TEACHING AND LEARNING

short games series as new pedagogical tools:
the international relations games show

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Abstract
This article discusses the advantages and drawbacks of a new pedagogical tool that is short games series. As an illustration, it introduces what could be called the 'International Relations Games Show', a series of six short games that have been played with bachelor students to experience theories of International Relations (IR). These games were played twice during three academic years in IR introductory courses with 100 students each on average. They illustrate, respectively, the logics of (i) Classical Realism, (ii) Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism, (iii) Neo-Marxism, (iv) Heterodox International Political Economy, (v) Constructivism, and (vi) Critical Theories. The article is organized in two parts. Part 1 discusses why short games series are potentially interesting pedagogical tools. It includes a reflection on students' evaluations of games. Part 2 develops the International Relations Games Show. The conclusion summarizes the main arguments and proposes ways forward. When adequately organized – not too long, with debriefing after the game and during the lectures, and with clear rules, short games series can improve attention, understanding, memory, general learning atmosphere, and favour success for all.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the advantages and drawbacks of a new pedagogical tool, that is short games series, to illustrate the logics of different theories for introductory courses. Short games series are defined as a package of at least three games (ideally more, one for each class) that are played with students at the beginning of the class in a maximum of ten minutes.

The article looks at one precise illustration by examining a short games series named the 'International Relations Games Show',[1] that is a series of six games that the author has been playing with second-year bachelor students to experience the logic of theories of International Relations (IR). More precisely, these games were played during three academic years (autumn/winter semester 2012, 2013, and 2015) in two IR introductory courses (and therefore played six times each), one in English and one in French, the one in French being given during evening hours and open to individuals who already embrace a professional career. Both courses had a relatively large number of students: 100 each on average. The six games played illustrate, respectively, the logics of (i) Classical Realism, (ii) Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism, (iii) Neo-Marxism, (iv) Heterodox International Political Economy, (v) Constructivism, and (vi) Critical Theories.

This article stands in the recently flourishing literature on innovative active learning. This literature is rich and covering all its developments is out of the scope of this contribution. But what one can draw from it is that innovative active learning has proven to be an adequate teaching method to improve learning capacities, most importantly through practicality that facilitates learning for all. Indeed, research shows that we all learn best when we can relate new concepts to our own realities: 'students retain 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what they say, and 90% of what they do and say together' (Boyer *et al* quoted in Asal, 2005: 359). Games, just like simulations, have 'the power to recreate complex, dynamic political processes in the classroom, allowing students to examine the motivations, behavioral constraints, resources and interactions among institutional actors' (Boyer and Smith, 2015: 315). Games create a sort of laboratory, where 'students may well become lab rats but they are still very much in charge of determining direction and outcome of the game' (Simpson and Kaussler, 2009: 414). This means that via games students are the protagonists of their own learning tool, maximizing their learning capacities.

With the general objective to improve the access to higher education for all, instructors must encourage success for audiences that are becoming more heterogeneous. For instance, evening classes are attended by professionals returning to studies, and most universities accept an increasing number of Erasmus/foreign students coming from all over the world and therefore with very diverse backgrounds and experiences of teaching cultures. The use of games as a teaching tool enables to diversify the pedagogical portfolio, potentially attracting the attention of more students: 'indeed, because students have diverse learning styles – comprised of their discrete learning preferences – engaging them in a variety of ways is important' (Bromley, 2013: 818).

Another positive impact of innovative active learning tools is their potential to improve student's attendance. While attendance has been found as a factor

for success (Tiruneh, 2007), instructors increasingly have to fight against the risk of low attendance caused by the growing pressure exerted to produce full written syllabi and corresponding supports (slides) for the students. To maintain interest and boost participation, teachers should bring something more than just reciting what is already contained in the syllabus. Games are definitely devices that have to be played collectively in the classroom.

Beyond these general assets of innovative active learning techniques, this article presents how one of these techniques was used to tackle the other more specific challenge of teaching theories. One key added value of academic teaching is to introduce students to theory that leads to analytical thinking. However, information is easily available all around, but not analytical thinking. For instance, while students could spontaneously search on the Internet for the composition of the United Nations Security Council or the different stages of the Libyan conflict, they would not look for Realism, Neo-Marxism, or Critical Theories because they simply don't know about their existence.

The difficulty is to render theory, and for introductory classes classical theories, accessible, as others noted already: 'although covering the essentials is crucial as it lays the foundation necessary for the students' academic understanding and advancement, it can become an abstract exercise dampening their enthusiasm and subsequently causing them to lose interest in the field' (De Matos-Ala and Hornsby, 2015: 157). An additional difficulty is that, in Political Science, classical theories were mostly developed in the twentieth century and, as a result, seem out-dated to students. Moreover, while organizing introductory courses for bachelor students, which is the context of this article, one has to be aware that it is most probably the first time they are

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confronted with abstract theoretical content. Teachers do not want to put them off right from the beginning. It is here that games look like a good compromise between teaching theories and attracting attention. They can, for instance, be used as a warm-up activity before launching into a classical IR theory lecture. Debriefing after the games and during the lecture also helps, constantly referring back to theories and their applications at the same time and avoiding the usual frontier that is drawn between theories and concrete examples in most textbooks (Matthews and Callaway, 2015).

Beyond the analytical value of reflecting on innovative active learning, the intended scope of this article is to evaluate the drawbacks and advantages of a new teaching format, namely games series. Because this article also investigates under which conditions games should be played, it also leads to two more practical outputs. First, it provides a turnkey solution for professors who would like to use the IR Games Show. Second, it gives tips for professors who would like to develop their own short games series, by adapting the IR Games Show, or creating new games.

The methodology used in this article to investigate short games series as new pedagogical tools has been developed in

two steps. First, the author compiled the existing literature on games as active learning devices and, on the basis of the course objectives and material conditions, designed the games series. Second, the author regularly surveyed students regarding the relevance of the games series, adjusting it as often as needed.

The article is organized in two parts. Part 1 discusses the potential of short games series as interesting pedagogical tools. Part 2 develops the IR Games Show. The conclusion summarizes the main arguments and proposes ways forward.

WHY ARE SHORT GAMES SERIES AN INTERESTING PEDAGOGICAL TOOL?

This section presents short games series as new pedagogical tools. It is organized around the methodology used for the study. First, it presents the underlying assumptions for using short games series as pedagogical tools. Second, it presents students' perspectives on short games series. Third, it elaborates the rules to design relevant short games series.

SHORT GAMES SERIES TO ILLUSTRATE THEORIES: ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE

WHY USING GAMES?
To understand the pedagogical value of games series, a reflection on why games are useful teaching devices is important. Games are actually well-known teaching tools in the realm of available teaching techniques. The reasons for their success rely on a number of characteristics that make them interesting devices, compared to other active learning techniques like simulations.

> '…*games are an excellent occasion for students to see what happens during the game and to try to link it with existing theory as to why it happened'.*

First, compared to simulations, games are particularly adapted to abstract thinking: 'a game is an abstraction of reality for the purpose of explanation, understanding, or prediction. It is not a description of reality. Through games, we hope to see something that we were not able to see before (…) Role-play simulations, on the other hand, are descriptions of reality (or, perhaps, some imagined reality). They present a real-world case (or imagined world case), with substantive background information and character roles. They can help students to understand a particular case or organization extremely well' (McCarthy, 2014: 404–405). In other words, games are more about reasoning, while simulations centre on content. As a result, games help students 'gain generalizable knowledge that they can then apply to various cases, both inside and outside the classroom' (McCarthy, 2014: 405). Games are therefore particularly useful to illustrate the logic of theories as 'the purpose of any theory-including game theory-is not to reproduce reality, but to increase our understanding of fundamental processes by simplifying it. Simplicity and abstraction guide us through a morass of information to focus on more fundamental issues' (Snidal, 1985: 28). The games used can derive from game theory but can also be descriptive game models (Snidal, 1985). In that case, games are an excellent occasion for students to see what happens during the game and to try to link it with existing theory as to why it happened.

Second, games are adapted to a large audience. Teaching audiences are growing larger, among others in international studies, because 'programs tend to be popular, and there is an increasing trend toward our curriculum being set in large class contexts due to gaps in the level of support accompanying growing programs' (De Matos-Ala and Hornsby, 2015: 156). It is obviously more challenging to create interactions when dealing with a hundred or so students. Here again, games are a good way to foster active participation, while simulations tend to be more adapted to smaller groups.

Third, games are more likely to require an equal participation from all students as many games require students to play the same role (at the opposite, simulations assign different roles to different students). This avoids introducing learning potential biases (Baranowski and Weir, 2010). Students also have the possibility to interact during games, improving the quality of their participation.

Fourth, most games are easy to organize for students and need no prerequisite.[1] Usually, teachers only choose one simulation that they play at the end of the semester, either building on the knowledge gathered for the course or including a new workload in the schedule with one or two preparatory sessions. Contrary to simulations (see Pruitt, 2015), games are not exercises where students require any background. Moreover, contrary to simulations (see Usherwood, 2015), they do not incur costs for preparation or resources, meaning they are accessible to all students.

Fifth, most games are short. The ones elaborated for the IR Games Show last about ten minutes and can therefore easily complement other pedagogical resources. Simulations are interesting teaching devices but take much longer, often lasting several days.

Sixth, games can be very easy to organize for the teacher. Most of the time, teachers are asked to innovate, but there is not much available in terms of materials, ideas, or activities that one could use. There exists a growing informative and reflective literature on simulations (for instance Raiser et al, 2015) but simulations are exercises that require detailed preparation and resources, which are not always available. Digital technologies offer other potential resources for pedagogical innovation (Ralph et al, 2010), but they are frustrating by annihilating face-to-face interactions. Games appear easy to organize. Just as Glazier (2011) proposes tips to organize simulations at low costs, this article later proposes tips to organize games easily.

Because of all their assets, games are widely used. What is noticeable, though, is that the literature often centres on one game[2] at a time. To the contrary, using games series brings additional warrantees for an efficient active learning.

WHY USING GAMES SERIES?

First the idea to develop a games series is related to one of the main drawbacks of games: they simplify reality. And because games are a simplification of theories, to play only one game would give more importance to one theory than to another, with the risk of overemphasizing biases (Hannah and Wilkinson, 2016). One could compile different games that are present in the literature but very often their format is very diverse (length, number of players), and authors do not always specify what is needed to play them (Baranowki and Wei, 2015). In IR, while games were available to illustrate mainstream theories, new games had to be developed to illustrate more approaches. Traditionally, game theory and its extensions are very state centric (Snidal, 1985). Moreover, alternative approaches such as critical theories are hardly covered in traditional teaching curricula (Parisi et al, 2013). It also means that more games have to be created.

Second, games series, if organized properly, can help explain the logic of a discipline. Most disciplines are characterized by

a number of theoretical approaches and debates that focus on abstract and conceptual discussions. Using several games also enables to propose their constructive alignment. For instance, the IR Games Show develops a series of games that follow the historical evolution of the IR discipline, starting with classical theories and later embracing critical ones. This also helps students remember the main stages of IR thinking, creating a link between all the games and therefore coherency.

Third, games series can help diversify the format of the games used. It is useful to present several games with different formats: some based on voting by students, some on PowerPoint presentations, etc. If playing games becomes a habit, the format always comes as a surprise and is likely to catch the attention of a variety of students.

To be sure, short games series do not answer to all the difficulties related to the use of games as pedagogical tools. Games also influence learning qualitatively. Because they represent theories, which in turn represent reality in some way, experiencing them can reify models in students' minds, granting them a new kind of truth status. Using them is therefore probably more adequate for introductory courses that will later be complemented by more specialized ones. Games also always have to be accompanied by a debriefing session, shedding light on what games tell us but also on what they do not tell us. In any case, games have to be complemented by other teaching techniques. This is quite feasible when games are short.

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON GAMES SERIES

Generally, authors discuss the various advantages and disadvantages they think come with the use of simulations and games based on the available literature (Horn *et al*, 2016; Asal and Kratoville, 2013). So far, however, very few studies have looked at what students say about experiencing the use of games as pedagogical tools. Because this study was experimenting with a games series for the first time, the author regularly consulted students, to be able to assess the impact of the series and improve its design if needed. Looking at what students themselves say about the series is essential (Giovanello *et al*, 2013).

Within the framework of this study, students had two opportunities to give feedback on the IR course they followed and to which was appended the games series. The first opportunity takes the shape of a centralized online questionnaire produced by the university and sent to the students several weeks after the end of each course. This anonymous online questionnaire (available as appendix) covers different elements of the course, but not pedagogical tools specifically. At the end of the online questionnaire, three general open questions are asked about what was seen as positive for the course and what could be suggested for improvement. This was the only place where comments specifically referring to the games series were found. While partly useful, this evaluation is also unsatisfactory for a number of reasons: (i) it is not adapted to receiving detailed feedback on pedagogical tools, (ii) it happens late and takes place online, meaning that the participation rate and the quality of feedback are low, and (iii) a number of students, and in particular Erasmus students, do not have access to it because they are not registered within the university system.

Because of these limits, students were also asked for further feedback using a paper teaching evaluation questionnaire (presented in appendix). This anonymous paper questionnaire was distributed during the last class of each course to obtain immediate feedback. Time was dedicated for students to actually fill it in. In this paper questionnaire, none of the questions referred specifically to the games played so as not to influence the potential

Table 1: Summary of students' overall assessment of the games

| | 2012–2013[a] | | | | 2013–2014 | | | | 2015–2016 | | Total |
| | FR | | EN | | FR | | EN | | FR | EN | |
	Online	Paper	Online	Paper	Online	Paper	Online	Paper	Online	Online	
Evaluations received	33	21	15	9	14	6	11	6	14	10	139
Mentioning the games	9	18	4	7	3	4	6	4	4	3	62
Negative about the games	/	1	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	2
Mixed about the games (length)	2	5	1	1	/	/	2	1	/	1	12
Mixed about the games (infantilizing)	/	2	1	/	/	/	1	/	/	1	5

Source: authors' own elaboration of evaluation results.

[a] Because it was my first year with an academic position, I explicitly asked students to give me feedback, which explains why I received more answers for the year 2012–2013.

> '44.6% of respondents mentioned the games spontaneously, which seems to indicate games are important pedagogical tools for students.(…) Out of the 62 received evaluations, only 2 evaluations (3.2%) were negative, mentioning that games are useless as pedagogical tools…'

importance of the dispositive, with respect to other teaching tools used. The idea was rather to see whether students would actually mention the games series and, if so, what they would spontaneously say about it. Table 1 details the results for both teaching evaluation methods. For Table 1 (and Table 2), each student evaluation was first coded according to a qualitative scale as 'negative', 'positive', or 'mixed'. Each evaluation was then coded more in detail to understand the reasons for the overall assessment and finally coded according to criteria like 'mixed/positive about the games for reason x or y', x and y being identified as the recurrent justifications given by students. All justifications, when given, were coded, and each student could give more than one justification.

44.6% of respondents mentioned the games spontaneously, which seems to indicate games are important pedagogical tools for students. On this aspect, there is a great discrepancy between the online and the paper evaluations, with 29.9% of online evaluations mentioning games, while 78.57% of the paper evaluations refer to them. When they take their time to give feedback and answer open questions, students often mention the games as a noteworthy pedagogical tool.

Table 2: Main justifications given regarding why the games are positive

Main justifications	No. of respondents (out of 62)
It helps engage students (dynamic, attract attention, playful, etc.)	21
It helps us understand the course (better understand, illustrate, introductory approach, etc.)	19
It helps us remember about the course (assimilate, retain, restitution, etc.)	3
It helps create a friendly atmosphere for the course (good atmosphere, relax the atmosphere, etc.)	3
It makes knowledge accessible to all (simple language, promotes higher success)	2

Source: authors' own elaboration of evaluation results.

Out of the 62 received evaluations, only 2 evaluations (3.2%) were negative, mentioning that games are useless as pedagogical tools, without giving any further explanation. This number is very low, meaning that nearly all students judge games at least partly positively.

Within the 'mixed' category, 12 evaluations (19.35%) are overall positive about the games but indicate that they might last too long: 'I love the topics we had. My only problem was that I had the impression some games made us lose some time. They were quite long sometimes. Yet, I liked the originality' (student evaluation, 2012–2013). The issue of taking too much time was more present the first year the games were played because they were still in the development stage. They were adjusted to become shorter for their subsequent versions. According to some students, the problem of using too much time for games is that it impinges on the content of the more classical ex-cathedra lectures: 'I regret losing time doing those games. Even if it is a good illustration it shouldn't be taking the time of the concrete material of the class' (student evaluation, 2012–2013). Taking too much time also means that the course is less dynamic: 'The activities make the course more dynamic, but there is the need to control that they do not last too long, otherwise they have the reverse effect' (student evaluation, 2012–2013).

Within the 'mixed' category, another group of 5 evaluations (8.06%) are overall positive about the games but indicate that they might infantilize students: 'I liked the games but we got sometimes the impression that we were back to primary school' (student evaluation, 2012–2013). Because they do not ask for preparation, games build on very basic knowledge and practices with the risk that they seem childish: 'Activities: good idea but should not become "too gaga" (like rock-paper-scissors)' (student evaluation, 2012–2013). Interestingly, the highest proportion of students feeling infantilized while playing games belong to the English-language IR course, where the student population is younger. It seems that the greater maturity students have, the more easily they would accept the format of the games.

The risks of losing time and feeling infantilized have to be counterbalanced with the main reasons why students would judge games as positive pedagogical tools, as presented in Table 2.

As a first asset, 21 evaluations (33.87%) indicate that games help students to be attentive during the course: 'This ludic approach was the best way. It gives me the joy to learn and to listen'

(student evaluation, 2012–2013). This seems particularly important for students who followed the evening courses: 'The activities at the beginning of (nearly all) classes, enable not only to relax the atmosphere, but also to give a good start to our 2-h classes, and also to maintain our brain in motion, especially for a course that takes place from 5 to 7 pm' (student evaluation 2012–2013). Games seem ideal for catching students' interest.

As a second asset, 19 evaluations (30.64%) indicate that games help students better understand the following ex-cathedra lecture course: 'The activities at the beginning are a good tool/a good metaphor to elucidate in a general way the approach that is then developed during the class. You should keep them!' (student evaluation 2012–2013). Indeed, games are seen as good entry points into the more complicated world of ex-cathedra lectures. More precisely, one student indicated that it helped her understand the content immediately: 'For me, this enabled me to really catch/understand the content at the very moment we played the game, and not only later, when I would be back home' (student evaluation 2015–2016).

As a third asset, 3 evaluations (4.8%) indicate that games are useful for remembering the course: 'The games are interesting because they help us better remember the concept, it is useful for restitution' (student evaluation, 2012–2013). More clearly, it is the ludic element of games that make them easier to remember: 'The idea of a funny activity at the beginning of each class enables to assimilate the course more easily' (student evaluation, 2012–2013).

As a fourth asset, 3 evaluations (4.8%) indicate that games create a good working atmosphere, meaning that they have potentially effects of a larger scope than just the IR courses: 'Great! The atmosphere in the lecture theatre during your games was truly enjoyable!' (student evaluation 2012–2013). They help students socialize and get to know each other in a different way.

Finally, 2 evaluations (3.2%) indicate that games are useful to help all students gain access to the content of the course: 'We can feel that the teacher wishes success for a great part of her students and her way to teach makes the course attractive, to the extent of us being sorry in case of non-attendance' (student evaluation 2012–2013).

Compared to what is contained in the academic literature, the students' evaluations indicate similar positive aspects, but complement them with practical drawbacks. Just as students indicate, the academic literature shows that games bring different learning outcomes, such as affective learning outcomes (interests and motivations), cognitive learning outcomes (knowledge, understanding, or skills), and regulative learning outcomes (here group socialization) (Vermunt, 1996). Yet, as the negative evaluations indicate, the design of the games is important so as not to bring more pitfalls than advantages, and in particular their length and format.

THE GENERAL RULES TO PLAY GAMES SERIES

Based on students' evaluations and the practical experience of playing games, this section looks at the general guidelines that should be respected to maximize the probability of games series succeeding as teaching tools.

First, the most important rule is that each game making up the series should not take too long (not more than twenty minutes for a total lecture of 2 h for playing the game and debriefing). Just as others mentioned already, the teacher should 'have selected (…) games not only for their utility in demonstrating the theories being taught but also because they

take very little resource to execute in terms both of material and time (all games have close to zero setup time (…))' (Asal *et al*, 2014: 351). The no-preparation characteristic is particularly welcome as it enables to start games quickly. Games could be played at the beginning of each course (which was the case in this study) so that students are psychologically prepared and ready to play (they know the course starts with a game), and tend not to arrive late (games are good incentives for students to be on time).

Second, all students have to be involved in each game. Participation might seem an obstacle when dealing with larger groups of students. It is therefore important to briefly point out at the beginning of each game that the games will work only if the students actually join in. When specific roles have to be assigned, it is always preferable to ask students to volunteer, because this makes things easier, quicker, and friendlier. But if they do not, it is possible to designate them randomly (or choose the student who arrived late...). Participation should not be evaluated because then there is a risk that students feel pressured and will not play spontaneously. Finally, participation in the debriefing session is also important. One easy way to foster this is to start the debriefing with an easy question that all students can answer like 'how did you feel while playing the game?', 'what do you think?', and so on. Starting with a classical game is probably useful before moving on to more innovative games.

Third, another important guideline is to construct bridges between the games and the more classical ex-cathedra lectures. Sometimes games can appear too long because they seem disconnected from the main materials of the course. In order not to give this impression to students, one key element is to debrief with them right after each game and to continue referring to the game during the class, envisaging scenarios that did or did not happen during

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the game, or imagining slightly different versions. This helps avoid diverting students' attention from the main goals of the class. Another incentive and a link between the games and the content of the lectures are to include the content of the games in the final examination.[3] Another important element to build bridges is to complement the games during the debriefing and the ex-cathedra lecture with references to historical events and current situations that follow the same logics as those of the games. Indeed, while games are excellent for capturing the logic of a theory, they have to be put in relation to current events; otherwise, they appear disembodied and disconnected from current affairs.

Fourth, in order for students not to feel infantilized during the games, a brief introduction is needed before playing. This introduction points out that games are a special pedagogical tool and that students might feel ill at ease at some times, but it also explains that in the end they will be rewarded by their participation. The impression to be infantilized is related to the fear that other students might judge what they do while playing the games. This is also why the games should be as inclusive as possible, requiring whenever possible the participation of all. The introduction also reminds students that most of the time the teacher is joining in and subsequently also involved in any potentially absurd situation.

Table 3: The international relations games show: main characteristics

Name	How many participate	Theory	Format	Historical/recent illustrations
The survival game	All	Classical Realism	Iterative card game	World wars Arms' race during Cold War or between North and South Korea
The prisoner's dilemma game	16 playing and all observing	Neo-Realism/ Neo-Liberalism	Simulation and voting	Non-proliferation treaty
The living in a world of inequalities game	All	Neo-Marxism	Simulation	Colonisation and decolonisation Emerging countries
The who has power game	All	Heterodox International Political Economy	Quiz	The oil shocks The financial crisis
The perception game	All	Constructivism	Performance and voting	Security communities
The when nature takes its revenge game	All	Green Theory (Critical Theory)	Performance	Climate change agreement

Source: author's own elaboration.

Fifth, discipline and the quality of participation are also important. The instructions for playing the games should be clear. For this study, playing six games twice for three years never led to discipline issues. Actually, if games are well designed and explained, students are usually more than happy to contribute to their success. Trusting students is essential – and most importantly it works. In any case, you can expect some frustration, and if problems do arise, one should try as much as possible to integrate them into the game: never stop playing but integrate non-cooperative behaviour within the game.[4] It is also important to ask students to play games for real (sometimes they will be threatened with prison or even death, sometimes they will be blind, or receive a reward, etc., and it is important that they play it for real).

Sixth, a few words about the teacher's preparation are also in order. While formal preparation takes little time once the games have been designed, it is always important to be well prepared psychologically. It is a rather demanding pedagogy, even more so if you are not a native speaker and students might react in a way you did not anticipate. One has to be prepared for uncertainty and be ready to join in the game

THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GAMES SHOW

More often than not, scientific articles about learning tools discuss these tools without describing them fully (Baranowski and Weir, 2015). To avoid this drawback, the following presents in detail the IR Games Show. Table 3 presents a summary of the IR Games Show. Each game is detailed below, with explanations on how to play it, and on how to debrief afterwards. The ex-cathedra lectures following each game build, among others,

on the games, adding historical and recent illustrations.

CLASSICAL REALISM: THE SURVIVAL GAME[5]

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED
To play the game you need about 200 cards (can be of any type). You should start the game by showing the following rules on a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation:

'The aim of the game is to survive as long as you can.
You receive two cards.
As long as you have cards, you are alive.
If you are alive, you are standing. If not, you have to sit down.
You have to challenge one opponent with the game 'rock-paper-scissors'(RPS), at least once every minute.
If someone challenges you, you have to accept the duel.
If you have 2 cards, you have to win 3 rounds of RPS to win the duel.
If you have 4 cards, you have to win 2 rounds of RPS.
If you have more than 4 cards, you have to win only 1 round.
If you lose a duel, you have to give all your cards to your opponent and sit down.
The winner wins one minute of applause.
If you arrived late, you are dead'.

Students start playing the game and 'die' progressively. After a short time, only two of them survive. The final duel should be played in front of all the others. One of them wins and we all applaud.

DEBRIEFING
You should start by explaining that if you replace individuals by states, this is what the world looks like according to Classical Realism. It is a very individualistic game, based on the idea that human nature is offensive and driven by greed (for this see

'If you replace individuals by states, you discover the main objective of states in the world today according to Classical Realism: survival that is mostly based on military expenditure…'

Asal, 2005). If you replace individuals by states, you discover the main objective of states in the world today according to Classical Realism: survival that is mostly based on military expenditure (you can show them a graph of current military expenditure by states as percentages of GDP).

- The debriefing goes on by asking: *What was, in your opinion, the best strategy to win the game?*

Usually, they answer that the best strategy is to win cards as soon as possible. Indeed, if you look at the rules of the game, the more cards you have, the more you are likely to win the game. This is representative of the focus of Classical Realism on resources, and more precisely on military resources, as power. The more material resources states have, the safer they would be. But still, it is impossible to be sure that you will survive because other states are offensive and greedy. Resources only improve your chances to survive.

Another answer they can give to this question is: Cheat! Indeed, if you look at the rules of the game, there is no referee. If students had some other cards in their bag, for instance, there's nothing to stop them from taking them out and using them. If they wanted to claim that they had more than four cards even if they only had four, they could. If they wanted to start with more than two cards, they could (the teacher is not checking at the

beginning). If they wanted to steal cards from their neighbours, they could. This illustrates a key element of international relations; namely, that states evolve in conditions of anarchy. And because of this anarchy, states can actually cheat on the international scene; indeed, Classical Realism says that they do it all the time. Classical Realism even postulates that there is no such thing as good faith on the international scene.

A third way to win is to create alliances right from start of play. There is nothing in the rules saying that you are not able to do so. Yet, in our study this did not even happen once. Classical Realism indeed indicates that cooperation is not a spontaneous strategy of states and is actually dangerous because in the absence of a referee, today's friend can be tomorrow's enemy (what if you create an alliance and your partner suddenly goes away with all the cards?).

Finally, a last solution to win the game would actually be to hide or to go outside the classroom. This demonstrates that entering into a struggle is actually dangerous for states. Yet, they still do it, and according to Classical Realism this is again related to the fact that they are selfish and greedy.

NEO-REALISM/NEO-LIBERALISM: THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA GAME[6]

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

The prisoner's dilemma game is a well-known simulation of what happens when people are invited to collaborate on a sensitive issue. While the game is not new, it can be played according to different versions that illustrate its particularities. The game illustrated here starts by explaining to students that we are going to play it according to different versions. They are asked whether they know the scenario of the game. If they do, one of them goes on to explain. Otherwise, the teacher should turn the story into the following scenario: 'the teacher has been found dead in the classroom. Two students are accused of the murder and arrested by the police. They will be interrogated separately. If both stay silent, they will be released because it means that the police have no evidence. If both accuse the other, they will both go to prison for two years because it is highly plausible that they organized the crime together. If one of them accuses the other and the other stays silent then the one that is accused will go to prison for four years (being guilty of the crime) and the other will receive a reward (having helped the police to find the guilty person)'. We play different versions of the game consecutively with different students (meaning here that 18 students will have participated):

Round 1. Three pairs of students play it only once. They are not allowed to speak with each other before taking a decision. They write down their decision on a piece of paper.
Round 2. Three pairs of students play it three times (for peanuts) and then one time for real. This last time determines what will happen to them.
Round 3. Three pairs of students play it once, but they can decide together what they will play. They can announce their choice verbally.

For each round, all students are observing what is happening.

DEBRIEFING

Ask students to imagine that players are replaced by states, and that denying means cooperating, while denouncing means not cooperating. If you do both transfers, you come to the Neo-Realist and Neo-Liberal interpretations of the game.

- *What was the best strategy while playing the game, in general?*

Table 4: Gain distribution in a prisoner's dilemma scenario

	State A	
	Cooperates	Does not cooperate
State B		
Cooperates	0,**0**	−4,**1**
Does not cooperate	1, −**4**	−2, −**2**

Source: author's own elaboration.

Usually, students reply that the best strategy is to denounce the other. But they cannot exactly explain why. Some 'feel like' it is less risky but no one finds evidence. This is where the teacher should project the matrix of gains (see Table 4) related to the scenario[7] and explain it according to Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism, starting with Neo-Realism (which is in line with their intuition that the best strategy is to denounce).

Neo-Realism says that denouncing the other is always the best solution because it maximizes individual gains. If you look at individual gains, summing up the results of each state individually for each column, you will see that states have more interest in not cooperating: the risks are lower (−2 instead of −4) in the 'does not cooperate' column, and the potential gains are higher as well (1 instead of 0), just as the total of the gains (−2 versus −1). So to cooperate would be foolish.

But if individual rationality indicates that you should always not cooperate, how do Neo-Realists explain international cooperation like international treaties or international organizations, for instance? (You can ask the students, but usually, they can spontaneously come up with an answer). The explanation is that Neo-Realists think that the prisoner's dilemma game does not reflect reality because it considers players as equal. This is also how we played it. But let's imagine that one student is stronger than another one and threatens retaliation if she is going to be denounced. Other inequalities can be related to wealth, personal networks, etc. So Neo-Realists say that cooperation actually happens because major players force other actors to cooperate and therefore create international organizations and international treaties even against their will. Strong players do this when these organizations and treaties reflect their own interests.

It might be that one student actually finds cooperation to be the best strategy. Sometimes they even refer to an optimum of Pareto situation. In that case, there is a Neo-Liberal explanation, too. Neo-Liberalism will indeed say that we should not look at the individual interests of states, but at their collective interest, because most international problems (climate change, maritime piracy, pandemic diseases) have to be solved collectively. If you sum up the gains made by both players for each box of Table 4, you will find that the box where the highest gains accrue is the one corresponding to both sides cooperating (total score of 0, while all the other boxes end up with negative gains). The fact is that Neo-Liberalism recognizes it is not easy for states to cooperate because of the anarchy problem. But looking at the game more closely they will use the results from Round 2 and Round 3 to demonstrate that international treaties and organizations actually help states cooperate.

- *What do we observe when players can speak to one another (Round 3)?*

We observe that they are more likely to cooperate (usually, all pairs of students decide to remain silent) because they exchange information about what their choices will be and can discuss this collectively. Neo-Liberalism, and more precisely Neo-Liberal Institutionalism, will say that this demonstrates how international meetings, where states discuss cooperation, are important for information exchanges. The more information you exchange, the more likely you are to cooperate.

- *Was it nice to be accused? What do you think of the person who accused you? Would you play the game with her again? What do you observe when players play the game three times for peanuts and after that another time for real (Round 2)?*

They answer that no, it was not very nice to be accused. And these feelings create reputation dynamics. Usually, what happens in Round 2 is that player 1 tends to copy the behaviour of player 2, ending with both of them denying or both denouncing. The Neo-Realist interpretation considers that you play the game only once in your lifetime, but this is not the case according to Neo-Liberalism. States are asked to cooperate all the time on a very high diversity of issues, meaning that they are likely to meet several times with the same partners. In that case, reputation is very powerful and states that tend not to cooperate might be marginalized. Reputation is also a key mechanism favoured by international institutions for maintaining cooperation.

NEO-MARXISM: THE LIVING IN A WORLD OF INEQUALITIES GAME

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED
Three students are selected to form a first group called Group 1. The remaining students form Group 2. The teacher then

> *'The Neo-Realist inter-pretation considers that you play the game only once in your lifetime, but this is not the case according to Neo-Liberalism'.*

divides the classroom into two unequal parts, asking the Group 2 students to move to a corner at the back of the classroom, which is precisely delineated. This corner has very limited space, meaning that the students (numbering about 100) have to stand and squeeze up tightly, which is rather uncomfortable. In addition to this, they have to face the wall, meaning that they are not allowed to look at the teacher. While the Group 2 students are grumbling and struggling to find enough space to stand, the teacher, on purpose, explains loudly to the Group 1 students that they can sit wherever they want, taking as much space as they need, and that they can look in any direction they like.

Once the students are in place, the teacher explains that she will give a short presentation on the history of development indicators,[8] using slides as a visual support. After the presentation, Group 1 students will be asked to select randomly one student from Group 2 to repeat the presentation. After this second presentation from the Group 2 student, the Group 1 students will have to consult and choose one of their representatives who will also have to repeat the presentation. For this second performance, the teacher gives her slides to the Group 1 student. After the three presentations (from the teacher, from the Group 2 student, from the Group 1 student), the students from Group 1 have to decide whose presentation was the best. If the student selected from Group 2 is the winner,

she will integrate into Group 1. If the student from Group 1 is the winner, she gets 1 min of applause. Obviously, it is always the student from Group 1 who wins the game. Then, all the students go back to their initial seat.

DEBRIEFING

- *How did students from Group 2 feel during the game?*

Usually, they answer that it was tiring to stand, it was uncomfortable to be sandwiched like sardines, it was difficult to follow without any visual support, and it was thus impossible for them to win the game. They are rather upset and say this is plainly unfair.

What they experienced are the inequalities that still exist in the world today. They were tired? In many countries, children have to walk several miles to go to school. They were feeling uncomfortable? Just look at figures about overpopulation and consequences for air, water, or soil pollution.[9] It was difficult to follow without visual support? Just look at figures about literacy rates around the world. Overall, they actually played a very much softer version of what the game would look like in certain regions of the world. What if you hadn't had anything to eat today? Just look at a world map of malnutrition. What if girls had to close their eyes and ears? Just look at maps of access to education for girls.

If we replace students by states, we actually have the world that Neo-Marxism is denouncing. Neo-Marxism sees the world as a system where a few rich countries from the centre (developed countries, Group 1 states) exploit poor countries from the periphery (developing countries, Group 2 states).

One important debriefing objective is then: *Why does the periphery accept the rules of the centre? (Why Group 2 follows the general rules, accepting that Group 1*

> ## 'Neo-Marxism sees the world as a system where a few rich countries from the centre (developed countries, Group 1 states) exploit poor countries from the periphery (developing countries, Group 2 states)'.

decides about who wins the game?). There are a number of possible explanations for this:

- Because students from Group 2 fear retaliation (in that case mostly from the teacher actually, not from Group 1, but we could say it is because they internalized power asymmetries between their status and the status of the teacher. Retaliation is a metaphor for the centre having military power).
- Because students from Group 2 are in competition: they all hope to be integrated into Group 1 and so they remain silent and listen to the presentation (developing countries are in competition for the production and export of agricultural goods to developed countries).
- Because they fear to be ashamed of not making it for the presentation (developing countries fear not to be able to perform as well as other countries).
- *What would be a solution for the game to become fairer?*

Usually, the students are at a loss to say, but some start talking about stopping the game. Yes, indeed, Neo-Marxism says states from the periphery should disconnect from the system. On one occasion, a very interesting phenomenon occurred during an evening IR course where the

game was played. While the teacher was starting the presentation, a student from Group 2 began to protest. He started to speak loudly and then moved from the corner to go back to his seat. He said he refused to continue playing the game because it was completely unfair, he could not accept this, and that it was irresponsible to make them play such a game. Progressively, all the other students from Group 2 started to rebel as well, explaining that they did not want to continue playing either. The game was subsequently abandoned.

So this is actually the solution: to organize a revolution. This is where emerging economies come in. For some Neo-Marxists, some emerging economies have managed to disconnect and this is why they now have better development situations. A revolution is likely because the way the game is played is unbalanced with three students against about 100 and inequalities that are very pronounced. But some Neo-Marxists say the developed countries are clever because they created a sort of semi-periphery to serve as a buffer zone between the centre and the periphery. In the game, this could also happen if a third group was created comprising Group 2 students who would have recently integrated into Group 1. In the world today, the semi-periphery is occupied by countries like those in North-West Africa that are now slowly developing.

HETERODOX INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY: THE WHO HAS POWER GAME?

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED
This game takes the format of a very short quiz that all students have to take part in. They vote by holding coloured cards: one red and one blue. Because the cards are one-sided, students cannot see what others are voting for. One of them is asked to act as referee and to evaluate whether the lecture theatre is 'more red' or 'more blue'.[10]

You should ask students three questions:

Question 1: Can you name 20 different vegetables in 2 minutes? (blue card for 'yes' and red card for 'no')
Question 2: Two pictures of medicines are shown on slides, one a generic drug and the other an equivalent classical brand. Which one would they prefer? (blue card for generic and red card for classical brand)
Question 3: If you compare the GDP of Portugal to the revenue of the transnational firm Total, which one is higher? (blue card for Portugal and red card for Total)

DEBRIEFING
Their answer to Question 1 is usually that they cannot name 20 different vegetables in 2 min. This is rather surprising because there are about 1350 different vegetables in the world. *So why can't they name just 20 of them?* Answer: Because if you look at what is available in our supermarkets, you see that the choice is very limited. Some say that this is because of our intensive agricultural system and because of the pressures exercised by the market. The fact is that we have no alternative other than to consume the very limited choice made available in supermarkets. This is what Heterodox International Political Economy would designate as negative power: the power to constrain choice, the power to have someone not do something.

Their answer to Question 2 is usually that they prefer the classical brand medicine. It is not a rational choice because in fact both medicines are equivalent and the generic one might even be cheaper. What happens is that we prefer the classical one because we know about the

brand and we allocate value to this brand. Heterodox International Political Economy would call this the power of seduction.

Their answer to Question 3 is usually that the GDP of Portugal is higher, which is not true (Portugal's GDP was $230.1 billion in 2014; in the same year, Total had a turnover of $236.1 billion). Transnational firms may have more financial power than states, and Heterodox International Political Economy recognizes that non-state actors can be key actors in the worldwide economy.

What the game shows us is that there are different facets of power. Heterodox International Political Economy precisely works on redefining the classical definition of power as formulated by earlier scholars. For Classical Realists, for instance, power is mostly about material resources. It is also linked to the ability to force international actors to do something. And it is governmental. As opposed to this, for authors like Susan Strange, power can be negative (on the one hand because of knowledge control related to the expertise of food actors in the Question 1 case; on the other hand because of reputation in terms of image in the Question 2 case). It is a power that also has a production and financial dimension and that can be attained by non-state actors. The result is the structural power framework where power is based on the four pillars of production, finance, military, and knowledge.

CONSTRUCTIVISM: THE PERCEPTION GAME

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED
The teacher gives a presentation (Presentation 1), asking students to act as if it was the first time they met. After the presentation, the teacher goes out of the classroom and asks them to answer one simple question. They can answer either

> *'Heterodox International Political Economy precisely works on redefining the classical definition of power as formulated by earlier scholars'.*

'yes' or 'nay', but they have to answer. A volunteer will count how many 'yeses' and 'nays' there are (because the teacher will not be in the classroom anymore, which is a very important dimension of the game). After the vote, the volunteer should invite the teacher to come back into the room so that she can give another presentation (Presentation 2). After this second presentation, the teacher would again ask a question, go out so that students can answer, and the volunteer should again invite the teacher to come back into the classroom.

For Presentation 1, the teacher should start with a very neutral presentation about her past and present research, training, and achievements, making it exaggeratedly technical, boring and pretentious, something like this: 'My name is X. I am a full professor at the University of Y. I have a PhD degree from country Y but also obtained a Marie-Curie grant and a GARNET grant to conduct part of it in country Z. As of June 2016, I published 15 peer-reviewed journal articles, 4 books etc'. The teacher can bring some of her journal articles and books with her, as if she was doing her own commercial promotion. After 5 min, the teacher stops and looks at students very seriously to ask: 'Would you like to be my friend?' Usually, this goes down like a bombshell, but the teacher leaves the room and waits for the volunteer to invite her to come back.

Presentation 2 is completely different. The teacher should take a friendly attitude, acting as if she was a bit shy and

embarrassed to be there in front of students and start a presentation about her personal life (showing them funny pictures): 'Hi, my name is X I live in town Y and this is me at home with my three children while we were preparing the Christmas tree etc'. After 5 min, the teacher stops and asks students the same question: 'Would you like to be my friend?', before leaving the room. She then waits for the volunteer to invite her to come back again.

DEBRIEFING
What is interesting to look at here is not so much the percentages of 'yes' and 'nay' but the evolution of these percentages after Presentation 1 and Presentation 2.

Usually, the difference between the percentages of 'yes' and 'nay' is high between the two versions, with students being more inclined to become the teacher's friend after Presentation 2.

• *How can we explain this?*

Usually, students say that Presentation 1 was too pretentious or that they did not even understand it, while Presentation 2 was friendly. Presentation 2 actually changed the perception they had of the teacher, even if she was still the same person. Your understanding of reality depends on your perceptions. This is the starting point of Constructivism: perceptions define identities that induce different behaviour. The world is constructed by our perceptions. What Constructivism does is to look at states' perceived identities (so in the game we again replace people by states) and explain international relations.[11]

If the difference between the percentage of 'yeses' and 'nays' is low, this does not necessarily contradict Constructivism because some authors would say that perceptions change only over the long term. There is also the role that you

> *'This is the starting point of Constructivism: perceptions define identities that induce different behaviour. The world is constructed by our perceptions'.*

assign to people, like the teacher; so even when she asks students to play the game for real, some of them might not be able to forget that she is the teacher. Perceptions are key, but they depend on long-term interactions.

For this study, the teacher always found herself to be rather popular even after the first round. There are two possible explanations for this: (i) she is young and so they feel close to her, and (ii) they are still frightened of any retaliation measures if they say they do not want to be the teacher's friend, which means that they assimilated role differences. This is another way of questioning the relevance of Constructivism: Are identities really constructed or are they not also given?

CRITICAL THEORY THROUGH GREEN THEORY: WHEN NATURE TAKES ITS REVENGE

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED
For this game, the teacher should bring a cactus and hide it under the desk. The teacher explains to the students that they have a guest speaker who asked to attend, although this was not planned as part of the programme. Considering that he is an expert, his request was accepted. The teacher should warn the students about the fact that this guest speaker is special, without explaining what exactly is so special about him, and so asks them to be particularly attentive. The teacher should say that she will now bring him into the room.

The teacher disappears behind the desk to come back with the cactus in her hands and places it just in front of the microphone, as if it was going to give a speech. The teacher explains to the students that the cactus is called Gilbert and that it actually is her favourite cactus. Then, the teacher gives the floor to Gilbert for a presentation on a very important topic of international relations. Of course, the students are not able to understand Gilbert and after a few seconds of silence and unease (some students smile, other laugh or sigh), the teacher turns her ear towards Gilbert and says: 'Gilbert, yes, tell me, ok, you are too shy to speak to the students, ok (and the teacher explains that because it is her favourite cactus she is able to understand when it speaks), so you want me to make the presentation for you. Ok Gilbert, I will do my best and use your slides'.

Gilbert's presentation is about the international bee crisis.[12] Gilbert explains to the students that bees are disappearing worldwide and that we are not even able to find their dead remains, making it even more difficult to understand why they are disappearing. Gilbert explains that we (humans) usually consider that they have died. We have a number of possible scientific explanations like disease (varroa), pesticides (disorienting bees meaning that they do not know where to go), GMOs. But Gilbert wants to make clear that these are not the right explanations. He has the right explanation: the bees are simply on strike. And they will stay on strike until they obtain better working conditions.

At that point, some students seem completely sceptical about the whole presentation and the explanation given by Gilbert. So the teacher should ask: 'Ok Gilbert, but why would bees be on strike?' And the presentation continues by explaining the current living conditions of bees that have to tolerate the overcrowding, constant transportation, mono-specie alimentation, controlled reproduction, etc., that we impose to them (which is again real information about how we use bees as pollinators). Then to be sure that he is not joking, Gilbert shows a very nice video from the National geographic about Chinese farmers pollinating by hand because bees are not there to do it anymore. The video contains figures about the cost to our economy if bees continue to disappear. Then, Gilbert explains he is doing the students a favour by explaining to them how to pollinate by themselves, something they will need to know whether they want to survive in a future without bees. Gilbert concludes his presentation by explaining that bees want a special status as full members of the United Nations. And they will stay on strike as long as they do not obtain this status. Gilbert thanks the students for their attention (some applaud, others not).

DEBRIEFING

- *Why were you laughing when Gilbert started his speech?*

Usually, they say it is because Gilbert is just a cactus, not a person.

- *Ok, so you mean he is not interesting?*

Some usually continue by saying that yes, he is just a cactus so he has no intelligence and it is not possible for him to present a talk. He is useless.

- To provoke them, you should go on by saying '*OK, I see, he is not interesting… so…. I guess you have no objections if I start cutting him into pieces in front of you*'? (and you pick up scissors).

In that case, some usually react and say 'no, you can't do that!!!!'

- *Why?*

And usually they do not really know why, but they start thinking hard about it and end up giving a number of different reasons like he is beautiful, he is useful because he produces oxygen, and as a cactus he is supposed to absorb radiation coming from electronic devices, and in any case he is a living thing. And in the end most of them are convinced that Gilbert is nice and that we should respect him.

Critical Theory is exactly about what happened during the game: It is about changing our perspectives on the things that surround us.[13] Green Theory is part of Critical Theory, giving importance to the natural world. While few people attribute no value at all to nature, most of us think that nature is worthwhile just because it is useful for human beings. It is anthropocentrism to say that Gilbert is worthwhile because he is beautiful (aesthetic value), he produces oxygen for us (functional value) and absorbs radiation (functional value). Another stream of Green Theory goes one step further, recognizing that natural species can have an intrinsic value. This is biocentrism that recognizes the need to give rights to certain mammal species (dolphins, seals, etc., because they are similar to us and demonstrate a sort of intelligence), that is restricted biocentrism, or to all animal and plant species for broad biocentrism (considering that they are alive, share the Earth with us, and therefore should be respected). Finally, ecocentrism is even more radical by asking for rights for the entire planet, even for ecosystems and the Earth's atmosphere.

These different perceptions actually give different rights and decision-making rights to the natural world. Gilbert is part of broad biocentrism that suggests giving value to natural species and giving them a say in the decisions that will affect them.

'Critical Theory is exactly about what happened during the game: It is about changing our perspectives on the things that surround us'.

This is the case for decisions on bees' working conditions, but also on mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change, on the use of the atomic bomb as a weapon, etc.

What the game demonstrates is that we all have biased perceptions of reality by simple virtue of the fact that we are human beings.[14] Critical Theory is about changing our perceptions of reality, looking at the other side of the coin, at the hidden part of the iceberg.[15] States have started to embrace biocentric and ecocentric views, and the teacher can show to the students a number of articles on global environmental treaties that use biocentric and ecocentric arguments. While they are still marginalized at the international level, some evolutions are sensitive, mostly because the ecological crisis is becoming a threat that governments take seriously.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented short games series as new pedagogical tools, developing the IR Games Show as an example. On an analytical level, games series can help to fill lacunas, with respect to unique games or to simulations, in terms of theory coverage, disciplinary logic, and teaching format diversity. When adequately organized – they have a clear introduction, they are not too long, they present a debriefing after the game and during the lectures, and they favour the participation of all – they can improve students' attention, understanding,

memory, their general learning atmosphere, and favour learning for all. The IR Games Show made students feel more familiar with International Relations.

Having said that, there are a number of ways this study could be furthered. On the one hand, to know whether games series have a real impact on learning, their advantages should be tested empirically, e.g. by correlating grade scores between 'gamed' and 'non-gamed' cohorts. As noted by others, including a control group is not easy in higher education because of practical constrains (Baranowski and Weir, 2015) but could be envisaged. Another way of developing a control group would be to survey students before and after playing the games series. On the other hand, to have more precise feedback regarding the games, one could envisage proposing students a detailed evaluation form for each game. While the evaluation used here was general, to also evaluate the importance of games with regard to the other pedagogical tools used during the lectures, it could be detailed to improve each game.

Overall, another key message of this research article is to call for the creation

'…*games series can help to fill lacunas, with respect to unique games or to simulations, in terms of theory coverage, disciplinary logic, and teaching format diversity'.*

of more games to illustrate additional theories and therefore create full game series. The IR Games Show, used as illustration, is itself incomplete and does not cover all the important theories. In the corresponding IR courses, transnationalism for instance is still introduced to students by showing them NGO campaigns, using videos as a pedagogical tool. This is not necessarily a problem, but games could surely also help introduce such a perspective. This would avoid a too strong bias of games towards state centrism. This also explains why this article gives useful tips for professors who would like to develop their own short games series, by adapting the IR Games Show, or creating new games series for other disciplines.

Notes

1 Exceptions are board games or electronic games for which the rules of the games can be complex and have to be known in advance. They also usually take longer and might not be adapted to a broad audience. This is why they are not included in the IR Games Show.

2 It is also the case on the flourishing websites and databases where games and simulations are detailed online. See, among others, the International Political Education Database, the Usherwood's Active Learning blog, and the Wikiversity Portal: Archive of Political Games and Simulations.

3 The evaluation comprises an MCQ section and a section with questions of reflection. Some MCQ questions rely on the content of the games played (for instance, ask about Portugal's GDP based on the 'who has power game' presented below). The students can also use the games to answer the open questions. For instance, if the question reads 'is international cooperation possible?', they can refer to the 'prisoner's dilemma game'.

4 See the examples below of the 'living in a world of inequalities' game or the 'when nature takes its revenge' game.

5 This game has already been developed and played by Asal (2005) and is known as the Classical Realism game. Asal gives a very interesting debriefing of the game, but this version is different and illustrates other aspects of Classical Realism. In this version, the more cards you win, the higher the

probability of winning the game. Our approaches are therefore complementary. To have a good overview of the game, you should look at both.

6 Asal (2005) developed this game too. In comparison with what he does, a different version is proposed here that better illustrates the arguments of both the Neo-Realist and Neo-Liberal camps. But Asal's version is interesting to illustrate Neo-Liberal Institutionalism. So again our versions are complementary.

7 The reward counts for 1 gain, while the years in prison are counted as penalties.

8 This presentation is about the development and evolution of development aid, giving key dates and figures. The full presentation is transmitted to all the students after the game and is included in the final examination.

9 For this, the teacher can prepare a short PowerPoint or Prezi presentation with updated graphs and data.

10 One reviewer interestingly suggested the use of Poll Everywhere, an online software that enables students to vote and see the results simultaneously. This is a good suggestion, even if it means that all students need a computer.

11 This is where Wendt and his state–identities–framework to know what type of anarchy we live in are introduced: if states are enemies, we have Hobbesian anarchy (like between North and South Korea); if they are rivals, we have Lockian anarchy (like between the USA and Europe); and if they are friends, we have Kantian anarchy like maybe within the European Union. It is also possible to introduce security communities, giving concrete and recent examples of states behaving differently because of shared or unshared identities.

12 And so again a few presentation slides of real facts related to the bee crisis are prepared.

13 Three students' evaluations make precise reference to this game, which is not the case for the other games. While one student thinks the game is too esoteric, two other students are more positive with one of them explicitly thanking Gilbert as an excellent external speaker, and one mentioning that she bought a cactus right after playing the game ☺.

14 In the following lecture, other examples are given like feminism, which says that IR studies have been biased for a long time because men developed them.

15 For the ex-cathedra presentation, a Prezi template that has the shape of an iceberg is used.

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APPENDIX: TEACHING EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

APPENDIX A: ELECTRONIC TEACHING EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

First part: comprising one closed question with two possible choices (for the first time; for the second time or more)

A. During this academic year, you follow this course:

Second part: comprising one closed question with four possible choices (0–25; 26–50; 51–75; 76–100)

B. Which percentage of classes did you attend?

and comprising one related open question
In case you did not attend at least half of the courses, you can specify here, if you wish, the corresponding explanations:

Third part: comprising eleven closed questions with an evaluation scale (very good; good; average; weak; insufficient; do not know)

1. General assessment of the content of the course
2. General assessment of the teaching performance of the professor
3. Explanation of the course objectives
4. Match between the course objectives and the content of the course
5. Structure of the course
6. Clarity of oral lectures
7. Balance of the workload distribution during the whole term
8. Quality of the course documents
9. Availability of the course documents
10. Readiness of the professor to respond to students' questions
11. Explanation of examination modalities or of other evaluation modalities

Fourth part: comprising three open questions

I. If you want to justify some of your responses on the above part of the questionnaire, indicate here your comments:
II. Which elements of the course do you consider as positive? Why?
III. Which elements of the course would you suggest should be improved, and how?

APPENDIX B: PAPER TEACHING EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Comprising seven open questions

1. Comment in a constructive way on the content of the course (topics, approach, structure of the course and of the classes, activities, etc.). Indicate what you liked and what you would suggest for improvements.
2. Comment in a constructive way on the performance of the teacher (clarity, enthusiasm, competence, preparation, etc.). Indicate what you liked and what you would suggest for improvements.
3. Comment in a constructive way on the documents accompanying the course (website, readings, slides, etc.). Indicate what you liked and what you would suggest for improvements.
4. Comment in a constructive way on the relationship between the teacher and the students (availability, respect, working atmosphere, supervision, etc.). Indicate what you liked and what you would suggest for improvements.
5. Comment in a constructive way on the preparation for the final examination (type, clarity, relevance, level, correction, etc.). Indicate what you liked and what you would suggest for improvements.
6. How did this course help you develop knowledge and skills? How could it further pursue these goals? Indicate what you liked and what you would suggest for improvements.
7. Other remarks. Please indicate here any other element you would like to communicate on the course (room, timetable, guest lectures, etc.).

About the Author

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