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Amitav Acharya, & Barry Buzan (Eds.) ***Non-Western international relations theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia.*** **New York: Routledge. 2010.**

This edited volume brings together six authors who evaluate the state of non-western oriented International Relations Theory in case study/country formats, incorporating studies of China, Japan, Korea, India, and Indonesia. Accompanying micro-level case study evaluation are meso- and macro- level inquiries from a Southeast Asian, Islamic, and World Historical view. The various authors come together in providing key insights into the fundamental question posed by this volume, namely: Why is there no non-western international relations theory—or, perhaps more pointedly—why is there a lack of appreciation for, exposure to, and dissemination of non-western oriented international relations theoretical scholarship? The nature of this volume is to offer readers a systematized purview of the nature of international relations theorizing, which stands in western academic circles as being the crux of scholastic achievement and stands apart from practitioner/policy analysis (which has as its core motive the solving of everyday issues and problems). The question posed by Acharya and Buzan's text has perhaps escaped academicians and laymen in general for the preceding half century of international relations scholarship. Nonetheless, the research trajectory set by the editors is both intriguing and prescient to the contemporary period, not least because the focus of power relations and international influence in the 21st century is shifting and will continue to shift towards Asia, with its dynamic economies and rapidly modernizing social and political spaces.

International relations (IR) is an interdisciplinary field of study, sometimes considered a branch of political science, with the primary goals of (1) understanding relationships between countries and (2) seeking to both analyze and formulate the foreign policy of states. Students of IR are keenly aware of the demand for rigorous study of the IR "classics" as well as the expectation that publishable work adhere to a theoretically sound and testable base, both of which are the essence of scholarship in the field of IR (and, indeed, in academia in general). However, in U.S. academic circles, the limited scope of theoretical inquiry into the field of IR itself (which has centered on few debates such as neorealist v. neoliberal, realist v. ideational, positivist v. reflexive) has led students and instructors of IR in U.S. universities down a dangerous path. This path is characterized by ever-increasing inflexibility and the need to "reheat" studies and approaches, using familiar paradigmatic expressions (inherently stemming from post-colonial studies) rather than looking towards the nature of international society or exploring the effects that globalization is bringing to the fore, including fracturedness, diversity, reimagination, and reconnection with lost traditions (i.e. the recapturing of local, regional, and subsystem coherence). The threat of reifying western IR Theory and the problem of its uneven fit to emerging regions of the world highlight the need for a fresh look and a diversified understanding of IR. The volume itself is readily accessible to students of international relations. This accessibility is a result of the authors' narrative styles, clearly structured work, and the absence of academic jargon. This text would appeal to a wide range of persons, including students of international relations, Asia experts, and those who simply find international relations interesting.

The first chapter, written by Yaqing Qin, addresses the state of international relations theorization and the components which have led to a lack of IR theorization in contemporary Chinese scholarship. Qin begins by making distinctions regarding the different periods of Chinese international relations academic inquiry. The author finds that the state of Chinese IR is

subject to political exigencies associated with China's political economy during the post-civil war era. The lack of IR-specific theorizing is seen as the result of the political need to make policy prescriptions for state management. This political need coupled with the lack of expertise regarding the western world led Chinese IR to focus on policy-based, real-world (i.e. non-theoretical), immediate problem solving. Combined with a commiserate lack of funding, Chinese expertise in high-level IR theorizing is currently found lacking.

The author's central argument for the reasons behind the lack of an academic discipline in IR in China is twofold. First, he surmises that there is a historical component that comes from the revolutionary nature of Chinese politics and society from 1898 onwards and the immediate need to "catch up" and establish China's place in the world. Second, he says, is a philosophical aspect stemming from the conflict between the intellectual traditions of Confucian-based Chinese theorization and the western liberal tradition. Qin's most revealing assertion, however, is that not only does Chinese scholarship have the potential to develop its own IR theory but also that Chinese reasoning and tradition themselves are in fact keenly suited to the creation of such theory. Confucian China places an emphasis on collective awareness with respect to understanding both China's political place in the world and the place of the individual within the greater political collective. This Chinese worldview, which places the individual inside of a greater socio-political collective, stands out as having the potential to be a focal point of a paradigmatic shift towards original IR scholarship. The aforementioned, coupled with rapid modernization and the opening up of academic space in China, in general, bode well for the development of Chinese IR. These conditions create fertile ground for an emerging Chinese academia and have the potential to give birth to a truly non-western IR theoretical sphere with Chinese origins.

In the second chapter, Takashi Inoguchi considers the question of whether or not there is a Japanese IR Theory. Inoguchi suggests that if an American positivist standard is considered the IR theory benchmark, then the answer would have to be no. If, however, one considers IR theory to encompass a richer structural field including constructivism, regional integration, international law, and economics then the answer would indeed be yes, though with its own particular nature and limitations. The author considers the nature of IR scholarship in Japan and presents a few reasons why there may very well be a lack of academic rigor in Japanese IR studies. First, the author points to socio-political constraints due to the lack of a strong political science culture in Japanese academia, which can be traced, he says, to the formative period of Japanese modernization and nation building, during which students of political science and IR were selectively trained according to the specific needs of the burgeoning Japanese state. (The author also jests that a lack of a strong political science culture might well be the result of a fear of having too many unemployed political scientist running amuck.) The author asserts that the nature of both state structure and state needs in Japan are such that IR and political science in general are influenced by a strong bias towards policy and state needs rather than towards theoretical considerations. As such, major strains of Japanese intellectual thought are generally disposed towards policy, historicism, Marxism, and post-1970 positivism. Additionally, IR and political science, as an autonomous university department, is nonexistent in Japan; hence, IR/political science departments are dependent upon and in many cases appendages of other faculties such as humanities, law, letters or economics. (p. 52-53) Social constraints in the Japanese employment market and the rigid nature of employment crossover are also pointed out as cogent.

To provide support for his thesis that a Japanese IR theory does indeed exist despite its limitations, the author considers three divergent Japanese scholars from the pre- and post-war periods. The author chooses Nishida (Philosophy), Tabata Shigejiro (International Law), and Hirano (Economy) to show how Japanese scholarship indeed has its own shape and voice rivaling western scholarship in considerations of identity formation, communitarian international law, and human rights discourses, and functional regional integration. In fact, says Inoguchi, such considerations were of academic interest in Japan prior to their becoming fully mainstream western intellectual pursuits. The author's premise is that Japanese IR theorists and theories were at one time quite prevalent and even informed Japanese scholarship for many decades prior to the recent upswing in American-,influenced positivist methodologies. The American-influenced trajectory in IR theorizing is inclined to be descriptive, culturally laden, and critical in nature. However, if one takes a broader view and considers constructivism, diplomatic history, and integration studies to be a part of IR, then there is ample space for locally produced IR theories unique from western influenced IR theory.

Chaesung Chun's chapter explores the lack of original IR theory in Korea. The author focuses on the relevance and applicability of western IR theories to the field of Korean IR and situates historical circumstances within the contemporary framework of tutelage, quasi-sovereignty, and the nonexistence of Korean-born IR traditions. The author clearly places the lack of Korean IR within the historical framework of Korea operating under Sino-dominated, Neo-Confucian understandings of dynastic hierarchy, which held enormous sway on the Korean peninsula with regard to regional politics, security, economy, and inter-social relations. The nature of peninsular relations, specifically between 1876 and 1953, which saw the collapse of the traditional order, the transformation to state-based equality, followed by colonial imperialism, then cold war rivalry, undermined the ability of the Koreans to develop a peninsular-specific form of IR theorizing and state policy consideration. As such, Korean IR tends essentially to rely directly on imported western IR theories, whether or not such theories are appropriate or applicable. In fact, the author considers western IR theories, particularly grand theories and traditions to be found wanting and wholly inapplicable to Northeast Asia, in general, and Korea, specifically (though he finds considerable applicability for micro-theories). He claims, American IR theories (e.g. realist) and methodologies, though recognized as imparting much needed expertise with respect to subsystem inquiry (such as security studies) are wholly inadequate when addressing macro issues, which, due to the nature and course of Korean history, simply do not fit the imported American philosophies. The reason for this uneasy existence between American IR theory and Korean reality is in fact the nature of political sovereignty (or rather lack thereof) in Korea. According to western IR theory, notions of sovereignty are the keystones to interstate and, by default, international relations of states. Problematically, Korean sovereignty falls outside of the west's narrow, simple understanding of what it means to be sovereign. Korea (both North and South), during its many political epochs that constitute the nation's history, (from the Period of Three Nations through the Ming Dynasty and into the Chosun Period towards Japanese Imperialism) has a very difficult time conceptualizing sovereignty in its western form. Sovereignty as constituted by modern international law and organized state behavior stands in direct opposition to Confucian worldviews and Korean Empire understanding of sovereign relations of personal and regional responsibility. Thus coming to grips with sovereignty and its highly deceptive form during the Japanese Imperialist period was not only instructive but helped cement realist leanings.

In considering the state of IR in India, Navnita Chadha Behera takes the question of whether or not there is an Indian IR and turns it on its head by instead firmly stating that there is an Indian IR and redirecting the frame of inquiry by asking why it has not been recognized. Behera's argument is centered on postmodern conceptions of knowledge formation, dissemination, legitimacy and reproduction based on discursive underpinnings. Behera asserts that Western IR theory, born of Western-originated notions of international systems of states, leaves no room for local Indian IR theories. According to Behera:

…Western IR and its fundamental understandings of the Westphalian state[1] and its attendant parts are part and parcel representative of a larger structure of exclusion. The exclusionary nature of this paradigm finds its powerbase in setting the intellectual agenda, gatekeeping and essential monopolizing discourse and the production of knowledge within the frameworks of western delineated structures. (Behera, 2009, p. 109)

By setting the course of academia, methodologies, legitimacy of inquiry, publishing, and wide dissemination of knowledge, says Behera, western sources of IR have "colonized the mind of local academics" in India by "precluding the inviolability of alternate sources of knowledge production" (Behera, 2009, pp. 105-106).

Despite these claims, Behera does not use the term "west" derogatorily and finds serious shortcomings, too, within the Indian system, particularly, for example, a lack of funding for IR in university departments, overworked academics, whose focus must necessarily be on teaching rather than on rigorous research, and a narrow field of inquiry, a shortcoming that began as early as independence, as a result of Nehru's decision to undertake foreign affairs, diplomacy, and international relations of the Indian state personally. Of particular importance, says Behera, was Nehru's non-alignment movement and attempts at pan-regionalism, which were dismissed by western intellectuals out of hand rather than considered as reasonable foundations of a new branch of IR theory. Bahera suggests that reconnecting history and allowing for a wider research sphere of IR would temper the western positivist science and rationalist perspective by adding more culturally oriented and appropriate models. In such a case, the field of IR would inherently benefit by the creation of a new IR that would be multi-polar and representative of those that IR seeks to generalize and study.

Alan Chong addresses the lack of originality in the existing IR scholarship of many non-western regions by pointing to an inherent bias that ultimately leads even non-western intellectuals to rely on imported western models, which are ill-suited to the region. Chong finds that discourse surrounding Southeast Asian states, in particular, in the international sphere largely coalesce around post-colonial studies, which stress a role of modernity that is superimposed by western lenses geared to highlight the salience of stability, nationalism, realist narratives, and dependence-based interpretations of nation building. In effect, the author asserts that western narratives concerning the Southeast Asian region reveal an understanding of Southeast Asia that began after the Cold War and one in which it is assumed that the agency of nascent Southeast Asian states and leaders was, in the best case, a second order priority. This

[1] Scholars of international relations have identified the modern, Western originated, international system of states, multinational corporations, and organizations, as having begun at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. In the Westphalian system, the national interests and goals of states (and later nation-states) were widely assumed to go beyond those of any citizen or any ruler. States became the primary institutional agents in an interstate system of relations. The "Westphalian" doctrine of states as independent agents was bolstered by the rise in 19th century thought of nationalism, under which legitimate states were assumed to correspond to *nations*—groups of people united by language and culture.

abundance of scholarly work which favors western realist narratives is supported by samples of high ranking scholarly journals that provide some evidence of an embedded cultural bias towards the region. However, the author points towards recent academic endeavors in non-western spheres that attempt to study and develop at least a generative conceptualization that is region-sensitive (i.e. non-western) and that incorporates constructivist studies and works dealing with agent-specific narratives of regional phenomena.

Leonard Sebastian and Irman Lanti consider the existence of generalized IR theorizing in Indonesia and find room for meaningful surveys into Indonesian/Southeast Asian variants that may lead researchers towards a new track of IR inquiry. The authors cite the centrality of organizational leadership and personality as a point of inflection for methodological excursions into politics and IR of Indonesia and Southeast Asia. The authors claim that Indonesian mythology resulting from kingship and character traits are reflected in the larger political sphere and have large-scale social ramifications. and political culture the Javanese tradition of "musyawarah" where leaders use informality and as the basis for decision-making, "mufakat" as the process or practice of decision-making "pamrih" as the directional change of leadership towards a The crux of their argument lies in the Indonesian conceptualization deterance and security, which is not simply based on material forces but rather is informed by ideational and non-materialist understandings of charisma and personality traits. This understanding points towards a need for greater recognition of the role of individual agency in the study of IR in Southeast Asia. Power structure, as has been studied by western theorists of Southeast Asian regionalism, is insufficient to fully unpack the nature of power in countries like Indonesia that demonstrate complex and nuanced cultural understandings regarding power, influence, and authority.

Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh considers the role that Islam, or rather Islamic traditions and worldviews, can contribute to an emerging body of knowledge that is distinct from western traditions while sharing some traits of western schools of IR theory. Tadjbakhsh proposes that the fundamental discord between Islamic and western interpretations of international phenomena is rooted in both Islamic and western essentialist conceptions of "the state," its people, and the role that religion plays in the formation of states. The author posits that the formations of Islamic states are based on a specific binary logic that eludes western political and positivist understandings, namely that justice is not predicated upon order or stability but that stability is predicated upon justice. The author believes that the Islamic state cannot be solely understood or studied in terms of western realist modernity; the Islamic state is a subjectified entity, bound in the identity-formations of its people. Finally, the author asserts that the Islamic state does not exist simply for itself. Rather, it exists for its people: to provide for them both physically and metaphysically by spiritual means. The last point is of particular interest, as it illustrates the critical point of disjuncture between Islamic and western IR theories and philosophies. This conceptualized understanding of the state requires the study of Islamic IR to include issues of morality and ethics, just as western-oriented IR examines conceptions of power, authority, and legitimacy. The author claims that there is an inability of the western scientific/rationalistic-based theories to capture the "essentiality" and "normative/ideational centrality" of Islam in not only everyday life but also in the role that Islam itself plays within the larger, collectivized understandings of the nation-state. The author believes that western rejection of all things that are not empirically-testable leads to the erroneous understanding that Islam's relation to international relations is irrational or ephemeral, and, thus, not inclinable to rigorous and

verifiable study. It is precisely this point that the author believes should be the basis for a new IR understanding and theory for Islamic states.

Buzan and Little place the frame of non-western IR theorizing within the disciplinary sphere of studying world history. They begin by surveying the historical and prevalent thematic literature of world history written by scholars and find strong similarities with regard to the study of world history as it presented. Particularly, they find that within the study of history, a "modernity bias" is nearly ubiquitous, leaning invariably towards historical narratives that prejudice the centrality of the nation-state as being a priori and, thus, narrowing the availability of broader theorizing or inquiries (though this was not necessarily the intent of scholars themselves). The nation-state being taken as a "given" further provides prejudice to the study of Eurocentric conceptualizations of state activity, power, formation, and external relations, which find their intellectual home in Europe. Furthermore, the authors point towards historians who have come to the realization of the existence of such structural biases and who have attempted to reconcile these with more balanced appeals to scholars (yet have found trouble due to the fact that the study of history and its narrative understandings are generally sourced from same pool of Eurocentricity). Revisionist historians and legal historians are cited as being the primary force behind the drive to identify such Eurocentricity. The authors find that by inquiring with a view towards studying alternative system prevalence (prior to European hegemony), historians can begin to properly construct the world as it was before European colonialism.

This volume in no way proposes simple solutions to the complex problem of a highly biased system of inquiry with regard to the field of international relations, but it does add a critically needed voice that specifies areas of deficiency and methods which may allow for alternative and reasonable disciplinary guidance that can finally address the historical inequity within the study of IR. The authors provide key insights to a problematic theme regarding how to overcome "colonization of the mind" by the limiting and framing scopes of inquiry so as to essentially set an agenda with regard to an entire disciplinary field of academia and its requisite effects. International relations and its theorizing stands to benefit and become a much richer field of academic inquiry that allows for alternative and specifically-suited methodologies and theory which can be applied without prejudice in order to provide better insight into the majority of the world's history, particularly those of cultures that are not European, American, or Australian.

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