Symposium Introduction: Teaching and Researching International Law – Global Perspectives

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Welcome to the Teaching and Researching International Law – Global Perspectives Symposium. This series of blog posts gathers perspectives from

international law teachers, researchers and students from different regions and all stages of their careers and legal education, to reflect together on common challenges and imagined futures of our profession. This Symposium is held in a moment of great uncertainty – but also of possibility: the Critical Pedagogy Symposium recently held on Opinio Juris offered thought-provoking commentary from across the globe on critical international pedagogy and the virtual space, while the forthcoming TWAILR series on Critique and the Canon promises stimulating discussion on balancing doctrinal rigour and critical engagement in the classroom. With the pressure of the pandemic, populist isolationism and – in some countries – tightening national budgets for education, there is no better time to have this conversation than now.

Week One: Country or regional studies

This Symposium will last three weeks, with 2-3 essays published each day. The essays released each week coalesce around a major theme. **Week One** focuses on case studies from countries or regions. Learning in granular detail from our colleagues from across the world will hopefully stimulate a cross-pollination of ideas to enrich our pedagogical approaches.

To kick the Symposium off, Sergey Sayapin relates the challenge of progressing Central Asian doctrines of international law beyond the shared Soviet history, and highlights the contribution of a new generation of Central Asian lawyers in making the doctrine and praxis of international law relevant to their region. Similarly, our Latin American friends Amaya Álvez Marín, Laura Betancur-Restrepo, Enrique Prieto-Rios, Daniel Rivas-Ramírez, and Fabia Veçosopress for a more local/regionalised approach to international law pedagogy. Members of their network, REDIAL, conduct important empirical studies and research projects to expose the problems facing international legal education at Latin American institutions, and is an example we all can learn from.

The dominance of English as the lingua franca of international law emerged as a common challenge across different contexts. Tran Viet Dung laments the difficulty of engaging student interest, while Yin Yin Win highlights the importance of transnational institutional collaboration in advancing international law teaching and research in Myanmar, but both concur in the difficulty of overcoming the language barrier, for students and teachers alike.

Next, Balraj K Sidhu reminds us of the enduring importance of international law principles in India, from ancient to contemporary times. Her contribution, as with many others, problematises the Eurocentrism of international law as taught in India and makes a compelling appeal for investment into scholarly growth. In seeking to localise our teaching of international law, Aristyo Darmawan offers an intriguing case study. While the law of the sea was used to justify Dutch colonisation of Indonesia, Darmawan notes how this spawned a rich tradition of Indonesian scholarship on the law of the sea, providing teachers with material to supplement lessons with Indonesian examples and cases.

Nciko Arnold offers another way forward. His valuable contribution outlines the contours of an intellectual movement within Strathmore Law School in Kenya whose aim is to decolonise the teaching of PIL, and in so doing envision an Afrocentric international law curriculum. At a pedagogical level, the vision of an African approach to international law animates Tom Kabau's essay. He proposes to equip students with critical tools and bolster transnational exchanges by African scholars. Antarnihita Mishra and Aman Kumar's contribution comprehensively allows us to imagine what a South Asian approach to international law could look like in concrete terms, and contains valuable material for any South Asian institution looking to 'regionalise' its international law syllabus.

For all the criticism on Eurocentrism, Andreas R Ziegler's insight from its supposed seat of power is that International Law is on the decline. He makes a valuable and powerful case for the enduring relevance of international law to *every* law student, and not just those who are already interested, and calls for the reinvigoration of teaching international law, as well as comparative law and European law, as an integral part of legal education in Europe. Finally, George Rodrigo Bandeira Galindo elegantly summarises the main themes that resonate in many of Week One's contributions. He reflects on the Eurocentric legal syllabus, the overreliance on canonical textbooks, monolingualism and the siloing of technical legal knowledge in his meditation on challenges he has faced as a law teacher in Brazil.

Week Two: Institutional frameworks and reflections

In **Week Two,** our contributors offer meditations on the institutional frameworks they operate in, whether national, regional or international – the limitations they face, possibilities for reform, and reflections on navigating the pursuits of teaching and research. Md. Rizwanul Islam begins with a highly pertinent reflection for academics in the Global South – specifically, navigating the constraints on resources. Both Rizwanul and Vellah Kedogo Kigwiru advocate maximising the use of academic blogs, both as resources and platforms for publication, where prestigious international journals and databases can be more inaccessible.

In his incisive piece, Eugenio Gomez-Chico ruminates on his personal experience being uncritically taught international law doctrine, and challenges us to question the rules by which the international legal order is structured as the first step to becoming 'rule makers' from 'rule takers'. Not only must international law teachers be vigilant for epistemological imperialism in positivist doctrine, but also how dominant narratives in the domestic context distort how international law is received by students, as Danushka S. Medawatte cautions. From her experience in Sri Lanka, she notes the artificially bifurcated view of international law as either a disciplining 'moral authority' or 'international conspiracy', and points out how this poses challenges for international law pedagogues.

Afshin Akhtar-Khavari adopts a similar cautionary tone in his observation of Australia's shift away from supporting research in universities. Rather than segregate teaching and research, Afshin argues that teaching and research are mutually energising endeavours, and the nexus between them must be further strengthened. S Pandiaraj echoes this concern in drawing on his experience at private law schools in India, where 'bread and butter' subjects are much higher in priority and academics are not afforded precious time for international law research.

On Day 4 of Week Two, Amritha V Shenoy shares with us her candid insights from attempting to engage Nepalese students' interest and prompt critical engagement with international law. In reflecting on how her students' understanding of international law as applied to their country educated her on Nepalese history, Amritha's contribution is a poignant reminder that teaching is a mutual learning experience. Amritha, much like fellow contributor Kinnari

Bhatt, underscores the importance of inter-disciplinarity to deepen students' understanding of international legal structures as dynamic scaffolding that determine both the external and internal domestic socioeconomic conditions of their country. This multi-disciplinarity is not only intellectually valuable, but intrinsic to the elusive 'commercial awareness' that students frantically cultivate to satisfy law firms.

To end off Week Two, we present a trilogy of powerful essays from Miguel Rábago Dorbecker, Rohini Sen, and Mohammad Shahabuddin on Global North-South dynamics in the teaching and research of international law, each highly probing in its own right. Miguel offers an auto-ethnography of himself as a Latin-American international law academic and forces us to scrutinise our own positionality in reifying global inequality and domestic class structure. He notes that dialogue between critical scholars of the Global South paradoxically take place in fora of the Global North, while more traditional, institutional lawyers remain local knowledge producers. Rohini and Shahab's personal reflections resonate with this observation: both trace common coordinates in coming from South Asia, but only encountering critical international law in institutions in the Global North. Whereas Shahab emphasises the importance of inter-personal and institutional collaboration between the Global North and South, Rohini views the teaching of critical international law in Asia as a deliberate pedagogical choice to write herself out of Eurocentric, androcentric classical international law.

Week Three: What needs to be done

In **Week Three,** the essays home in on what can be done, and indeed what needs to be done. The contributors address contemporary challenges that the pandemic has thrown at all of us, more deep-rooted challenges facing international law academe in the Global South, and new innovations to challenge Eurocentrism in international law.

From South Korea, Seokwoo Lee suggests developing an Asian perspective based on domestic implementation of international law – an intriguing area for further research that can complement critical international law. In particular, the systematic and comprehensive compilation of Asian state practice is invaluable in ensuring that Asian states will contribute to the development of

international law. Alexandr Svetlicinii approaches a similar challenge of teaching BRICS law from a methodological standpoint, from adopting a blended learning method to engage students, to building a 'canon' with the publication of new volumes and encouraging student research.

Dr Koesrianti is similarly concerned with 'Indonesianising' international law so students are able to appreciate its relevance to their lived reality. While she highlights the areas of particular relevance for Indonesia in the classical main body of international law such as ICJ jurisprudence and the UN Convention on Law of the Sea, there are notes of resonance with other contributors in the challenges of teaching and researching an essentially western international law: the dominance of English, the cynicism of international law as real 'law' due to the operation of realpolitik, and a paucity of locally or regionally relevant text materials. Arman Anwar responds to this difficulty by teaching international law through the lens of legal issues at the local level. Drawing upon Antony Anghie's approach of connecting international law to local history, Arman proposes an international law syllabus grounded in issues that affect Maluku, his province in Indonesia, such as illegal fishing and human trafficking, and militant separatism.

Pawat Satayanurug takes us to Thailand, where he dwells on the logistical and access-related challenges of moving university teaching online. His thoughtful contribution provokes us to give serious consideration to how we can make virtual education as inclusive as possible for beleaguered students and show empathy to – dare we say it? – equally beleaguered colleagues. Irawati Handayani offers problem-based learning as a possible solution to the perennial problem of engaging students' interest and sees this season as a window of opportunity to diversify modes of instruction with a greater use of multimedia, such as videos and podcasts. This pandemic has provided inescapable impetus to overcome the inertia some quarters of the international law academe have experienced in embracing technology.

Nor should international law be slow to address threats to cybersecurity. Gunjan Chawla addresses this in his contribution on developing TWAIL approaches to the international law of cyberspace, proposing that the Global South appropriate the controversial term 'lawfare' to protect itself against foreign interventions. Her piece adds to highly contemporary debates on cyber

power as the new frontier of global inequality and will surely prompt further discussion. Florence Shako underscores the importance of responsiveness and flexibility in our practice, by arguing that adopting critical international law is not only a matter of reforming reading lists, but also a pedagogical and epistemological shift that requires us pedagogues to distance ourselves from being 'owners' of information, to being 'facilitators' of information.

We should also mention here the work of Mohammad Shahabuddin and his colleagues in Bangladesh who have produced an international law volume that demonstrates how Global South approaches can be presented through a textbook that explores the classic themes and doctrines of international law from a Bangladeshi perspective, with particular attention being paid to issues that are of special concern to that country. Scholars from other countries seeking to produce textbooks based on their own country's history and experiences surely will find this important initiative of interest.

Mohsen Al Attar brings us an extraordinarily pertinent piece on confronting systemic racism in international law in light of this moment of global racial reckoning. In addition to confronting the imperialism in international law, Mohsen compels us to interrogate how international law has codified a prior form of oppression based on physiological difference. He challenges us to consider how we can incorporate anti-racist pedagogy in international law. In combining interdisciplinarity, critical approaches, and making international law relevant to the non-West, an open recognition of racialised ideology is certainly one way of engaging students in the struggle toward a more equitable, intellectually honest international law.

To round up our Symposium, Babatunde Fagbayibo's essay addresses a question that law teachers, students and administrators have been grappling since the dawn of democracy in South Africa: how to transform legal pedagogy. The impetus to decolonise the curriculum gained renewed focus with the #FeesMustFall protest by students in 2015-2016, and it is in this context that Babatunde provides an ideational discourse of the strategies for decolonising international legal pedagogy in South African universities.

Contributors

Sergey Sayapin: The Post-Soviet Central Asia and International Law: Practice, Research and Teaching

Tran Viet Dung: Teaching and Researching International Law: An Assessment Based on Ho Chi Minh City University of Law's Experience

Yin Yin Win: Teaching and Researching International Law in Myanmar

Balraj K Sidhu: TRILA and India: A Plea for its Restoration

Nciko Arnold: The Hutians – Decolonising the Teaching of Public International Law in African Law Schools to Address a Real Problem

Amaya Álvez Marín, Laura Betancur-Restrepo, Enrique Prieto-Rios, Daniel Rivas-Ramírez, and Fabia Veçoso: Rethinking International Law Education in Latin America

Antarnihita Mishra and Aman Kumar: South Asian University: Towards a 'South-Asian' Approach to International Law – Part I

South Asian University: Towards a 'South-Asian' Approach to International Law – Part II

Andreas R Ziegler: Don't Let International Law Become an Exotic Field Irrelevant for Lawyers…Seven Demands

George Rodrigo Bandeira Galindo: Some (Short) Reflections on (My) International Law Teaching Experience in Brazil

Aristyo Darmawan: Indonesia and the Development of the Law of the Sea: Reflections on History, Scholarship, and Teachings

Tom Kabau: Theoretical Perspectives to the Teaching and Researching of International Law in Africa

Md. Rizwanul Islam: Teaching and Researching International Law by Resource-Constrained Academics

Vellah Kedogo Kigwiru: To Blog or not to Blog? Technology, Blogging from a Pedagogical Consideration and Teaching International Economic Law: Taking

Blogging Seriously from the Lens of AfronomicsLaw Blog

Eugenio Gomez-Chico: Teaching and Learning From Where You Stand: a Reflection

Danushka S. Medawatte: Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Teaching International Law in Sri Lanka

Afshin Akhtar-Khavari: The Dangerous Road Ahead for Universities and the Teaching-Research Nexus

S Pandiaraj: Teaching and Researching International Law at Private Law Schools: A Personal Reflection

Kinnari Bhatt: Where Are All the T-Shaped International Lawyers? Thoughts on Critical Teaching from a Practitioner's Perspective

Amritha V Shenoy: Teaching PIL in Nepal: A Personal Experience

Rohini Sen: Teaching International Law in Asia: The Predicated Pedagogue

Miguel Rábago Dorbecker: Reproduction of the Hierarchy and the Training of Internationalist Lawyers: an Auto-ethnography of a Latin American Professor

Mohammad Shahabuddin: Teaching and Researching International Law: Some Personal Reflections Via Bangladesh and the UK

Seokwoo Lee: Asian State Practice of Domestic Implementation of International Law (ASP-DIIL)

Alexandr Svetlicinii: Teaching "BRICS Law": Application of Team Teaching and Learning Technologies

Koesrianti: Teaching International Law: Indonesian Practical Experience

Arman Anwar: Managing Legal Issues at Local Level to be Appealing for Students to Learn International Law

Pawat Satayanurug: Adaptability with Inclusivity: Teaching International Law during the Pandemic

Irawati Handayani: Problem-Based Learning as an Alternative Approach for Teaching International Law

Gunjan Chawla: TRILA in the Shadow of ‘National Security’: Towards Developing TWAIL Approaches to the International Law of Cyberspace

Florence Shako: Teaching and Researching International Law – a Kenyan Perspective

Mohsen Al Attar: “I Can’t Breathe”: Confronting the Racism of International Law

Ntando Sindane and Babatunde Fagbayibo: Some Thoughts on the Ideational Underpinnings of a Decolonised Pedagogical Approach to International Law in South Africa

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