

Seminar Paper

Valuing Social Theory – Registers between Epistemic Capitalism and Geopolitics of Academic Knowledge

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Introduction

Contemporary social theory faces a major challenge: the recent emergence of post- and de-colonial discourses calls into question the basic theoretical foundations of Sociology in the face of a lack of reflection on colonial, racist, and patriarchal structures and demands a revision of basic assumptions (Reuter and Villa 2009). While it is by no means possible to speak of a stringent theoretical program, the focus is on historically developed unequal power structures of colonialist origin (Boatcă and Costa 2010). Within this context, the paper parts by an interest in how academic knowledge production is handled within Social Theory. This interest is double-handed, as it allows to understand more accurately how evaluation criteria of Social Theory are developed, as well as it permits to identify modes of epistemic inequalities. Focussing on processes of valuation brings a new perspective into the discourse of decolonising Social Theory since it asks the questions of *who* is negotiating values, within *which* geographical sites, historical context, and epistemic cultures, alongside the matter of situating the knowledge production and distribution of Social Theory as a whole.

In the first part, this paper provides, firstly, a short overview of different approaches within the heterogeneous discourse of Valuation Studies to build a framework and guiding

heuristic to Social Study through a perspective that emphasises practices of valuation. Secondly, it dives into the current debates about the geopolitics of academic knowledge in order to introduce a decolonial approach to analyse knowledge production. This perspective stresses the importance of the *longue durée* of colonial matrices that are influencing academic knowledge production and advocates for the inclusion of marginalised knowledge. Thirdly, the notion of epistemic inequalities is employed to bridge the gaps between empirical Valuation Studies and normative decolonial approaches.

The second part of this paper focuses on the analysis of practices of valuation. Firstly, it discusses registers of valuing within the debates on conceptualising Social Theory. Secondly, it goes on to explore the canonisation of Social Theory as historical and current practices of valuation, debating traditional as well as critical approaches. Thirdly, the paper contextualises the abovementioned practices by embedding them into research and publication practices of the Social Sciences. Lastly, it concludes by providing a short overview of the paper, pointing out the advantages and limitations of the chosen approaches as well as suggestions for further research.

(E)valuating Knowledge – Building a framework

Valuation Studies are interested in “where the value or values of something is established, assessed, negotiated, provoked, maintained, constructed and/or contested” (Valuation Studies Board of editors 2020:1), denoting that the term of values comprises more than solely economic values. Rather, valuing is understood as a social practice that can be observed empirically. As a recently emerging field, there is a notable diversity in approaches. One can differentiate between valuation practices, in other words, assigning worth or value, and evaluative practices, that is assessing how worth or value is attained (Lamont 2012:205). In light of the reciprocity between those two processes, I will refer to them as processes or practices of (e)valuation. Heuts and Mol employ the term “registers of valuing” (Heuts and Mol 2013) to foreground that the principles of (e)valuating might be multiple, but constituted through a shared relevance. To construct registers of valuing, one might recur on “devices of valuation” (Doganova 2019) as standardized procedures of ascribing value. Furthermore, the places and sites where (e)valuation happens, and their context, are of particular interest to Valuation Studies.

Therefore, it is inevitable to state that “[v]aluation is thus always in a specific situation, but influenced by tools, logics and infrastructures that reach beyond the situation” (Fochler, Doganova, and Asdal forthcoming:5).

Following Michèle Lamont, categorization, legitimation, and hierarchization can be identified as sub-processes of (e)valuation. Or, in other words, subprocesses to construct registers of valuing. To specify, categorisation concerns “[...] determining in which group the entity [...] under consideration belongs” (Lamont 2012:206). Applied to the subject of knowledge production within Social Theory, this translates to categorising knowledge as scientifically and sociologically relevant. Legitimation, as Michèle Lamont puts it, is guided by the question of “[h]ow does [...] a scientific theory gain value to the point at which it is consecrated and integrated into the canon” (ibid.). In this sense, legitimation refers to the intersubjective recognition of a value, that is sociological knowledge, to be incorporated into a canonized discourse. Last but not least, Lamont emphasises that there is a “[...] plurality of criteria/grammars of valuation and evaluation” (Lamont 2012:207). Consequently described as *heterachies*, which she describes processes of (e)valuation as based on “cultural or social structures” (Lamont 2012:208) that enable to construct or deconstruct hierarchies of valuation. Applied to this case, this might be the network of journals on Social Theory, structured through not only their impact but also their criteria of evaluation, that is the peer-review process of journal articles, and the influence of commercial publishers (Best 2016; Ruiz Serna et al. 2022). Or, in broader terms, academic structures that are increasingly governed by the logics of neoliberal capitalism (Fochler 2016) and incentivise the accumulation of academic capital (Falkenberg and Fochler 2022). However, this will be set forth more thoroughly in the following pages.

To put it shortly, Valuation Studies provide a framework to analyse and understand the production and distribution of Social Theory as sociological knowledge through a critical lens that foregrounds processes of (e)valuation. Primarily, this approach suggests looking at specific *loci of enunciation*, which will be carried out through analysing literature on the conceptualisation and canonisation of Social Theory. Secondly, it points out the importance of contextualising registers of valuing. Here, the landscape of sociological publishing platforms sticks out, alongside the historical developments of Sociology as a discipline. In this sense, the aforementioned tools of Valuation Studies are

understood as a guiding heuristic to analyse processes of constructing canonical Social Theory.

Geopolitics of Academic knowledge

The decolonial approach of the *geopolitics of academic knowledge* emphasises that knowledge is “made in circulation” (Keim et al. 2020:251), consequently inscribing epistemic inequalities and hegemonies into knowledge production, and also stresses the fact that knowledge, as a global tool of power, is built upon “the historical configurations of the economies of knowledge” (Pavón-Belizón 2023:357). Drawing on approaches to the broader “geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge” (Mignolo 2008; Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006), this concept hints at the modern/colonial world-system as a founding factor of a global system of knowledge circulation built on colonial difference which is the particular social experience of the European empires. Followingly, the claim is that historically, colonial systems of knowledge permeate academic discourses and render subaltern knowledges as systematically absent, “for creating knowledge that is not valued” (Muñoz-García, Lira, and Loncón 2022:654). In their challenge to disrupt hegemonic knowledge systems, they claim to encounter *monocultures of knowledge* that create absences by being “undergirded by colonial logics and the installation of legitimized knowledges that set the limit of what is ‘visible’” (Muñoz-García et al. 2022:654), and by creating “exclusive canons of knowledge production” (Santos 2016:172).

According to decolonial approaches, Natural and Social Sciences played and continue to play an important role in the creation of the “Epistemologies of the North” (Santos 2018:5). This aligns with the idea that the colonial and imperial context gave rise to modern science and technology (Jasanoff 2006) and historical *epistemicides* (Grosfoguel 2015). *Epistemicides* refer to the destruction of the knowledge of the cultures oppressed by the colonial powers as “[a]ny kind of knowledge not susceptible of serving the objectives of the colonial order, and thus of being appropriated, was violently suppressed” (Santos 2018:41). The conquest and colonisation of the continent of the Americas were not only accompanied by a multitude of genocides but also by the systematic eradication of other non-Western knowledge through the elimination of certain social practices and the non-recognition of the importance of social actors, inferioris-

ing them. These arguments are constructed upon the famous claim that knowledge is not neutral, but situated into a very specific positionality (Haraway 1988), disrupting the “Zero-Point Hubris” (Castro-Gómez 2005) and the implied privileges, that is disconnecting knowledge from beforementioned geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge, whilst similarly establishing racialised orders of knowledge that claim to be universal. Even though these critiques attract criticism due to “a diagnosis of a relatively unified object of analysis” (Krause 2021:103), they are able to embed academic knowledge into a long history of power relations.

In this context, current post- and decolonial debates advocate for situating Social Theory within these geopolitics of academic knowledge. As Manuela Boatcă and Sergio Costa (2010:13) argue, “[g]iven that colonized or totalitarian countries were not on their way towards modernity, they were long denied the status of valid objects of sociological analysis; in turn, after gaining independence, they were allowed to become reception sites for European and North American social theories – yet not their production sites”. In other words, they claim that the social experiences of the colonised population are systematically undervalued, that is excluded and marginalised, within Social Theory, both in its historical and current dimension.

Bridging the Gaps between Decolonial and Valuation Studies

However, one might contend that there is a conceptual gap between the idea of the geopolitics of academic knowledge and decolonialising discourses within Sociology and Valuation Studies approaches. Whilst the first concept undeniable is a normative approach that is based on the political program of decolonisation, the latter is strictly oriented towards empirical research. On the one hand, decolonial currents contend that sociological processes of (e)valuation processes are deeply flawed due to colonial matrices of power that are permeating knowledge. On the other hand, Valuation Studies predominantly aim at understanding social practices as processes of (e)valuation, thus not emphasising the dimension of social injustices or power relations.

Drawing on the definition of epistemic inequality provided by the US-American sociologist Julian Go allows us to bridge this gap between Valuation Studies and the geopolitics of academic knowledge. As he contests, epistemic inequality is “[...] the question of

knowledge hierarchies; of how certain standpoints get marginalized as inferior, unworthy, and lesser while other standpoints get valorized as superior” (Go 2017:194). Taking up this definition, it is useful to distinguish between two sides of epistemic inequalities. On the one hand, there are the historical hierarchies of knowledge in Sociology and, on the other, the current unequal relations of knowledge, the first dimension giving rise to the second. Recurring to the difference between valuation and evaluative practices, one might identify that there is a deeply connected interplay between the knowledge and social experiences that are deemed relevant to sociological thought, both within the social reality or an academic discourse (evaluative practices) and the assignation of sociological value through research and publishing practices (valuation practices).

Connecting these practices with current works on data colonialism allows to understand sociological registers of valuing within the long-lasting connection between colonialism and capitalism. Nick Couldry and Ulises Mejias (2021:2) understand data colonialism as “[...] the continuous extraction of economic value from human life through data” (Couldry and Hepp 2017:2). Whilst grasping Social Theory as mere generation of data seems to be shortsighted, data colonialism renders visible that processes of (e)valuation are realised by reference to a seemingly universal, dominant and Eurocentric scale that governs researching and publishing practices and which might be described as monocultural. As research practices increasingly tend to be influenced by the logics of “epistemic capitalism” (Fochler 2016), meaning that they are embedded into neoliberal dynamics of accumulating specific forms of capital through knowledge, systematically disregarding ways of thinking and knowing otherwise, one can claim that Social Theory as academically institutionalised knowledge production is canalised through registers of valuing oriented by academic trajectories. Consequently, epistemic inequalities can not only be seen as historical forms of registers of valuing that have not only a Eurocentric inclination but also are part of cultural dynamics that preserve accumulated capital through epistemic privileges.

My argument is that by introducing epistemic inequalities as a connecting dot between the geopolitics of academic knowledge and Valuation Studies, a bridge opens up that allows us to relate historically unequal forms of producing and distributing knowledge to the current cultural dynamics of neoliberal academia. Additionally, it permits the in-

roduction of normative dimensions into Valuation Studies. Consequently, in order to tackle the epistemic inequalities, this renders necessary both a historical analysis of the emergence of Social Theory as well as an analysis of its current dynamics.

Conceptualising Social Theory

Generally speaking, Social Theory is situated awkwardly within the broader sociological discourse, mainly through its interdisciplinary character, intertwining Social Sciences and Philosophy (Delanty, Chernilo, and Mascareño 2023:412). This is why, even though there exists a large number of articles and books that seek to explain the essence of Social Theory, they struggle to do so. There seems to be a common theme that introduces Social Theory by rejecting its common ‘nature’ and embracing its plurality as the characteristic feature (Joas and Knöbl 2009; Lemert 2010). This aligns with the prominent narrative of Sociology as multiparadigmatic science which allows different approaches to coexist (Kneer and Schroer 2009). In other words, one might identify multiparadigm or plurality as one register of valuing that comes to light when categorization as a process of (e)valuation is approached.

Multiparadigm as a central register challenges the ability to categorise Social Theory as such. However, there exists literature on how to evaluate Social Theory as good. Or, in more technical terms, processes of legitimation that provide recognition of valid knowledge within the discourse. Nonetheless, these processes are overshadowed by the register of multiparadigm, thus impeding universal criteria of recognition. For instance, some currents define Social Theory by providing a framework for studying society and culture through abstracting, thus contending that it lies beyond empirical research (Knoblauch 2020:6–11). Others assert that “empirical teasing” (Knorr-Cetina 1992) is necessary to render Social Theory applicable within empirical research.¹ As these examples show, how legitimation is obtained depends highly on the paradigmatic context. Consequently, “[...] there is no standard form or style of ‘making’ social theory [...]” (Balon 2013:515) nor commonly accepted criteria of validation. In other words,

¹ Unsurprisingly, the still not resolved controversy to define the relationship between Social Theory and empirical research yielded the problem of finding common denominators of Social Theory, notably also due to heterogeneous viewpoints on the influence of normativity and morality on Social Theory (Joas and Knöbl 2009:2). At the same time, this incrusts another debate on where to draw the boundaries between Social Theory and other levels of theory (Rosa et al. 2020:17).

Social Theory is a heterogeneous and interdisciplinary field of research that draws on various disciplines and relates differently to empirical realities by employing largely different methods and methodologies.

Thus, rather than universal criteria of good Social Theory, there is a need to prove social theory relevant within scientific discourses, a process of legitimation that translates into a register of valuing. In this sense, it goes beyond the idea of getting research factually right and more towards emphasising the idea of originality (Krause 2016a, 2021:119–20). Recalling Lamont’s definition of legitimation as “recognition by oneself and others of the value of an entity” (Lamont 2012:206), the status of a valuable scientific contribution is ascribed by recognising both its originality and the ability to fit into “collective patterns in the production of knowledge” (Krause 2021:120). To sum it up, Balon (2013:517) articulates recognition as the central legitimatising register of value: “[...] at the core of the enigmatic charm and seductive fore of social theory is the fact that it seems to have no other assignment and objectives apart from the very task of making sense of social theory’s relevance”.

The Canonisation of Social Theory

One might argue that doing Social Theory is a highly canonized matter. This is not only shown by the appraisal of Classical Theory, foundational authors, or canonical statements (Kemple 2006) but also through the reconstruction of its emergence. Drawing on literary theory, canons might be understood as “[...] a privileged set of texts, whose interpretation and reinterpretation defines a field [...]” (Connell 1997:1512). This implies another register of valuing that might be denominated as “historical time” (Heuts and Mol 2013:131–32). Whilst classical texts assert a timeless quality, they are (e)valuated by their novelty within the specific historical context they were produced. Very much within the above-mentioned necessity to fit into collective patterns of knowledge production, it “[...] accords value to a certain object, partly because it is well known and has already been studied intensively” (Krause 2021:25). Also, the canonical characteristic of Social Theory entails academic conventions. It serves as “a function of the international distribution of knowledge production” (Parvulescu and Boatcă 2022:13) which is majorly produced through exclusive monolingual logics.

Social Theory is commonly regarded as a result of social change within Europe, namely focusing on the Enlightenment and Industrialization, similarly mentioning Modernity as a founding factor. Or, shortly put, “[c]lassical sociology was a product of first Great Transformation of (initially) European societies from largely agrarian to industrial capitalist societies” (Ray 2010:35). To be more explicit, France and England as research objects played a privileged role in understanding modernity and especially processes of Revolution and Industrialisation (Krause 2021:106–8). At the same time, there is an important claim to scientific methods at play which enabled Social Theory to its normative and moral claims (Ray 2010:20). Within this narrative of social change, classical texts are regarded to provide a novel and unique contribution to social sciences (Alexander 1987; Ruviñoso 2021:267). Followingly, claims suggest “that the texts of these masterminds, once integrated in a canon, form the foundation of the identity of the discipline and thereby ensure the discipline’s integration” (Wagner 2012:111).

Nonetheless, in recent years, there has been a contextualist tradition where “the consensus that the classics remain important in sociology persists, although the terms of why and how we should understand them remain in dispute” (Owens 2015:435). Thus, the status as classics ascribed to certain authors perdures, but is situated in the above-mentioned historical time as register of valuing. Emphasising historical time also opens up normative dimensions of canonization, insofar as post- and decolonial approaches argue for the inclusion of overlooked topics. Joas and Knöbl (2009) cater to these needs as they claim to be “[...] part of [an] attempt to produce a comprehensive social theory capable of meeting contemporary needs [...]” (Joas and Knöbl 2009:ix). Still, the classics are understood as guiding references on how to theorise (Swedberg 2021).

However, Raewyn Connell shows convincingly that the emergence of Classical Theory is intimately linked to an “imperial gaze” (Connell 1997:1524) which was constitutive to sociological thought. She provides a counter-narrative that claims Sociology and its theory to be engaged in colonial projects since its beginnings in the 19th century. Additionally, she claims that the formation of the modern canon was the result of a “conceptual vacuum” (Connell 1997:1537) within the sociological discourse after the Second World War that subsequently gave birth to a new understanding of sociology’s history arising from the United States. As a result, the epistemological changes that

were constitutive to the current canon of Sociology were exclusive and marked by inherent patterns of hegemony. In other words, Social Theory emerged not only from the centres of global empires, but it was also indispensable to legitimise colonial oppression and unequal relations of power by constructing narratives of “global difference” (Connell 1997:1517).

Certainly, this historical analysis entails that sociological knowledge production is strongly linked to the creation of global hierarchies of knowledge, thus yielding to epistemic inequalities. In catering towards certain, sanitised interests based on an exclusionary understanding of modernity, the canonisation of social theory might be guided by internal (e)valuative practices that focus on novelty and originality within the discourse of Social Sciences. However, given a broader contextualisation, it might be understood as a new, historical variety of epistemic capitalism that used accumulated knowledge and the right to produce valid knowledge as capital to legitimate global modes of exploitation and to maintain political hierarchies through distinct registers of valuing. This impedes the incorporation of “anti-canonical” knowledge (Connell 2019:358–59). In other terms, the external (e)valuative practices of the process of canonisation can be denominated as exclusivity, insofar as certain European model cases were taken as points of reference and sociological knowledge production had to be constructed around this context.

The Publication Landscapes and the Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences

Resorting to hierarchization as a subprocess of (e)valuation hints at the material and normative infrastructural dimension. Firstly, that is the conditions of knowledge production. Drawing on Hebe Vessuri (2013) and Syed Farid Alatas (2003), there exists an unequal global labour division in the Social Sciences that relegates the work of scholars of the Global South as seemingly less important. He claims that the unequal labour divisions are not only constituted through political and economic imperialism but likewise through epistemic imperialism. Followingly, these historical relations of power are translated into new, neoliberal structures of scientific knowledge production. He describes a monopolised structure that is dominated by contemporary Social Sciences powers as “[...] countries which (1) generate large outputs of social science research

in the form of scientific papers in peer-reviewed journal, books, and working and research papers; (2) have a global reach of the ideas and information contained in these works; (3) have the ability to influence the social sciences of countries due to the consumption of the works originating in the powers; and (4) command a great deal of recognition, respect and prestige both at home and abroad” (Alatas 2003:602).

This caters to the second point which refers to the “uneven internationalization” (Krause 2021:103–4) of academic knowledge production through differing support for science and the use of English as the international *lingua franca*. The dominance of English-language journals within the Social Sciences coincides with hegemonical practices that preserve institutions and reinforce core-periphery relations as well as diminish the value of publications outside of an Anglo-American context (Meriläinen et al. 2008). Tellingly, this is shown by the debate on the biggest Open Access Initiatives in Latin America, *SciELO* and *Redalyc*, which were described as publication favela for “doing a poor job in disseminating and giving visibility to their academic content compared to commercial platforms, because ‘many North American research have never head of them’” (Mounier 2018:299), followingly classifying them as predatory journals. This implies an idea that “[s]cholarly knowledge that is not generated in the knowledge centres – encompassing everything that is not know there, not produced in English is considered underdeveloped, and of low-quality” (Torres Heredia 2021:131–32). The Anglo-American hegemony produces hermetically sealed discourses that align with *metrocentrism*, arguing “that the West has served as the model system for societies” (Krause 2016b:200). Similarly, the tendency towards homogenised journal publishing (Froneman and Muller 2022; Kaltenbrunner et al. 2022) might be a result of creating frames of references that are oriented towards the epistemic cultures of Western academia.

Thirdly, citation patterns are an example of how epistemic inequalities are shaped through knowledge infrastructures that are based on exclusive registers of valuing. Citations not only serve as a way to situate research in a broader context, but they also allow to differentiate and to account for previous contributions on a topic. At the same time, they set the boundaries of disciplines. By looking at patterns, it is possible to identify collective patterns of valuing knowledge within a discipline. Ogan et al. (2023) argue for centrality as the main register of valuing, by which they mean “a source or a clus-

ter of sources that receives substantially more citations” (Ogan et al. 2023:13). This is entangled with a “capitalist system of evaluation” (The Citational Justice Collective et al. 2022) based on numerical metrics. Consequently, these practices struggle to capture collective knowledge that does not fit into the system's metrics (García Salazar and Walsh 2017:4), as well as they preserve dominant knowledge systems by rendering authors from the margins as less impactful, less central, and thus less valuable than those who engage with a scholarly consensus.

Fourthly, this uneven internationalization along patterns of coloniality aligns with the tendency towards commercialise academic knowledge production. In the past decades, the landscape of sociological publishing has significantly changed towards large commercial publishers (Best 2016). Similarly, research processes tend to be governed by the logics of cultural capitalism (Falkenberg and Fochler 2022; Fochler 2016). An example of how the logics of commercialisation and cultural capitalism are taking over journal publishing is shown by a scandal that emerged in September 2017 within the journal *Third World Quarterly*. Bruce Gilley, a professor of Political Science at Portland State University, published an article named “*The Case for Colonialism*” where he argues that “Western colonialism was, as a general rule, both objectively beneficial and subjectively legitimate in most of the places where it was found, using realistic measures of those concepts” (Gilley 2017:1). Even though the article has since been retracted, it created significant discussion and was later identified as “click-bate to drive clicks and citations” (Finn et al. 2017:182). Consequently, relying on numerical metrics as a register of valuing both for scholars as well as profit-oriented journals might result in problematic publications that concur with quantified academic and commercial expectations.

To sum it up, analysing research and publication practices in the social sciences shows the importance of the infrastructural dimension of knowledge (e)valuation. Vessuri (2013) and Alatas (2003) suggest that the research infrastructures in the Social Sciences are framed by a global divide that depreciates knowledge production from the Global South. Drawing on the “uneven internationalization” (Krause 2021) of academic knowledge production, it can be claimed that an Anglo-American hegemony, linked to persisting coloniality, provides the ground for a publication landscape that is shaped by the logics of cultural capitalism and metric of evaluation. Thus, centrality as a

quantified register to render knowledge relevant is embedded in colonial and capitalist discourses that systematically disregard knowledge from the margins.

Consequently, my claim is that not only “[...] capitalist cultural principles increasingly shape processes of knowledge production from the inside [...]” (Falkenberg and Fochler 2022:5), but also that they are deeply intertwined with a coloniality of knowledge that serves to maintain globally unequal power relations by implementing Eurocentric registers of valuing. This is supported by the claim that the conditions of global capitalism are reciprocally constitutive of the persisting coloniality (Grosfoguel 2002). Or, in more theoretical terms, the current knowledge production within the Social Sciences and Social Theory is both guided by an epistemic capitalism and coloniality that reproduces globally unequal hierarchies of academic knowledge.

Conclusion

In the course of this paper, it was shown that knowledge production in Social Theory is guided by distinct registers of valuing. Constructing a theoretical framework around the heuristics of Valuation Studies and decolonial approaches to academic knowledge production allows to identify different dimensions of processes of (e)valuation. Firstly, this was the discourse on how good Social Theory should be done. In the light of Sociology as a discipline, multiparadigm was identified as central register of valuing that emphasises the plurality of possible approaches. However, whilst this register impedes a universalist approach to Social Theory, recognition of relevance seems to be another indispensable register. Both might be denominated as categorising registers that seek to identify if knowledge belongs to Social Theory. Followingly, recognition of relevance is embedded into the historical time of Social Theory, in other words, its temporal contextualisation which is dominated by a logic of canonisation.

The canonisation of Social Theory can be seen as a legitimating subprocess of (e)valuation which establishes a frame of reference that is governed by exclusivity as it is built upon an imperial gaze. Lastly, in order to take hierarchisation into account as a subprocess of (e)valuation, it was necessary to take a closer look into the broader context of research and publication practices in the Social Sciences. Centrality was denominated as a governing register to enter and participate in the publication landscape. However,

as centrality is understood through numerical metrics, it did align with problematic tendencies to commercialise academic knowledge as well as epistemic imperialism and hegemonial practices.

The paper intended to show how said registers can be identified through a perspective that combines decolonial approaches to global academic knowledge production and Valuation Studies. However, there are limits to this approach. Admittedly, it is necessary to investigate more thoroughly the compatibility of the two presented approaches, as well as their applicability to other cases. Furthermore, whilst it was possible to identify registers of valuing, one might argue that a decolonial perspective predetermines the results of this research. Similarly, it is important to investigate further which registers are at play within the discourse of Global Social Theory (Bhambra et al. 2019) that claims to disrupt hegemonic ways of doing Social Theory.

To conclude, a decolonial Valuation Studies approach shows that the production of knowledge on Social Theory is an institutionalised matter that encompasses different actors at different *loci of enunciation*. The research and publishing practices are marked by different registers of valuing that serve to categorise, legitimate, and hierarchize knowledge production. The registers of valuing classical Social Theory may provide ways to enter the discourse and encompass different approaches, but they also reveal the epistemic inequalities that are inscribed into practices of (e)valuation. Most importantly, exclusivity is the central register that impedes discursive access and establishes knowledge hierarchies through the creation of Eurocentric frames of reference at the interplay between epistemic capitalism and coloniality. I would argue that the strength of the presented approach lies in adding a normative dimension to practices of (e)valuation which allows capturing power relations as central element of knowledge production. Moreover, it allows decolonial approaches to articulate their concerns more systematically by employing critical heuristics.

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