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Scott Straus & Barry Driscoll. International Studies: Global Forces, Interactions, And Tensions. Los Angeles: CQ Press (Sage Publications, Inc.), 2019.

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Scott Straus & Barry Driscoll. *International Studies: Global Forces, Interactions, And Tensions*. Los Angeles: CQ Press (Sage Publications, Inc.), 2019.

Scott Straus and Barry Driscoll have written a superb text on international studies, a field that stands out for being inchoate, and even amorphous. It is often conflated with international relations, or politely treated as “Political Science light.” While recognizing its hazy origin, Straus and Driscoll argue that international studies has grown to be an interdisciplinary field that draws upon the strengths of a number of social scientific disciplines. In this spirit, they have gleaned insights from anthropology and sociology to political science and international relations to write a theoretically guided, empirically rich, and a highly readable introductory text. They have targeted it at undergraduate scholars, who constitute their intended audience. Despite the incipience of the field and its cross-disciplinary roots, Straus and Driscoll present international studies as a stand-alone discipline, which has been competitive on college campuses, at least in the United States.

The authors blithely recognize the growing popularity of introductory courses in international studies that especially has become a major draw for the millennial generation. The major trope of such courses, and international studies in particular, has been the ever-globalizing contemporary world and what the Nobel-laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz aptly describes its “Discontents.” Straus and Driscoll are more nuanced in their choice of descriptors. They certainly steer clear of what could appear to be the charged terms describing the consequences of globalization or the globalizing world. Such caution is evident in their choice of an anodyne term “tensions” (contra “discontents”) to illustrate frustrations or what they see “unintended outcomes” of “global interactions.” They argue that movement of capital, ideas and people is generative of “global interactions,” but growing fears in host societies of, for instance, human migration in the assumed dilution of majority communities and their stable identities are productive of “tensions.”

Straus and Driscoll have framed the text with four interrelated themes that recur throughout the text: *global interactions*, the *tensions* they produce, the *global forces* that “animate interactions,” and the *outside-in and inside-out* dynamics shaping these interactions. *Outside-in* is a reference to global actors, while *Inside-out* refers to domestic actors within national jurisdictions, who, in the authors’ view, have acquired active agency to affect global affairs in this interconnected world. Of multiple global forces, Straus and Driscoll zero in on four of them: (a) global markets, (b) information and communication technology (ICT), (c) shifting centers of power in the world, and (d) global governance. They claim, and persuasively so, that these four global forces “matter for almost any contemporary global challenge” (p.xix).

The authors define global markets as “the reach and depth of supply and demand across borders.” Information and communication technology (ICT), in their view, makes online interactions possible, while accelerating the diffusion of ideas and information. Shifting centers of power reflects the reshuffling of the deck of global geopolitics, in which the rising nations of the Global South are crowding out the traditional power(s). Global governance is defined as the way in which complex international issues are managed by multiple actors through a web of regulative and enforcement mechanisms. Straus and Driscoll argue that these four forces are basic to explaining any global problem, or devising its solution. Their argument to define the role

of these quadrilateral forces in shaping, deshaping or reshaping the contemporary world is quite instructive. Global markets and ICT are the kind of forces that young learners are familiar with, although they still need to be educated on their analytic relevance, particularly to global interactions and the tensions they produce.

The changing world map of global powers – from a unipolar to bipolar to now multipolar moment – is equally important for young learners, especially in the Global North. How the primacy of the Global North is being decentered by the rising powers in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are clustered as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), is of critical importance to the learning communities across campuses. Is the shadowing of the unipolar moment a result of the declining preeminence of the United States as declinists argue, or is it due to the rising power of Asian, African, Eurasian and Latin American nations? Does the rise of one great power have to be the fall of the other? Or is it just a diffusion of power across multiple poles? Does the reshuffling of world powers affirm the declinist argument, or an argument for a stable world order, or an international government?

The tentative answers to these questions rest on global governance, which the authors introduce as the fourth prong of their analytic framework. Global governance goes beyond formal organizations in national governments or within national jurisdictions to include state and non-state actors and entities to manage issues of global concern. The authors' case studies of human rights and climate change are urgently relevant in illustrating the importance of global governance. How global interactions have produced the specter of human trafficking, and how global actors and entities have responded to such menaces is at the heart of global governance. The same is the case with climate change, a product of global interactions, which has multitudes of actors and entities around the world speaking on its behalf and tirelessly working for its stabilization. The work being done on climate change is an example of global climate governance or environmental governance.

Straus and Driscoll have carefully selected issues of global concern for their pedagogy. Their subjects range from democracy, human rights, development, poverty, inequality, civil wars, terrorism, human migration, global health, and global environment to global food. These issues are duly anchored in a wide-ranging repertoire of conceptual and theoretical frameworks that constitute the foundational readings, which are concise and to the point. Equipped with knowledge and deep knowledge (*i.e.*, amplifying theoretical lenses and methodological tools of scientific precision), young learners are expected to make the next move: analyze, among others, issues of development, poverty, inequality, the environment, climate change, food, and hunger. Discussing the issue of development, for instance, the authors test major theoretical explanations to demonstrate why some countries continue to be poor.

Their colloquial version of dense theories makes them more comprehensible to young learners. A case in point is modernization theory that they sum up in a catch phrase: "To Get Rich, Copy the Rich!" Similarly, dependency theory translates into another catchphrase: "Plug *Out* of global markets." On the contrary, developmental states theory has "Plug *In*" to global markets. neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus has the shrunken state in the talons of the market. Straus and Driscoll present global governance as a post-Washington consensus. They engage with cutting edge science while discussing issues of food famines and climate change.

Global food encompasses high-quality discussions of food security and food sovereignty, before it closes in on the question of who runs global food. The authors answer the question in a range of explanations from realism and liberalism to structuralism. While reviewing the challenge of climate change, they sample a number of world responses that are embedded in academic explanations of the phenomenon.

Straus and Driscoll particularly focus on climate stabilization, adaptation to climate change, and large-scale climate interventions. The latter includes some of the highfalutin geoeengineering projects. To these and a range of other issues, the authors bring their lifelong passion and learning, especially on-site, hands-on, and minds-on learning. Straus, whose geographical expertise extends to Africa and beyond, began studying African development as an undergraduate scholar in Kenya where he traveled under a foreign study program. Years later, he went back in Kenya to report on African development as a freelance journalist. During his doctoral training in political science, he devoted his dissertation to the examination of the sources of genocide in Rwanda. In the like vein, Driscoll finds global forces' interaction in his first trip, as a young scholar, to China where he visited Mao Zedong's embalmed remains in his final resting place, and ate a burger at a nearby A&W restaurant in Beijing, which is a U.S. fast food chain that he writes had recently opened in China.

In short, Scott Straus and Barry Driscoll have ingeniously marshalled their intellectual forces to produce a memorable introductory text for international studies courses that should be required reading for anyone engaged with our globalizing, inter-connected, and interdependent world. In particular, it should sit atop the supplementary sources for all introductory liberal arts courses. Kudos to Straus and Driscoll for pulling off this scholarly and pedagogical feat!

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