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PATTERNS IN GLOBAL STUDIES PROGRAMS

Examining similarities between master's degree programs

ABSTRACT

Giulia Prado Rodrigues Ferreira: Patterns in Global Studies Programs: Examining Similarities Between Master's Degree Programs
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This thesis emerges from the growing relevance of degree programs in the global society and from the interest in the field of study in Global Studies (GS). This field is relatively new and has set high goals for itself. Global Studies scholars often define the field as innovative and barrier-breaker, saying that GS should go beyond existing disciplines in explaining global and local issues and networks from a global and critical perspective. In this context, the purpose of this thesis is to examine master's degree programs and find more about the existing similarities and differences between these programs.

Making use of World Society Theory, I search for similarities in the reading list of the introductory courses in master's degree programs in four universities in Northern Europe - Humboldt University, in Germany, University of Iceland, Roskilde University, in Denmark, and University of Gothenburg, in Sweden. Within the reading lists, I search for patterns in authors and texts featured in them, in addition to the area of study appearing in the lists and the topics brought up by the texts. The study is conducted using a mix of content analysis and frequency analysis. To complement the analysis, I examine geographically specific texts (GSTs) and the vocabulary of the texts included in the reading lists using a word count software.

The research finds that similarities appear less than expected. Universities tend to rely on similar areas of study to build up their reading list, but other aspects do not present the same level of affinity. Authors and texts hardly repeat between universities and themes overlap occasionally. The local context seems to have a determinant influence over the programs. Moreover, the GSTs reveal that centralized regions of the world receive more space in the list while marginalized areas receive little to no space. The word count mainly shows that the texts' rely on state-centric vocabulary.

The findings indicate that GS programs are not fully structured yet, with some mismatches between theory and practice. While the theory of Global Studies heavily argues for interdisciplinarity, critical thinking, global perspective, and awareness of structural inequalities, the literature used in the master's degree programs is still rather conventional. This shows that the Global Studies academic community needs to put more effort into making GS all it says it is.

Keywords: global studies, master's degree programs, world society theory, reading list

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

*"Ao verme que primeiro roeu as frias carnes do meu cadáver dedico como
saudosa lembrança estas memórias póstumas."*

Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas,
Machado de Assis

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Introduction

University degree programs have been gaining increasing importance and space since their foundation and spread. Since the birth of the university, which was first dedicated to the cleric, serving the Church and the Crown, and then to selected parts of society, serving the newly formed nation-states, till spreading all over the world during the 20th century, the university has expanded in demographics, scope, and geography (Mignolo, 2003). In modern society, universities and university degree holders are seen with prestige, taking a special place within society (Meyer et al., 2005). With the fast development and the key role universities now play in the global society, it is important to look into these institutions and their programs, understanding how they develop their curricula and what they offer to students.

With that in mind, the present work will look into the content of four master's degree programs in Global Studies. More specifically, the purpose is to investigate if there is a pattern among what these programs are offering to their students within the field. As a relatively new area of study, with a vivid debate about what the field is and how it should progress (Editors, 2013) global studies invites deeper investigation into how degree programs in the field are practicing GS. Moreover, the field has the ambitious goal to break barriers and go beyond the limitations faced by traditional fields of study. This makes it interesting to investigate the degree programs in this field and find out how theory and practice are taking form. On top of that, no such research examining a group of global studies degrees has been found thus far, so diving into this topic can contribute greatly to the field.

To achieve the aim of understanding GS degree programs, I will investigate the similarities between degree programs in Global Studies. This will allow a deeper comprehension of both individual programs and the programs as a group. For this, I will examine introductory courses from master's degree programs (MDPs) from four different universities located in Northern Europe. The selected universities are Humboldt University - Germany, University of Iceland - Iceland, Roskilde University - Denmark, and University of Gothenburg - Sweden.

Based on the reading list of the introductory course of each of these universities, I ask the three following questions ‘*Do authors and readings appear in different reading lists? Which areas of study do the readings cover, are they similar? And last, which themes do the readings deal with, are they similar?*’

The work presented in this thesis adopts the assumptions provided by World Society Theory (WST). This theory was first developed precisely in studies on educational similarities around the world with enquires into the spread of mass schooling around the world (Ramirez, 2012). The main idea of WST is that actors and realities are socially constructed and dependent on their environment, and that the global system constitutes a world society. This world society shares models of behaviors and rationalities, resulting in how similarities are found in the most diverse spheres of life in distinct places of the world (Drori & Krücken, 2009; Meyer, 2009; Schofer et al., 2012).

The research conducted in this thesis indicates that similarities between programs occur less than expected, with local contexts exerting influence on the reading lists. Similarities tend to be restricted to the disciplines featured in the reading lists. It was recognized that universities tend to resort to the same few disciplines to build up the reading list of their introductory course. On the other hand, authors and readings hardly repeat between universities. The themes featured in the readings overlap occasionally with varying frequency depending on the area of study. Moreover, the research also observed discrepancies between theory and practice of global studies. Reading lists do not show expected levels of interdisciplinarity and fail to embrace the knowledge and experience of marginalized locations.

This thesis is organized as follows. The next chapter sets the background of the research. It presents the field of global studies, its scope and evolution, followed by the motivation for the research and the research question. The following two chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4) describe, respectively, the data and methods used and the theoretical

framework on which the research is based. Chapter 5 presents the findings; Chapter 6 presents the results and draws conclusions about the analyzed programs.

Global Studies

History and Scope of Global Studies

Global studies is a relatively young field of study. It started in most part due to the rise of general interest in globalization in the 1980s and 1990s, an interest that surged within academia and outside of it, in public opinion, news, and on the mind of everyday people. As Steger and Wahrab (2017) put it in their book, the rise of the global imaginary contributed immensely to the birth of global studies. Without the widespread notion of the globe as a connected and single place, there would hardly be a desire or need of understanding from a global perspective.

The first academic program in global studies was established in 1995, at the California State University in Monterrey. Two years after that, in 1997, Hitoshibashi University, in Japan, was the first university to establish a graduate program in the field. Nine years later the first Ph.D. program in Global Studies would appear, set up by Rutgers University, in USA. From this, many other universities followed and established their own global studies programs, and today there are many academic programs in global studies, in undergraduate and graduate levels, in various places (Juergensmeyer, 2012).

Over the years, not only have more universities joined the effort of offering global studies programs to their students, but also multiple journals and associations emerged, fostering lively discussions within the field. Some of the most incipient discussions are debates around what, after all, is global studies? How to define this field? How is it different from other similar fields? To this day, these debates remain a big part of global studies discussions.

In *Introduction to Global Studies*, McCormick (2018) defines global studies as “The systematic study of the global systems and of its related features, qualities, trends, institutions, processes, and problems” (p. 5). Juergensmeyer’s (2012) definition in the *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* is similar to McCormick’s: “Global studies is the analysis of events, activities,

ideas, processes, and flows that are transnational or that could affect all areas of the world”.

The two definitions, though very similar to each other, are not the exact same. This is a picture of the various definitions of global studies. The articles and books dedicated to it give definitions that look a lot alike but that vary to some extent, and the field keeps a lively discussion on this.

All major scholars in the field engage in this discussion and some of them, such as Darian-Smith (2015) and Steger and Wahlrads (2017), defend, at the same time, that these discussions should not aim to set a definite concept of global studies. Instead, there should be some space for revisions and upgrades. Darian-Smith (2015) put this well by arguing that it is useful to arrive at a general definition of the field of global studies, also for bureaucratic and institutional reasons, but as the “enormous multi-layered, multi-sited, multi-cultural, multi-centered global complex we are studying, scholarly conversations describing and analyzing this complex should be messy, interdisciplinary, dynamic, passionate, and constantly open to rethinking.” (p.165).

In sum, global studies is an academic field for the current world. That is, global studies is a field to understand the world we live in today, and beyond that, also to understand the ‘past world’ that societies lived in, and the future world societies will live in the years, decades, and centuries to come, considering that they are also connected to the global society we live in today. Global studies was born out of the need to understand the hyper-connected world resulting from processes of globalization, as some scholars felt that an interpretation of this new world could not be provided by the existing disciplines.

It is a consensus among GS scholars that the field evolved from globalization studies but that it goes beyond it. Studies of globalization are usually more interested on the process of globalization or on different dimensions of it. On the other hand, global studies is not about the globalization process or the consequences of globalization over this or that sphere of life. It is about a global perspective on global and local issues, and a wide understanding of phenomena, with a holistic and transgressive approach (Darian-Smith & McCarty, 2017).

Existing disciplines could not provide such a global analysis because their analysis was focused on their own subject. For instance, sociology focused on the social dimensions of globalization, while history was more interested in the history of globalization. Multidisciplinary analysis existed before GS, for instance, sociology and economy could come together to investigate how society responds to economic shocks in different nation-states. Yet, global studies aspire to go beyond multidisciplinary and take a step further into interdisciplinarity in order to provide understandings that encompass all factors influencing an issue. In a connected world, issues and processes are often dictated not only by local factors and variables directly connected to it but also by global flows, trends, and indirect variables connecting the local to a varied network that spreads out of local borders. To comprehend such a network, one must have a global perspective and an interdisciplinary approach.

In the same way, in addition to an interdisciplinary approach, global studies ought to be transnational to fully grasp this broad network. This is not to say that global studies does not have space for the local. Instead, at the same time that the global constitutes the local, the local also constitutes the global (Darian-Smith & McCarty, 2017). In this way, both have relevance for global studies. For instance, Gunnlaugsson et al. (2019) investigate Iceland's preparedness for Ebola having in mind that in a connected world, health challenges that afflict one place, might reach others. Though the focus of the article is Iceland, the situation is approached from a global perspective.

On top of these two distinguishing characteristics - interdisciplinary and transnational - global studies understands that in order to comprehend global flows, processes, phenomena, and trends, it is necessary to do it critically, aware of the inequalities in power, wealth, resources, opportunities, and how these inequalities affect and determine those global flows, processes, phenomena, and trends. As a result, many GS scholars recognize the need for GS to embrace critical theories, such as post-colonial thinking (Darian-Smith & McCarty, 2017), since it allows researchers to theoretically integrate those inequalities in global studies. Post-

colonialism is useful in this situation since the colonial system increased and formalized many of these inequalities, expanding them to a global level (Quijano, 2005).

The critical take of global studies exists also with the purpose of being truly global. Global studies research aims to incorporate knowledge from different geographical, socioeconomic, and ethnic locations, not only from one or another place or through the point of view of a limited number of groups, but instead from sources as varied as the networks, flows, and locations that constitute the world. In practicing this critical view, global studies avoid parochial views on global issues and gain the necessary tools and knowledge to perform a global analysis. For this reason, issues on global knowledge production are of great importance for GS. It is not possible to be global and have a worldwide perspective if knowledge is produced only in a handful of places or if just a small portion of the knowledge produced in the world gets spread around the globe. Witt (2020) presents this well, pointing out the difficulties of achieving global knowledge and performing global analysis with existing barriers in the academic publishing sector. Obstacles appear, for instance, as bias from peer-reviewed publishing, with discrepant paper's acceptance rates, and monetary hurdles, since many universities around the world do not have access to funding and donations the same way as world-lead universities do and therefore cannot afford access to all the most comprehensive databases, providing students with less access to academic literature. Without access to multiple knowledge there is no global understanding.

While defining global studies, there are usually a few characteristics that authors highlight as the main ones, those that differentiate GS from other disciplines or that are unique to GS. In general, they are the ones mentioned in the last few paragraphs: transnational, interdisciplinary, and critical. Yet, in each definition, there are nuances, accretion or changes. In the article *What is Global Studies?*, Juergensmeyer (2013) gives six main characteristics to GS: transnational; interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and problem-oriented; contemporary and historical; critical and multicultural; and globally responsible. The above is an updated definition

from his entry in the *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (Juergensmeyer, 2012), where he lists transnational; interdisciplinary; contemporary and historical; postcolonial and critical; and global citizenship. In *Introduction to Global Studies*, McCormick (2018) lists: transnational; integral; inclusive; and interdisciplinary, while in the *Oxford Handbook of Global Studies*, Steger (2018) establishes four pillars of global studies: globalization, transdisciplinarity, space and time, and critical thinking. The definitions are slightly different from each other and indicate how global studies is a fluid and self-critical field (Steger & Wahrab, 2017), constantly review itself. The common take on GS is that though definitions may vary it is an area of study that comes to surpass the limits of existing areas allowing understanding of the complex world and networks we live in today.

As a field that cover subjects also studied in other disciplines, GS faced some criticisms and challenges to gain space in academia. Challenges ranged from scholars from other areas questioning GS contributions to difficulties in launching GS programs due to universities' financing (Campbell et al., 2004). There were also questions about GS being an actual field of study. Wank (2008a, 2008b) present an overview of this critique. His article does not give a straightforward answer to whether GS is a field or not but incites reflection asking whether GS has particular methodologies or if it revolves around a 'master concept' like disciplines such as sociology, or even what is the difference its curriculum offers. More than 10 years later, it is possible to say that global studies has gained much more space within academia and is now more institutionalized than it was in 2008 - though still keeping its role as a space of tension within the academic field (Steger & Mahrab, 2017).

The first graduate program in GS was inaugurated in 1997. By 2010 programs - mostly master's degrees - numbered more than 60, an impressive increase in 13 years. Currently, programs spread to different places in the world (Juergensmeyer, 2012). Research centers, academic associations, journals, and the like, also flourished since the early days of global

studies and nowadays the field has a wide variety of resources¹. Some GS programs were created from scratch, designed as a global studies program from the beginning. Some were drawn from existing programs in areas such as development or international studies, or international relations and remodeled into global studies. Others, appeared by changing the name of existing programs and not much else. Much of the surge of GS programs resulted from global studies starting to be an attractive name, drawing attention from the public, which stimulated universities to have programs named Global Studies (Steger & Mahlrab, 2017). Consequently, the structure of global studies programs is often related to how the program was first organized. Programs arising from existing programs tend to keep the focus of those past programs, while programs that emerged already as global studies programs, tend to stand closer to what scholars define as its core conceptual frame. Nederveen Pieterse (2013) makes this point and shows the different focuses programs have in a list of universities.

It is worth mentioning moreover, that programs considered to be, by the academics of the field, pertaining to global studies, do not always carry this name. Some of them are, for instance, the International Development Studies program, at Philipps University (Germany), International Development, University of Birmingham (UK), Globalisation and International Development, University of Ottawa (Canada), Global Affairs, University of Toronto (Canada) (Bader, Deutsch, & Schuster, 2014). This also happens with journals dedicated to global studies, which can have other names while still dealing with global studies. While one cannot expect that such a fluid and broad field would be uniform, the variety of names can cause some confusion and misunderstandings.

Literature discussing the field of global studies amounts to a rather vast bibliography. However, the same cannot be said about literature on global studies programs. Texts on definition and history of global studies often bring data on existing programs and some

¹ List of such resources can be found in Steger & Wahlrab (2016), Juergesmeyer (2012), and Darian-Smith & McCarty (2017).

information about them (Juergesmeyer, 2012; Nederveen Pieterse, 2013). Grinin et al. (2014), for example, present an extensive list of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs from different universities, including available courses, with a description of each program. Nevertheless, it is hard to find works that explore and analyze global studies programs.

Although existing, there are considerably fewer papers on university programs than on global studies as a field. There are a few articles on undergraduate programs (Campbell et al., 2004; Shrivastava, 2008; Stevens & Campbell, 2006), talking about, for instance, programs development and practices of global studies. On the master's level, the academic community from the University of Graz, Austria, seems to have taken it upon themselves to enhance the available literature on programs' analysis. The master's program in Global Studies from that university is commented in a handful of texts that examine programs' curricula and offer suggestions on how to improve and guarantee quality in GS programs (See Ahamer (2014); Ahamer et al. (2011); Bader, Deutsch, & Schuster (2014); Bader et al. (2013); Bader & Köttstorfer (2013); Mukerji & Tripathi (2013) for details).

Besides analysis on Graz's program, there is also Rehbein's (2021) work where he offers an analysis of the joint master's program administered by a consortium consisting of eight universities - University of Freiburg (Germany), University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) FLACSO Argentina (Buenos Aires), Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok), University of Cape Town (South Africa), Humboldt University (Berlin) and University of Pretoria (South Africa). Rehbein goes over different aspects of the program, including its history and evolution, its flaws and how they were surpassed. He also reviews the structure and necessary reforms, students' demography, and thesis subjects from past years. This is maybe the most comprehensive work on global studies university programs.

The works mentioned above comprise almost all works available on the subject. It is possible that universities, faculties, and departments are reviewing and analyzing their own programs as well as comparing them with other programs - either from the university itself or to

GS programs from other locations, since all educational institutions have their own means of holding programs accountable. However, there are still small efforts going towards a wider evaluation of these programs, a comparison between them, or an understanding of the field from a broader perspective.

Research Justification and Research Questions

This thesis's intention is to investigate how master's degree programs in Global Studies are developing. To delve into this, I ask if there is a pattern among such programs within Northern Europe and what this possible pattern looks like. This type of research is important so that there is an understanding of what is happening inside degree programs, as well as some sort of accountability for what programs are delivering. There are hundreds of master's degree programs in the most varied fields, with different purposes, inserted in different local contexts, and with them, many expectations are set. There are the faculty's aims, the goals of each course, the program's objectives. Adding to that, the academia is always evolving through time and new findings. In this scenario, degree programs have the hard task of designing and delivering all this to students, educating them in the field they chose while meeting requirements from the university, board, investor, government, community, and the like.

Amidst all this, there are many factors to keep track of. Boards and investors usually have established ways of keeping track of universities and faculties, which have their own accountability systems with degree programs and professors. However, little seems to have been done towards following how different degree programs in the field are developing amid all expectations, goals, evolutions, and requirements. Hence, the present theses dive into this topic. How are global studies programs developing, are they advancing in the same direction, are programs reflecting the discussions unwinding in their fields?

There are many questions to be asked regarding the topic. The question the present study focuses on is *'Is there a pattern in what Global Studies master's degree programs are offering in their programs? What does this possible pattern look like?'*. By asking these questions, I can start

to understand what these programs are delivering to students, if theory and practice are intertwined in programs in global studies, and hopefully offer degree programs a chance to reflect and analyze their academic program.

Research diving into degree programs exists in other areas, for instance in education (Nelson, 1998), psychology (Hays-Thomas, 2000), and fashion (Schramme & King, 2019), but there is little research looking specifically into courses from the academic program and what they offer. In the field of global studies, both types of research are scarce. Literature examining programs is not common and no article was found analyzing particular courses or other similar features of global studies programs. The available literature on global studies programs, with exception of maybe Rehbein (2021) and the works from the University of Graz mentioned above, usually cover the evolution and institutionalization of the field, with data and small debates on existing programs. For instance, Juergensmeyer (2012, 2018) goes over the different types of existing programs in global studies. However, the field still lacks a systematic understanding of what is going on within the degree programs.

The incentives to look into Global Studies degree programs are mainly three. First of all, these are relatively new degree programs. The oldest master's program in the field, in Hitoshibashi University (Japan) is not 30 years old so the academic programs are not canonized as with old disciplines such as politics or sociology. The degree programs are still evolving, and it would be profitable to examine at this stage how they are progressing.

Second, within the field of Global Studies, there is much debate about the field itself. Scholars dedicated to GS argue about the scope of the field, how it is relevant, how it differs from similar areas of study, how to achieve truly global research and a myriad of other topics. Yet, as stated above, the literature on Global Studies is yet to pay attention to what is going on within the degree programs and to how they are educating future GS scholars. Therefore, it is hard to tell if all these debates are reaching and being incorporated into academic programs and how the programs are practicing global studies.

Third, many of those who have tried defining Global Studies, its scope and theoretical framework say that one of the most important characteristics of GS is that the field embraces critical theories, engages different kinds and sources of knowledge, looks into the world from all geographical contexts, and brings all these together to build a field that is truly global in its core instead of looking into the global from one or other standing point. In summary, GS is a field that has the proclaimed aim to break barriers with existing limitations in knowledge production and global analysis (Darian-Smith & McCarty, 2017). With that said, it is clear that GS is an ambitious field of study. It is essential, thus, to investigate the practice of the field and see how this is unfolding in the everyday life of its practitioners.

These - new field, self-critical, and social critical - are the main reasons I chose to investigate Global Studies and ask *'Is there a pattern in what Global Studies master's degree programs are offering in their programs? What does this possible pattern look like?'* For this reason, I selected introductory courses to Global Studies in master's degree programs from different universities. Based on the reading list of these introductory courses I ask three more specific questions that will answer the main research question: *'Do authors and readings appear in different reading lists? Which areas of study do the readings cover, are they similar? And last, which themes do the readings deal with, are they similar?'*

I chose to work with introductory courses because they offer the necessary foundation for the rest of the degree and should include what is judged to be essential for Global Studies. Throughout this research, I will use the theoretical framework offered by World Society Theory. Since WST is a theory that began in educational research, which argues about similarities and differences between different places around the world, viewing actors and realities as a social construct, it seemed the most reasonable choice to use its concepts. These choices are further explained in the next chapter.

Nonetheless, every research is bound to face some limitations. One of the limitations of this thesis is its own geographical focus. Choosing to narrow down to degree programs in

Northern Europe means that the results found here are not as broad as they could be if, for instance, it could have included programs from a more varied set of universities. However, due to the limitations of scope and resources, choosing to narrow the research down was necessary. It is better to narrow it down and be able to analyze the list as thoroughly as possible than to include more universities and look into the lists superficially. In addition, as I am using only introductory courses for my dataset, it is possible that I will lose important content from other courses that might bring concepts not included in the introductory courses. Introductory courses were the best options in this case because they should provide a foundation for what will come throughout the program. Moreover, there are also inherent limitations when carrying out content analysis. Here the biggest risk comes from having only one researcher coding the data. Having more people doing this could better ensure that the codes would be less influenced by researchers' biases.

Research Design

Data and Methods

The goal of this thesis is to find out whether master's degree programs in Global Studies are similar to each other and explore these possible similarities. To accomplish this task, I chose to analyze the introductory course of Global Studies MDPs in search of similarities, differences, and main characteristics. I will carry out this study with a qualitative methodology relying on sociological institutionalism as the theoretical scope. In this chapter, I lay out the research design of this thesis, explain research choices, and clarify possible limitations of the research.

I chose to work with introductory courses for three main reasons. First, the introductory course to the MDP is commonly a broad course that encompasses the fundamental material for the rest of the degree. It is expected that this course introduces the students to the main concepts, ideas, and perspectives used and developed throughout the degree. Second, as the field itself, the degree programs are very broad, and academic programs can vary from one university to the other. Often the degrees are structured in a way in which students have a lot of

freedom to choose the courses they take during their degree, so the program's curricula vary according to students' choices. Choosing the introductory course is a way of selecting and comparing where they are most fit for comparison, avoiding changes in degree structure that can skew the results. Third, studying more courses from each university would take resources that unfortunately are not within the scope of a master's thesis.

The data collection started with an online search for MAs in Global Studies on public online platforms using the search words '*Global Studies*' and '*Master's degree Global Studies*'. From the initial result, I excluded the degrees which were not Global Studies degrees or that had a specific concentration, such as Global Development Studies or Global Gender Studies. Programs that did not have an introductory course in the academic program were excluded from the list as well. This way the selected programs had a common ground allowing the programs to be studied together. This process resulted in a list of 16 universities.

Each one of these 16 universities was contacted via e-mail, informed about the research, and asked for their introductory course reading list. Four of them responded with information suitable for this research. The four universities were Humboldt University - Germany, the University of Iceland, Roskilde University - Denmark, and the University of Gothenburg - Sweden. After this, the reading items of each list were retrieved from academic databases.²

The initial purpose of this paper was to encompass a broad range of institutions. However, the suitable answers all came from universities located in Northern Europe, resulting in the current regional focus of the study. Given that, I acknowledge that the study and its results do not represent the entirety of the programs in Global Studies, but rather a small picture of how they are within Northern Europe.

² The reading list for each of the four universities can be found in the appendix.

The dataset of this thesis contains 169 reading items coming from the four universities mentioned above. Each of them contributes to the dataset in the following way: Humboldt University's reading list has 11 items, the reading list from the University of Iceland has 46, from Roskilde University, 60, and from the University of Gothenburg, 52. The original reading lists contained fewer items. However, I decided to split those readings of more than one chapter of the same book. I decided to do so because each chapter could also be an independent reading item and could appear in a different reading list as such. Though the number of items from Humboldt University differs significantly from the others, I still considered relevant to include it in the dataset. The research has an already narrow focus, taking out a useful reading list would only narrow it down even more. In this case, it was better to maintain Humboldt's reading list in the data set.

The data used here though naturally occurring is not available to the wider public. That is, it is not possible to find the lists on, for instance, the universities' websites. It was necessary to contact them individually and ask for it. I made sure to state clearly the reasons to ask for this information and how it would be used, so that the parties involved were aware of the motivations and use of the reading lists. None of the respondents declared being against the use of their material. Since the research does not involve human participants, special attention to anonymity, data protection, and similar concerns on research ethics when dealing with human participants, private or delicate information, were not necessary. I am also not personally involved with any of the universities and degree programs studied here.

To analyze the data and retrieve from it the necessary information to answer the research questions posed here, I employed mixed methods research. Mixed methods has been seen in works since the early 20th century but it was more substantially conceptualized in the latter half of that century (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). Mixed methods combine both qualitative and quantitative research to take a step forward toward answering complex research

questions and looking into complex realities. The idea is to take advantage of these two research paradigms and combine what they have to offer (Molina-Arizon, 2016).

Different authors have argued the advantages of using mixed methods. Using different methods can provide space for clarification and corroboration of results, can provide the possibility to cross results from different methods, can deepen the understanding of results coming from one method using a different one, can increase reliability and truthfulness of results, and much more. In addition to that, mixed methods has been applied in sociology for a considerable time and bears familiarity within the field (Johnson et al., 2007). In view of the advantages of using different methods, I use two methods to analyze my data. In different moments I employ qualitative content analysis and frequency analysis. Albeit the data collection was only one, the data analysis used different methods and their results were integrated.

Content analysis is a widely used and broad method of analysis, used for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this research, I first use a qualitative approach to content analysis. Within content analysis, various types of analysis and data can be used, despite that, the consensus around this method is that it allows researchers to distribute and classify texts into related smaller categories that provide understanding of the analyzed material (Forman & Damschroder, 2007). With this, it is possible to understand large amounts of texts and break it into categories the researcher can work with and draw conclusions from.

To look into the fields of study present in the reading lists, I conducted a deductive content analysis, meaning that the categories in which I distribute the data - the areas of study - already exist and are pre-defined independently from the research. To look into the themes the texts work with, I conducted an inductive content analysis. That is, the codes were data-driven, and categories were designed based on the content I analyzed. As I looked for which themes were brought up and the intention was not to prove a specific hypothesis, the codes could not be informed by existing theories or empirical works (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Forman & Damschroder, 2008).

In addition to carrying out a content analysis based on categorizing the texts according to their content, I conducted a second type of content analysis with a more quantitative approach, based on word frequency analysis. This form of analysis consists in gathering the highest-frequency words and using them to understand the data or the text, assuming these words reflect the content of the text. However, word frequency analysis requires attention when used to draw conclusions about the data. First, words may be used with different meanings and synonyms might interfere with the counting (Stemler, 2001). Moreover, word counting does not reveal the connections between the high-frequency words, which can be important to an accurate analysis of the content of a text (Weber, 1990). For this reason, I chose to use frequency analysis to complement the main content analysis derived from the contents of the texts. This way, one could supplement or contrast the other's result and the limitations of both could be minimized.

To start the qualitative content analysis, the first step was to get familiar with the data. Since the dataset comprises of a considerable number of texts, it was not possible to read all of them entirely. To get the most from each text with the available resources, I chose to read selected parts of each reading item. The selected parts were title, subtitle, summary/abstract, headings and subheadings, and keywords. When summary/abstract was not available, for instance when the item was a book chapter, I read the first few paragraphs and looked for the paragraphs that contained a summary or aim of the chapter. Together, these parts gave satisfactory information.

On the first round of reading each of the 169 reading items, I took note of the parts mentioned above as well as key information regarding the text's publication - year, journal, publishing journal, and the main points of the text. After having familiarized myself with the readings, I coded each item according to what my research questions needed. Each item was coded in three levels. First, they were coded into areas of study, then by general theme,

followed by a narrower note on specific topic within that theme. In this phase, each text was consulted two or three times,

Some items were coded into more than one area of study. For instance, some readings referred to Geography as well as Sociology, or Gender Studies as well as International Relations. Thus, there are 169 reading items and 233 codings regarding area of study. After having all items coded, it was necessary to process these codes once more. At this stage, I combined similar areas of study and rearranged the codes, so that texts would be coded into suitable categories. For example, Geography, Geology, Transnational Geography, and Geopolitics merged into the code of Geography, while Economy, Political Economy, Global Economy, and Economic History merged into the code of Economy.

In a similar way to what was done with readings that were formed by two chapters of the same book, when readings items had more than one author, I counted each author of the text independently. In this way, I created a list with all authors who appeared in the reading lists. With this list, I could search for repeating authors.

In addition to the set of codes mentioned above, the data was also coded according to their geographic specificity. For this, I coded as Geographically Specific Text (GST) texts that dealt particularly with, for instance, a country, a city, a continent, and issues particular to that place, or texts that use a location for the purpose of a study case, when this was not a mere mention used as an example, but a consistent study case important for the text. With a list of all authors and reading items, with all texts coded according to their respective areas of study, theme, and geographical specificity, and with codes treated into suitable categories, I could get the information I needed to answer the research questions

In addition, to complement the data analysis, I created a list of the most used words in the texts based on the readings of the four universities. The aim of such a list was to gain a more in-depth perspective on the reading items. It also helps to compensate for the fact that the reading items were not read entirely but just the selected parts mentioned above. The list was

created with the help of ATLAS.ti, a data analysis software. A small number of the texts (eight) could not be scanned by the software since I could not find a digitalized version compatible with the software. Notwithstanding, ATLAS.ti was the best option for the task and the missing texts did not represent a risk for the outcome of the word list. From the University of Humboldt, there were three texts missing,³ from the University of Iceland⁴ and from Roskilde University,⁵ two each, and one from the University of Gothenburg⁶.

The list includes the 50 most used words in the texts from the four universities. Words such as many, us, even, thus, press, among, and the like were excluded from the count because they did not contribute to the aim of the word list.⁷ Although the list itself provides only a small picture of the content of the texts, including it in the research could only improve the understanding of the analyzed texts.

Theoretical Framework

World Society Theory

The World Society Theory (WST) is a sociological institutionalist theory that understands the world as constituting a society - therefore the name of world society theory. The basic

³ McLennan, G. (2006) *The Enlightenment Project Revisited*, in: Stuart Hall et al. (eds.), *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 635-663.; Ferguson, J. (2002) "The Anti-Politics Machine", in: Joan Vincent (ed.), *The Anthropology of Politics. A Reader in Ethnography, Theory and Critique*; and Van Schendel, W. (2005) *Geographies of Knowing, Geographies Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia*, in: Kratoska, Raben, Schulte, *Locating Southeast Asia* (KITLV Press, Leiden: 2005), pp. 275-307.

⁴ From the University of Iceland: Appadurai, Arjun. 2008. *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*. In Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Globalization*, Second Edition (pp. 47 –66). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.; and Huyssen, Andreas. 2001. *Present pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia*. In Appadurai A. (Eds.), *Globalization*. Duke University Press.

⁵ From Roskilde University: A. Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy", in *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1990, 7. <http://journals.sagepub.com.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/doi/abs/10.1177/026327690007002017>; and Tsing, Anna. 2000. "The Global Situation". *Cultural Anthropology* 15 (3). <https://rex.kb.dk/primor>

⁶ Hannerz, U. (1987). 'The World in Creolization', *Africa* 57(4): 546-559.

⁷ The complete list of excluded words is: many, us, even, however, see, well, within, much, example, two, often, thus, since, like, based, pp, un, way, al, https, et, time, press, use, terms, part, first, important, years, among, now, long, need, made, large, less, become and across.

assumption of WST is the social construction of reality and actors and that these actors derive from their environment. Differently from other theories prevalent in the social sciences that focus on individually interested actors or power disparities to examine and explain reality, in WST, actors are 'creatures of their context' (Schofer et al., 2012). On the other hand, as with other social sciences theories, the world society is still an anarchical structure with no government-like institution ruling or organizing it.

World Society Theory started developing in the 1970s and 1980s in research in comparative education with scholars noticing the pronounced similarity among educational system in different places in the world, places that would functionally require different skills, training, and knowledge (Ramirez, 2012). Despite diverse needs, it was noted that students around the world were learning similar things and that educational systems were organized in similar ways. As such practice was not forced upon states, WST scholars were prone to think that other factors influenced states to apply similar practices. These factors are said, then, to be the frames and models existing in world society. What WST proposes is that these frames and models do not exist only within the educational realm but in all other spheres of global life, influencing actors to act according to pre-defined widely accepted behaviors.

World society is a shared collective of understandings where actors share values and perspectives that are universalized among them. From these shared understandings arise the models and blueprints that influence actors towards those pre-defined behaviors. Following these blueprints grants actors legitimacy, since they hold authority granted to them by society at large and by the common understandings shared between members of society. This authority is a major force for actors to comply with world models. Since there is no ruling actor in society, models do not spread through coercion but due to their authority - be that authority based on status or expertise (Schofer et al., 2012). Because of these characteristics, WST is often used as a theory to look into worldwide similarities, more so when these similarities can not be explained by power, coercion, or force.

It is in the importance given to authority and expertise that science and knowledge gain significance in world society. Authority is granted upon scripts and blueprints predominantly by professional and specialized knowledge, through epistemic communities, meaning professionals and epistemic communities play a big part in creating, spreading, and supporting scripts (Drori & Krücken, 2009; Meyer, 2009). The importance of science and knowledge to world society increases considering that the widespread model of reality, accepted and enacted throughout the world, is the model of modernity and in modernity, science and knowledge are two of the biggest sources of authority there are. In other words, modernity is the *modus operandi* of world society, and in this system, science and knowledge have the capacity to bestow importance and authority. In the current global society, science and knowledge play the role religion and tradition played before.

In sociological institutionalism, institutions are crucial carriers of world culture and models of reality, playing a key role in WST. Institutions have a double role in the world society. They are, at the same time, enactments of widely accepted models and the place where models to be enacted by society at large originate. Through institutions, scripts and blueprints arise, spread, and are operationalized. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) promotes the spread of scripts related to health issues by making recommendations to its members, publishing papers, or financing research, which also helps to operationalize scripts, together with the financing of health programs around the world. At the same time, for example, it incorporates gender issues in its discourses because the global society now demands some level of gender awareness from its actors. Another example is the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which translates the neoliberal script existing in the global society into economic recommendations and projects, spreading and operationalizing the neoliberal economic script. This happens with non-governmental organizations as well such as the World Organization of the Scout Movement, which makes scout movements all over the other a bit more similar through regulations, recommendations, global conferences, and the like, giving rise to and

spreading similar behaviors between scouts of the whole world. These and other institutions represent the institutionalized culture currently on trend in the world and help to set scripts of behaviors among actors. All in all, science, knowledge, and institutions are the engines of world society.

Though blueprints have indeed a major influence upon actors, this influence does not result in actors enacting blueprints all in the same way, or even intentionally putting them into practice at all. The concept of loose coupling explain this process. Models exist in the wider environment independent from particular actors actively complying with them. They also exert influence in the collective society partially independent from specific actors. Moreover, scripts and blueprints have an instance of ritualization and formality, working on an abstract level. The result of this independent existence and ritualization is that model/theory does not translate into uniform enactment/practice, meaning practice is decoupled from theory (Schofer et al., 2012).

According to WST, changes in actors' behaviors can happen even when actors do not formally comply with models. As if by just existing in society, models could influence outcomes. So global similarities can appear even if some actors do not formally commit to scripts. At the same time, in consequence of models having an instance of ritualization and formality, it is possible that actors formally comply with scripts without changing practices. This happens, for instance, when actors public declare compliance with certain script but the compliance is limited to the discourse only. This happen rather often in the global society, where expressing accordance with collective behaviors and rationalities is important to actors image and authority. It is also the case that actors take from wider models and scripts ideas of how they are supposed to act in society. The issue is that actors are in contact with multiple models at once and their practice is a result of all this influences. In consequence, the resulting practice is decoupled from many of these models (Meyer, 2010; Schofer et al., 2012). Hasse and Krücken (2014) illustrate the process of coupling and decoupling in education. They show how schools and universities receive influence from the wider environment and how the result is different in

each of these institutions. It is noted that universities, which are more connected with the world society, present more similarities around the world, while schools, which relates more to local structures, present more differences.

The enactment of models and blueprints depends on other factors as well. For instance, they are bound to local specificities, how well the script fits into the local structure, and actors' abilities to put it into practice. States, NGOs, social movements, and other actors have different capacities to implement models and different local realities. As a result, each of them reads models according to their own realities and enact models as they see fit or as they can. Apart from that, involvement with international organizations also affects actors' enactment. The more involved with such institutions, the more actors are embedded into the world society. When apart from these collective bodies, actors are less influenced by them. For instance, countries that are not members of international organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the International Labor Organization, the International Organization for Standardization, and the like, are less likely to be influenced by them and less compelled to act in a certain way (Meyer et al., 1997).

World Society Theory and Higher Education

As a theory that began in educational research and within which science and knowledge are of greater consequence, much has been said about higher education through WST lenses. Under the light of World Society Theory, higher education (HE) is seen as an institution. This means HE is considered to be an enactment of wider models deriving from their environment. (Meyer & Powell, 2020; Meyer et al., 2005) The same is valid to higher education institutions (HEI), which are also enacting models they receive from the global environment.

In accordance with the ideas from WST, education and HEI present striking similarities all around the world in how they portray themselves, in their structure, in their content, and so on. All around, universities and HEI are recognized under the same definitions and categories,

despite their distinct local contexts and different national educational policies. With the expansion of higher education throughout the world in the last century, the university is a central institution in all places of the world (Ramirez, 2006; Frank & Meyer, 2020).

These places (HEI) take a particularly prominent place in the WST. As it was said beforehand, science and knowledge are central to the continuity of world culture, its maintenance and progress. They fulfill a double role of granting authority and justifying models, and propagating them around the world (Schofer et al., 2012). HEIs are the home to scientists and knowledge production, which are used by actors to create scripts and blueprints and justify their execution. Simultaneously, HEIs are a crucial place to spread world culture rationalities and ensure its continuousness. In these institutions, students and researchers are embedded in world culture, and can internalize it. Shared rationalities such as progress and science are praised and are central to world culture.

Universities gather even more importance in the knowledge and information-based society we live in today where science and knowledge are tangled with the production of value and capital and with basic activities carried out by all in everyday life (Frank & Meyer, 2020; Rubio & Baert, 2011). The centrality of it appears, for instance, in how well-educated people are seen, how products are advertised as being the result of research and development processes, how policies are justified by international reports coming from lead scientists, or in the use of high-end technology in daily life.

Moreover, HEs are an actor and an institution of the world society and therefore an enactment of the wider environment (Meyer et al., 2005). The existence of universities, the trends set and followed by them, their structure, are all connected to existing world models of HEI and universities. In the case of higher education, the universities have already well established models resulting from hundreds of years of universities being the central place and enactment of education. As a long existing and established model, the university has its blueprints well spread around the world and it is today a highly connected field. Though local

conditions vary, universities have strikingly similar structures all around the world, as foreseen by WST (Frank et al., 2011; Meyer et al., 2005; Riddle, 1990).

Not only that, but every field of university education also has its international associations, specific journals, regional and global conferences, and other mechanisms that increase communication and exchange among HEIs. This sets the necessary conditions for, institutionally, HEs around the world to keep increasing or at least maintaining high levels of similarities, and individually, the rationality and models of world society to reach and influence an ever-increasing number of people. On this, Meyer et al. (2005) make the point of university existing more to “link the role structure of society to universalized cultural knowledge than to efficiently prepare graduates to fill these roles”. (p. 29) That is, these HEIs exist more to maintain structure and repeat this rationality of knowledge and science than to prepare students for future activities.

The influence of world society in education can be seen, for instance, in Frank et al., (2011), who argue that environmental education is increasing in universities in consequence of bigger importance given to the relationship between humans and nature in global institutions. Similarly, Suarez and Bromley (2012), shows that the more embedded the nation-state is in the human rights' global regime, the bigger the probability of implementing human rights university programs is. The influence of international and transnational organizations over national education can also be seen in Rautalin and Alasuutari (2007), Collins and Rhoads (2010), and Uvalić-Trumbić (2010). In Hazelkorn (2015, 2018), it is clear how international rankings and competition in the global educational field influence higher education. It is necessary to say, however, that WST also receives criticism in comparative education research. Silova and Brehm (2015) points out the limitation of WST to embrace questions of power. The theory, as said in the article, does not necessarily argue in favor of the establishment but in explaining how the educational system works, it does not include questions of power and power/knowledge, leaving space for practices of oppression and structural inequalities to persist. Similar critiques are also

voiced by Takayama (2015), and Silova and Rappleye (2015), who argues for WST to include more voices and geographies into its research on education. Still keeping these critiques in mind, the vitality and importance of universities in the world and their striking similarities are undeniable.

Findings

In this chapter, I explore and start analyzing the data set in order to answer the three questions posed in this thesis. The chapter is divided into three sections. In each section, I show the relevant data for each of the three questions respectively. In total, there were 169 reading items in the data set, distributed among the universities as follows: Humboldt University (11), University of Iceland (46), Roskilde University (60), and University of Gothenburg (52). In each section, I work with the relevant data from the sum of the reading lists of these four universities.

Authors and Readings

In this section, I will explore the existence or lack of repeated authors and reading items among the curricula of the four universities studied in this thesis.

Authors

The data set is constituted of 169 reading items. As some of the texts have more than one author, and sometimes a group of them, the number of authors present in the lists totals 266. Some of these authors appear in two or three universities; however, no author is present in the reading list of all four universities. Seven authors, out of the 266 total, appear in more than one university.

The ones present in three of the four lists are Eriksen and Nederveen Pieterse. Eriksen is read in Iceland, Roskilde and Gothenburg, while Nederveen Pieterse is read in Humboldt, Roskilde and Gothenburg. Agnew, Appadurai, Piketty, Standing, and Stiglitz, are the authors featured in two of the universities.

Table 1

Authors Appearing in More Than One Reading List

Authors	Gothenburg	Roskilde	Iceland	Humboldt
Agnew, J.	X	X		
Appadurai, A.		X	X	
Eriksen, T. H.	X	X	X	
Nederveen Pieterse, J.	X	X		X
Piketty, T.	X	X		
Standing, G.	X		X	
Stiglitz, J. E.	X	X		

Roskilde University and the University of Gothenburg have reading lists where more repeating authors appear. Six authors from each university are featured in the table above, and five out of these six authors are shared between the two universities (Agnew, Eriksen, Nederveen Pieterse, Piketty, and Stiglitz). They are also the universities that share the most authors between each other.

For the number of repeating authors, the University of Iceland comes second with three of its authors appearing also in other universities (Appadurai, Eriksen, and Standing). Humboldt has only one repeating author, Nederveen Pieterse, shared with Roskilde and Gothenburg. The small number of readings in the reading list of Humboldt University helps to understand the smaller number of similarities with the other universities.

While few authors appeared in more than one reading list, it was more frequent that an author appeared more than once in the same reading list.

Table 2

Repeating Authors Within Each Reading List

Humboldt	Iceland	Roskilde	Gothenburg
Krugmann, P. (2)	Coll-Seck, A. M. (2)	Eriksen, T. H. (2) ⁹	Latour, B.
	Eriksen, T. H. (6) ⁹	Polanyi, K. (2)	Marchand, M.
	Loftsdóttir, K. (4)	Thakur, R. (2)	Standing, G.
	Mercer, R. (2)	Thomassen, B.	Stiglitz, J. E. (2)
	Randers, J. (2)	Wood, E. M.	Tooze, A.
	Skaptadóttir, U. D. (2)		
	Stenberg, K. (2)		

Note: (n) the amount of texts from the specified author. ⁹ authors that appear in more than one reading list

While seven authors appear in more than one university, 17 of them have more than one text within the same university. As the table above shows, in the reading list from the University of Iceland there are seven authors appearing more than once. This also happens, in some proportion, in the other universities.

Eriksen is the only author that appears more than once within a reading list (Roskilde and Iceland) and also in the reading list of more than one university (Roskilde, Gothenburg, and Iceland). In addition to that, he is also the author who appears most often on a reading list. Six reading items in the reading list from Iceland are his. All these reading items are different chapters from his book *Overheating* (2016).

Readings

In a similar manner to the authors, the readings are also hardly repeated among universities. There are two reading items which can be found in more than one reading list. The

first is the article *Periodizing Globalization: Histories of Globalization*, by Nederveen Pieterse (2012), which occurs both in the reading list from Roskilde and from Gothenburg. Although the author can also be found in the curricula of Humboldt University, it is with another text instead.

The other text repeated in different reading lists is *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, by Appadurai (1990, 2008), which occurs in the reading list from Roskilde and from Iceland. This text appears in two different ways in the reading lists. In Iceland, it appears as a book chapter retrieved from *The Anthropology of Globalization*, edited by Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo (2008). In Roskilde, it appears as an article published in the journal *Theory, Culture & Society* (1990). The book chapter was published after the article, and it contains an extra section at the end on global cultural formations.

Nevertheless, despite some differences resulting from editing and updating, the two texts are still the same, and in consequence, it will be considered a repeated reading shared between Roskilde University and the University of Iceland.

Beyond these two texts, no other reading occurs in more than one of the reading lists. What happens more often than repeating authors or readings, is texting from similar disciplines or dealing with similar topics and issues. The next two sections explore the data by examining these criteria.

Areas of Study

This section examines which disciplines and areas of study could be identified in the reading lists. The coding process resulted in 233 codes. The total number of areas recognized in the texts was 18. Below, table 3 shows how many times each area of study was identified on the sum of the four reading lists, and Figure 1 compares the frequency with which each area appears on the texts and how each university contributes to these frequencies.

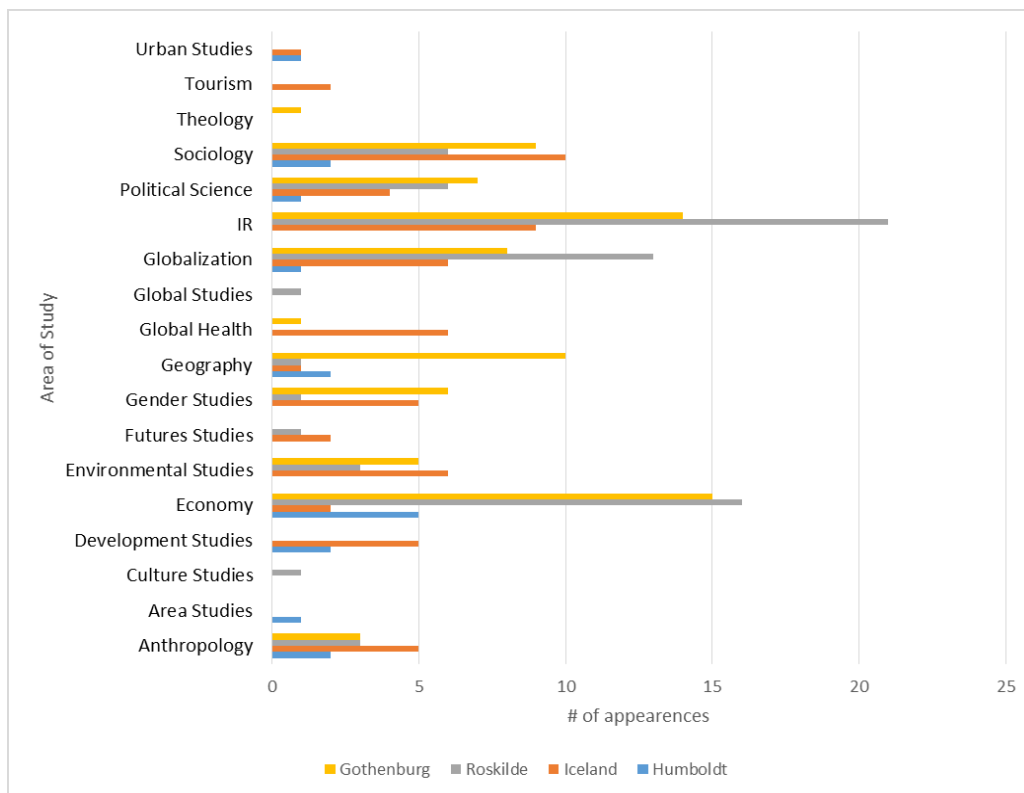
Table 3

Frequency of each area of study identified on the lists

Discipline	#	Discipline	#
IR	44	Global Health	7
Economy	38	Futures Studies	3
Globalization	28	Tourism	2
Sociology	27	Urban Studies	2
Political Science	18	Area Studies	1
Environmental Studies	14	Culture Studies	1
Anthropology	14	Global Studies	1
Geography	13	Theology	1
Gender Studies	12		
Development Studies	7	Total	233

Figure 1

Contribution of each university for each area of study



It is noticeable that IR and Economy are the two areas that are most present in the curricula overall. They appear, with some advantage, before Globalization, an area of study of most importance in Global Studies. Globalization is mentioned many times in the description of the degree programs of Global Studies, sometimes as the central topic which the program revolves around, or one of the main subjects and area of interest of the studies.

The prominence of the discipline of IR probably arises from the fact that IR and Global Studies are fields that overlap with one another in some ways. Both have a wide scope of studies and interest in inter/transnational issues, global actors, changes and transformations in the world, and more. Though their motif might be different.

The five most recurring disciplines amount to 66% of the texts, which stands for a third of the total occurrences. The other 13 disciplines split the remaining 34% of the texts, which means 80 of the 233 codes. The readings, then, are concentrated to a considerable extent in

the top five disciplines - in descending order: IR, Economy, Globalization, Sociology, and Political Science.

To say that the overall concentration happens in these five disciplines does not mean that each of the four universities have similar number of texts in each area of study. For instance, Humboldt does not add to the count of IR texts, but proportionally has more text in Economy than any other university, almost 30% of its texts deal with economic matters. On the other hand, Iceland differs from the others with only two economic texts out of 46 reading items, corresponding to 3% of its texts. For its part, in Roskilde, Globalization and IR comprise at least around 8% and 11% more texts than in the other universities.

Nonetheless, the different distribution of these disciplines within each reading list does not overshadow the fact that they are generally prevalent. In Humboldt and Iceland, three of them made it to the top five disciplines in the university. In Gothenburg, four of them are in the top five, and in Roskilde, those five disciplines are exactly the top five most recurring disciplines.

A number that stands out from Table 3 concerns texts regarding Global Studies in specific. Of the 169 reading items, only one concerned specifically the field of Global Studies. This is not to say that only this text referred to global topics. Texts from almost all the other areas talked about global issues or from a global perspective, for instance, texts related to global health, global flows, globalization, world order, production chain, and the environment. However, only Thomassen's (2019) review dealt purely with Global Studies. It was the only text to clearly state its belonging to the field of Global Studies in particular and to discuss the field itself.

After these five recurring disciplines, areas of study appear distributed in irregular ways. Anthropology is the one to appear more evenly distributed, with a similar number of texts in each of the four universities. Geography comes up in all the reading lists as well, but much more in Gothenburg than in the other. Environmental Studies do not come up in all universities, but where it does - Iceland, Roskilde, and Gothenburg - it is more evenly distributed than

Development Studies, which comes up five times in Iceland and two in Humboldt. Of the areas appearing less than the top five but more than three times, Global Health is the one that is more concentrated. The field arises almost entirely in Iceland - six of the seven texts from that field come from Iceland's list.

The areas of study mentioned so far are recurrent in the curricula, each in its own way and rate but they occur in a significant manner and amount to a considerable number in the general count of texts/disciplines. Other areas make more humble appearances in the reading lists. They are, for instance, the field of Futures Studies, represented in three texts, Tourism and Urban Studies, with two texts each, and Area Studies, Culture Studies, Global Studies, and Theology, which each appear only once in the reading lists studied here.

The variety of areas of study appearing in each university also changes from reading list to reading list. Among the four universities studied here, Humboldt has the smallest number of areas appearing in its reading list - its texts are from nine different areas of study. Nevertheless, this university is the only one that adds Area Studies to its reading list and one of the two that add Urban Studies. The University of Iceland is the one with the most varied reading list - regarding the number of disciplines. There are 14 different fields represented in its reading list. This number helps the university to have the most well distributed reading list, no discipline has more than 10 texts on the reading list.

Roskilde University and the University of Gothenburg have a similar number of disciplines represented in their curricula. Yet, Roskilde University has the most concentrated reading list in terms of variety of disciplines. The three most recurring disciplines, IR, Economy, and Globalization, correspond to more than two thirds of the disciplines on its reading list. The other nine disciplines that make an appearance in the list share the last third of the total amount of areas of study. This notwithstanding, the university still manages to add Culture and Global Studies to the list, areas that are represented only there, and Futures Studies, which appears only in Roskilde and Iceland.

In its turn, Gothenburg's reading list is not as concentrated as Roskilde's and it also manages to add disciplines that appear in only one or two reading lists - They are the only ones, besides Iceland, to add Global Health readings to the reading list, and Theology occurs only on their list. This means that each university has at least one discipline that only appears on its own reading list.

Themes

In this section, I delve into the areas of study identified in the previous section. In this section, it is explored what these areas are dealing with, the topics they bring and how they occur in the reading lists.

Economy

Economy readings are the most recurring in the reading lists and two themes come up regularly in these readings: economic regimes/systems and economic crisis. While other themes do not come up in so many readings, these two have many representatives in the reading lists. 14 of the 39 texts focus on economic regimes as the topic, while economic crisis comes up in six. The readings on economic regimes go from revisiting the origins of capitalism, as in Hung's *The Global, the Historical, and the Social in the Making of Capitalism* (2017), to the systemic insistence on technical fixes in economic crisis, as in *Hollowing out Keynesian norms: How the search for a technical fix undermined the Bretton Woods regime*, from Best (2004). While economic regimes appear in readings from three universities, economic crisis appears in two.

Another recurring theme is inequality, present in seven texts distributed in three of the four universities. Some texts refer to global inequality and migration, as in Milanovic's *Global inequality: a new approach for the age of globalization* (2016), others have a narrower focus, for instance in Piketty and Saez's *Inequality in the long run* (2014).

Not many other themes recurred in the economy readings, in part because the ones mentioned before amount already to a major part of the readings. Nonetheless, a theme worth

mentioning is gendered dimensions of economy. This is the theme of three texts and two of these shares not only the same theme but also the same specific topic: the issue of social reproduction and unpaid work in society. While themes often overlap, it was not common, in any of the area of study, to have specific topics overlapping as well. Other themes were economic history, sociology of economic thought, and transnational risks.

International Relations

The readings on IR had many overlapping themes but some of these were concentrated all in a single university. For instance, there were 21 texts dealing with a Realist thematic, that is, themes such as Sovereignty, Security, Peace and Conflict, State System, World Order, Power Balance, Terrorism, and Hegemony. However, 16 of these texts came from Roskilde's curricula. Similarly, at a first glance, foreign policy seemed a frequent theme, but a closer look revealed all these texts to come from Roskilde's curricula. Therefore, it is not the case that these themes are recurrent in the reading lists a whole, but rather in Roskilde's reading list in specific.

Other thematics appeared in a more distributed manner, migration for instance. The theme appears five times in Iceland, two in Gothenburg, and one in Roskilde. In Iceland, there was a tendency to approach migration more through the migrant's perspective, as in Skaptadóttir's (2015) *Women and men on the move: From the Philippines to Iceland* and Udwan et al.'s (2020) *Digital resilience tactics of Syrian refugees in the Netherlands: Social media for social support, health, and identity*, while in Gothenburg there was a more systemic perspective with Mountz and Loyd's (2014) *Managing migration, scaling sovereignty on islands*.

In addition, gender and human rights also appear as the theme of two text each. Human rights is the theme of two texts from the University of Gothenburg, and gender appears in that university, with gendered perspective of international politics, and in the University of Iceland, with discussion about the role of gender in national branding discourse. Moreover, the IR

readings account for the most part of the Geographic Specific Texts (GST)⁸ 31 of the 45 GSTs are from readings identified as belonging to the discipline of IR.

Sociology

The themes around which the Sociology texts revolve do not repeat as often as in the two disciplines from the two sections above. The environment and politics appear in two readings each, however, on both occasions, the two texts are from the same university. The few recurring themes are modernity, mobility, economy, and the construction of meaning and reality. The last one is the most frequent one, being the theme of five texts, from three different universities, by authors such as Gunder, McLennan, Huysen, Latour, and Foucault. Economic thematic comes up in three texts, more clearly in Hung's (2017) *The Global, the Historical, and the Social in the Making of Capitalism*, in Gothenburg, and Klein's (2000) *New Branded World*. One of the two texts that deals with modernity, *Introduction: Feminist Sightings of Global, old and new conceptualizations*, by Marchand and Runyan (2011), from Gothenburg, is also the only reading from Sociology that has a gendered thematic. Modernity also appears in texts by Foucault and Eisenstadt.

Political Science

The readings in Political Science can be grouped into three categories. Three of them as texts with overlapping thematic and one last category of texts with non-repeating themes, all with a similar number of texts. The three recurring themes are social movements, environment, and rights.

Although rights are a regular theme, the four texts referring to it are from the University of Gothenburg. The other two themes occur in more than one university, but no theme occurs in all universities. The environment is brought up in text such as Routledge et al.'s (2018) *States of just transition: Realising climate justice through and against the state*, and social movement is

⁸ This concept is explored in depth in section 5.4.

developed in Wright's (2010) *Symbiotic transformations*, and McAdam's (2017) *Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States*.

Globalization

The most frequent theme in Globalization is, by far, the theory of globalization. There are 11 texts on the theme, and they are fairly distributed among the universities - though not appearing in Humboldt. Other regular themes in Globalization are cultural and economic dimensions of globalization. Cultural dimensions of globalization are explored in texts from Humboldt, Roskilde, and Gothenburg. In Humboldt and Gothenburg, the texts dive into issues of what happens with culture in a globalized world, as in Nederveen Pieterse's (2009) *Globalization and Culture*, while in Roskilde, the texts work with identities in globalization, as in Kinnvall's (2004) *Globalization and religious nationalism: Self, identity, and the search for ontological security*.

Gender dimensions of globalization also comes up twice, however, the two texts are from Gothenburg. Other than the aforementioned themes, it also appears in globalization readings the themes such as migration, environment, and health, but none of them are brought up in more than one text.

Geography

The texts in Geography are fewer and there are not many themes in common. The only theme occurring in more than one university is mobility, brought up in the editorial *Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings*, by Hannam et al. (2006), in Gothenburg, with a focus on mobility, governance and policies, and in Loftsdóttir and Skaptadóttir's (2020) *Mobility and Transnational Iceland: Current Transformational and Global Entanglements* (2020), in Iceland, which looks into transnational mobility in relation to Iceland.

Apart from that, sovereignty and migration appear twice each but both times in texts from the University of Gothenburg. Beyond that, non-recurring themes include peace and conflict, climate justice, and new forms of territory.

Anthropology

In the Anthropology readings, the mixing and interconnectedness of the world is a regular theme, five of the 12 texts revolve around this thematic, and these five texts are divided into three universities. These texts cover topics such as global culture economy, with Appadurai's (1990) *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, and miscegenation, with Hannerz's (1987) *The World in Creolization*. Aside from that, no other theme occurs in more than one reading list. The rest of the texts bring themes such as economic crisis, sovereignty, and theory of modernity.

Other Areas of Study

The readings on Environmental Studies are 14 and five of these readings refer to environmental politics, the only theme occurring more than once. These five texts are divided into the three universities that have readings on Environmental Studies, but their topics vary significantly. It goes from economic responsibility for the environment issue to difficulties in applying environmental policies, passing through international social politics of energy. The diversity in topics extends to the other 11 texts as well, dealing with, for instance, fast fashion, migration, and the need for holistic studies.

Readings on Gender Studies are mostly concentrated in Gothenburg and Iceland. Still, the only reading from Roskilde on the field bears the same theme as one of the readings from Gothenburg, the issue of social reproduction and unpaid work. There are, beyond these, three readings that address the role gender stereotypes play in constructing material realities. Each of the texts addresses it in a different scenario, one in Mexican factories, the other in the tourism and hospitality sector, and the last in environmental activism. There are also three texts on gender aware global theory but all coming from the University of Gothenburg.

The remaining areas of study are Area Studies, Culture Studies, Development Studies, Futures Studies, Global Health, Global Studies, Theology, Tourism, and Urban Studies. All these areas appear less than time times in the reading lists altogether. Among them,

Development Studies and Global Health are the most recurring ones, with seven appearances each. However, in the case of Development Studies, although theory of development studies is the theme of three texts, these texts all come from the University of Iceland. In a similar manner, as nearly all readings in Global Health are from Iceland's reading list, themes do not occur in different universities.

Other disciplines - Area Studies, Culture Studies, Global Studies, Theology, and Tourism - were only identified in one reading list each, making it impossible to have repeating themes among universities. As for Futures and Urban Studies, which comes up in two universities, in each university, they appear a different theme was discussed.

Geographically Specific Texts (GST)

Some of the texts included in the reading lists deal with specific geographical locations. Paying attention to this is useful here. I consider geographically specific texts (GST), texts that deal particularly with, for instance, a country, a city, a continent, and issues particular to this place. For example, Bachour's (2015) *Disrupting the myth of maquila disposability: Sites of reproduction and resistance in Juárez*, Linke's (2019) *Language as Battleground: 'Speaking' the Nation: Lingual Citizenship and Diversity Management in Post-unification Germany*, Oliveira and Verhoeven's (2018) *Taming Interventions: Sovereignty, Statehood and Political Order in Africa*, and Keating and Kacmarska's (2019) *Conservative soft power: liberal soft power bias and the hidden attraction of Russia*.

In addition, texts that use a location for the purpose of a study case are also considered here, when it is not a mere mention used as an example, but a consistent study case important for the text. Beyond that, it is considered here as a GST, for instance, texts about Trump⁹,

⁹ Forlenza, R., & Thomassen, B. (2020). Decoding Donald Trump: The Triumph of Trickster Politics | Public Seminar, 1–8. Retrieved from <http://www.publicseminar.org/2016/04/decoding-donald-trump-the-triumph-of-trickster-politics/>

September 11¹⁰, and BRIC¹¹. For the two first, the USA is used as a proxy for their geographical location since they are closely related to that location. The BRIC on the other hand is used as a single location, similarly to the use of Third World in Rao's (2010) "Introduction" in *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* and Escobar's (1995) *Introduction: Development and the Anthropology of Modernity*.

There are in total 46 GSTs, and 27 different locations used in these texts - some texts use more than one location and the some locations are used in multiple texts. The use of locations is distributed among the universities in the following manner: Humboldt (3), Iceland (18), Roskilde (22), and Gothenburg (10). In absolute numbers, Roskilde makes more use of GST, but in proportion to the total number of texts in its reading list, Iceland makes a little more use of it.

The most frequently used location is the USA, used 10 times. From these 10 mentions, two correspond to text about Donald Trump, and one used the attacks of September 11 as a global time frame. Following the USA, comes China with six mentions, Iceland with five mentions, Russia and the European Union, with three mentions, and Africa, London, Third World, and the Philippines, with two mentions each. The other 18 locations are used one time each. While these locations are the most used, Europe is the continent from which most locations come. Including the EU, there are ten different locations within Europe used as specific locations in the texts analyzed here.

Both Europe and Asia sum 16 mentions in GSTs. Europe appears with nine different locations, Asia with eight. Following Europe and Asia, comes America, with three different locations mentioned that sum to 12 GSTs. This happens with America because the US alone is

¹⁰ Jackson, R. (2007). Sovereignty and its Presuppositions: Before 9/11 and After. *Political Studies*, 55(2), 297–317. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00668.x>

¹¹ Parizek, & Stephen, M. D. (2021). The long march through the institutions: Emerging powers and the staffing of international organizations. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 56(2), 204–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836720966017>.

used in 10 GSTs. The seven Asian locations (Southeast Asia, Philippines, China, Russia, India, Middle East, Beijing, and Israel) are better distributed than the American ones.

On the other hand, there are more African locations mentioned in GSTs than American ones, but the African locations (Africa, Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria) are not used repeatedly. In this way, though there are four African locations, there are only five GSTs referring to Africa. Of the continents which have their location used in GSTs, Africa is then the least used.

Table 4

Distribution and Occurrence of GSTs per continent

Europe		Asia		America		Africa		Global	
Iceland	5	China	6	US	10	Africa	2	Third World	2
EU	3	Russia	3	Mexico	1	Lesotho	1	Mediterranean	1
London	2	Philippines	2	New Orleans	1	Ghana	1	BRIC	1
Sweden	1	Southeast Asia	1			Nigeria	1		
Porto (PT)	1	Beijing	1						
Germany	1	Middle East	1						
Netherlands	1	India	1						
Finland	1	Israel	1						
Poland	1								

Central and South America, and Oceania were never used as a specific location in a GST. South America is only secondarily used if we consider Brazil as its representative in the BRIC in Parizek and Stephen's text¹². It should still be noted that the economic bloc is used in the text as a whole, not considering its participants separately. Other than the BRIC, there are two locations that are not tied to a specific geography, but an area or a geopolitical group. They are the Mediterranean and the Third World.

¹² Parizek, & Stephen, M. D. (2021). The long march through the institutions: Emerging powers and the staffing of international organizations. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 56(2), 204–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836720966017>.

Word count

Based on the reading lists of the four universities, I created a list of most often used words in the texts that make up my database. The list was created with the help of Atlas.ti, a data analysis software. A small number of the texts (8) could not be scanned by the software as it was not possible to find a digitalized version compatible with the software. Notwithstanding, Atlas.ti was the best option for the task and the missing text do not represent a risk for the outcome of the word list. From the University of Humboldt, there are three texts missing⁷, from the University of Iceland and from Roskilde University, two each⁸, and one from the University of Gothenburg⁹.

I have also comprised the 100 most used words on a word cloud where the usage of these words can be noticed in comparison to each other. The word cloud in Figure 2 makes it visible how some words stand out and gives the context of where the 50 words from Table 4 are inserted in.

Figure 2

Word Cloud - 100 most used words



The following list comprises the 50 most used words in the texts from the four universities - words such as many, us, even, thus, press, among, and the like, were excluded from the count because they did not contribute to the aim of the word list.

Table 5

Word Count – All Reading Items

word	#	word	#
global	8643	work	1663
state + states	7501	different	1636
world	7220	China	1634
social	5091	local	1613
new	4978	trade	1611
globalization	4804	politics	1600
international	4370	united	1587
countries + country	4043	women	1494
political	3836	war	1490
national + nation	3711	foreign	1488
economic	3519	income	1480
development	3275	century	1465
power	2842	relations	1451
market + markets	2842	American	1432
policy	2537	capital	1421
rights	2375	culture	1405
people	2365	European	1404
health	2331	studies	1390
human	2142	history	1382
economy	2138	order	1377
university	2135	Europe	1303
society	2073	public	1280
system	2041	growth	1227
change	1802	London	1212
cultural	1745	security	1205

Though a word list such as this may not be, by itself, an assertive content analysis from which to draw conclusion about all four reading lists, it puts some light on what is being said in the texts, and, most importantly, combined with the other analysis carried out in this thesis, can give us more information so that more educated conclusion can be made.

The more frequently used word is 'global', which has by far the biggest number of occurrences - it outnumbers that second place by over 1000 mentions. The second and third most recurred words also outnumber the next by a significant amount. While 'state/states' and 'world' have, respectively, 7501 and 7220 mentions, the word 'social' which got fourth place, has 5091. It is a difference of more than 2000 uses. Although all words from the list have their role in

the texts, the numbers indicate that the words 'global', 'state/states', and 'world' play an expressive role in the ideas conveyed in the texts.

These differences in numbers of uses of a single word decrease over the table and the variety of words increase. The 15 first uses resemble and are coherent with the most recurrent disciplines identified in section 6.2 of this chapter. Words such as state, social, globalization, international, political, economic, market, power appear repeatedly in the disciplines of IR, Political Science, Economy, Sociology, and Globalization.

It is prominent in the word list the appearance of state-centric vocabulary. On the first 10 words it can already be found the words 'state/states', 'country/countries', and 'nation/national', with emphasis on 'state/states' which gets, as stated before, an impressive amount of uses. Distinguishing the prominence of such words becomes more important as the field of Global Studies proclaims the hope of going beyond the state centrism recognized in other more mainstream areas.

Most of the words on the list are very broad words, words such as power, people, society, capital, and history. Fewer are the words with more specificity. Among these more precise words are the ones that refer to places. Five of them make an appearance on the list: China, America, European, Europe, London. Not coincidentally, they overlap with the locations of some of the GSTs. In a similar matter to what occurs with the state centric vocabulary mentioned in the paragraph above, the regularity of these words is significant in the context of analyzing Global Studies programs in particular to indicate which locations are taking space in their literature.

Discussion and Conclusions

The data analysis has sought to shed light on four Global Studies master's degree programs. The aim of this thesis was to start to understand how degree programs from this new field are developing, and more specifically if there are similarities and patterns in their development. As said in Chapter 2, the literature dedicated to this kind of research is very small,

and not much is known about how global studies is being practiced in its designated master's degree programs. Therefore, I hope the results presented here are helpful and incite more research like this to be done, so that we can hold academia accountable and monitor what it is delivering to students.

Global studies is said to be, first and foremost, an interdisciplinary field. It needs perspective from a variety of areas of knowledge in order to construct a body of knowledge that is holistic and embracing of the multiple factors influencing global issues. With that in mind, looking into the disciplines the programs are resorting to it is noticeable that the majority of readings come from five major well-established disciplines (IR, Globalization, Sociology, Economy, and Political Science). As said in the previous chapter, they stand for 66% of the readings. The remaining 13 disciplines share the other 34%.

It is not possible to say that programs are not branching out to different disciplines to study the global. However, this is happening at a slower pace than one would expect after reading the definitions and conceptualizations of the field. The fact that the concentration of the majority of the readings is on a small number of disciplines shows that the areas of study getting a place in the curriculum are still limited. Other areas that do get a place on the reading list are not getting a proportional space. The result of this is students absorbing more analytical perspective of a few disciplines and less from others, disciplines that could contribute to a holistic understanding of global topics.

Moreover, at least three of the five most recurrent areas generally have a tendency towards a more traditional perspective of analysis. Economy and Political Science are classical old-established disciplines, with canons secured by ideas from past centuries. IR, despite being younger than the former two, is highly influenced by Realist thought. To rely heavily on such disciplines is in contradiction with the global studies goal of being critical towards global structure and innovative in its thinking.

Saying this looking only into the disciplines featured in the reading lists would be premature since even the most classical areas of study have critical and innovative works that assist global studies extensively. Nevertheless, the topics brought up by the texts were also not as avant-garde as one would expect. This can be easily noticed in the IR texts. Though the field has much critical and provocative literature, the ones featured in the analyzed lists are mostly on conventional IR topics, such as world order, power balance, and sovereignty, for instance. The word count shown in section 4.5 contributes to this conclusion, revealing the texts are heavily permeated by state-nation-centric vocabulary.

This analysis corresponds to the four universities combined, but there are also differences among them. For instance, the reading list from the University of Iceland is better distributed in relation to disciplines than the one from Roskilde University. In the first, there are 14 different areas of study represented in the readings, the most recurring discipline is not IR nor Economy, as in the other three universities, and areas such as Global Health and Environmental Studies rank among the top five represented areas in the readings. Iceland's reading list is then more diverse and less typical than Roskilde and Gothenburg's lists, which have a more classic tendency among the four. The differences noticed between the reading lists are consistent with the argument made by Nederveen Pieterse (2013) that programs' outlook depends on their local contexts'. This is visible with the fields that appear only in one or two reading lists or in disciplines that appear much more in one list than in the others.

The disciplines appearing in the lists suggest as well that some areas are better incorporated into global studies than others. Environmental Studies and Gender Studies have almost the same number of texts in the four lists combined. However, Environmental Studies is more equally distributed among the four lists than Gender Studies, which is divided into almost only two of the lists. Likewise, Geography has around the same number of texts as these other two disciplines and it is even more concentrated than Gender Studies - though proportionally, Humboldt and Gothenburg dedicate the same space for the discipline. The unequal appearance

of these disciplines suggests that they are better incorporated into some programs and are yet to be assimilated by others. Likewise, the limited appearance of areas such as Area Studies, Culture Studies, and Urban Studies contributes to the suggestion that the four programs still need to include some areas in their introductory curriculum.

It is noteworthy that texts dedicated solely to global studies appeared just once in all of the lists. Thomassen (2019) is the only text to debate the field of global studies. Among introductory courses to global studies, this is a surprising reality. In a similar manner, Urban Studies, Area Studies, and Culture Studies, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, make a modest contribution to the reading lists despite bringing important aspects to the comprehension of global issues, networks, and phenomena. Likewise, Religious Studies did not appear in any of the reading lists. From the readings, Kinnvall (2004) is the text that gets the closest to dealing with Religious Studies, but even so, religion is just one of the elements brought up in the text that talks about globalization, identity, and ontological security. The lack of readings in this field contrasts with the importance religion has to global society, both in the past, with religions advancing connections between far lands and notably the spread of the Catholic Church during the Great Navigations, and in the present, with religious being in the forefront of local and global politics.

On the matter of authors and readings, what was noticed was that in fact there were few similarities between the lists. With only two academics featured in three lists and two readings featured in two lists each, it is not possible to say that there is something such as a canon of global studies being shaped in these universities. On the other hand, it was more common for scholars to come up more than once in the same reading list. This happened in all four universities. This can come from authors having a significant importance in their field or from professors sticking with authors they are familiar with.

The data analysis made it apparent that authors who appear often in the literature about global studies, like the ones mentioned in section 2.1., did not show up as much in the reading

lists. Nederveen Pieterse appears in Humboldt, Gothenburg, and Roskilde, while scholars such as Juergensmeyer, Darian-Smith, Steger, and others, were not included in any of the analyzed lists. Texts with a global perspective appeared in the lists, for instance in Knowles (2015), Otis (2016), Lyons et al. (2012), and Vaitinen (2014), but authors that take part in the debate about the field of global studies were missing.

Overall, there was a modest number of common topics discussed within each area of study covered by the reading lists. In some areas topics were closer to each other and in other areas topics did not overlap. It is the case that there are some topics that could hardly be excluded from a global studies reading list, such as migration, mobility and global-scale flows, as economic and culture flows. At the same time, topics did not overlap as much as to result on a clear frame of reference of global studies, with universities keeping their own profile.

Though to be sure about this there would need to be more research on the four programs, for it is possible to identify some differential characteristics in each of them. The reading list from Humboldt for instance is quite shorter than the others, giving preference to broad text over texts with a very specific focus or interest. On Iceland's list, there were more texts dealing with Iceland than the other lists had texts on their respective countries. Iceland also gave much more space to global health than any of its counterparts. In its turn, Gothenburg dedicated extra space for readings on China and Russia, indicating a tendency toward the East. Roskilde, and Gothenburg, appeared to have a bigger IR influence than the other two universities, with Gothenburg having a bigger influence of Realist IR than Roskilde.

With regards to the content of the texts, the word count hints at two main results. First, the vocabulary of the readings is still considerably state-nation-centric. As the words 'state/states', 'countries/country', and 'national/nation' all ranking among the ten most used words, it seems that the vocabulary in use is still referring to state centric perspectives. Some of these words were bound to appear in the word count because the state/nation/country is yet an important actor in the global world, with a global perspective or not. Nevertheless, these words

recurring often as they do, and in contrast with the rest of the words, is not so congruous with what the global studies fields is suggested to be.

Second, the geographical locations featured in the word count (China, American, European, Europe and London) imply that some locations receive more space in the reading lists than others, and these locations are the same that usually receive space in readings in other fields as well. Most of them - America and Europe - are also ones from where most disseminated knowledge comes from and from where universalized perspectives and analysis of the world originate. These two facts indicate, as with the last paragraph, that this vocabulary might not be congruent with what the global studies field ought to be - a field that includes perspective and knowledge from everywhere, which recognizes structural global disparities, and is critical of the knowledge privilege the North Atlantic enjoys.

The locations that come up on the word count overlap with those appearing on the GSTs, contributing to the conclusion that, overall, generally privileged areas are privileged in global studies programs as well. Some of these mentions and GSTs might criticize these locations or show off this privilege, or texts might be used to incite discussions about this privilege in class. Nonetheless, they are still receiving more space than excluded locations. It is important to contrast this with the less or not mentioned locations. Asia is used in GSTs many times, but China and Russia take half of these uses. Although China and Russia are not the North Atlantic, they are powerful global actors, in the center of the international field, and by no means neglected or erased locations in the current global sphere. Africa is represented in few readings and Latin America is virtually excluded not only from the readings but apparently also from the field of global studies. The region is barely mentioned on seminal global studies literature and on the reading lists it appeared once on a reading featuring Mexico and discourse around women in maquila industry (Bachour, 2015).

Conclusions

The goal of this thesis has been to find out if there is a pattern between four master's degree programs in global studies, using their introductory course as a proxy and object of study. To satisfy this goal, I asked three questions: *'Do authors and readings appear in different reading lists? Which areas of study do the readings cover, are they similar? And last, which themes do the readings deal with, are they similar?'* The research performed and described in the above chapters revealed that similarities between the programs are actually scarcer than would be expected. The findings show that similarities are mostly constrained to the disciplines featured in the reading lists and to some occurrences or overlapping themes brought up in the texts. Among authors and readings featured in the lists, similarities hardly occur. Given that the HE realm is highly connected, that the degrees pertain to the same specific field, and the socio-geographical closeness of the countries, one could expect more similarities to appear.

From the point of view of World Society Theory, this can be seen somewhat as a surprise. First, they are inserted within the same global academic society and are therefore under the same shared understanding and rationalities in relation to the enactment of master's degree programs. In addition, they occupy similar positions within the global system. Not to erase social and historical differences between Germany, Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden, but they are all countries from Northern Europe, enjoying similar levels of stability and historical commonalities, and if not in the center of the international system, somewhere very close to it. Thus, it would be expected that as global actors, these countries would present high levels of similarities, with comparable capacities and abilities to adhere and to enact models without structural differences such as resource availability and contrasting local realities. Moreover, these countries are all signatories of the Bologna Declaration and therefore members of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This way, they share not only rationalities but structural recommendations as well, such as the student credits system, organization of educational cycles, and other structural and organizational measures¹³.

In addition, global studies is a highly connected field. There are multiple academic associations, degree associations, consortiums specifically for graduate programs, joint programs, dedicated journals, and spaces for discussion. Despite these contributing factors, the research did not find substantial levels of coincidence between the reading lists. In this case, what seems to be more influential to the programs are their local context, be it how they originated, as said by Nederveen Pieterse (2013), or yet other local variables.

The lack of significant similarities can be better understood with the concept of loose coupling. With global studies acting as a catchphrase (Steger, 2018), faculties are influenced to open academic programs in global studies in accordance with society's general behavior. Nevertheless, how the practice of these programs will unfold is contingent to local context and other variables. This way, there is a general script and mode of action - inaugurating global studies programs - but the practices of it differ from one place to another. Universities recognize the existing model and comply with it. However, each of them do so according to their own interpretation of the model and how the model fits with their own reality, resulting in decoupled practices. It is also that interpretation and the practice coming from interconnects with other models and behaviors of each actor, which influences the resulting practices. To understand why gives preferences to broad texts, Iceland includes a bigger variety of disciplines in its reading list, Roskilde is the only one to include a reading about the field of global studies and Gothenburg has strong Realist IR influence, further research need to be conducted to find how the script of GS degree programs is incorporated into each of these realities. It is possible, as well, that similarities are found in aspects of the degree programs other than the ones investigated here. This opens possibilities for future studies in this area to find if patterns exist in other dimensions of degree programs in global studies or if indeed the programs are developing in different directions.

The results found in this research also indicate that the practice of global studies is still under a structuring process. Theory and practice are not running parallel, and the field's

literature and discussions about itself are yet to be incorporated into academic programs so that students understand the aims of the field they just entered and how to practice GS. The theory of global studies is very ambitious. Scholars in the field propose to practice and generate avant-garde knowledge that is critical and global which demands a lot of work and changes from what academics are used to, once academia is deep-seated in parochial biased views and unequal hierarchies (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2003). To achieve a truly global and critical understanding of issues as scholars urge, academics need to master different methodologies, have insights from various areas of study, and restructure their usual mode of knowledge production and reproduction. They need to recognize past privileges, biases, and assumptions, include unfamiliar and marginalized points of view in their research and go against the general tendencies of the academic field, including those related to structural inequalities in academia. In this way, they would be able to be as global, innovative, and critical as the definitions of global studies announce the field is.

What the analysis shows, however, is a practice that is actually similar to the practice of other fields. Reading lists consist of readings mainly from mainstream disciplines, with the inclusion of a few other disciplines in smaller numbers. Texts reflecting on the field of global studies are barely included, with the exclusion of Thomassen's book review (2019), leaving behind important considerations and inputs on how to practice global studies, what global studies is and is not, and how it is different from other areas of study. Newer and more interdisciplinary areas of study, such as Environmental, Gender and Urban Studies, are discreetly incorporated into the lists, in varying degrees depending on the university, showing levels of divergence between the definitions of the field and its practice.

Texts address issues from perspectives covered by other disciplines and maintained most of the parochialism global studies intends to oppose. Most of the locations mentioned in the texts occupy central positions in the global society. The authors and texts are still from centralized locations with few representatives from historically excluded and marginalized

locations. In the book review of *The Global Turn* (Darian-Smith & McCarty, 2017) by Thomassen (2019), the author notices this issue. Despite the book's ambition to overcome western-centric global analysis and emphasis given to critical thinking, the book can still be located close to the center of the global system. Almost all the 500 references listed in the book correspond to Western citations, and the four 'exemplary studies by leading global scholars' given to readers are from academics from UC Santa Barbara.

Thomassen is not the only one to note this pattern in global studies. Rehbein (2021) observes how few programs practice GS focusing on the Global South. According to him, programs "comprise, at most, a visit to the 'less developed' regions of the world" (p.1). Shrivastava (2008) adds to this perspective by pointing out how difficult it is to find programs that meaningfully cover global processes from perspectives befitting the experiences of the marginalized regions of the world and how this contributes to silencing the experiences of these regions and their people. This calls for the development of research that clarifies the geographies of global studies programs, in the same way Tange and Millar (2016) did to an international master's program in Denmark so that faculties know what their programs need to improve.

The scarcity of varied theoretical frameworks and marginalized issues in the analyzed lists is only aggravated by how much the theory of global studies highlights the need for them in global research. Conceptual frames such as post and decolonialism, dependency theory, subaltern studies, indigenous knowledge, and other non-centralized epistemologies are missing in the content of these courses. The frames are the same frames that could help global studies to be what its scholars say they want it to be. They add critical thinking, diverse perspective, and awareness of the structural inequities that cause, aggravate, or interconnect with the objects of study of global studies. In the particular context of Northern countries, the lack of coloniality conceptual frame contradicts the necessity of the region to recognize and work with its colonial past. Germany, Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden were not at the forefront of the invasion and

colonization of Africa, Asia and Latin America happening from the 15th onwards, nor were them the main subjects of the colonial project. Nevertheless, they are still intertwined with the colonial imaginary and the coloniality of the world created by colonization. It is important to include this notion in global studies within these nations in order to oppose the colonial complicity ingrained within their knowledge system (Quijano, 2005; Vuorela, 2012).

If, as Meyer et al. (2005) says, HEIs are an enactment of their wider environment, these programs are reflecting the Euro/US-centric knowledge system they are inserted in and the structural inequality that characterizes this system. To overcome this, reading lists and curriculums need to incorporate authors and topics from more diverse backgrounds and locations, and faculties and professors need to make an active effort to notice the parochialism in their teaching and work so that this will not be passed on to students. Without equivalent measures, structural inequalities will be perpetuated even within a field that is supposed to go against it. In accordance with Shrivastava (2008), global studies is always going after its own definition and differentiation from traditional disciplines, and it is, moreover, a field with much potential to overcome the limitations of existing fields and areas of study, but to achieve this potential, scholars, academics, faculties, consortiums, and the like, need to evaluate, review and reform current practices. In this way, programs will provide students with what the field promises, and future academics will be able to carry out truly global analysis and research. Maybe then the programs will have a distinguishable pattern of being all that global studies can be.

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Appendix A
Humboldt University - Reading List

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Verso.

Appendix B
University of Iceland - Reading List

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Appendix C
Roskilde University - Reading List

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Appendix D
University of Gothenburg - Reading List

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