

# Non-Western International Relations Theory

Perspectives on and beyond Asia

*Edited by*  
**Amitav Acharya** and  
**Barry Buzan**



# Non-Western International Relations Theory

Given that the world has moved well beyond the period of Western colonialism, and clearly into a durable period in which non-Western cultures have gained their political autonomy, it is long overdue that non-Western voices had a higher profile in debates about international relations, not just as disciples of Western schools of thought, but as inventors of their own approaches. Western IR theory has had the advantage of being the first in the field, and has developed many valuable insights, but few would defend the position that it captures everything we need to know about world politics.

In this book, Acharya and Buzan introduce non-Western IR traditions to a Western IR audience, and challenge the dominance of Western theory. An international team of experts reinforces existing criticisms that IR theory is Western-focused and therefore misrepresents and misunderstands much of world history by introducing the reader to non-Western traditions, literature and histories relevant to how IR is conceptualized.

Including case studies on Chinese, Japanese, South Korean, Southeast Asian, Indian and Islamic IR this book redresses the imbalance and opens up a cross-cultural comparative perspective on how and why thinking about IR has developed in the way it has. As such, it will be invaluable reading for both Western and Asian audiences interested in international relations theory.

**Amitav Acharya** is Professor of International Politics at American University, USA.

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The original idea for this book project came from conversations between the editors, which started in the early 1990s. Acharya's work on Third World and Asian security led him to realize the striking lack of fit between his subject areas and international relations theory (IRT). Buzan's sporadic engagements with Asia left him with the impression that there was little if any indigenous development of IRT there. In addition, his collaborative work with Richard Little underlined to him the dependence of much IRT on a specifically Western history.

Six of the chapters of this book (China, Japan, India, Southeast Asia and earlier versions of the introduction and the conclusion) were first published together as a special issue of the journal, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (vol.7, no.3, 2007). We would like to thank the editor of the journal, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, for organizing the review process for the special issue, and the journal's publisher, Oxford University Press, for giving us permission to reproduce those articles here. Stephanie Rogers at Routledge deserves special appreciation for encouraging us to turn the special issue into a book with the addition of four new chapters (South Korea, Indonesia, Islamic IRT, and world history), along with a revised introduction and conclusion.

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Amitav Acharya, Washington DC,  
and Barry Buzan, London, 2009



# 1 Why is there no non-Western international relations theory?

## An introduction

*Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan*

More than 40 years ago, in a provocative essay that has since become a classic in the field, Martin Wight (1966: 20) addressed the question of ‘why is there no international theory?’ Wight asserted that ‘international theory, or what there is of it, is scattered, unsystematic, and mostly inaccessible to the layman’. To explain why this is so, he compared **political** theory with international theory. Political theory was informed by a widespread belief in the sovereign state as the highest form of political life, a belief which contributed to the lack of interest in the possibility of a world state. Whereas political theory and law were concerned with the good life featuring ‘maps of experience or systems of action within the realm of normal relationships and calculable results’, the realm of international relations could be equated with a repetitiously competitive struggle for survival, reproducing ‘the same old melodrama’.

In this project we take up a more specific question than Wight’s, but inspired by it. We start from the premise that there is now a substantial body of theory about international relations, some of it even meeting Wight’s normative understanding of political theory. The puzzle for us is that the sources of international relations theory (IRT) conspicuously fail to correspond to the global distribution of its subjects. Our question is: ‘why is there no non-Western international theory?’ We are as intrigued by the absence of theory in the non-West as Wight was by what he considered to be the absence of international theory in general. But our investigation into this puzzle follows a broader line of enquiry. Wight’s central message was that satisfaction with an existing political condition identified with the pursuit of progress and the good life within the state inhibited the need for developing a theory about what was regarded as the repetitious melodrama of relations among states. If so, then one may find a ready-made explanation for why non-Western international theory, or what there is of it, remains ‘scattered, unsystematic, and mostly inaccessible’. Today, the contemporary equivalent of ‘good life’ in international relations – democratic peace, interdependence and integration, and institutionalized orderliness, as well as the ‘normal relationships and calculable results’ are found mostly in the West, while the non-West remains the realm of survival (Goldgeiger and McFaul 1992). Wight maintained that ‘what for political theory is the extreme case (as revolution, or civil war) is for international theory the regular case’. One might say with little exaggeration that what in Wight’s view

was the extreme case for political theory, has now become extreme only for the international relations of the core states found in the West, while for the non-West, it remains the stuff of everyday life.

But the absence of non-Western IRT deserves a more complex explanation than the simple acknowledgement of the conflictual anarchy of the non-West. Indeed, we do not accept Wight's observation that international theory, in contrast to political theory, is or should be about survival only. We acknowledge the possibility of progress and transformation both in the West and the non-West. Our explanations for the absence of a non-Western international theory focuses not on the total lack of good life in the non-West, but on ideational and perceptual forces, which fuel, in varying mixtures, both Gramscian hegemonies, and ethnocentrism and the politics of exclusion. Some of these explanations are located within the West, some within the non-West and some in the interaction between the two. These explanations have much to do with what Wæver (1998) has called the 'sociology' of the discipline, which reinforces material variables such as disparities in power and wealth.

In this book, we set out to conduct an investigation into why is there no non-Western IRT and what might be done to mitigate this situation. We focus on Asia, both because it is the site of the only contemporary non-Western concentration of power and wealth even remotely comparable to the West, and because it has its own long history of international relations that is quite distinct from that of the West. History matters to IRT, because as we will show in section 3 below, even a short reflection on Western IRT quickly exposes that much of it is conspicuously drawn from the model provided by modern European history. We are acutely aware that we are excluding the Middle East, whose history has an equal claim to standing as a distinctive source of IR. We also exclude Africa, whose history of state traditions was often tied into the Middle East and Europe, and whose non-state history perhaps has less immediate relevance to IRT (though this perception too, may be part of what needs to be rectified). We make these exclusions on grounds that our expertise does not lie in these regions, and that including them would require a much bigger project than we have the resources to undertake. We hope others will take up our challenge to do for these regions what we do here for Asia, and that they will find the approach adopted here useful in doing that.

Our goal is to introduce non-Western IR traditions to a Western IR audience, and to challenge non-Western IR thinkers to challenge the dominance of Western theory. We do this not out of antagonism for the West, or contempt for the IRT that has been developed there, but because we think Western IRT is both too narrow in its sources and too dominant in its influence to be good for the health of the wider project to understand the social world in which we live. We hold that IR theory is in and of itself not inherently Western, but is an open domain into which it is not unreasonable to expect non-Westerners to make a contribution at least proportional to the degree that they are involved in its practice.

There is, in addition, the powerful argument of Robert Cox (1986: 207) that 'Theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose.' IR theory likes to pose as neutral, but it is not difficult to read much of it in a Coxian light, especially those that offer not just a way of analysing, but also a vision of what the world does look

like (realism, English School pluralists), or should look like (liberalism, Marxism, critical theory, English School solidarists). In the Coxian perspective, liberalism, especially economic liberalism, can be seen as speaking for capital. Realism and the English School pluralists speak for the status quo great powers and the maintenance of their dominant role in the international system/society. Though they are presented as universal theories, and might, indeed, be accepted as such by many, all three can also be seen as speaking for the West and in the interest of sustaining its power, prosperity and influence. Various strands of Marxism and critical theory have sought to speak for excluded or marginalized groups (workers, women, Third World countries) and to promote improvement in the position of those in the periphery. From this Coxian perspective, Asian states have an interest in IR theory that speaks for them and their interests. Neither China nor Japan fit comfortably into realism or liberalism. China is trying to avoid being treated as a threat to the status quo as its power rises, and the moves to develop a Chinese school of IR are focused on this problem. Japan is seeking to avoid being a 'normal' great power and its status as a 'trading state' or 'civilian power' is a direct contradiction of realist expectations. ASEAN defies the realist, liberal and English School logic that order is provided by the local great powers. South Korea and India perhaps fit more closely with realist models, yet neither seems certain about what sort of place it wants for itself in international society. To the extent that IR theory is constitutive of the reality that it addresses, Asian states have a major interest in being part of the game. If we are to improve IRT as a whole, then Western theory needs to be challenged not just from within, but also from outside.

The next section looks at what we understand by IR theory. Section 3 sets out the pattern of Western dominance in IRT. Section 4 surveys non-Western contributions to thinking about IR. Section 5 explores the possible explanations for Western dominance of IRT. Section 6 sets out the structure of the book and summarizes the arguments in the chapters that follow.

## **What do we mean by IR theory?**

It is important at the outset to have some sense of what 'theory' means in IR. The question is problematic because of the dichotomy between the hard positivist understanding of theory, which dominates in the US, and the softer reflectivist understandings of theory found more widely in Europe (Wæver 1998). Many Europeans use the term theory for anything that organizes a field systematically, structures questions and establishes a coherent and rigorous set of interrelated concepts and categories. The dominant American tradition, however, usually demands that theory be defined in positivist terms: that it defines terms in operational form, and then sets out and explains the relations between causes and effects. This type of theory should contain – or be able to generate – testable hypotheses of a causal nature. These differences are captured in Hollis and Smith's (1990) widely used distinction between *understanding* and *explanation*. They have epistemological and ontological roots that transcend the crude Europe-US divide, and it is of course the case that advocates of the 'European' position can be found in the US,

and of the 'American' position in Europe. In both of these forms, theory is about abstracting away from the facts of day-to-day events in an attempt to find patterns, and group events together into sets and classes of things. Theory is therefore about simplifying reality. It starts from the supposition that in some quite fundamental sense, each event is *not* unique, but can be clustered together with others that share some important similarities. Each power rivalry (or development trajectory, war or empire etc.) will have both some unique features and some that it shares with others of its type. In this sense, and at the risk of some oversimplification, social theory is the opposite of history. Where historians seek to explain each set of events in its own terms, social theorists look for more general explanations/understandings applicable to many cases distributed across space and time. For historians, the goal is to have the best possible explanation for a particular set of events. For theorists, the goal is to find the most powerful explanations: those where a small number of factors can explain a large number of cases. Waltz (1979) aims for this type of parsimonious theory with his idea that anarchic structure makes the distribution of capabilities the key to understanding the main patterns of international relations for all of recorded history.

For the enquiry that we have in mind, we do not think it either necessary or appropriate to get engaged in the bottomless controversies about theory that emanate from debates about the philosophy of knowledge. We set aside concerns about whether the social world can be approached in the same way as the material one. We are happy to take a pluralist view of theory that embraces both the harder, positivist, rationalist, materialist and quantitative understandings on one end of the spectrum, and the more reflective, social, constructivist, and postmodern on the other. In this pluralist spirit we also include normative theory, whose focus is not so much to explain or understand the social world as it is, but to set out systematic ideas about how and why it can and should be improved. Although normative theory has a different purpose from analysing the social world as it is, it shares the underlying characteristic of theory that it abstracts from reality and seeks general principles applicable across a range of cases that share some common features. Privileging one type of theory over others would largely defeat the purpose of our enterprise, which is to make an initial probe to find 'what is out there' in Asian thinking about IR. A broad approach to theory will give us a much better chance of finding local produce than a narrow one, and those who take particular views can apply their own filters to separate out what is of significance (or not) to them.

Given the peculiarities of international relations as a subject, it is worth saying something about whether IR theory needs to be universal in scope (i.e. applying to the whole system) or can also be exceptionalist (applying to a subsystem on the grounds that it has distinctive characteristics). As noted above, the holy grail for theorists is the highest level of generalization about the largest number of events. That impulse points strongly towards universalist IR theories, like Waltz's, that claim to apply to the whole international system and to be timeless in their application (though even Waltz can be faulted here for keeping silent about the vast swaths of history in which 'universal' empires held sway, overwhelming his supposedly indestructible self-reproducing logic of international anarchy – Buzan and Little

2000). Yet there is also plenty of room for exceptionalism. Perhaps the leading example is European studies, where the emergence of the EU has created a regional political structure that fits neither domestic nor international political models. It is too far removed from anarchy to be Westphalian, and too distant from hierarchy to count as either an empire or a domestic political space. This post-Westphalian experiment has a reasonable claim to be exceptional, and is theorized about in terms of 'multi-level governance' and other such specifically tailored concepts. In principle, area studies should be a main location for subsystemic theorizing. In relation to Asia, elements of this are visible in the idea that East Asia may be dressed up in Westphalian costume, but is not performing a Westphalian play. Because of its Confucian culture, East Asian states are more likely to bandwagon with power rather than balance against it. This line of thinking (Fairbank 1968; Huntington 1996: 229–38; Kang 2003) projects Asia's past into its future. It assumes that what Fairbank labelled the 'Chinese World Order' – a Sinocentric and hierarchical form of international relations – has survived within the cultures of East Asia despite the superficial remaking of the Asian subsystem into a Western-style set of sovereign states. This line of exceptionalist theorizing about East Asia is not that well developed, and mainly emanates from the US. The problem with area studies is that although it might well be the right location for subsystemic, exceptionalist theorizing, area studies is generally dominated by disciplines that have a low interest in theorizing, effectively taking exceptionalism to be a reason *not* to theorize. Europe (in the form of EU studies) once again stands apart.

Subsystemic theorizing in IR is thus generally underdeveloped. Area studies experts mostly are not interested in it, and most mainstream IR theories concentrate on the system level (realism and great powers, liberalism and 'universal' values, the English School and international society, globalization and the world economy). It is noteworthy that English School theory has ignored the regional level generally and the EU in particular, even though there is no reason in principle why the idea of international society cannot be applied to subsystems, and many reasons in both theory and practice why it should be (Buzan 2004: 205–27). Even theorizing about regionalism is often done in universalist, comparative terms. Despite the effective dominance of system-level theorizing in IR, it is clear that if pushed to an extreme, the logic of exceptionalist claims would deny the possibility of universal IR theories – or indeed any universal social theory. If cultural differences are strong enough, then shared features at the system level will be too thin to support universal theories. There is an interesting link here with the Coxian formula discussed above. If all theory is for someone and for some purpose, this effectively makes universal theory impossible other than as a disguise for the secular interests of those promoting it.<sup>1</sup> E. H. Carr's (1946: 79) warning that 'the English-speaking peoples are past masters in the art of concealing their selfish national interests in the guise of the general good' captures this Coxian perspective nicely, and given the Anglo-American domination of IR is of more than passing interest. The result is to identify a perpetual tension in the act of theorizing about IR, whether at the systemic or subsystemic level. Is it possible to aspire to detached science in attempting to understand and explain how the world works, or must all



such attempts be seen as fundamentally sectional, and inevitably part of an ongoing political game to sustain or unseat the hegemonic view, and thus sustain or unseat those whose interests are served by that view?

Taking all this into account, and regardless of how one answers the last question, this project requires us to have some sense of what counts as a contribution to IRT. Unless we set some benchmark it will be impossible either to assess the present situation or measure progress. Since part of our purpose is to survey the state of the art it seems fitting to set the criteria fairly wide in order, in the first instance, to capture as much as possible. We are also conscious that it would probably be impossible to construct a watertight, uncontested definition that would clearly divide theory from non-theory. On this basis we will count something as a contribution to IR theory if it meets at least one of the following conditions:

- that it be substantially acknowledged by others in the IR academic community as being theory;
- that it be self-identified by its creators as being IRT even if this is not widely acknowledged within the mainstream academic IR community;
- that regardless of what acknowledgment it receives, its construction identifies it as a systematic attempt to generalize about the subject matter or IR.

We will also look out for what might be called ‘pre-theory’, which is to say elements of thinking that do not necessarily add up to theory in their own right, but which provide possible starting points for doing so. IR theory is mainly the province of academics, but we will not exclude the thinking of practitioners if it meets, or leans towards, our criteria. IR is a big subject without fixed borders. It has many frontiers where it blends into history, economics, sociology, domestic politics, psychology, law and military strategy. In keeping with this character, we will take a broadminded view not just of what theory is, but what it theorizes about.

## **Western dominance of IR theory**

There are two obvious, and partly reciprocal, ways in which the Western dominance of IRT manifests itself. The first is the origin of most mainstream IRT in Western philosophy, political theory and/or history. The second is the Eurocentric framing of world history, which weaves through and around much of this theory. Since the bald fact of Western dominance is not controversial there is no need to demonstrate this in great detail. But a brief sketch of the main branches of IRT in this light gives a sense of the nature and sources of Eurocentrism that might well prove useful in setting up comparisons with non-Western thinking about IR.

*Classical realism*, with its focus on state sovereignty, military power and national interest is rooted in the diplomatic and political practices of modern Europe up to 1945. It likes to claim an intellectual pedigree in classics of European political theory such as Hobbes, Machiavelli and Thucydides, and uses this to support its claim that power politics is rooted in human nature, and is therefore a permanent,

universal feature of the human condition. This, in turn, supports a foreign policy prescription based on self-interest, self-reliance, suspicion, vigilance and prudence. *Neorealism* differs mainly by placing the source of power politics in the survival needs of states embedded in anarchic international system structures. Both classical and neorealism project onto the rest of world history their basic Europe-derived story of international anarchy and balance of power politics as a permanent, universal structural condition. They support this move by citing examples from both Western history (classical Greece, Renaissance Italy, modern Europe) and samples of non-Western history that run parallel to the European story ('warring states' periods in India, China and the Mayan world). Because of its commitment to anarchic structure and balance of power politics, realism largely ignores the great swathes of history, both Western (Rome) and non-Western, where empires such as the Han, the Persian, the Inca and the Aztec held sway over their known worlds. Its main historical story is the modern one in which Western powers both fight amongst themselves and take over the rest of the world, though that said, realism unhesitatingly makes room for any state, Western or not, that qualifies as a great power. Japan thus climbs into the realist frame from the late nineteenth century, and China began to do so after the communists took power. Realism's current privileging of the Western powers is thus historically contingent, and not built into the theory. Realism has played a major role in defining the mainstream subject matter of IR in state-centric terms. In that sense, it has been an accomplice to Western hegemony by taking the political system that the West imposed on the rest of the world, and declaring it the norm for all of world history.

*Strategic Studies* is closely linked to realism, generally accepting the realist interpretation of how the world is, and focusing within that on the technical, tactical and strategic aspects of military power and its uses. Strategic Studies is rooted in the tradition of the Western way in warfare and its classics: Clausewitz (Napoleonic wars), Mahan (British naval practice and strategy) and a host of responses to developments in Western military technology (tanks, aircraft, nuclear weapons etc). During the Cold War, Strategic Studies flourished in the pursuit of deterrence theory as a response to the co-development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. In this pursuit it was much influenced by rational choice modes of analysis drawn from Western economic thinking. Since then, it has been much obsessed with the so-called 'Revolution in Military Affairs' largely driven by US-led applications of sensor, processing and communications technology to both weapons and tactics. But here at least there was some non-Western input with Mao Zedong and Che Guevara acquiring status as writers on guerrilla war, and Sun Tzu on strategic thinking. Like realism, the tendency of Strategic Studies to privilege the West is historically contingent rather than built in.

*Liberalism and neoliberalism* have clear roots in European political and economic theory (Cobden, Hobson, Kant, Locke, Smith), and in the Western practice of political economy from the nineteenth century onwards. The central liberal principles of individualism and the market (and more hesitantly, democracy) all come out

of Western thinking and practice, yet are presented as universal truths that are applicable to, and whose application would be beneficial to, all human beings. The general policy prescription of liberalism is the need to homogenize along liberal lines economic and political practices and human rights across the planet. Whereas realism reflects a backward-looking assessment of the European experience (how things were and always will be), liberalism reflects a forward-looking one: how to improve on past practice and move humankind towards a more peaceful, prosperous and just future. Justification for this frankly imperial perspective is found in the great relative success of the West (in terms of power and prosperity and justice) compared with the rest of the world during the past two centuries. As an offshoot of liberalism, the successful development of formal theory within Western economics has provided considerable support to those who want to apply the methodology of the natural sciences to the social world. This has manifested itself in the emergence of behaviouralism, the development of neorealism and the application of rational choice theory to a wide range of social phenomena. In line with liberalism's general outlook, these methodologies also carry universalistic assumptions about the human condition and how it can be theorized. While realism tends to relegate the economic sector to being an element of state power, the natural tendency of economic liberalism is to separate the economic and political spheres, treating the former as a separate domain amenable to scientific analysis, and the latter as a residual that will largely be taken care of if the economy is run on sound liberal principles. International political economy (IPE) struggles against both these tendencies, rejecting the idea that the economic and political sectors can be seen as autonomous, and seeing them instead as strongly interlinked.

*Marxism* is the main reaction against and counterpoint to liberalism's response to the rise of an industrial economy in the West. Instead of using individualism and the market to unleash the power of capital into an evermore prosperous future, Marxism sees the liberal formula as profoundly unstable and leading inevitably to class war. Marxism is the opposite of liberalism in preferring collectivism to individualism and a command economy to a market one. It also shares some of realism's belief in the durability of conflict in the human condition. But like liberalism, Marxism rejects the past and looks forward to a better future, and also sees its own prescription as universally valid. While the Soviet Union was in business, Marxists could use it to justify their claim to the future. But once the Soviet Union failed, and China kept the name, but not much of the substance, of communism, Marxism lost much of its standing as a model for the future of industrial society.

The *English School*, has its roots in much of the same Western political theory as realism (Hobbes, Machiavelli) and liberalism (Kant), albeit with more prominence given to Grotius and the idea that states can and should form among themselves an international society. The main models for this are found in European history, both classical Greece and modern Europe, though some work has also been done to show the existence of international societies in premodern, non-Western contexts. The English School's main contribution to world history is to show how an

international society formed in Europe expanded to take over the world. Through the success of its imperialism, Europe remade the world politically in its own image of sovereign territorial states, diplomacy and international law. Decolonization left behind a world in Europe's image, in some places made quite well, and in other places badly. The English School has been much preoccupied with the consequences of expanding a culturally coherent European international society to a global scale that lacks a strong common culture to underpin it. It has told well the stories of how China, Japan, the Ottoman Empire and some other non-Western countries encountered European international society. But there can be no doubt that the English School's main story so far is about how Europe remade the world. The concept of international society could in principle be applied to non-Western histories, but only a little work has been done in this direction.

*Historical Sociology* is perhaps on the borders of IRT. It has links to Marx, Weber and other classical Western sociological thinkers. Although some parts of its literature have taken on broad world-historical themes, notably Wallerstein (1974) Mann (1986) and Hobson (2004), the main focus of this literature is on the making of the Westphalian state, and thus, like the English School, it puts European history on centre stage. Some elements of historical sociology, most notably Tilly (1990) cut close to realism in their linkage of the state and war.

*Critical theory* has roots in Marxism, specifically the idea that the point is not just to understand the world but to change it, and in the more contemporary European social theory of Habermas. Unlike the other progressive IR theories Marxism and liberalism, which offer quite concrete visions of the ideal future, critical theory offers a general commitment against exclusionism and in favour of emancipation. Like other progressive theories it is universalist, but unlike them (and more in common with historical sociology) it seeks to understand each situation in its own terms. In one sense critical theory is an offshoot of the Western tradition of normative theory and the practice of promoting preferred (Western) values. It can also be seen as a successor to Peace Research. In IR, critical theory was introduced and led by Robert Cox, Ken Booth and Andrew Linklater. Much, though not all, of feminist writing on IR is found under this heading, with the feminist perspective itself being very strongly rooted in specifically Western political and social practice.

*Constructivism* and *postmodernism* both have roots in Western philosophy of knowledge and social theory, building particularly on the work of modern European social theorists such as Bordieu and Foucault. They set themselves up as alternatives to the materialist, positivist epistemologies underpinning realism and liberalism, seeing the social world as needing to be approached in its own terms as an intersubjective realm of shared understandings. Within that, constructivism is mainly a methodological approach, not carrying any necessary normative content of its own. It ranges across a spectrum from Alexander Wendt, who builds bridges to the neo-neo rationalists, through Emanuel Adler, to Nicholas Onuf and Fritz Kratochwil. Postmodernism tends to be more radical, seeking out and challenging

the endlessly unfolding relationship between knowledge and power, rejecting metanarratives and the Enlightenment project, and seeing 'truth' as a temporary social construction limited in time and space. Both constructivists and postmodernists see themselves as universalist in application of methods, but as particularist in seeing social structures as being limited in time and space, and so difficult or impossible to compare across time and space. Most of the rest of feminist writing is found under these headings.

This brief survey shows not just the striking variety of Western IRT, but also the great extent to which, despite its frequent universalist pretensions, it is rooted in European history and Western traditions of social theory and practice. A few flecks of non-Western thinking or actors are allowed in at various points, but mainly to validate universalist claims. There is, of course, an important sense in which the ideas within Western IRT *are* universal. But looked at in another light, they can also be seen as the particular, parochial and Eurocentric, pretending to be universal in order to enhance their own claims. At the very least this West-centrism suggests it is possible for non-Western societies to build understandings of IR based on their own histories and social theories, and even to project these in the form of universalist claims.

### **Non-Western contributions**

There are some non-Western contributions that fit broadly within our understanding of IRT, though these almost never meet the criteria for hard theory. Instead, they are more likely to fit within softer conceptions, focusing on the ideas and beliefs from classical and contemporary periods. Broadly, one could identify four major types of work that could be considered as soft theory. What follows is a brief examination of each.

First, in parallel with Western international theory's focus on key figures such as Thucydides, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Kant etc., there are Asian classical traditions and the thinking of classical religious, political and military figures: e.g. Sun Tzu, Confucius and Kautilya, on all of which some secondary 'political theory' type literature exists (Sharma 2001). Attempts to derive causal theories out of these do exist, but have been rare. (See for example, Modelski 1964; Hui 2003). An important aspect, though not necessarily limitation, of this type of work is that there is not always a clear demarcation between the boundaries of what is domestic and what is 'international' relations. More important, invoking of the ideas and approaches of these classical writers is seldom devoid of political considerations. In the heydays of the 'East Asian Miracle' in the 1980s and early 90s, for example, Confucian thought and ideas about communitarianism were frequently cited as the basis of an 'Asian Values' perspective, which was offered by elites in the region, as an alternative to Western individualist liberal values. It was also presented as the alternative conceptualization of an East Asian international order, which could challenge the hegemonic ambition of the liberal mantra of 'democratic peace'. In India, Vedic ideas about strategy and politics have been invoked as the justification of India's acquisition of nuclear weapons (Karnad 2002). This is by no

means unexceptional, however, since as many have observed, the development of international relations theory often reflects real world developments, and as Robert Cox reminds us, 'theory is always for someone or some purpose'. But what may be striking about the invoking of Confucian and Vedic justification for a particular approach to international relations is that they came at a time of growing wealth of power of certain nations: there has been no corresponding invoking of classical ideas to explain crisis or decline of nations in Asia.

A second category of work that might be called soft IRT in Asia relates to the thinking and foreign policy approaches of Asian leaders such as Nehru, Mao, Aung San of Myanmar, Jose Rizal of the Philippines and Sukarno of Indonesia. They offer what Keohane and Martin (1993) would call 'principled ideas' about organizing international order. Although a good deal of their thinking may be sourced to training in the West or training in Western texts at home (although some, like Sukarno were educated locally), they also came up with ideas and approaches independent of Western intellectual traditions that were a response to prevailing and changing local and global circumstances. One concrete example would be the idea of non-alignment, developed by Nehru and fellow Asian and African leaders in the 1950s, which though adapted from concepts of neutralism in the West, was in many respects an independent concept. Nehru also promoted the idea of non-exclusionary regionalism, as opposed to military blocs based on the classic European balance of power model. Aung San's ideas offered something that could be regarded as a liberal internationalist vision of international relations, stressing interdependence and multilateralism rather than the isolationism that came to characterize Myanmar's foreign policy under military rule (Aung San 1974; Silverstein 1972). Like Nehru but focusing on both the security and economic arena, he rejected regional blocs that practice discrimination, such as economic blocs and preferences. In the 1960s, Sukarno developed and propagated some ideas about international order, such as OLDEFOS and NEFOS ('old established forces' and 'new emerging forces'), which drew upon his nationalist background as well as his quest for international leadership (Legge 1984). Another example would be Mao's three worlds theory, and his ideas about war and strategy. There is some parallel here with the influence of statesmen and generals in Western thinking about IR, foreign policy and strategy: e.g. Clausewitz, Bismark, Metternich, Wilson and Lenin, in the case of whom it is hard to separate the intellectual contribution from praxis, and where theory always served immediate policy goals.

Unlike the case of these Western practitioners, however, the analysis of the thinking and approach of Asian leaders has been mainly undertaken by biographers and area specialists, rather than scholars specializing in IRT. Not many scholars, Asian or otherwise, have taken up the challenge of interpreting and developing the writings of Asian leaders from the perspective of IRT. (For an important exception, see Bajpai 2003). But this clearly belies the 'theoretical' significance of these ideas, especially those of Asia's nationalist leaders.

The case of Jawaharlal Nehru is especially interesting and relevant, because Nehru was recognized both within India and in the world, as a thinker in his own right, rather than simply as a political strategist. His views were influential in

shaping the initial foreign policy beliefs and approaches of several of Asia's fellow nationalists. Moreover, unlike other political leaders of the day, Nehru did engage Western realist intellectual writings, such as those by Nicholas Spykman and Walter Lippmann. In his *The Discovery of India*, he took a dim view of Nicholas Spykman's position that moral beliefs and 'values of justice, fairness, and tolerance' could be pursued by statesmen 'only to the extent that they contribute to, or do not interfere with, the power objective' (Nehru 2003: 538). Nehru also attacked Walter Lippmann's prescription that the post-war world order should be organized around a number of alliances each under a great power orbit. The fact that India could be the putative leader of a future South Asian 'Hindu-Muslim' bloc that Lippmann proposed did not impress Nehru. Such ideas about power politics were seen by Nehru as a 'continuation of old tradition' of European power politics, and led him to critique realism for sticking to the 'empty shell of the past' and refusing to 'understand the hard facts of the present'. Myanmar's Aung San also rejected military alliances under great power orbit; any 'union or commonwealth or bloc' that Myanmar may be invited to participate in must be a 'voluntary affair and not imposed from above'. It must not be 'conceived in the narrow spirit of the classic balance of power' (Aung San 1946). In short, for Nehru, some of the 'realist' solutions to the world's problems ignored new forces sweeping the world, including the physical and economic decline of Western colonial powers after World War II, as well as the upsurge of nationalism and demands for freedom in the former colonies. By ignoring these trends, 'Realism' was being 'more imaginative and divorced from to-day's and to-morrow's problems than much of the so-called idealism of many people' (Nehru 2003: 539).

The fact that such writings and discourses have not found their way into the core literature of IR is revealing. The fact that Nehru was a political leader first and an intellectual second (mostly when he was incarcerated by the British) cannot be the justification, since IRT has recognized the ideas and approaches of people who were primarily politicians or diplomats, such as Woodrow Wilson, not to mention the European master strategists such as Metternich and Castlereagh. Another example would be Kissinger, although it might be said that Kissinger was a trained academic who became a practitioner, whereas Nehru was a politician who became a theorist.

Despite their widely different backgrounds and circumstances, the ideas and approaches of Asia's nationalists shared some important common elements. First, they did not see any necessary conflict between nationalism and internationalism. On the contrary, some of these nationalists were among the foremost critics of nationalism as the sole basis for organizing international relations. India's radical nationalist leader, Subash Chandra Bose, as well as Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, fall into this category (Tagore 2004). This might have been driven partly by a desire to mobilize international support for national liberation. This 'open nationalism' of Asia was in some respect distinct from the exclusionary and territorial nationalism of Europe. Though a Myanmar patriot and a staunch nationalist, Aung San saw no necessary conflict between nationalism, regionalism and internationalism. He believed that regional cooperation could compensate for Myanmar's

weaknesses in the defence and economic sphere. Some of these nationalists would later adopt a *realpolitik* approach to foreign policy and security, partly due to the influence of the superpowers as the Cold War set in. The most important aspect of this nascent internationalism of Asia was the advocacy of Asian unity and regionalism. Nehru was the most articulate early post-war advocate of Asian unity, which he saw as the inevitable restoration of cultural and commercial links across Asia that had been violently disrupted by colonialism. He organized the Asian Relations Conferences of 1947 and 1949, the latter being specifically aimed at creating international pressure on the Dutch to grant independence to Indonesia.

It is noteworthy that many of these figures self-consciously distanced themselves from utopianism or 'idealism'. In critiquing nationalism in Japan, Tagore dreaded the 'epithet' of 'unpractical' that could be flung against him and which would 'stick to my coat-tail, never to be washed away' (Tagore 2002: 50). Aung San proclaimed: 'I am an internationalist, but an internationalist who does not allow himself to be swept off the firm Earth' (Aung San 1974). Similarly, in criticizing Lippmann's vision of great power orbits balancing each other and regional defence pacts such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), Nehru defended himself against the charge of being a 'starryeyed' idealist, levelled against him by the members of such pacts represented at the Bandung Conference of Asian and African nations in 1955. Nehru derided the 'so-called realistic appreciation of the world situation', expressed by pact member Turkey in defence of regional pacts on the ground that they represented a more realistic response to the threat posed by communism than Nehru's idea of cooperation and 'engagement' with China and Soviet Union. Far from being a pacifist, he claimed himself to be 'taking a realistic view' of the contradictions and dangers involved in membership by the newly independent nations in such pacts, which to him represented a new form of Western dominance at a time when colonialism was in its final death throes, and which could lead to Europe-like tensions and conflicts in Asia and Africa (Nehru 1955). The Bandung Conference thus could be Asia's answer to the idealist-realist debate (the first of the so-called 'inter-paradigm debates' that graduate students in Western universities are obliged to read).

Outside of classical and modern political ideas about interstate or international relations, a third type of work is non-Westerners who have taken up Western IRT. Many Asian IR scholars have addressed the issue of theory by applying Western theory to local contexts and puzzles and to assess their relevance. Examples include A. P. Rana and Kanti Bajpai in India, Chung-In Moon in Korea, Muthiah Alagappa from Malaysia (working in the US), Inoguchi in Japan and Yongjin Zhang from China (working in New Zealand). Considering their work as part of the development of non-Western IRT may be problematic for two reasons, which were identified and extensively debated at the Singapore Workshop. The first relates to the fact that most such scholars have received their training in the West, and have spent a considerable part of their working life in Western institutions. Hence, can they be regarded as truly 'local' scholars and their work truly 'indigenous' contributions to non-Western IR theory? This caused quite a bit of controversy at the



Singapore Workshop, with one group holding the view that they should not, while another arguing that the place of training and career-building should be less important than the substance of their contributions in judging whether their work might be regarded as non-Western IRT. As editors, we are inclined to take the latter position. But then this raises a second issue. What if the work of such scholars simply applies and tests Western concepts and models on Asia to assess their fit? Should this work have the same claim to be an authentic contribution to non-Western IRT compared to work, which is much rarer, that makes independent generalizations from the Asian experience that might have transregional or universal applicability.

For example, Muthiah Alagappa suggests that 'Asia is fertile ground to debate, test, and develop many of these [Western] concepts and competing theories, and to counteract the ethnocentric bias' (Alagappa 1998). But will the problem of Western dominance disappear by using the Asian empirical record primarily to 'test' theories generated by Western scholars? Or will this merely reinforce the dominance of Western theory by relegating area knowledge as little more than provider of 'raw data' to Western theory? (Shea 1997: A12–A13).

An alternative pathway may be found in a fourth type of work on IRT related to Asia. Such work studies Asian events and experiences and develops concepts that can be used as tools of analysis of more general patterns in international relations and for locating Asia within the larger international system and comparing it with other parts of the world. Some of the finest examples of this include Anderson's 'imagined communities' and Scott's 'every day forms of resistance' (Mittleman 2000; Anderson 1983; Scott 1985), which have inspired scholars of comparative politics as well as international relations (Adler 1994). Anthropologist Edmund Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* is an example from another discipline that is now used to underscore fluid notions of ethnic identity in Southeast Asia and beyond (Leach 1954). What distinguishes this type of work is that the scholars are not turning Asia into a mere test bed of Western social science theory. Rather, they are identifying processes from an Asian (and other local) settings that could be used to explain events and phenomena in the outside world. Other works in this category include Wolters' 'mandala state' (1982), Geertz's 'Negara' (1980), Fairbank's 'Chinese World Order' (1968), Huntington's 'Confucian international systems' (1996) and Kang's notion of 'hierarchy' (2003–4), which may not help IR scholars studying other regions of the world, but which do capture distinctive Asian patterns and experiences, and serve as the basis of comparing Asian international relations with the more general pattern. Another emerging body of work that can be considered here draws on generalizations about Asian interdependence and regional institution building and Asian regional *practices* such as 'the ASEAN Way'. These constructs are considered exceptionalist, but in reality they are not. For example, consensus decision-making is a worldwide practice of multilateral institutions. But they do acquire a certain myth of distinctiveness in local contexts and are recognized and accepted as such. Hence, claims about Asia's distinctive regionalism has found increasing acknowledgement in IRT literature on multilateralism and regionalism (Johnston 2003).

As editors, we hesitate to take a definitive stand on this debate, lest we be accused

of gatekeeping. We might be a little partial to the second type of contribution, but leave the ultimate judgement to the scholars in the field, including those who have contributed to this volume. We also believe that when judging the significance of the work of Asian scholars, one could look for contributions that may be regarded as 'pre-theories' in the sense defined by James Rosenau, i.e. generalized work that begins to suggest broad and persistent patterns of behaviour of actors that may or may not have the full 'causal' and predictive attributes associated with American-style IRT. The diversity of opinions expressed on the subject at the Singapore Workshop is itself healthy, and would help develop the kind of critical reflections that will open the door to a greater sensitivity to the need for theory in studies of Asian international relations.

The extent of non-Western IR literature focusing on distinctive praxis remains a potentially rich source, although it is limited. And with few exceptions, neither type of work has been attempted in Asia by Asians. Theoretical work by Asian scholars seems to be concerned mostly with testing Western IR theory on an Asian national or regional setting. Countless graduate dissertations by Asian scholars in American universities testify to this trend. Hence, a key challenge for IRT in Asia is to explore 'how "local knowledge" can be turned into definitive frameworks for analyzing global processes'. Such type of work – in which Western local patterns have been turned into IRT concepts – is commonplace in the West. For this reason, the Concert of Europe has been the basis for the literature 'security regimes', the European Union is the main springboard of the entire theory of neoliberal institutionalism and the classical European balance of power system informs a good deal of theorizing about power transitions (now being applied to China's rise), alliance dynamics and 'causes of war' literature. Hence, the question: 'if European and North Atlantic regional politics could be turned into international relations theory, why not Asian regional politics?' (Acharya 2001).

Yet such work, if and when attempted by non-Westerners, would beg the question – another subject of heated debate at the Singapore Workshop – have they been simply been co-opted into Western IRT, or have they in some sense transcended it, and made contributions that could be counted as distinctively non-Western variants of originally Western ideas? One candidate here would be dependency theory (Frank 1966; Smith 1979). This was supposed to be a theory derived from the experience of Third World countries. But this too became an over-generalized framework, in some way reinforcing the neglect of the non-West in IRT by denying it any autonomy. Shamir Amin or Cardoso were followers of an essentially Western theory, but they did not simply stop at theory-testing (as happens in Korea, Taiwan or Japan), but advanced some of their own ideas as well. A stronger claim for an indigenous theory is postcolonialism. There is now a discernable IR variant in which Indian scholars have played a prominent role in developing 'subaltern studies': Homi Bhaba (1994) on subaltern studies and Arjun Appadurai (1996) who writes on globalization. They are rebelling against orientalism and Western dominance, and hence are largely negative in their inspiration. But postcolonialism's autonomous nature can be overstated. Postcolonialism challenges Western dominance by pointing to its odious outcomes; Gayatri Spivak criticized Foucault

for treating 'Europe as a self-enclosed and self-generating entity, by neglecting the central role of imperialism in the very making of Europe' (Ahmad 1977: 374). Edward Said had made similar criticisms, accusing Foucault of neglecting not only European imperialism, but also resistance to imperialism outside of Europe. Postcolonialism also seeks to dismantle relativism and binary distinctions found in postmodern theory, such as the distinction between First World–Third World, North–South, centre and periphery and 'reveal societies globally in the complex heterogeneity and contingency' (Dirlik 1994: 329). These are useful contributions in the search for a non-Western IRT. But postcolonialism cannot be regarded as an authentic attempt to counter Western-centrism, because, as Arif Dirlik points out, it is basically framed within cultural discourses originating from the West. Its aim has been 'to achieve an authentic globalisation of cultural discourses by the extension globally of the intellectual concerns and orientations originating at the central sites of Euro-American cultural criticism ...' (1994: 329). In other words, postcolonialism seeks

not to produce fresh knowledges about what was until recently called the Third World but to restructure existing bodies of knowledge into the post-structuralist paradigms and to occupy sites of cultural production outside the Euro-American zones by globalizing concerns and orientations originating at the central sites of Euro-American cultural production.

(Ahmed 1997: 368)

It is also noteworthy that postcolonialism has not attracted wide adherence in Asia from scholars outside of South Asia, certainly not in China.

## **Explanations for the dominance of the West**

There is little doubt that Western IRT is massively dominant, and it is important to understand why this is so. There are many possible explanations, some of which leave little or no room or reason for remedial action, and others of which suggest the condition of Western dominance is likely to be temporary. The following list covers the main possibilities that could in principle explain a distortion on such a scale.<sup>2</sup>

### ***1. Western IRT has discovered the right path to understanding IR***

If true, this explanation would put IRT on a par with physics, chemistry and mathematics, whose theories can reasonably claim universal standing regardless of cultural context. This book would then have no point other than to exhort non-Westerners to engage themselves more in the established theoretical debates. One would not expect the laws of physics, or IR, to vary just because they were being discussed by Asians rather than Westerners, but one might well expect a larger body of participants to improve the quality of criticism, insight and application. We think this claim cannot be defended in any absolute sense, not least because so

much of Western IRT is drawn from modern Western history. One consequence of this 'Westphalian straightjacket' is an over-emphasis on anarchy and an under-emphasis on the many possibilities for how international systems and societies could (and have) been constructed. In pursuit of 'scientific' status mainstream Western IR theory has also been excessively concerned with rather narrow rational choice views of motive in power politics, strategy and economics. It is only beginning to come to terms with the wider range of possibilities such as identity, honour, tradition etc. There can be no doubt that Western IRT has generated significant insights and deserves to be taken seriously by all who are interested in the subject. But equally, there can be no doubt that it is rooted in a very specific history, and that a more world historical perspective should open up additional perspectives.

There is also the Coxian view set out above, that because social theory is always for someone and for some purpose, it is to its very core, and unavoidably, a political enterprise. To the extent that they are accepted, theories such as balance of power, hegemonic stability, democratic peace or unipolarity cannot help but construct the world they purport to describe. There may be room for argument about the balance of effects between material and social factors, but it would require a heroic commitment to pure materialism to argue that it did not matter whether or not people accepted these ideas as true. To accept the world is now unipolar, as many do, not only forecloses other ways of understanding international order, but automatically puts the US in a unique and privileged position. The acceptance would produce effects even if in material terms unipolarity was *not* an accurate description of how things are. The consequential impossibility of detaching social theory from the reality it addresses means it must always matter who it is that generates IR theory. The extreme dominance of Anglo-American voices in IRT should not be, and is not, viewed without suspicion, namely the quote from E. H. Carr discussed in Section 2 above.

## ***2. Western IRT has acquired hegemonic status in the Gramscian sense***

This explanation is not about whether Western IRT has found all the right paths to truth. It is about whether, because Western IRT has been carried by the dominance of Western power over the last few centuries, it has acquired a Gramscian hegemonic status that operates largely unconsciously in the minds of others, and regardless of whether the theory is correct or not. Here one would need to take into account the intellectual impact of Western imperialism and the success of the powerful in imprinting their own understandings onto the minds and practices of the non-Western world. As noted above, the process of decolonization left in its wake a world remodelled, sometimes badly, on the lines of the European state and its 'anarchical society' form of international relations. The price of independence was that local elites accept this structure, and a good case can be made that they not only did so under duress, but absorbed and made their own a whole set of key Western ideas about the practice of political economy, including most conspicuously and most universally, sovereignty, territoriality and nationalism. Other

Western ideas such as democracy, the market and human rights have had a more contested, less universal reception, but nonetheless have become widespread and influential outside the West. Third World elites have embraced the key elements of Westphalian sovereignty and even expanded its scope. For example, the doctrine of non-intervention, a key subsidiary norm of Westphalian sovereignty, is being vigorously contested in the West, and has suffered some erosion, but in the Third World, it has remained robust. In fact, the decline of non-intervention in the West has paralleled its rise in the Third World.

If Western IRT is hegemonic because it is right, then there is little scope for non-Western contributions. But if it is dominant because it rode on the back of Western power, then there is both room and reason to develop a non-Western voice. Particularly significant here may be the extent to which Western imperialism not only overwhelmed local traditions of thought and knowledge, but also cut peoples off from their own history by drawing their self-understanding into a Western historical frame. Perhaps also significant is a consciousness of Western hegemony, a desire to avoid being ensnared by it, and an avoidance of engagement with theory precisely because it entails a risk of such ensnarement.

### ***3. Non-Western IR theories do exist, but are hidden***

There is, of course, a possibility that non-Western IR theories do exist, but that they are hidden from the Western discourse by language barriers or other entry difficulties and therefore do not circulate in the global debates. If the reasons for being hidden are largely cultural and/or linguistic, that may well result in local theories being hidden not just from the Western debate, but also from other non-Western debates. It is far from clear, for example, that theoretical debates conducted, say, in Japanese, would find much if any audience in China or India. Even in Europe, there are distinct local language IR debates in Germany, France and elsewhere that are only partially, and often quite weakly, linked to the English language debates (Friedrichs 2004)). Those engaged in the English language debates have more than enough to read within that, and often lack the language skills to investigate beyond it. Those with the language skills are mainly located in area studies, an approach that generally focuses on the uniqueness of the area under study, and so carries a low interest in general theory.

The reasons for being hidden may also lie in intended or unintended barriers to entry to the Western discourses. Is there a lack of receptiveness to non-Western contributions arisen from the ethnocentrism of Western scholarship, and its tendency to view the reality of others through its own experience, and to assume the superiority of its own cultural model over others? (See Acharya 1999). For a detailed empirical exposé of the Western dominance in IRT, see Wæver 1998 and Tickner and Wæver, 2009. An interesting attempt to bring in a Latin American perspective is Tickner 2003. It is also easy for those in the Anglo-Saxon IR core to assume that English as a lingua franca must make access easier for all. Up to a point, there is truth in this assumption, but for those having to work in English as a second or third language it may feel like a barrier, both because of the additional

work necessary to put one's thoughts into a foreign language, and because of the high rejection rates in the leading English-language IR journals. The amount of time and energy such persons may have to invest to get something published in a mainstream IR journal could be several times what they would have to spend to publish it in their own language. It is easy for Anglophones to forget that there are large IR communities in Japan, Germany, France and elsewhere within which individuals can make a perfectly satisfying career.

If non-Western theory does exist, but is marginalized, then the purpose of this book is to reveal that existence, and the problem is not to create such theory but to get it into wider circulation. Is it the case that the contributions of non-Western scholars remain hidden from view because of their inability to publish in the leading journals in the field, nearly all of which are edited in the West? The themes of articles published in these journals are heavily weighted in favour of Western issues, theories and settings, both historical and contemporary. Non-Western contributors to these journals tend to be rare, and those who do make it usually are based in the West. When Western IR scholars rebel against Western dominance, they usually target American dominance, especially its rational choice positivism. The alternatives they identify tend to be British and European (and to some extent Australian) rather than Asian (see, for example Smith 2000; Crawford and Jarvis 2000; Ikenberry and Mastanduno 2003). The Crawford and Jarvis volume is another example of how extensions of IRT beyond the US stop at the UK and Australia. The Ikenberry and Mastanduno volume contains only a single Asian contributor.

#### ***4. Local conditions discriminate against the production of IR theory***

There are various local conditions – historical, cultural, political and institutional – that could explain why the academic environment outside the West might not be conducive to the generation of IR theory. On the historical side, most stories about how Western IR got established as a self-conscious subject see World War I as a watershed, reinforced by World War II. The unexpected horror, cost, destruction and disruption of the 1914–18 war took Western civilization by surprise, and filled it with the fear that a renewal of all-out war might herald the end of Western civilization. These origins meant that right from the start, IR generally, and IR theory in particular, was endowed with a strong problem-solving orientation. Liberalism and realism were both, in their different ways, responses to the problem that fear of war had become equal to, or greater than, fear of defeat. From that fear grew the need for a better understanding of peace and war and it was around that goal that the field of IR was institutionalized. It may well be true that this particular historical trauma is unique to the West, and shaped and motivated the development of its IR theory in a particular way. Yet one might argue that for much of Asia World War II was not a wholly dissimilar experience. And if historical trauma is a necessary midwife for the birth of IR theory, then the experience of Western domination and decolonization should have been more than adequate to serve. Although Western history has unique connections to the development of IRT, it is far from

clear that non-Western societies lack similarly forceful mobilizing historical traumas.

Probing deeper, one can ask whether there are cultural differences between the West and the non-West that make the former more generally inclined to approach issues in abstract terms, and the latter less inclined. In its strong form, the idea would be that theory in general is a Western way of doing things, with others more inclined either to empirical approaches or abstractions related mainly to local affairs, and without the presumption to universalism typical of Western social theory. On the face of it, it seems highly unlikely that this strong version would apply only to IRT, so any such factor should be visible at least across the social sciences. Yet it is undeniable that IRT has flourished most in English-speaking countries (US, UK, Canada, Australia) or in countries where English is almost universally spoken (Scandinavia, the Netherlands). This brute fact leaves room for the idea that IR might be in some respects culturally specific. In its weaker version the culture explanation would simply be that theory, especially universal theory, is a kind of luxury that societies struggling with the immediate and pressing problems of development simply cannot afford to indulge. The focus would all be on short-term local problem solving (perhaps typically foreign policy analysis for the state concerned, or at most regional level), and not on more grandiose efforts to understand larger systems. There could also be a link between culture and the hegemony explanation. One consequence of hegemony could be to induce in the local cultures a kind of radical demoralization and loss of confidence that would make it particularly difficult to engage in general theoretical debates. Conversely, hegemony would encourage exactly such theorizing from those in the dominant position.

Distinct from cultural logics, but possibly related to them, are political factors that might inhibit the development of IRT. In the West, IR theory has flourished most successfully in democracies, though the existence of more or less IRT-free zones in substantial countries such as Italy and Spain suggests democracy is more of a necessary than a sufficient condition. Other than in a narrow party-line sense, one would not expect IRT to flourish in totalitarian states where the government has a strong political interest in controlling how foreign policy and the structure of international relations are understood. The experience of the Soviet Union perhaps exemplifies the limits here. There is evidence from European history that authoritarian states are not necessarily hostile to social theorists (e.g. Kant), but this perhaps depends on the presence of an enlightened despot. It is, in general, an interesting question as to whether or not undemocratic governments are sufficiently sensitive to IRT so as to inhibit its development within their domain. It is perhaps worth noting that the typical Western academic experience is that governments could not care less about IRT, pay little or no attention to it, and certainly do not consider it a threat to their authority. They will occasionally pick up elements of it to adorn specific policies (e.g. deterrence, democratic peace), and the general principles of realism are suffused through the foreign policy elite. Perhaps the closest connections are possible in the US system, where it is not all that uncommon for academic theorists to play significant roles in government (e.g. Henry Kissinger,

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Joseph Nye, Stephen Krasner). This connection, however, almost certainly has much less to do with their standing as theorists, and much more to do with their willingness to pursue political activism within the party system. As a rule, it is perhaps fair to say the more closely linked the study of IR is to government and foreign policy establishments, the less theoretical it is likely to be. IR and foreign policy think tanks are generally averse to theory, and much more interested in, and encouraging of, focused empirical work relevant to the issues of the day. Perhaps the one exception to this has been in relation to strategic theory, where there was strong interplay between government and academic thinking about nuclear deterrence.

The final local condition that may discriminate against the development of IRT is institutional. By this we mean things to do with the resourcing, workloads, career structures and intellectual ethos of those, mainly academics, who might be expected to do IRT. In Western academia, research is encouraged by the career structure: you don't get either promotion or the esteem of your peers without doing it. Theoretical research generally has high standing, and it is mainly easier to get to the top ranks of one's field by doing theory than by empirical research. Such research is, up to a point, funded, and again up to a point, time is built into the career structure for research. Other resources such as IT and libraries are generally adequate to support research. If all, or even some, of these conditions are not present, then one would not expect academia to generate theory. If research generally, or theory work in particular, are not esteemed, then they will not be produced. If they are esteemed, but academics have too much teaching and administration, and too few resources, they will still not be produced. This institutional explanation might be related to the cultural one in the sense of absence of a research culture, but it might be more a question of inadequate resources. There might also be quite particular local reasons to do with how IR was introduced into a country, who the founding leaders were and what the disciplinary links were that could work against the development of IRT. In the Anglo-American IR world, IR has been most closely linked with political science, a discipline quite strongly inclined towards theorizing. But IR can and has been linked to less theoretically inclined disciplines such as history, law and area studies. Links of that sort might well build a theoretical or even anti-theoretical inclinations into a local IR community, whereas links to sociology and political science would tend to encourage a more theoretical bent.

##### ***5. The West has a big head start, and what we are seeing is a period of catching up***

If this explanation is true, then the main problem is a question of time and resources. Where there are resources available for the study of IR we should expect to see, depending on the level of resources available, the steady unfolding of local developments in IR theory. Where such resources are available, we should expect to see the gap between West and non-West closing, and it might not be unreasonable to expect this gap would close more or less in line with the pace of catch-up in the wider process of modernization. One objection to this line of reasoning is



the same as that relating to Ayoob's (1995) catch-up theory of the Third World state: that it has to repeat the development trajectory of the West. The difference for state development and IRT is that the non-West has to perform its development in the shadow of ongoing Western domination and penetration.

These explanations are, of course, not all mutually exclusive. It is not difficult to imagine, for example, a combination of Western hegemony, inconducive local conditions and engagement in catch-up. Expectations of the pace of catch-up could be frustrated by unhelpful local conditions. One aim of the chapters that follow is to weigh the balance of these explanations in specific cases, and perhaps to add others to them.

### **The structure of the volume**

The chapters included in the volume, covering both individual countries (China, Japan, South Korea, India, Indonesia), as well as a regional study of Southeast Asia and a thematic focus on Islamic IR worldview that pays particular attention to the Arab world, have quite different stories to tell, but each in its own way touches on the following themes:

- To survey the thinking about IRT in the country/area concerned taking into account how it emerged and developed; how well organized and extensive it is; how it relates to general patterns of thinking in the social sciences; and what the main focus of its debates is.
- To evaluate the impact of Western IRT as an approach to understanding the international relations of the country/area concerned: in what ways does it clarify and give insight, and in what ways does it distort and obscure?
- To survey and assess how thinking about IR in the country/area concerned has been impacted by (and if relevant, impacted on) the Western debates about IRT.
- If there is an indigenous, non-Western IRT in the country/area concerned, to discuss whether it has been excluded from the Western debates, and/or insulated itself from them, and/or simply been insulated from them by factors such as language barriers.
- To examine the historical, political and philosophical resources of the country/area concerned (e.g. key historical experiences, key political leaders, key ideological traditions, key philosophical thinkers), with an evaluation of how these do or don't play into the debates about IRT, and assess how they might form the basis of an indigenous non-Western IRT. How do the key Western IR concepts such as sovereignty, statehood, legitimacy, balance of power, international law, justice, war, diplomacy, nationalism, private property and great power fit or not fit with local traditions and practices? Are there indigenous political or strategic traditions, beliefs and practices that may have no equivalent in Western IRT, but which did and may continue to influence local political beliefs and practices relevant to IR?

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## Notes

- 1 We are grateful to Tang Shiping for this observation.
- 2 In this section we have drawn heavily both on insights provided by Kanti Bajpai, and on analyses, and discussions about them, in the first drafts of the country chapters, all gathered during the Singapore Workshop for this project 11–12 July 2005.

## 2 Why is there no Chinese international relations theory?

*Yaqing Qin*

IR theory has always been a concern of China's IR academic community. In addition, China is a land with long intellectual traditions and has been a major international player in history. Then, why is there no Chinese international relations theory? In this chapter, I try to provide a tentative answer to this question and argue that there is a great potential for a Chinese school of IRT to emerge.

### **I. Social theory: A system of ideas**

Theory is a system of ideas. Most authoritative dictionaries define theory as a system of generalizations, able to account for facts and associated with practice (Oxford 1971: 3284; Webster 1986: 2371; Cihai 1980: 1213). Once we enter the field of international relations, we immediately face two definitions of theory, though neither is a complete violation of the general definition provided by authoritative dictionaries. As Acharya and Buzan state in the introductory chapter, there are two kinds of theory: '... the harder, positivist, rationalist, materialist and quantitative understanding on one end of the theory spectrum, and the more reflective, social, constructivist, and postmodern on the other' (Buzan and Acharya 2007: 290–91). Even though American and European IR theories have many different features, they follow the general definition that a theory is a system of generalizations. In this sense, they are different in degrees rather than in essence. The general agreement about theory is valid for both.

Kenneth Waltz is perhaps at the hardest extreme. For him, theory must be systematic, causally valid and rigorously simple (Waltz 1995: 67–82). He commends Newton's theory of universal gravitation, saying it 'provided a unified explanation of celestial phenomena. Its power lay in the number of previously disparate empirical generalizations and laws that could be subsumed in one explanatory system ...' (Waltz 1979: 6). His structural realism is a telling example of a Newtonian nature, a neat self-sustaining system containing the structure defined in terms of power distribution and the units of nation-states interacting in anarchy (Waltz 1979). When he draws an artificial sphere to make international politics a distinct subject, he is constructing a theory that is systematic in nature.

Although Waltz believes soft reflectivist works are all pre-theoretical efforts 'that can neither provide satisfactory explanations nor lead to the construction

of theory', mainly because they are not able to *systematically* explain the causal relationships (Waltz 1995: 68–9, emphasis added), theory that is covered by the general term 'reflective approach' also constitutes a system. Even though it may not be an explanatory system, it is quite often an interpretive one. It seems widely accepted that in theorizing, a typical and defining feature is that a theory itself is a system. In his well known 1966 article, Martin Wight, having discussed the four sources of international theory, i.e. the writings of the irenists, the Machiavellians, the political philosophers and historians and the politicians, deplores that there is no international theory partly because 'international theory, or what there is of it, is scattered, *unsystematic*, and mostly inaccessible to the layman' (Wight 1995: 19, emphasis added). For most scholars who are members of the English School, it is, implicitly or explicitly, accepted that theory is a system, a systematic set of generalizations. Despite the differences in epistemology and methodology, the various IR theories are defined by a systematic organization of ideas, concepts and categories that structure explanations, accounts or interpretations of international phenomena. Even deconstructivism, which argues against any form of logo-centrism, constructs its own theoretical system while trying to deconstruct the hegemonic domination of the Western logo-centric tradition.

In the Chinese context, theory has two meanings. One is action-oriented, defining theory as a guidance for action. Mao's 'leaning toward one side' strategy and the Nixon Doctrine are examples because this type of theory is used to have immediate impact on policy and action. The other is knowledge-oriented, defining theory as a perspective to understand the world and as an achievement of knowledge production or reproduction, such as the theory of Giddens, Waltz and Bull. In this paper, I use the second definition and take theory as knowledge-oriented.

According to this definition, theory-related research is of three different, but related types. First, original theory, which is new theory incommensurable to the existing theories (Type I); second, introductory and critical analysis of an original theory (Type II); and third, theory application and testing (Type III). The distinct feature of original theory is that it contains core assumptions that are not commensurable with core assumptions in another distinct theory. If the core component is different, then it can be a distinct research program or meta-theory or paradigm. Introductory and critical analysis of an original theory contains no such distinctions and develops no new theory, but either presents a good account or valuable criticism of an original theory. The third type includes many tests of original theory. Its merits lie in the verification and falsification of the theory concerned through applying it to social reality.

When we say that there is no Chinese IR theory, we use the knowledge-based meaning of theory and the first type of theory as the defining standard.

## **II. IR discipline in China: State of the art**

The 'state of art' in China's international relations research has attracted keen academic interest. Both at home and abroad, there has been a lot of discussion about

how to develop IR theory in China (Wang 2001; Johnston 2003). In this section, I will discuss three factors – the institutional development, the contribution by translation and the research in the Chinese IR community. I argue that Type I theory is yet to emerge in China though great progress has been made and there is a great potential for a Chinese school of IRT.

### ***1. Institutional development***

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, three stages of institutional building can be identified in China's IR development. The first stage is from 1953 to 1964. The PRC set up its first IR-related department-level programme in 1953 within the Renmin University of China. Two years later, it was re-established as an independent institution, the Foreign Affairs College.<sup>1</sup> Its mission was to train China's diplomats and do research in international relations. Later on, two other institutes were established: the Institute of International Relations and the Institute of International Politics.<sup>2</sup> These two institutions, like the Foreign Affairs College, were mainly established to satisfy the immediate need for talents in the field of national security and public security. Disciplinary development was not the priority of their work. (Liang 2002: 456–7)

The second stage is from 1964 to 1979. The characteristic feature of this stage was the establishment of the three departments of international politics in three major universities in China, namely Peking University, Remin University and Fudan University. The three departments had a division of labour: Peking University for the study of the national liberation movements in the Third World; Renmin University for the study of the communist movements in the world; and Fudan University for the study of IR in the Western world. Although these departments were within universities, their main task was to interpret the classics of revolutionary leaders such as Marx, Lenin and Mao, and their foci were, accordingly, on the action-oriented theory, such as Mao's 'three-world' theory and 'strategic triangle'<sup>3</sup> theory. At the same time, courses were offered to understand revolutionary leaders' thinking (such as Lenin's theory on imperialism) and Western thoughts studied either as a means to understand the enemy or as a target of criticism. This pattern lasted until 1979 when China started its reform under Deng Xiaoping.

The third stage is from 1979 to the present. This is the period when international relations as a discipline has witnessed its greatest development in China. The reform and opening up has offered the Chinese IR community a good opportunity to have extensive exchanges with the rest of the world. Institutions have mushroomed in China. Up to 1979, there had been only three university departments and three specialized institutes doing IR-related education and research. The demand since 1979, thanks to the opening of the country, has been enormous. In 1980, the National Association of the History of International Relations was set up as the first nationwide academic association. In 1999, it changed its name to China National Association for International Studies (CNAIS) so as to have a clearer identity and wider coverage. The 2004 CNAIS expansion has enabled it to include

all-important institutions of IR in China. The most recent membership statistics of CNAIS show that among Chinese universities and research institutes, 54 have bachelor or master degree programmes and 29 have doctoral degree programmes in International Relations.

## 2. Learning through translation

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the first Chinese students who had studied in Europe, the US and Japan started the learning process through translation. A famous scholar-translator, Yan Fu, made great contributions to the Chinese academic and intellectual development by translating Adam Smith, Mill and many other Western thinkers. Since IR is a relatively young discipline in the West, the effort for translation has been made since 1979. Five major series of translations are particularly influential.

The first translation series began to come out in 1990 and the translation of Hans J. Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* was the milestone. It was 42 years after its first edition was published in 1948. Even Waltz's work was 13 years after its publication in English. Although the translation had at least a 10-year time lag, the consciousness about theories as schemes of ideas and as explanations of IR phenomena began to emerge. This is a watershed, for only when the IR community distinguishes between the two concepts, i.e. IR research as an academic endeavour or as a policy tool, can theory-consciousness come into being.

In the mid- to late-1990s, translation was paid even greater attention. It was consciously realized there was a domination of realism in the IR discourse in China and the learning process was very much leaning toward the misperception that realism was the IR theory. The end of the Cold War heightened this awareness. New efforts were made to introduce theories other than realism. Liberalism, constructivism and other classics have been consciously introduced through translation (Qin 2002a: 1–7). Four more series of translations have come out since then: Shanghai People's Publishing House's *Oriental Translation Series*, Zhejiang People's Publishing House's *Contemporary Classics of IR Theory*, World Affairs Press's *Classics of IR Theory* and Peking University Press's *New Directions in the Study of World Politics*. Table 2.1 shows the foci of the four series.

Altogether, the five series have enabled 53 important Western IRT works to be translated into Chinese. In addition, the two series by the Peking University Press and the Shanghai People's Publishing House are open and continue to publish more books. Other publishers have been doing similar work, having translated important IR works, such as Barry Buzan, James Rosenau and Immanuel Wallerstein. Most of them have been done in the past five years. To some extent, it is translation that gave Chinese IR scholars a push for establishing an independent academic discipline. It is also translation that has made many Chinese scholars, especially the younger ones, follow the standards of the Western IR discipline.

By the end of the twentieth century, almost all the major Western theories were introduced to the Chinese IR community and to graduate programmes at the same time as they were published. There is almost no time lag now. The learning



Table 2.1 Books in the five translation series

<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Book</i>
China People's Public Security University Press (7 books) [only 6 listed]	Morton A. Kaplan, <i>System and Process in International Politics</i>
	Hans Mogenthau, <i>Politics Among Nations</i>
	J. W. Burton, <i>Global Conflict: The Domestic Sources of International Crisis</i>
	А·В·Кукулка, Проблемы теории международных отношений [A Study of International Relations]
	Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, <i>Power and Interdependence</i>
	Kenneth Waltz, <i>Theory of International Politics</i>
	Robert Gilpin, <i>War and Change in World Politics*</i>
Zhejiang People's Publishing House (10 books)	David Baldwin, <i>Neorealism and Neoliberalism</i>
	Martha Finnemore, <i>National Interests in International Society</i>
	Joseph A. Camilleri and Jim Falk, <i>The End of Sovereignty</i>
	Stephen Krasner, <i>Structural Conflict</i>
	James C. Hsiung, <i>Anarchy and Order</i>
	Barry Buzan <i>et al.</i> , <i>Security: A New Framework for Analysis</i>
	James De Derian, <i>International Theory: Critical Investigations</i>
	Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwill (eds), <i>The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory</i>
	John G. Ruggie, <i>Multilateralism Matters</i>
	Christine Sylvester, <i>Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era</i>
Peking University Press (6 books)	Robert Keohane (ed.), <i>Neorealism and Its Critics</i>
	Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, <i>Power and Interdependence</i> , 3rd edn
	Robert Keohane and Helen V. Milner, <i>Internationalization and Domestic Politics</i>
	Robert Keohane, <i>Liberalism, Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World**</i>
	Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, <i>Activists Beyond Borders</i>
	Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (eds), <i>Ideas and Foreign Policy</i>
World Affairs Press (11 books)	Hedley Bull, <i>The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics</i>
	James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, <i>Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey</i> , 5th edn

<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Book</i>
World Affairs Press (11 books) <i>cont.</i>	Robert Jervis, <i>Perception and Misperception in International Politics</i> John S. Odell, <i>Negotiating the World Economy</i> Martin Wight, <i>Power Politics</i> Edward Carr, <i>The Twenty Years' Crisis</i> Robert Cox, <i>Production, Power and World Order</i> Dani Rodrik, <i>The New Global Economy and Developing Countries</i> Williamson Murray (ed.), <i>The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War</i> Paul Kennedy (ed.), <i>Grand Strategy in War and Peace</i>
Shanghai People's Publishing House (19 books)	Jim Rohwer, <i>Asia Rising: Why America Will Prosper as Asia's Economies Boom</i> Zbigniew Brzezinski, <i>The Grand Chessboard</i> Eric J. Hobsbawm, <i>Nations and Nationalism Since 1780</i> Alexander Wendt, <i>Social Theory of International Politics</i> Robert A. Pastor, <i>A Century's Journey: How the Great Powers Shape the World</i> Robert Gilpin, <i>The Challenge of Global Capitalism</i> Robert Keohane, <i>After Hegemony</i> Angelo M. Codevilla, <i>The Character of Nations</i> Walter Lippmann, <i>Public Opinion</i> Joseph Nye, <i>Understanding International Conflict</i> Benedict Anderson, <i>Imagined Communities</i> David P. Calleo, <i>Rethinking Europe's Future</i> Kenneth Waltz, <i>Theory of International Politics</i> Robert Gilpin, <i>Global Political Economy</i> David Held, <i>Democracy and the Global Order</i> John Mearsheimer, <i>The Tragedy of Great Politics</i> Charles A. Kupchan, <i>The End of the American Era</i> Amitav Acharya, <i>Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia</i> Ido Oren, <i>Our Enemies and US</i>

\* It was included in the same series, but published by another publisher (Renmin University Press).

\*\* This is a book Robert Keohane prepared specially for the publication in China.

process is much quickened, paralleling the newest developments of IR theory in the world. Realism, liberalism, constructivism, the English School and other important Western IR theories have all come into China and found their spokespersons in the Chinese IR community. A map of major theories is drawn, although a detailed map is still needed.

### ***3. Progress in research programmes***

To understand the progress made in the Chinese IR community, it is necessary to distinguish a three-phased theoretical development: the pre-theory phase, theory-learning phase and theory-building phase. During the pre-theory phase, there is no consciousness about theory and research is done mainly by individual experiences and intellectual wisdom. There may be many relevant thoughts, but there is no conscious effort to turn the thoughts into a systematically constructed theoretical paradigm. Usually, the discipline concerned is mixed with other disciplines with no distinct identity.

The theory-learning phase is introduced when the academic community in the relevant field starts to have a collective consciousness and begins to produce an agenda for the second and third types of theory-related research. During this phase, there are an increasing number of research products that are clearly related to introduction and critical analysis of major theories (Type II), and there are research products that test major theories with the purpose of verification or falsification (Type III). New ideas may emerge, but no new theory that contains distinct core assumptions emerges. When there are already theories in the field in other national academic communities, it is most likely that scholars in one national academic community learn from their counterparts in other national communities. But this learning alone can hardly lead to a distinct theory.

The third phase is one of creation because new theory is put forward with distinct core assumptions and serves as a powerful explanation of the reality. When there is no ready theory in the academic field concerned, scholars may turn to get inspiration from other related fields.<sup>4</sup> When theory exists in the discipline, they put forward new ones that fulfil two purposes: either to negate the old ones by falsifying all or some of their core assumptions and to establish a different set of core assumptions that define a new theory. When a national community reaches the third phase, we may say that a new school of thought has emerged and we may name it after the nation.

The three phases for China's IR theory-related research are not difficult to observe. Let's take as the beginning of the IR discipline in China the year of 1953 when the Department of Diplomatic Studies was set up in Renmin University. It is reasonable to say that 1953–89 was the first phase, or the pre-theory stage. At this stage, the term 'theory' was very much in its first meaning.<sup>5</sup> It was action-oriented. As a Chinese scholar observed, IR theory creation and development during a long period of time was a matter of such paramount importance that only top leaders could do it, and IR researchers' job was to provide information in advance and offer interpretations afterwards (Zi 1998: 4–5). Thus, in the Chinese context, theory has

been understood as a guideline for practice and action, a policy statement of rules and principles to be followed.

Since theory was understood mainly as the policy and strategy put forward by political leaders, few in the academic circles had the consciousness and the luxury to think about theory in the knowledge-based sense. Some journals with a focus on international relations existed and were created, but the articles carried in them show that almost all of them were policy interpretation, background information and a description of current international events. Almost no theories were introduced from outside China. In 1964, when the three departments of international politics were set up, their tasks did not have a clearly disciplinary orientation and had little awareness of developing IR theory in the sense of a 'scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation or account of a group of facts or phenomena', the dominant discourse was definitely not along the tradition of the Chinese intellectual culture. Table 2.2 shows the IR related studies in this pre-theory period.

The second phase is from 1990 to the present and three features stand out in this stage. The most conspicuous feature of these 15 years is an increasingly clear separation of policy interpretation and academic research. In fact, in the late 1980s, the Chinese IR community began to realize that theory was not only a guideline for policy making, but also a perspective from which people observe the IR world, a hypothesis by which people test their abstraction of the IR world and a generalization through which people understand the IR world.

The second conspicuous feature of this phase is the mushrooming of publications

Table 2.2 IR-related articles in *World Economics and Politics* (up to 1989)

Year	IR-related articles	IRT-related articles
1979*	0	0
1980*	0	0
1981*	0	0
1982	45	6
1983	63	5
1984	52	5
1985	55	5
1986	56	5
1987	67	10
1988	64	10
1989	89	13

\* Between 1979 and 1981, the journal was named *Reference About World Economy* and carried no IR-related articles.

that have been going together with the translations. Articles poured out in academic journals, introducing and criticizing theories from outside China. The journal *Europe* took the lead in setting up a column exclusively for IR theory. Other journals, such as *World Economics and Politics*, also began to pay great attention and made contributions to this learning process. The development of social constructivism in China is a telling example. Wendt's book was translated and published in 2000, one year after its publication in English. By the end of February 2003, there had been seven academic monographs (including three translated works, two monographs and two IR theory books that include constructivism) and 42 journal articles (including 4 translated ones, 28 theory analyses and 10 case studies) (Yang 2003: 21–2). Table 2.3 shows clearly this wave of introductory and critical analysis of IR theory.

The third feature is that the research covers a range almost as wide as that in countries outside China. A recent study shows that in the period between 1996 and

Table 2.3 IR-related articles in *World Economics and Politics* (WEP) and *European Studies* (ES) (since 1990)

Year	WEP		ES	
	IR-related articles	IRT-related articles	IR-related articles	IRT-related articles
1990	15	5	0	0
1991	18	4	0	0
1992	15	3	0	0*
1993	20	7	14	13
1994	15	4	24	14
1995	28	10	28	23
1996	27	8	19	14
1997	36	11	33	25
1998	36	11	33	27
1999	45	32	30	23
2000	44	32	39	34
2001	48	40	33	28
2002	88	66	37	28
2003	93	88	34	29
2004	80	67	33	29

\* Between 1990 and 1992, *European Studies* was named *Western European Studies* and carried no IR-related articles.

2001, 10 leading IR journals in China published 3,398 IR articles, covering 9 issue areas: IR theory, great power relations, security, area studies, international organizations, international regimes, international political economy, human rights and globalization/global governance (Wang 2001). Another study shows that the major topics covered by US academic journals (*International Organization*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*) and policy journals (*Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Washington Quarterly*) were not covered as widely in Chinese journals, but the 'attention paid to these issues has increased particularly in the last 2–3 years'.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, among all the topics, there is a steady and sometimes conspicuous increase in three research areas: 1) multilateralism and international institutions; 2) international society; 3) non-state actors and global governance (Qin 2002b).

The greatest significance of the second phase is the awareness of IR theory as a knowledge-oriented construct rather than a mere tool for policy interpretation. The greatest advancement is the practice of applying Western IR theory to Chinese issues. The awareness and practice, however, have been achieved through a tenacious learning process mainly through translation of Western classics, which has further enhanced the dominant role of Western IR theory. The second stage is thus characterized by the modernizing programme in IR through applying the Enlightenment ideas. The research programmes have been getting increasingly close to those of the Western IR theory.

As for the third phase, the stage of theory creation, there have been some positive signs, but its full appearance is yet to come. The defining feature of the third stage should be the emergence of new IR theory. So far, the consciousness of developing a Chinese school of IR theory has been increasingly awakened (Qin 2005), together with a continued reinforcement of the Western definition and conceptualization of theory. In general, the present 'state of the art' is still a Western discourse in a Chinese context. There is no such theory that can be called Chinese IR theory yet. I therefore argue that China's IR theory development is at the second stage, with an increasing number of Type II and Type III products, while original paradigmatic theory is yet to emerge. Thus, now in China, we have a discipline of international relations, but it is a discipline without theory of its own.

### III. Why is there no Chinese IRT?

The 'state of the art' in China's IRT has attracted keen academic interest. Both at home and abroad, there has been a lot of discussion about how to develop IR theory in China (Wang 2001; Johnston 2003). China is a land where there are long intellectual traditions and international relations has been a highly attractive discipline in recent years with a rapid increase in IR programs as well as in the number of students working towards various levels of academic degrees. Thus, the fact that China has so far no major IR theory is conspicuous and puzzling (Zi 1998: 12–13).

Then, why is there no IRT that has originated in China? Three factors stand conspicuous in this respect: the lack of an awareness of 'international-ness', the

dominance of the Western IRT discourse and the absence of a theoretical hard core. I will discuss them in turn.

### *Lack of an awareness of 'international-ness'*

In the traditional Chinese intellectual mind, there was nothing similar to the concept of 'international-ness', for there was no existence of a structure in which the ego stands against the other. The world or the state in the Chinese culture was not a clearly defined entity with a finite boundary. The Chinese world referred to everything under the heaven and on the earth. There was a sense of space, for there was a centre and a gradually distancing periphery; there was a sense of time, for the generations of the Chinese in their thought and practice saw an endless continuum along which history and the future distanced gradually from the present backward and forward (Hall and Ames 2005: 11–13). If you stand on top of the hill in the Imperial Garden behind the Forbidden City, you see a square-shaped complex of buildings surrounded by a larger square surrounded by an even larger square, and so on. This is the Chinese understanding of the world, which is infinite in space and time with the Chinese emperor's palace at the centre. It was a complete whole where no dichotomous opposites existed. Thus, there was only one ego, a solitary ego without an opposite alter.

This worldview of the traditional Chinese mind was practiced in the tributary system, a system centred around and governed by the Chinese emperor from 221 BC to the early 1800s. States are like people. The Chinese traditionally took relations among states as relations among people. In this sense, a society of states, like a society of individuals, had been long a concept in the Chinese mind. In this unequal, quasi-international system called the tributary system, China was the dominant power, maintaining stability and providing institutionalized mechanisms for interaction among states within the area of what is roughly nowadays East Asia.

The tributary system is not an international system in its true sense. It was modelled on the system of the Chinese Zhou dynasty (1046 BC – 771 BC), which was an emperor-prince system with the emperor overriding the land and princes governing in their respective fiefdoms within the land. Without the idea and institution of sovereignty, the Chinese imperial court was the centre and took the surrounding states as its dependants. The tributary system was not a system of equal members, but it lasted without much change for 2,000 years. China, as the most powerful state and the most advanced civilization in the region, played an overwhelming role in maintaining peace and trade, providing public goods and governing the system. The tribute trade system saw more benefits going from China to the tribute states rather than the other way round. China also played the role of a balancer, intervening wherever invasion by one state occurred against another (Fairbank 1968; Fairbank and Reischauer 1989).

The extended self, although having the same ontological status in nature, was not the same in social status. Distance away from the centre made the difference in social status. This difference in status constituted the ordering principle of the tributary system. The essence of the tributary system was the radiation of the ego

– China as the ‘I’ at the centre while other tributary states at the periphery paid tributes to the centre. This is a system in which there was no distinction between the ego and the alter. The ontological status of the units of the system was at the same time the ontological status of the centre. It was modelled on the Confucian notion of the ‘state’, which in turn was modelled on the Confucian concept of the ‘family’. Thus, the state was an enlarged family or an enlarged state.

When John Fairbank said the tributary system was not an interstate system, but a world system, he touched on a crucial issue about this China-centred system: there were no equally, even though perhaps only *de jure*, positioned units in it. It was not ‘inter’-national, because there was no legal equality among units and therefore there were no ‘like units’ as Waltz says. The tributary system was a mere enlarged system of the Chinese domestic system and the two in fact were one in the traditional Chinese mind. Thus, the tributary system, spatially and conceptually, was like concentric squares, with only differences in distance and without difference in ontology. The periphery was the radiation of the centre and therefore the dualistic positioning between the ego and the alter did not exist at all.

Such a system had no room for ‘international-ness’, and therefore, traditionally, Chinese had no consciousness of ‘international-ness’ nor the concepts related to it, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity. Since there was no awareness of ‘international-ness’, it was natural that there was no need to develop a theory of international relations. When the first professorship was set up in Aberystwyth immediately after World War I, the Chinese still believed that ‘Half of *The Analects* is enough to govern the whole world’.

### ***The dominance of the Western IR discourse in a Chinese context***

China has rich intellectual traditions, which could have provided sources for IRT. However, the failure in modernization when China met the West in the late nineteenth century broke the genealogy of the intellectual culture (Zhu 1984; Fairbank 1942). The amazing power of the West, the sudden realization by the Chinese of their backwardness and the changed ideas about their country, their traditions and themselves, put together, made an unbridgeable fault and created even a reversed trend in Chinese intellectual history. Therefore, the collapse of the tributary system was in fact the collapse of the Chinese cultural tradition.

The consequences of the Opium War, however, were much greater and deeper than the defeat on the battlefields. When the Chinese were defeated in the mid-1840s, they thought their backward technologies were the cause: the Westerners used firearms while the Chinese could only wield their spears and knives. As a result of this belief, the Westernization movement was initiated mainly by high-ranking Chinese officials to improve China’s military technologies. They insisted that the Chinese learning be the essence and base, and the Western learning for mere practical application. By the late 1800s, however, they began to feel that not only their technologies were backward, but the Chinese system of ruling was wrong. Officials and scholars questioned the system and argued that it was problematic. The 1898 reform initiated by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao and the



1911 revolution led by Dr Sun Yat-sen both sought a change in the political system and its institutions. When people began to question their political and economic systems, they moved from the pure technological level to the institutional level. This lasted until the May 4th Movement in 1919 (Li 2003: 309–38).

The May 4th Movement witnessed perhaps the greatest self-reflection of the Chinese, for they began not only to question Chinese technology and Chinese political and economic systems, but also Chinese culture with Confucianism at the heart. Two major camps were emerging in categorical opposition. One was the Chinese-learning School, represented by modern neo-Confucianists. They advocated the spirit of Confucianism and tried to transform it to be applicable in a modernizing context. They argued very strongly that Confucianism was the knowledge for cultivating one's moral character and developing one's temperament, thus having the superiority for humanities. The second is the Western-learning School. They believed the fundamental problem of the failed modernization in China was the Chinese culture: its backwardness, conservative nature and neglect of sciences. They advocated 'wholesale Westernization', believed Confucianism was the murdering doctrine and shouted the slogan 'Down with Confucianism!' The confrontation of the two schools of thought in China thus reflected the confrontation of the two cultures. The Chinese Marxists in the early years were, to some extent, scholars of the second school (Ge 2001; Li 2003; Zhang 2005).

The traditional Chinese-learning School took the Chinese learning as the end and the Western learning as the means, while the Western-learning School advocated for the opposite. Although there was no official declaration as to who won, it was clear the Western-learning School got the upper hand and was becoming the dominant discourse in China. This was the victory of the Enlightenment ideas and of the Newtonian culture. In this sense, China started her modernization process by engaging herself in international interactions and through the forced teaching by the Westphalian Westerners. Among the ideas the Chinese learned were the concepts of international-ness and sovereignty.

The parallel developments – the collapse of the tributary system and the great debates among Chinese intellectuals – have left the Chinese with two opposite traditions: the Confucian and the Western. It seems that at the time Confucianism was the symbol of conservatism and backwardness, and the only teacher was the West. The Chinese saw a great discontinuity of their intellectual culture when the West met the East. As the Chinese culture with Confucianism as its core was confronted and defeated at the turn of the twentieth century, the belief system contained in it disintegrated accordingly. This made the Chinese reflect on their culture from inside.

In such a context, no matter what you theorize about, its soul is Western. Therefore, no distinct Chinese school of IR theory, as well as any other social theory, can be established. This situation has continued to the present. For 30 years from 1949 to 1979, there was a partial discontinuity due to Mao's anti-Western attitude. Since 1979, especially when China's IR entered its learning stage and tried to be an independent discipline, the process was resumed and learning from the West has become a major drive of the Chinese IR community. The translation

effort discussed above and the large market for Western IR classics are telling examples.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Lack of a theoretical hard core***

Social theory must have a hard core. In the learning process, what is missing is just this element. Imre Lakatos takes a series of theories as a research programme, which falls in the category of meta-theory or paradigm. His research programme has the essential features of a system, with a core and a protective belt, each playing its own functions. What is most relevant here is his argument that any scientific research program has a hard core, which is distinct and different from that of any other research programme. Each theory has a distinct hard core and a more flexible protective belt to ensure that the hard core is not damaged and eroded (Lakatos 1978: 6).

This hard core identifies a theory. Once a new hard core is formed, a new theory is born. Although Lakatos does not discuss the formation of this hard core, he explains that the formation of a research programme starts from an initial 'model', which gradually grows, with painstaking efforts, into a research programme. This process is similar to what is called 'nucleation', the formation of the nucleus or the hard core of a theory.

If this argument stands, we need to ask a crucial question about any particular theory: What is its hard core? In natural science, it is easier to answer. The principle of gravitation, for example, constitutes the hard core of the Newtonian Theory. It is the description of a causal relationship that accounts for the fact that an apple drops down to the earth rather than flies up to the sky. In social studies, however, it is much more complex, for it aims not only to find regularities and causal relationships, but also to understand meanings in a social context. I argue, therefore, that the nucleus of a social theory contains two components: physical/material and metaphysical/ideational. The former, like the first-order questioning framework, is related to the material world and the latter, like the second-order framework, is related to the speculative world.<sup>8</sup> According to this conceptualization, the physical component of the hard core leads to core assumptions and hypotheses of a theory about the world out there, while the metaphysical component produces the ontological essence (and therefore the epistemological and methodological derivatives) of a theory (Wendt 1999: 4–5). Even though the hypotheses developed from the physical part of the hard core are based on empirical experience at a particular point of time and space and subject to empirical verification and falsification, the ideas that spring from the metaphysical component are not subject to such empirical scrutiny. By definition, they are speculative ideas that do not come from reality (though they are related to reality and can create reality). This component is formed over years in the cultural context of a people: their history, their intellectual tradition, their world outlook, their universal vision and their way of life and way of thinking – their culture.<sup>9</sup>

The two components are interrelated and interactive. When a real-world problem arises, the physical component is activated and represents this problem as

one that needs interpretations or solutions. Then as the problem is represented as such, it goes through the metaphysical component to find the answer as to how to understand, interpret and solve this problem. Where the two components are well coordinated and play complementary functions, a successful theory emerges. When we say a theory as a distinct or original one, we mean that either the theoretical question is represented by the physical component in a different way or the understanding is offered by the metaphysical component in a different way. The latter is particularly important, for it defines a distinct social theory.

Scholarly discussion in Western IR often neglects this metaphysical component of a theory's core. Perhaps this is either because they take it for granted or because they have a similar second-order mindset that can go back to the ancient Greek philosophy, the Renaissance and especially the Enlightenment. William A. Callahan compares the American IR theory, the English School, and the IR theory with Chinese characteristics. He argues that any theory with a national identity must have a big idea: for American IR theory, it is democratic peace; for the English School it is international society; and for Chinese IR theory, the *Datong* (universal great harmony). A big idea qualifies a big theory (Callahan 2002: 6). What Callahan does not ask is why they – the Americans, the British and the Chinese – have different big ideas. To me, this big idea is not completely derived from the reality at the present. It is the present problem perceived through a particular cultural and traditional lens and conceived through a particular representational system. It is the working of the metaphysical component on the physical component's reaction to international anarchy.

A big idea is often related to a big problem. I have argued that any theory must have a distinct problem that develops into a hard core and makes the theory alive and alone (Qin 2005). The mainstream IR theories in the US have one thing in common – how to solve the big problem the US as the hegemon faces in the post-World War II international system, or hegemonic maintenance (Gilpin 1980; Organski and Kugler 1980; Krasner 1983; Keohane 1984). No matter whether it is the emphasis on hard power or soft power (Mearsheimer 2001; Nye 2002, 2004) and no matter whether it is the maintenance of the hegemon's power position or the hegemonic system as a whole,<sup>10</sup> the big problem the US has faced in the post-war era constitutes the core of all these theories. Thus, a big idea is based on the big problem an international actor, such as a nation-state, faces. However, in both Callahan's article and my own, the focus is on derivatives of the physical component of the hard core. The problem is specific, relevant, conspicuous and present. It worries the theorist and the policy maker alike. It needs solutions. As Robert Cox says, 'Theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose.' (Cox 1986: 207). In this sense, theory is a tool, a tool to solve the problem an actor faces (Zalewski 1996: 341). What these articles do not discuss, or what is absent, is the other component: the metaphysical component. When a problem presents itself to the human mind, the solutions to it do not come out of nothing. The Chinese way of leadership or domination in the tributary system was very different from that of the US in the post-World War II and post-Cold War situations, although their problem was somewhat similar, i.e. how to maintain dominance or leadership (Womack

2003).<sup>11</sup> The problem is understood, reflected and represented by the mind. On the bases of this representation, one solution becomes possible and another solution impossible or even inconceivable. The representation is culture-specific and path-dependent. This is what the metaphysical or second-order component of the hard core of a theory is all about. It is the being of a theory and part of a culture, of a way of life and thinking that has been formed (and transformed) from the history of human practice. This metaphysical component decides the identity of a theory, distinguishing one theory from another. Because of it, we say that any social theory is ethnocentric in nature and at the beginning.

The Chinese intellectual tradition used to have a core with a distinct metaphysical component. But the failed modernization at the beginning of the twentieth century broke it up. In its long and tortuous struggle with the modern international system, China had been reconstructing its identity. Such a reconstruction of the Chinese intellectual culture resulted inevitably in the collapse of the metaphysical component of the Chinese tradition and the formation of one similar to that of the Western Enlightenment mindset began at the same time in the struggle against the tradition. International thoughts, like those in other fields, followed this path and moved farther away from the indigenous Chinese system of intellectual ideas and concepts. The development of the study of international relations has reflected this trend and witnessed its strengthening step by step. The natural consequence that came from the collapse of the metaphysical component of the Chinese intellectual culture and its replacement by a Western one was that the study of international relations began to employ the Western discourse within a Chinese context.

#### **IV. Potential sources for a Chinese school of IRT**

It is possible and even inevitable that a Chinese school (or schools) of IRT will emerge? Since social theory and human practice are twins, interactive with each other in an ongoing progress, it is likely that distinct Chinese IR will be developed during the period of great social transformation China has been undergoing. I will discuss three potential sources for a Chinese school of IRT, each being a pair of thought and practice.

##### ***The 'Tianxia' world view and the tributary system***

Confucianism has an important concept about the universe or the *Tianxia* world-view, by which the tributary system was rationalized and explained. Literally, *Tianxia* means 'space under the heaven'. But this concept in the traditional Chinese mind was much more than the natural world and a geographically defined area. It was a combination of nature, god and morality. Thus, it was not a mere material thing out there. It was more a cultural concept containing the system of morality, or the way of heaven.

The tributary system, based upon the *Tianxia* philosophy, is a system of inequality. This is the part that goes against human desire for equal recognition. However, there are some other important ideas and practices in this system as well as in the

philosophy that may be highly positive. The first is the holist approach. Since *Tianxia* was a combined whole, the concept of the subjectivity, or the subjective 'I', was not conspicuous at all and therefore there existed no dichotomy of the self and the other. As Qian Mu said, 'The attitude of the Chinese is often introversive. By introversive, I mean that everything is inside himself.' (Qian 1994: 14). As a result, in the Chinese mind, there could be something far away in time and space, but there was never something that was opposite, intolerant and needed conquering. The far away was indeed an extension of the self, like a great-grandfather and the great-grandsons in the temporal framework, or the centre of a ripple and its gradually spreading circles in the spatial framework. This holist world view is different from the Western dualistic view of the two opposites, where an inevitable conflict is implied.

The second idea is the highest ideal of the *Tianxia* philosophy – *Datong* (great harmony). In a dualistic philosophy, great harmony is impossible, as Keohane's distinction between harmony and coordination indicates (Keohane 1984). In a holist worldview, however, it is not only possible, but also inevitable, for the seemingly opposite elements always complement each other. *Tianxia* is a concept that takes care of the whole world, believing in and aiming at a harmonious whole. It was the space where human and nature met, where the ideal and the reality met and where the moral and the material met. Thus, *Tianxia* is both a physical and a cultural concept, able to extend *Datong* to the natural world and to realize the ideal of 'unity of the nature and the human', which is an important idea in the Chinese intellectual tradition. In an increasingly globalized world, such a holist worldview may help shape new theory as well as new perspectives.

The third idea is order. For the Confucian philosophy, order is the most important principle in society. The tributary system starts with the idea of unequal social relationships, but this unequal relationship, in the eye of the Confucian scholar, was not that between the animals in the Hobbesian jungle, equal and hostile; not that between the humans in the Lockean society, equal and competitive; not even that between the states in the Kantian culture, equal and friendly. Rather, it was that between the father and sons in the Confucian family, unequal but benign. At least, this was the ideal relationship in the traditional Chinese mind and the foundation of the appropriate social order. From the very beginning it does not assume a jungle, but a society. What holds the members together in the rites, norms and institutions contained in Confucianism and practiced in the Chinese dynastical system. The core was the five relationships (father-son, emperor-minister, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife and friend-friend) and the four social bonds (propriety, righteousness, honesty and a sense of shame) described by Confucius, interpreted by successive Confucian scholars and established as the core of the Chinese way of governance. The governance and authority based on these social relationships and bonds was termed '*Lizhi*', meaning governing by ethical codes or morality. It contained the logic of appropriateness, somewhat similar to that discussed by Martha Finnemore (Finnemore 1996).

Thus, the *Tianxia* philosophy and the tributary system contain something conspicuously different from the Western international philosophy, unable to

be explained or understood in the Western IR discourse. While it is necessary to abandon the assumption of inequality therein, it is also necessary to explore the valuable components, such as the holist approach and institutional order, or, put it simply, the *Tianxia* world view and the *Datong* ideal.

### ***Modernization thoughts and the Chinese revolutions***

China began to have a clear awareness of modernity when the Opium War broke out. From Kang Youwei and Yan Fu to Sun Yet-san to Mao Zedong, reform and revolution had become the overwhelming theme in the Chinese drive for modernization. Ideas, such as sovereignty and nationalism, were the results of the forced open door of the country and the product of the collective reflection. As the Reform failed in 1898, revolution constituted the most important intellectual ideal and popular practice. Revolution had been ever since the dominant theme for intellectuals and masses alike; its goal being to break up the old China and set up a new one.

In this revolutionary drive, there were three clashes that helped shape the later generations of the Chinese. The first is the clash between the tributary system and the Westphalian System, ending up in the defeat of the former. The tributary system was criticized for its principle of inequality and it is gone forever in this particular sense. Since the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, equality has become a norm, a value and an ideal universally accepted. Although inequality exists *de facto* in both the domestic and international realms, it has been the target of many revolutions and reform movements. The revolutionary thought, very much shaped by the Western ideas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, took as irrational and feudal the traditional Chinese worldview and the order based upon unequal social relationships. To break this order thus became the objective of the revolution.

The second was the clash between the Chinese philosophy centred on order and an introversive rationality governing human relations and the Western intellectual tradition of competition and an extroversive rationality based on materialism. The traditional Chinese philosophy focused more on human relations, therefore stressing the emotional part of human behaviour and striving for appropriate interpersonal relationships; the Western philosophy focused more on materialistic gains, therefore stressing the rational part of human behaviour and striving for relative gains in relationships between the human and the nature and among the human beings. The clash resulted in the defeat of the Chinese philosophy and material gains were given priority as a reflection of human rationality.

The third was the clash between the Chinese holistic approach of understanding the universe and the Western individualistic way of discovering the world. Learning from the West started from the desire to have a strong and prosperous nation-state. Together with it was the inevitable acceptance of many Western ideas, among which sovereignty was perhaps the most important in terms of relations with nations in the world. Equality was based upon the independence of individuals and thus eroded the concept of *Tianxia*. The dualistic view began to take roots. The revolutions that have been undergone in China, if we look back at all of them,

are imbued with the dichotomous distinction and a radical separation between the 'ego' and the hostile 'alter'.

Influential ideas have been born out of these clashes. Revolutionary thinking, married to the modernization desire, has been so important in the history of modern China since the 1840s, that it constitutes an important source for a possible Chinese school of IRT. Examples include Mao's theory on the united front, on the leaning against one side and on the three worlds, all of which started from drawing a clear line between the 'we' and the 'they', or between the 'friend' and the 'enemy'. The consistent strategy of Mao was to distinguish among three categories: 'we', 'ally' and 'enemy'. Then 'we' should unite our 'allies' against our 'enemy'. Domestically, Mao believed there were different classes, some of which were allies and others enemies. Internationally, it was similar. Mao's three-world theory was in fact an enlarged theory of class struggle and united front at home. Once this clear distinction is made, one will know for sure who to attack.

From the 1898 Reform to the 1911 Revolution to the Communist Revolution, the idea and practice had been dominantly revolutionary. It is natural that the Russian way of revolution was believed and practiced in China. Since this went hand in hand with the modern history of China and the 100-year humiliation complex, it helped shape the mindset of Chinese when they were entering the world.

### ***Reformist thinking and the integration into the international system***

The reform and opening up initiated in the late 1970s has brought about great economic development and social transformation. The idea that started the reform came from the pragmatic thinking of Deng Xiaoping that China should develop its economy and the Chinese people should get rich. When a few farmers in a remote, poor village in southern China decided to do away with the collective farming system, their idea was also simple: they needed food so as not to starve. It was Deng that made timely use of this event and set in motion reform all over the country. This was a fundamental break-up with the revolutions and the revolutionary mentality. The reform ideas and practices, in fact, have brought about three significant changes in Chinese life, exerting great influence on the mindset of the people. Almost three decades have passed, leaving us valuable legacies for developing China's IRT. Three changes that have been undergoing are of particular importance.

The first change is institutional. Deng's reform is different from that of Khrushchev, for Deng, from the very beginning, linked reform with opening China to the world. Reform and opening up, therefore, are twins, complementing and reinforcing each other. The legitimacy of the reformers in China thus rests on the opening up. Because of Deng's reform and his successors' continuation of the reform, China has not only undergone rapid economic growth, but also institutional changes. The process of teaching by international institutions and learning by the Chinese has been obvious. By 2004, China had joined 266 international multilateral conventions and most of the intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Accordingly, China has made great adjustments to adapt its domestic institutions to international

regimes, norms, and standards. The idea of joining the international system and the practice of China in the past three decades are both nourishment for a possible Chinese school of IRT.

The second change is social, i.e. the change in China's identity. National identity refers to what a state is in relation to international society in terms of the identification between the two. Operationally, there are three degrees of such identification: positive identification, zero identification and negative identification, representing status quo, detached and revolutionary states (Qin 2003). Positive identification indicates that a state sees itself as a member of international society and takes part in the affairs of this community. It accepts international norms, regimes and rules. Zero identification means that a state detaches itself from the society and abstains from international affairs according to its own will. Negative identification, on the other hand, indicates an attitude against international society. China has been experiencing a redefinition of its national identity, i.e. a transformation from a revolutionary state to a status quo state, from an outsider to a member of international society. The transformation started in the early 1970s and gained substantial momentum and velocity when the policy of reform and opening up was adopted in the early 1980s. Furthermore, the more it is integrated into the international system and its institutions, the more it defines itself as a member and a responsible member.

The third change is ideational. The main theme for modern China since 1840, as we discussed above, had been revolution. As Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao's reform was denounced as daydreams, revolution and violent revolution became the idea and practice of the nation. Since 1911, revolution after revolution had broken out in China. The Cultural Revolution was, to some extent, the culmination of the waves of revolutions. The ideas behind all the revolutions are those nurtured and cultivated in the fight against the traditional values and norms of the Chinese culture. China's reform and opening up three decades ago was the beginning of a non-revolution era. With the rapid tangible development, it is natural and necessary that ideational change has been taking place, with a revival of the traditional and the attraction of the Western. Two targets of the revolutions, international norms and traditional values, have gradually come back as inspiring ideas. At the same time, other modern concepts and sentiments, such as nationalism, are also influencing the Chinese. The ideational change is much more fundamental than the visible change in economic development and increase in national capabilities.

These changes are characteristic of the reform era in China. They are significant and fundamental, leaving a valuable legacy for those who aim at developing a Chinese school of IRT.

## **V. Conclusion: The core problematic of a Chinese school of IRT**

We have discussed three sources from which a possible Chinese school of IRT could draw nutrition. However, as mentioned above, there must be a central problem around which the hard core of a social theory could be formed. So far, the



Chinese IR community has still been fumbling for it. I argue that the most likely core problem is the relationship between China and international society.

This is a problem that has been puzzling China for 150 years. In the 2,000 years of the tributary system, China did not have such a problem, for the Chinese worldview contained nothing like sovereignty, nationalism or internationalism. In the 140 years from 1840 to 1980, China had always faced the problem of its relationship with the international system, but never had an appropriate solution to it. In fact, during these 140 years, China had been an outsider, trying, hesitating and staring into a strange and sometimes hostile universe. This has been the most fundamental problem haunting China for more than a century. The Qing dynasty failed to solve it, as did the later Chinese governments. In the 1950s, China began to develop, but the Cold War, the ideological divide and the domestic chaos prevented the Chinese from tackling this problem.

It is the reform and opening up in 1979 that enabled China to seek a solution. In fact, China has been in practice entering international society. How to get inspiration from the three sources of the thinking and practice and how to draw nourishment from the Western IR and social thought? These are questions to which answers should be provided if a Chinese school is to emerge in the era of globalization.

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## Notes

- 1 It is now called China Foreign Affairs University, directly under the Foreign Ministry of China.
- 2 It is now the People's Public Security University of China.
- 3 It refers to the triangular relationship among the US, the Soviet Union and China.
- 4 For example, Kenneth Waltz learns from micro-economics to establish his market-like international system; Robert Jervis is very much inspired by psychology; Wendt borrows heavily from sociology.
- 5 See Xiong Zhiyong. For a detailed and insightful description about the two meanings

- of theory, see Wang Jisi, 'Guojiguanxi Lilun yu Zhongguo Waijiao Yanjiu (IR Theory and the Study of China's Foreign Policy)', in Zi Zhongyun (ed.), *ibid.* pp. 297–9.
- 6 Alastair Iain Johnston's article takes into account 16 terms and calculates their frequency in China's academic journals. The 16 terms are: democratic peace, feminism, non-traditional security, global governance, multipolarity, interdependence, ethnic conflict, identity, crisis management, psychology, IGOs, international political economy, peace research, international organization, multilateralism and regional organization. See Johnston 2002: 141–2.
  - 7 A phenomenon worth noting is that in recent years Chinese doctoral dissertations in the IR field are more like those of the US, having the sections of literature review, theoretical framework, hypotheses, testing (usually by cases) and conclusion. Most of the theories used are Western ones, with Waltz, Keohane and Wendt as the most often cited theorists.
  - 8 Wendt uses the term second-order question, which is concerned with 'the fundamental assumptions about social inquiry: the nature of human agency and its relationship to social structure, the role of ideas and material forces in social life, the proper form of social explanations, and so on' (Wendt 1999: 5). I mainly take the non-material and ideational dimensions of the second-order framework.
  - 9 For example, it is argued that there is a fundamental difference between the Chinese and the Western mind: the former tend to have what is called the correlative thinking and the latter, the causal thinking. See David Hall and Roger T. Ames (2005), *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture*, Chinese edition, Xuelin Press, Shanghai, pp. 22–3.
  - 10 For most realists, the most crucial issue is the maintenance of the hegemon's own power position, but for most liberals, it seems that the maintenance of the hegemonic system with its value and order is at least equally important. See Keohane 1984; Nye 1990.
  - 11 But since at the first-order level, China has not been in a situation that poses hegemonic or leadership problems since the 1840s, it is impossible for today's China to produce an IR theory on world leadership or hegemony.

### 3 Why are there no non-Western theories of international relations?

#### The case of Japan<sup>1</sup>

*Takashi Inoguchi*

Are there any theories of international relations in Japan? My answer to the question is a qualified yes. I argue that international relations theories do exist in Japan. The 'flying geese pattern' regional integration theory is one example of a positivist middle-range theory. In the normative domain, one can cite a 'proto-constructivist' theory of identity formation, which I shall discuss later. Yet, my answer to the above question is a qualified yes because Japan has been an abortive regional hegemon in the past, even if it emerged from World War II to become the second largest economy in the world. Great powers often produce theories of international relations. But in the case of Japan, being a failed challenger to American hegemony in the past and having been embedded in the global governance system dominated by the United States today, has inhibited theoretical advance. This, combined with the relatively weak tradition of positivistic hypothesis testing in social science and the relatively strong tradition of descriptive work have tended to discourage the development of a Japanese theory of international relations.

What follows in this chapter consists of three sections. First, I summarize the development of the study of international relations in Japan for the period 1868–2005 (Inoguchi and Bacon 2000: 1–20; Inoguchi 2002: 111–26; 2003). There are four distinctive major intellectual currents – *staatslehre*, historicism, Marxism and positivism (Inoguchi in eds Easton, Gunnell and Stein 1994: 269–94). By *staatslehre*, I mean the study of how to rule the country from a state-centric perspective. Its influence can be seen in the first political science textbook in Japan by Kiheiiji Onozuka at Tokyo Imperial University (Onozuka 2003). By historicism, I mean the methodology whereby everything must be studied historically on the basis of verifiable documents and materials. One of the best-sellers in this tradition is Tokutomi Soho's world history (Tokutomi 1991). By Marxism, I mean a political and intellectual tenet that sees and examines phenomena with a focus on dialectics of productive power and relations and their political manifestations. One of the best-known works in this tradition is Toyama Shigeki's work on the Meiji Restoration (Toyama 2000). By positivism, I mean the ideological tenet whereby everything must be empirically examined and tested. One of the best-sellers in this tradition is ironically Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Gakumon no Susume* (Fukuzawa 1978). This section is necessary to demonstrate that positivism in the American style has not been vigorously, or to put it more correctly, excessively implanted on Japanese

international relations soil despite the growth of the post-World War II academy of international relations in Japan (Inoguchi and Harada 2002).

Second, I focus on three authors during the pre-1945 periods, Nishida Kitaro, Tabata Shigejiro and Hirano Yoshitaro, to argue that there were fledgling theoretical developments on the Japanese soil. I suggest that, although constrained by circumstances of war and suppression, these authors did articulate quite a robust theory (in the broad sense articulated by Acharya and Buzan in their introduction to this volume).

Third, on the basis of the preceding empirical observations of Japan's international relations academy in terms of its approaches and orientations and the important contributions of Nishida, Tabata and Hirano, I argue that there developed vigorous theoretical works that can be legitimately characterized as a 'constructivist with Japanese characteristics' (Ong 2004: 35–58; see also Jones 2004), a normative international law theorist placing popular sovereignty, like Samuel von Pufendorf does, first before state sovereignty, as Hugo Grotius does (Sakai 2003: 95–106) and a social democratic internationalist (Sakai 2004: 79–95). The observation that the American style positivistic approach to international relations has not been developed as much as its international relations community's size suggests should be taken cautiously, because it does not automatically suggest there are no Japanese theories of international relations. Rather, even during the interwar and war periods there were theoretical developments that arguably constitute an important basis of the post-1945 development of Japanese international relations research.

## **1. The development of international relations in Japan**

As in other societies, the field of international relations in Japan has been greatly influenced by the major currents of the social sciences. They may be described as follows: (Inoguchi in eds Dyer and Mangasarian 1989: 257–64; Inoguchi in eds Easton, Gunnell and Stein 1994; Inoguchi in eds Smelser and Baltes 2001) the first, in the *staatslehre* tradition, which greatly influenced military and colonial studies in the pre-war period and remained strong in a metamorphosed form even after 1945. The feature of this tradition is emphasis on rich, descriptive details elucidating complexities of all sorts. Top priority was given to supplying ample historical-institutional backgrounds and describing events and personalities in contexts and their consequences in minute detail. This approach was valued in analysing trends in international change that might affect Japan's foreign relations. Even after 1945, however, the bulk of area studies have continued in the *staatslehre* tradition, especially when conducted by government-related think tanks. In sharp contrast to the salience of this tradition in government-sponsored research, most area studies as practiced in academia are somewhat excessively humanistic, rather than relevant to social science or useful to government policy. The strong salience of area studies in Japan's international relations study is not unlike the Indian situation as characterized in Navnita (2009). This reflects in part the reaction of academics to the domination of the *staatslehre* tradition. One corollary of this strong *staatslehre* tradition is the emphasis on law and economics as opposed to

political science and sociology. Whereas schools of law and economy exist there are no departments of political science or sociology. They are most likely to be an appendage to the faculties of law or of letters for more than a century. Even at the dawn of the twenty-first century, Japan is one of the very few countries in Asia that does not have an autonomous department of political science.

The second tradition is Marxism, which was very strong from the 1920s through to the 1960s. This tradition is associated with the conception of social science as *Oppositionswissenschaft*, or opposition science. As if to counter the staatslehre tradition, the vigorous Marxist school was clearly discernible from the 1920s through to the 1960s. Marxist categories of political analysis imparted a critical colouring to the observation of political events and the recognition of the ideological biases of the observer. In the 1920s, when the term *shakai kagaku* (social science) first came to be used in Japan, it often denoted Marxism, rendering social science virtually synonymous with Marxism. Japanese social science had been literally *Marxised* by the 1930s. Marxist influence became even more widespread without an internal security act of 1925, after 1945, and from the immediate post-war period through the 1960s the social sciences – economics, political science and sociology – were often led by Marxists or Marxist-leaning scholars. International relations was no exception. Marxism was so influential and pervasive that many other social science theories, especially those non-Marxist theories, were literally crowded out. Within the Marxist framework, such theories of international relations as ‘the second image un-reversed’ and ‘the hegemonic destabilization’ propositions were put forward. Given the strong staatslehre tradition and the almost continuous one-party dominance observed for nearly half a century since the mid-1950s, it was considered natural or desirable for academics and journalists alike to form a sort of countervailing force critical of government conduct. After the Cold War, while most Marxists have become post-Marxist, many have retained their critical view of government policy. Some have transformed themselves into postmodernists, radical feminists and non-communist radicals in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods. Yet it is safe to say that Japanese academics were de facto *demarxised* by the 1970s.

The third tradition is the historicist tradition. This current has been very strong, and as a result the bulk of scholarship in international relations is akin to historical research, and therefore a branch of humanities rather than social sciences. In contrast to staatslehre, historicists do not pay much attention to policy relevance, and topics tend to involve events and personalities prior to 1945. The spirit that guides much of international relations is often similar to the Rankean concept of history, *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*, or broadly ‘let the facts speak for themselves’. At the same time, this tradition brings some historians into the direction of quasi-constructivism in the sense that its thrust is to delve into the minds and impulses, hearts and passions, and memories and psycho-history of individuals and nations. Before Americans ‘invented’ constructivism, many Japanese historians of international relations felt they had been constructivists all the way through.

The fourth current of post-war international relations is informed by the recent introduction of perspectives and methodologies of American political science.



In the pre-war period the absorption of European social scientific thought – in the form of the works of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Leon Walras and Alfred Marshall – constituted the antidote to strong Marxist influence in the social sciences. After 1945, American social sciences played a similar role. American-style international relations has many components, of which two are most important: a proclivity for formulation of theories and for vigorous empirical testing. This intellectual tradition became stronger from the 1970s through to the 2000s.

It is important to note these four diverse currents are clearly evident in Japan's international relations studies even today and that they coexist fairly amicably without many efforts made toward integration. Most associational activities, like framing sessions of the annual conventions and of allocating journal pages, are determined by the more or less equal representation of four blocks, i.e. history, area studies, theories and substantive issues. Diversity without disciplinary integration – if not without organization integration – is one of the features of the academic community of Japan in part because of the strong legacy of the four diverse major social science traditions originating from the one-and-a-half-century experience of nation building, economic development, war and then peace.

The strong tenacity of the four traditions embedded in the Japanese international relations community sometimes makes it hard for some of more *bumi putra* (sons of the earth) Japanese academics to discuss matters with more heavily US-influenced (or arguably neocolonial) East Asian neighbours such as Korea, Taiwan and China (Inoguchi 2004). But various efforts to liberate Japanese academics from their slightly insulated academic community have been underway on the basis of their long accumulation of academic achievements. Most vigorous of these efforts is the launching of a new English-language journal, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (published twice a year by Oxford University Press). Its founding editor happens to be the author of this article. Referees are globally distributed depending on the expertise of a subject dealt with in a manuscript. Roughly 50 per cent of referees are from North America and about 30 per cent of referees are from Asia, including Japan and Australia. Also submissions exhibit a roughly similar pattern of geographical distribution. It is remarkable that the journal has been slowly but fundamentally transforming the Japanese international relations community into an entity that is far more intensely interested in the generation and transmission of ideas and insights on a global scale than before. Publications of their works in the English language by Japanese academics have been on the steady increase. Roughly 100 of its 2,000-odd members have published their books in English and more than 300 members have published their articles in English. Since the number of American PhDs is pitifully small, some 6 per cent of all the members of the Japan Association of International Relations, compared to East Asian neighbours, say, Korea (60 per cent of the Korean Association of International Studies have an American PhD.), their efforts at making inroads into the global community are laudable. In tandem with it, the perception of the Japanese international relations community held by the global international relations community seems to be changing slowly. To see how soon *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* starts to provide a venue for new schools of thought in

international relations, perhaps the period of five years since its first publication is too short.

## **2. Key framing questions of Japan's international relations since 1945**

In order to see more closely the substance of international relations research in Japan, I now turn to the past half a century of the development of international relations in Japan in terms of the key framing questions that have driven intellectual agendas in the field (Inoguchi 2004). It is very important to note at the outset that in Japan the four great debates as conducted in the US were not reproduced. Japanese international relations academics have been much more deeply rooted in their own historical soils than East Asian neighbours. Furthermore, these four traditions and their influences on Japanese international relations have been self-sustaining in a more or less mutually segmented fashion. But the question is not to Japanize international relations theories, but to historicize and contextualize some of those American international relations theories and to generate insights and propositions much more sensitive to historical and cultural complexities. Other social science disciplines, such as economics and sociology, had been pursued in Japan since well before World War II, but international relations was relatively new, introduced as in many places, only after the war. Three key questions that may be identified in the development of the discipline of international relations since 1945 are as follows:

1. What went wrong with Japan's international relations?
2. What kind of international arrangements best secure peace?
3. Why is it that so much remains to be desired in our diplomacy?

These three questions are interrelated with each other. But it is very important to note that as time goes on, the shift has been taking place from question one via question two through question three. The first question, which goes back to the days when Japan's international relations led to war, then to defeat, and to the occupation of the country, is still one of the key framing questions in the study of international relations. It has drawn international relations students to study history-diplomatic history as well as other aspects of modern Japanese history in the related areas of economics, sociology and political science. It is as if all the questions originate from this key question. The economics perspective focuses on the productive capacity and production relationships of the Japanese economy whose alleged distortions drove the country into a wrong, long war. The sociology perspective focuses on the study of alleged feudalistic social relations and state-led social mobilization that were eventually manipulated and mobilized by the state to support and sustain that war. Political science devoted time to the study of the alleged pitifully insufficient democratic arrangements and institutions – the Imperial Diet, political parties, the bureaucracy, elections, the armed forces etc. Most of the foremost post-war scholarship of the third quarter of the twentieth

century has revolved around this first key question. Masao Maruyama is the foremost scholar addressing the question in his *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japan* (Maruyama 1963). If one has to choose only one key framing question in the Japanese social science communities in the latter half of the twentieth century, 'What went wrong?' is everyone's choice. In this sense Japan's social science community has been living under the long shadow of World War II irrespective of the oft-heard chorus of 'do not forget the past'.

In the study of international relations, the key framing question that attracted students was Japan's diplomatic interactions with foreign powers. The then newly founded Japan Association of International Relations (JAIR) compiled and edited the multivolume work on Japan's 'Road to the Pacific War' (*Taiheiyo senso e no michi*), mobilizing virtually all the scholars and diplomatic historians, of which some were Marxists, active in the field in the 1950s and 1960s (ed. 20 Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai 1962–3). The approach it employed was predominantly descriptive, rather than analytical or theoretical, in sharp contrast to the other disciplines that adopted interesting mixtures of Marxism and culturalism in attempting to address similar issues.

This landmark Pacific War study asks the big what-went-wrong question and devotes chapter after chapter to tracing and examining absorbing details of the diplomatic and political dynamics of Japan's external relations. As the work is based primarily on studies of the recently released public documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the volumes are full of newly revealed details that led to the disaster. Most actors were portrayed as having done the right thing in executing their duties at places they were assigned to. The problem was that collectively their dutifulness and diligence did nothing to avert war with the rest of the world. Rather each individual actor's dutifulness and diligence led to collective disasters of a gigantic proportion. The past presidents of the JAIR include many who were involved in this massive study and remained leaders in the field long after the work was completed and published. In that sense as well, the key framing question had a very strong impact on the entire discipline. Diplomatic history has been a strong presence in the JAIR throughout the last half a century.

In tandem with the JAIR Pacific War project, newspapers and magazines played an important role in framing the academic agendas of international relations. For the press, the key framing question was the second: What are the best arrangements to secure peace? Debate unfolded on the subject of peace with the allied powers – should the San Francisco Peace Treaty have been signed? In the context of the Cold War, what was the right choice: a partial peace with the Western powers or a total one including all the Allied powers? Nambara Shigeru, a political philosopher and President of the University of Tokyo, took the latter position in the collectively signed appeal to total peace (Nambara 1950; see also Tsuchiyama 2005).

The former position was called realism, the latter idealism. The great debate on realism versus idealism unfolded in the 1960s and 1970s. At a glance it resembles the first great idealism-realism debate in the US. But in Japan, unlike in the US, realism's victory over idealism was somewhat incomplete. (Parenthetically, the second great debate between traditionalism and the scientific school did not take

place either.) The behavioural revolution did not take place in Japanese international relations. The third great debate between neorealism and neoliberalism did not take place in Japan either. Nor is the fourth great debate between rationalism and reflectivism taking place. Many Japanese academics feel that they have been practicing reflectivism, rather, long before it was preached by Americans, although they were less articulate and sophisticated about methodology. The salience of this debate in the most widely read newspapers and popular magazines was such that the main arena of discussion was journalism, not academia, and the individuals who were involved in the journalistic debates became the best-known names in the field.

There is nothing wrong with the debate itself. Intellectuals who speak out in the media have played immensely important roles throughout the last 60 years. The problem was that the professionals in the academic community of international relations itself ended up becoming less rigorous in their scholarship than their colleagues in other fields of the social sciences. The second framing question was basically a policy question, but given the way in which Japanese society is organized, there is little likelihood that members of academia can develop careers as experts on policy or become well versed in policy affairs and well connected in policy-making circuits. Intersectoral labour mobility is so limited that even scholars active in the journalistic debates over policy could not realistically aspire to active involvement in policy making as part of their careers. What looked like policy debates, therefore, was in fact mostly illusory. Ultimately, the 'journalist academics' came to constitute a special species within academia. The situation in Japan forms a strong contrast to the case in the US where professionalization has made great advances for the last half a century and academics have established themselves by an autonomous/autocentric dynamism.

The third framing question is a more recent one. Although in a sense it is similar to the second, it has led to empirical rather than theoretical investigations of what should be done. In this sense, the third framing question encouraged scholars to carry out empirical studies of an often fastidious nature. This thrust became dominant in the 1980s and 1990s. Kusano Atsushi published meticulously researched books on Japan-United States policy discussions on the market and trade liberalization of agriculture and large retailing shops (Kusano 1991). Kusano has been quite active in commenting on policy and politics in TV programmes since then. Also, Tadokoro Masayuki published a well conceptualized work on the international political economy of US dollars and Japanese yen (Tadokoro 2001). Tadokoro has been quite active as a co-editor of a monthly magazine in which he regularly contributes a policy column. However, unlike empirical studies in the US, those of Japan do not necessarily feel driven to place their research in grandiose and occasionally almost Procrustean theoretical schemes. This tendency reflects, in part, the growing professionalization of Japanese international relations academics, despite the adversities. Competition among international relations academics has somewhat increased in tandem with growth of the membership of JAIR. As of January 2005, the number is slightly more than 2,000.

The above portrayal may give the impression that the field of international relations has been directly affected by Japan's own development. Diplomatic history, quasi-policy debates and empirical analyses are depicted as the shifting salient genres predominant in each period of post-war Japanese development. As the key framing questions changed from the 1940s through to the 2000s, empirical analyses of various aspects of Japan's foreign relations have become a dominant genre.

A natural question to ask here is whether dynamic debates have been taking place among Japan's four traditions. Over the years since 1945, the first two traditions, *staatslehre* and Marxist, seem to be waning in their influence. The latter two, historically oriented studies and American social science-influenced studies have been on the ascendant. But the basic tenacity of these four traditions over many years has much to do with the lack of political science and international relations departments on campus, which are autonomous in appointment and budget – and in terms of academic discipline. Parenthetically, the absence of an institutionalized political science department has a lot to do with the nineteenth century origin of nurturing bureaucratic elite candidates in legal training and with the fear of producing a bundle of unemployed young elites trained in 'political science', which could be subversive to the 'system'. Therefore, the waning and waxing of these four traditions have much to do with the development of Japanese society, i.e. rapid industrialization, the achievement of a high income society and the relative decline of the state's influence rather than with the dynamic debates amongst them. 1) 'idealism' in the third quarter of the twentieth century was to be replaced by 'realism' in the post-Vietnam war years; 2) 'realism' in the fourth quarter of the twentieth century was to be replaced by the proliferation of other streams of thought, constructivism, institutionalism, feminism and so forth. By idealism, I mean the tendency to place pacifism at the helm according to article nine of the Constitution and to play down the role assigned to Japan by the Japan-US Security Treaty. By realism, I mean the tendency to place alliance with the US as the highest priority and to play down the role envisioned by the Constitution at the time of its drafting process. Having examined, albeit briefly, Japan's international relations during the interwar, war and post-war (and within it, post-Vietnam, post-Cold War and post-9/11) periods, I now take a closer look at these authors who were active in theorizing of Japan's international relations.

### **3. Three theorists as an illustration of Japanese theories of international relations**

The following three thinkers are chosen to illustrate that something akin to fledgling theoretical development was seen in the 1930s or at a critical juncture of deepening democracy and run-away fascism: 1) They represented one of the then most noted scholars in philosophy, international law and economics; 2) They vigorously articulated their thoughts, which are resonant with Japanese international relations thoughts and practices after World War II as well.

### ***3.1 Nishida as an innate constructivist***

Identity is one of the key concepts in international relations study. Yet it is a key concept that is not easy to ‘grasp adequately by Anglo-American positivist methods alone’ (Williams 1996; Ong 2004). Nishida attempted to fix this thorny issue of Japanese identity in international relations when Japan was considering its place between East and West. The question is: How to resurrect the historical consciousness of Japanese in an environment where ‘what is perceived as a normative inferiority induced by a Western civilization that views itself as intellectually culturally and morally superior’ (Ong 2004). To summarize, this is the thrust of his philosophy of identity.

Nishida rejects Cartesian logic and adopts dialectic. Yet his dialectic is more Hegelian. In his dialectic a thesis and an antithesis coexists without forming a synthesis. Contradictions manifest themselves in concrete forms. Contradictions do not necessarily move in the direction of a new synthesis without an innate self-contradiction. ‘Rather it rejects decontextualized things; it seeks to see things in their appropriate contexts’ (Nisbett 2003 cited in Ong 2004). He argued that Japanese identity emerges through a coexistence of opposites, Eastern and Western. In his own words,

Simply put, if every real thing is concrete and determined it is because it is the expression of a greater reality taking shape, and this greater reality is the universal. The identity of an individual, its self-determination, is at the same time the manifestation of the self-identity of the universal determining itself through the individual.

(Heisig 2001)

What is striking about Nishida’s philosophy is that he is envisaging to make Japanese identity construction, not parochial but universally understood. Nishida’s orientation is qualitatively very different from those works of Nihonjinron in the 1980s and 1990s, which argue that Japanese culture is unique, exceptional and thus parochial. In his own words, ‘The distinctiveness of the Japanese is only of local value; it is enhanced when its core can be extracted and translated into something of world scope.’ (Heisig 2001).

Many American constructionists swim in the vocabulary of rationalism. But Nishida lives in the philosophy of nothingness (1958). I argue that Japanese theories in this area are very profound. Once articulated by such authors as Ralph Pettman and Christopher Goto-Jones, Nishida’s innate construction becomes clearly comprehensible by readers of all persuasions.

### ***3.2 Tabata as an international law theorist presupposing the natural freedom of individuals***

State sovereignty is one of the key concepts of international relations study. Tabata Shigejiro, well versed in the long tradition of international law, state sovereignty

and democracy, put forward his theory of international law, remarkably presaging the advent of a democratic, anti-western and anti-hegemonic international law.

How to treat state sovereignty is a key question in international law. Discussing the equality of states, Tabata (Tabata 1946), in his works written before 1945 but published in a book form thereafter, emphasizes that the concept of equality of states presupposes both the recognition of the natural freedom of individuals and duties that arise from natural law (Sakai 2003, 2004). Tabata takes the popular sovereignty theory as developed by Emmerich de Vattel and Samuel von Pufendorf in contrast to the state sovereignty theory as developed by Hugo Grotius. The Grotian theory of state sovereignty was more widely and strongly accepted during the inter-war period as a universalist position. Yet the Grotian theory of state sovereignty tends to accommodate what existed in his early modern times, and presupposed the Hobbesian concept of self-preservation in a constant struggle in the international community. In contrast, Pufendorf, for one, developed the argument that only on the basis of equality of individuals can one envisage the equality of states in which such normative duties as 'thou shalt not hurt others' prevails.

Tabata's theory took dramatic applications both in 1944 and in 1950 (Sakai 2003, 2004). In 1944 he argued against the negation of equality of states under the scheme of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and for the immediate independence to be accorded to Western colonies in Asia with the equality of states materialized under the scheme. During the Allied powers' occupation, he argued in 1950 against a peace treaty only with the non-communist Allied powers. He argued that concluding a peace treaty with some of the Allies, but not with others, is tantamount to the negation of the concept of equality of states. The bearers of sovereignty are citizens and democratic principle ought to be observed in concluding a peace treaty as the government proposed to do. Since public opinion was arguably against it by more than slight margins, Tabata was riding upon public sentiment. He argued for the transcendence of state sovereignty on the basis that equality of states and popular sovereignty which he thought would lead to peace.

One is struck by his consistency and integrity in sticking to the equality of states and its popular democratic foundations when he argued with the world. He argued against retaliation prevalent in the interwar period and against the hegemonic unilateralism in the immediate post-war period. By 2005 Japan had become one of the major rule makers relinquishing the role of a rule taker in global governance in a number of policy areas (Inoguchi 2005: 112–17). In this area as well, Japan's international relations have laid down the basis of some niches that are more likely to grow in the near future. At the dawn of the 2000s, just to give a few examples, Japanese international law academics are busy theorizing about 'inter civilizational law' especially with regard to different conceptions of human rights, making rules and norms of transnational business transactions, formulating schemes of 'special drawing rights' for nuclear energy for peaceful use through neo-multinationalism (Onuma 1998; Hurrell 2004; Inoguchi 2005).

### **3.3 Hirano as an economist placing regional integration higher than state sovereignty**

Regional economic integration has been one of the key concepts in international relations study. Having escaped the fate of being further marginalized in the world economy despite the lack of tariff autonomy for the long period between 1856 and 1911, many Japanese economists were eager to build a more robust economic strength on their own feet as well as with Japan's neighbours. In 1924 Hirano argued that modernity and its contractual social principle (read capitalism) could be replaced by constructing a communitarian social principle (read socialism) (Hirano 1924). When socialism, communism and anarchism were widely considered to be dangerous thoughts, Hirano used the concepts communitarian and contractual to denote socialism and capitalism. Hirano was the leader of one of the competing Marxist analyses of Japan, arguing that the Meiji Restoration represented the absolute monarchy and Japanese style, and the task of revolutionaries is to accelerate Japan's capitalist development further, thus precipitating a socialist revolution. In 1944 he argued for a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere by noting that instead of the struggle among imperialist sovereign powers, his cherished goal of upholding a communitarian principle might be materialized at long last. Whether his dramatic turn to the support of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was a real or disguised *tenko* (relinquishing an anti-government position and transforming oneself into a pro-government position due to suppression and inducement) is a moot question. The following year Japan was defeated and the Communist Party welcomed the US-led Allies as a liberating force (Johnson 1990).

Seeing the pre-1945 and post-1945 Japanese thoughts a little more continuously, one can see a striking co-working of extraordinarily divergent thinkers pouring their thoughts into the idea of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Area. Saburo Okita, a young bureaucrat with an engineering degree and Hotsumi Ozaki, a young journalist, worked together for Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe, who was Prime Minister during the critical years of 1939–41. Hotsumi Ozaki received capital punishment for treason against the state as a member of a spy ring of Richard Sorge, a Soviet spy. Saburo Okita climbed the ladder in bureaucracy and articulated the idea and policy of regional integration together with John Crawford from the Australian National University. The Japanese theory of regional integration in the form of the flying geese pattern of development grew out of their thinking of the 1930s and 1940s (see Korhonen 1994: 93–108). The theory was revived in the 1970s, hence demonstrating persistence.

## **4. Provisional answer to the question, 'Why are there no Japanese theories of international relations?'**

In order to answer the question, we have examined the four major currents of Japan's international relations to see that the *staatslehre* was interested in policy rather than theory; that historicism wanted to have detailed and meticulous descriptions of events and personalities on the basis of verifiable documents,



in part for its own sake, in part to disguise political positions due to the limited degree of freedom before 1945 and in part to construct norms and logics of actors à la proto-constructivism; that Marxism did represent very theoretical analyses until 1970s by when academics and non-academics alike were largely demarxised in Japan; and that positivism, American style, did not become hegemonic in Japanese international relations. If we define theories of international relations as narrowly defined positivistic theories of American-style international relations, Japanese international relations can be characterized as not producing theories of international relations. Neither hegemonic stability theory nor democratic peace theory is born. Positivism is not a major current in Japan's international relations. Needless to say, there is not a shortage of theory-conscious empirical studies without grandiose pretension.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, in part to give a qualified answer to the question, we have illustrated the three proto-theoretical arguments as revealed by Nishida Kitaro, Tabata Shigejiro and Hirano Yoshitaro. They all demonstrated quite robust theoretical arguments and are characterized as an innate constructivist, a popular sovereignty theorist of international law and a Marxist theorist of regional integration respectively. Indeed, they generated theories of sorts that would have universal audiences if their work was translated into English and published in an appropriate forum.

The beauty of these three theorists is that they have resonance to the kinds of issues that confront Japan's international relations in the 2000s. First, as Japan's difficulties with regard to the Yasukuni shrine, to the East Asian summit in Kuala Lumpur and to the US military bases in Japan illustrate, Japan's identity between the West and the East has not been well sorted out. Second, the flying geese pattern of integration suggests the market-conforming and yet developmental hierarchy-conscious, bilateral liberalization strategies, which is slightly at odds with the multilateral regional integration agreement strategy. Third, the border-transcending, people-based pacifism is not fading away. Rather, in the process of revising the Constitution's article nine, the Liberal Democratic Party's draft retains the basic pacific posture intact whereas the existence of armed forces called the Self Defense Forces is explicitly acknowledged.

To sum up, if theories of international relations are understood as narrowly positivistic theories, American style, my answer is that there are no Japanese theories of international relations. If theories of international relations include constructivists, normative theories, positive theories and legal theories as well as works representing less than rigorously formal theorizing effects, my answer is a qualified yes.

More indirectly but possibly more fundamentally, I might as well speculate that the following four factors are important to stress when we try to understand the nature of Japan's international relations in terms of theoretical continuity.

1. Japan's international relations research has been developing like a mosaic with different methodological traditions harmlessly co-existing with each other. Unlike international relations in the United States, where political science gives the crucial disciplinary framework, international relations in

Japan accommodates different disciplinary traditions like diplomatic history, international law, international economics, area studies and various political theories. This amalgamate nature of Japan's international relations community makes it more difficult to produce theories for international relations.

2. Japan's international relations research is a *bumi putra* (indigenous) variety, because Japan was not colonized by the West. Colonialism was an avenue to acquiring foreign language, which tends to facilitate international relations study. The US-led Allied occupation during the 1945–52 period was conducted by indirect rule. By which I mean that Americans stood at the top while Japanese bureaucrats were mostly kept intact except for some small percentage of those regarded to have been tainted by war crimes. Indirect rule is too shallow to change many things. This is most conspicuous when we compare international relations in Japan with those in Korea, Taiwan and China, let alone in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines.
3. Japan's international relations research operates in a slightly different framework from the King/Verb/Keohane positivistic methodology bible. It reflects the historical and cultural legacies, some of which may be most usefully glimpsed through the postmodern angle of Ralph Pettman's work (King, Keohane and Verba 2001; Pettman 2004).
4. More substantively, Japan's international relations evolved with three stages: a) its beginning as a small peripheral country whose ruler was 'legitimized' by Chinese rulers in the latter's fledging tributary system mostly during a period leading to and including the Qin and Han dynasties; b) its endogenizing period in which tributary missions and trades were suspended and then private trade flows with sporadic quasi-tributary trades dominated the scene during the one millennium of Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties; c) its maturing period of developing its own Japan-centric world order during a few centuries of early modern Japan in which the Tokugawa *bakufu* (military government) ruled the nation in almost exclusive control of Japan's external defence and commerce plus internal communications and security with some 300 domains keeping de facto autonomy (Inoguchi in Rozman *et al.* 2005; Inoguchi 2005: 362–403).
5. Three distinctive features of Japan's international relations as most clearly glimpsed from the fledging Japan-centric regional order in the early modern period are as follows: a) permeable insulation whereby Japan absorbs higher civilizations such as ideographs, religion, weapons and institutions – selectively and taking time – without letting them fully permeate and swamp the country (Schaede and Grimes 2003). It was the case not only with China and Korea in ancient times but also with Portugal and Spain in medieval times and also with the UK and the United States in modern times; b) friendship with and distance from China and the West: Japan's relationship with China and Korea resembles to that of the UK with Europe (Inoguchi 2005: 392–6). Japan is ambivalent to the continent like the UK is. In other words, Japan is part of Asia, but somewhat separate from Asia; c) Japan-centric world order whereby

external actors were largely left for a certain adjacent domain to handle, like the Satsuma domain vis-à-vis the Ryukyu kingdom, the Tsushima domain vis-à-vis the Chosun kingdom, the Matsumae domain vis-à-vis the Ainus and Russia whereas the Tokugawa *bakufu* monopolized external trade and conducted only at Deshima port of Nagasaki mostly with Dutch and Chinese (Fairbank 1968; Satoru 2005). In 1818 Chinese Emperor Jiaqing distinguished in Jiaqing huidian two groups of foreign countries: tributary states and mutually trading states. For example, tributary states were Korea, Vietnam and England, and mutually trading states were the Netherlands, France and Japan. To China, Japan was an economic animal without being respectful by sending tributary missions whereas to Japan, China was a non-state trading actor without formal relationship (Banno 1972).

6. Japanese style of integration has three distinctive features, which developed on a domestic, regional and global scale step by step: a) it focuses on transportation and the market (Rozman 1974). During the early modern period internal commerce was encouraged across 300-odd domains. The Tokugawa *bakufu* consolidated social infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports and storehouses. During the modern period ports, ships, coal, oil and tax autonomy were keys. During the post-World War II period, population, official development assistance, foreign trade, technological cooperation and foreign direct investment were keys; b) it makes use of evolutionary developmental maturation within Japan, in Asia and the world over. It is sometimes called the flying geese trade and development pattern whereby the leading goose is followed by lieutenant geese, and then by laggard geese. Just like the development of commercial routes linking Osaka and Edo (Tokyo) and other ports nationwide was crucial in forging the national domestic market in early modern Japan, the development of industry in Asia (light industry such as textiles, clothes, footwear and food, and heavy industry such as steel, petrochemicals, machinery and electronic and information industries) was pursued through official development assistance, trade and direct investment, in conjunction with the Japanese development of a certain stage (one step earlier). In an era of globalization, complex patterns are forged case by case to determine where Japanese-style functional integration can go. In the current discussion in Japan on East Asian community building, functional integration is a key word in the Japanese debate. In other words, economic, financial, technological and organizational linking is first sought after without paying too much attention to security, ideas, values, institutions and so on (Inoguchi 2005: 56–61); c) the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was conjured up by the Japanese Imperial Army when necessary weapons and energy resources were dried up at home and near abroad when the Japanese Imperial Navy lost the entire Western Pacific for its sphere of control. It contained the ideas of racial equality, anti-monopoly by the West and the equality and solidarity of East Asia. However, the idea was not backed up by either military might or economic resources let alone by political practice in 1944 or 1945. However, some authors like Nishida, Tabata and Hirano hoped in their own respective way that the Japanese destruction

of Western colonialism, its idea and military might, would help pave the way eventually to the liberation of the colonized East by Japan, however awkward its implementation was and however self-contradictory its ideas were. Nishida thought of it as a way of helping Japan to establish its own identity; Tabata thought of it as a way of establishing international law less founded on state sovereignty; and Hirano thought of it as a way of equality-based regional integration. All the three dreamt implausible and impossible dreams because the idea ended in the mere imposition of coercion when Japan was totally at the mercy of US military attacks (Inoguchi 2005). If the military might of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy had been completely replaced by the United States Armed Forces, a greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere might have been triggered.

I would like to add a few words about American hegemony in international relations theory and research. A few reasons why American international relations have a much larger and stronger profile, other than those already noted, may be elaborated. In my view, in part because of multiple anonymous peer reviews, in part because of its sheer size, in part because of use of *lingua franca* and in part because of the link between hiring/promotion and assessment of publication performance, the American academic community has developed a dynamic, competitive and auto-centric quality. Other international relations communities have not matched its vigour and strength. Perhaps West Europeans have built a community that has arguably developed strength in a number of niche areas on a par with Americans. Such European-based international relations journals as *Review of International Studies*, *European Journal of International Relations* and *Journal of Peace Research* have registered their respective niche and position in the world market and are a clear testimony to this assessment. Yet one might have to note the 'out flows' of American authors penetrating these and other 'outstanding' journals. To state in a reverse direction, there are other non-American outstanding journals here, 'outstanding' in part because of the 'outflows' of American-residing authors. West Pacific Asians have been trying to build strength on their own feet as much as possible. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* has spearheaded the publication in the region of a journal that is purported to set up a forum in which discussions from within and without not only bring up the academic level of articles but also trigger the fusion of ideas and the enrichment of insights to be brought to bear on the better and deeper understanding of international relations in the region (2000–). Compared to, say, the *Pacific Review*, a journal with a similar regional focus, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* has been less preoccupied with the rather stereotyped comparison between Western European and Pacific Asian regionalism (a highly institutionalized one and an open house one) and interested in a more historically and culturally contextualized analysis of regionalism. Yet its strength remains to be improved substantially before it can claim its position of one of the world-renowned academic focal points.

As a footnote, I might as well add that Japanese political scientists have moved forward to a world centre stage. Two articles in the June 2005 issue of *American*

*Political Science Review* are co-authored by political scientists with Japanese names and one of the articles in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, which was the most widely read article (of all the Sage journals) in June 2005, is co-authored similarly (Hill and Matsubayashi 1999: 215–24; Imai 2005; Richardson 1974; Goldsmith *et al.* 2005: 408–29). In other words, Japanese strength cannot be underestimated. All the three articles are very solid and positivistically spirited. In an era of deepening globalization, ideas diffuse and permeate fast and en masse. The fact that the latter article on anti-Americanism has been read most frequently seems to suggest that Japan's international relations research has started to enhance world-wide acceptance without so much playing down its *bumi putra* characteristics. In a similar vein, some non-Western theories of international relations have been made far more comprehensible thanks in part to Western authors like Ralph Pettman, who decipher and represent metaphysics such as Taoist strategies, Buddhist economics, Islamic civics, Confucian Marxism, Hindu constructivism, Pagan feminism and animist environmentalism (Pettman 2004).

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## Notes

- 1 I draw for sections 2 and 3 of the paper from Takashi Inoguchi, 'The Sociology of a Not-So-Integrated Discipline: The Development of International Relations in Japan', *Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, February 2002, pp. 111–26; revised 12 December 2005.
- 2 Furthermore, such authors as Motoshi Suzuki, Keisuke Iida, Yusaku Horiuchi and Takashi Inoguchi are vigorous in this area of study.

## 4 Why is there no non-Western international relations theory?

### Reflections on and from Korea

*Chaesung Chun*

In *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel wrote ‘the Owl of Minerva first takes flight with twilight closing in’. Likewise, IR theory begins to be made with the reality closing in. Looking back on Korean history, it has been hard for Korean IR scholars to theoretically reflect on their international reality, since Korean history has always been filled with breathtaking events. History moved too fast for Korean scholars to ponder upon.

The most seminal event was the opening of ports in 1876 to Japanese. In the treaty with Japan, Korea was conceived as a ‘sovereign’ state, which was very foreign to Koreans at that time. From that time on, Korea entered into a modern Western state system and concluded treaties with Western countries. From 1876 to 2005, 130 years have passed. During that time, Koreans have experienced a modern balance of power system with imperialism, Japanese colonialism, the division of the peninsula, the Korean War, the Cold War confrontation, the collapse of the Cold War and the coming of the anti-terror period, possibly the postmodern transition.

If we compare the Westphalian transition in Western Europe with Korea’s opening of ports, the transition that persisted for nearly 360 years (1648–2005) in Europe happened in Korea for only 130 years. And that happened with imperialist and superpower rivalry.

Against this backdrop of the changing reality, IR theory in Korea was very underdeveloped<sup>1</sup> (Moon 1988; Kim 1989, 2002; Choi 2003). Without a systemic, endogenous theory-building process, most IR theories have been imported from the West, especially the US. When considering the Cold War situation, IR theory as one of cultural products among many was the most powerful means to shape the way Koreans look at the world and think about values. As the Cold War is over and Koreans try to look at the world from a more independent perspective, IR theories prevalent in Korea so far begin to be under scrutiny. The problem, however, is ‘from here to where?’

In this chapter, I will first examine the state of the art of Korean IR theory from the inception of the modern international system to the present. Second, I will trace Korean history from the IR theoretical perspective, paying attention to the reason why Korea lacks its own IR theory. Then, I will suggest the reason for the relative underdevelopment of IR theorizing in Korea so far. The issue of how to build Korean’s theoretical perspective in the future will follow.



## The underdevelopment of 'South Korean' IR theories in modern times

Before the arrival of Western imperialism, Korean scholars, mostly Confucian philosophers had their own view about regional politics, or inter-dynastic relations. Lacking an explicit positivist social science, they paid most attention to the normative basis of the relationship with the Chinese centre, Northern tribes and Japan. They thought civilization came from the Chinese centre from which Korean civilization found the standard. Establishing a coherent intellectual moral framework penetrating from the self through the family, and the state to the whole world, Korean scholars felt comfortable in the mechanism of Sino-centrism and the tributary system (Chung 2004; Namgung 1999; Park 2001; Fairbank 1969).

During the transitional period (1876–1910), Koreans had a hard time in moving from the traditional regional politics to a modern international system. First, Korean scholars tried to understand the concept of national sovereignty. The tradition of imperial sovereignty, however, prevented them from understanding the norms of sovereign equality and domestic non-intervention. Second, the gap between the normative and legal cover of an international system, the *realpolitik* and the harsh reality of international relations confused Koreans. Korean scholars thought that once the country was recognized as a sovereign state by being a subject of a modern treaty, territorial integrity should automatically follow. However, experiences defied their expectations. Illegal territorial occupation and many instances of domestic intervention taught Koreans that legal arrangements could not really guarantee empirical sovereignty or even juridical sovereignty. Third, the stage in which Korea entered into a modern state system was the stage of imperialism. To imperialists, national sovereignty applies only to strong powers, leaving Koreans outside of sovereign protection. When Emperor Chosun dispatched representatives to the Hague Peace Conference in 1907, and to Versailles in 1919 only in vain, Koreans realized the principle of national self-determination is impotent in the face of imperialist logic<sup>2</sup> (Cho 2005; Choi 2003; Ha 2002; Hyun Chul Kim 1999; Ki Jung Kim 1990; Soo Am Kim 2000; Lee 2004; Palais 1975; Gong 1984).

International relations as a field started to be established after 1945 when Korea was liberated from Japanese colonialism. Before then, it was hard to imagine that Korea could afford to develop its own perspective or theory on international relations, since from 1876, when Korea was integrated into a modern state system, it suffered from Western imperialist powers followed by Japanese colonial rule for 35 years (Ku 1985). Under these circumstances, founding the South Korean government in 1948 was a starting point to theorize the international relations of South Korea from the standpoint of modern IR theory. For the first time in Korean history, South Korea was recognized as a legal sovereign state by international society. The most special characteristic from the outset was that Japanese academic influence had been considerably diminished and the influence of Western academia, especially of the US, dominated South Korean scholarly works in the field of international relations. From the 1950s, South Korean scholars have worked to theoretically analyse international relations surrounding the Korean

Peninsula according to Western theories (Ha 1987; Lee 1997; Pak 1978; Park 1987; Rhee 1979; Ro 1988).

With intellectual resources lacking and international affairs rapidly changing, Korea did not have breathing space to develop the field of international relations. The Korean War from 1950 to 1953 also posed an insurmountable challenge to Korean scholars in pondering upon serious problems such as nation-state building, division of the peninsula, the Cold War in the region and foreign policy towards surrounding powers. For the eight years from independence to the end of the Korean War, Japanese academic works and Korean intellectuals trained under the Japanese system had still been influential, with the impact of American scholarship slowly rising<sup>3</sup> (Yong Hee Lee 1955; Cho 1955; Sin 1950).

After the Korean War South Korean scholars in international relations began to develop the field. In 1953, the Korean Political Science Association (KPSA) was established, which is still the largest academic organization in the field of Korean political science, with a membership of more than 2,000. With the lead of Seoul National University, departments of political science in many universities set up courses on international relations, foreign policy and security studies. In 1956, the first major IR course was set up in Seoul National University, and became an independent department in 1959. Also, the Korean Association of International Studies (KAIS) was established in 1956, which has now grown into the largest organization of international political scientists in Korea, with over 1,300 members today.

In the 1950s, South Korean IR scholars were heavily influenced by American academia. On the one hand, South Korean scholars studied in the United States acquiring doctoral degrees, and on the other hand, the conclusion of the Treaty of Mutual Defence in 1953 and subsequent strong alliance between the two countries had the effect of harmonizing the view on international affairs, especially facing North Korean communist threats. During this time, the theoretical perspective on international relations was dominated by political realism. Books by classical realists such as E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan and Henry Kissinger were translated, leading to the publication of IR books by Korean scholars. Works by Harold Nicolson, Hans Kelsen, and C. W. Mills were also introduced. Foreign policies, security policies, international institutions, especially the United Nations, and international relations theory were major topics Korean scholars tried to ponder upon.

One thing to be noted is that studies about international organizations, especially the UN had flourished due to the particular process of state-building and the Cold War situation. The US tried to establish the South Korean government as the only legitimate government in the late 1940s vis-à-vis North Korea. Also, throughout the 1950s, competition to establish more diplomatic relations with Third World countries had continued between the two Koreas, which also contributed to the development of the study of international organizations (Choi 1964, 1965).

In the 1960s the major trend in the 1950s persisted, but diversified. More American authors, such as George Kennan, Harold Nicolson, R. Osgood and John F. Dulles, were introduced and studied. At this time, several attempts were made

for South Korea's own perspective. For example, Lee Yong-Hee's book, *A General Theory of International Politics in Relation with its Historical Aspects*, was an attempt to establish a theory of international relations based on the author's own perspective of South Korea's international history and situation. The so-called Topos Theory was devised making the broader unit or agent than nation-state, such as the sphere of civilization or geographical sphere the most important unit of analysis. It looks at the clash between Asian civilizational sphere and the Western state system as the origin of the transformation of the organizing principle of Asian international politics.<sup>4</sup>

Two journals, the *Korean Political Science Review* (KPSR) by the KPSA and the *Korean Journal of International Studies* (KJIS) by the KAIS, began to publish many articles on international relations in general. Articles on South Korean international relations regarding the South Korea-US relationship, the South Korea-Japan relationship, modernization, diplomatic history and international relations theory were published.

Looking back on the period of the 1950s and 1960s, it might be said that it was 'the period of citation' or 'the period of importing final products' (Ha 1987; Park 1987). Despite South Korean scholars' efforts, American theories, especially realism, had a great influence on South Koreans' thinking, leaving them in a position of applying those theories to South Korean international situations.

In the 1970s the increase in the numbers of IR scholars in South Korea brought about diversification of theoretical concerns, with the persistent dominance of security studies. Also in this decade, much more diverse academic journals appeared. But the most distinctive feature in the 1970s was the advent and rise of behaviouralism, or the scientific approach.

The rise of behaviouralism in the US was also reflected in the South Korean academy with more distinctive influence in the 1960s. But the impact of behaviouralism was more evident in the field of comparative politics until the end of 1960s. In the 1970s many IR works with a behaviouralist trend were translated and studied in South Korea, leading them to paradigmatic changes. Diverse theories such as communication theory, cybernetics theory, game theory and systems theory were studied by South Korean scholars who acquired their doctoral degrees in US universities<sup>5</sup> (Rhee 1964; Yun 1959).

It seems natural that, despite a methodological turn with the impact of behaviouralism, South Korea's specific situation in the midst of the Cold War confrontation made security studies still the focus of empirical and practical research. Many scholars also adopted a traditional and historical approach in analysing and evaluating security issues. The dominance of a realist perspective also persisted in this period.

In addition, concerns about the international political economy increased due to the oil crisis in the early 1970s, the rapid development of the South Korean economy and trade relationships, mainly with the US. The theory of complex interdependence had also been imported introducing a liberal paradigm to a limited degree.

With all these in mind, this period can be called 'the period of import substitution'. South Korean scholars continued to import Western IR accomplishments,

but tried to develop and adapt them to make those theories fit in explaining South Korean international realities.

Many changes that had happened in the 1970s and 1980s, such as détente, the oil crisis, the rise of Third World countries, the democratization movement and the economic development of South Korea as one of the new industrializing economies (NIEs), were reflected in academic concerns and problems among South Korean IR scholars. Furthermore, the development of IR theories at the global level as witnessed in the theories of complex interdependency, regime theory, dependency theory, world systems theory and critical theory gave lively impetus to South Korean scholars' academic works<sup>6</sup> (Ha 1965, 1972; Rhee 1977; Ro 1980; Roy 1969).

The dependency theory especially had a refreshing impact on South Korean academia, which was imbued with American influence. Many young scholars studied major themes of the dependency theory and transformed and applied them to South Korean international realities, raising the need to view not only the path of South Korean economic development but also the relationship with the US critically, which had rarely been under critical examination (Ki Jung Kim 1990; Odong Kim 1979; Lee 1993; Park 1985; Roy 1969; Cumings 1981, 1990).

This trend, not only in IR but also in broader fields of social science, was closely related to the democratization movement. Throughout the 1970s, criticism against the authoritarian political leadership of President Park Chung-Hee had risen considerably, leading to severe criticism of the role of Washington to support Park's regime. The call for democracy, and subsequently autonomy from American influence, gave impetus to critical notions of dominant paradigms of international relations in the 1980s, and to enhanced attention to structuralism, especially the dependency theory and world systems theory. Critical perspectives about the character of South Korean capitalism and class structure, and the call to overcome dependency in the relationship with the US diversified IR theorizing in South Korea and influenced the attitude of IR students.

It was a good thing to have a more critical perspective about South Korean international reality and have a more diverse view by overcoming American academic hegemony. But still, the basic theoretical elements were imported from the West or Latin America, lacking Korean theories to analyse Korean realities.

In parallel with various changes at the global level, many changes happened in South Korea from the end of 1980s. Most of all, the end of the Cold War at the global and regional level had tremendous impact on South Korean IR scholars' thinking (Jin 2003; Moon 2003; Westad and Kahng 2001). Changing distribution of power determining the future destiny of the two Koreas posed a serious challenge to South Korean IR academia. Globalization was also the major theme from the 1990s. South Korea pursued globalization ambitiously from the early 1990s, and also fell victim to the 1997 financial crisis, only to be subject to rapid economic globalization. Also, the rise of China and the concern about the possibility of the reappearance of a Sino-centric regional order redirected South Korean IR scholars' concern to broader issues, such as the clash of civilizations. Lastly, South Korea became one of the most advanced countries in the field of information technology.

Many changes happened due to the information revolution, affecting the domestic political process and international situation. New subjects related to the Internet, communication, knowledge and culture became the focus of South Korea IR scholars (Kim 2003).

Under these grand changes, several characteristics can be mentioned regarding IR theorizing in South Korea. First, American influence has been weakened. It was a general phenomenon that meta-theoretical reflection from the late 1980s provided the IR theory community with a chance to review grand theories from an epistemological, ontological and axiological point of view. Post-positivism, constructivism and critical theories are a few examples to raise meta-theoretical questions to existing paradigms (Choi 1995, 2003; Chun 1999; Hong 1999; Jin 2003; Kim 2005; Shin 1998). This global trend refreshed South Korean IR scholars' minds to the effect that dominant theories sometimes worked as 'problem-solving' theories or cases of 'American social sciences'. Some critical theories such as dependency theory and Neo-Marxism from the 1980s affected the theoretical thinking of the new generation of Korean scholars.

Second, the need to develop 'Korean' IR theory began to be stressed (Chun and Park 2002; Ha 2002, 2005; Park 2004; Moon and Chun 2003). If every theory is value-laden at least for determining scholarly concerns and research interests, values and perspectives should be important in formulating and developing theories. South Korean scholars, after the so-called 'Third Debate' defined by its post-positivist or postmodern problematique, tried to formulate and develop theory based on South Korean interests and perspectives. In this process, new focus on sovereignty, civilization, Asian regionalism and soft power came to light.

Third, the number of academic associations, research institutes and study teams for IR theory has increased. In addition to the KPSA and the KAIS, new academic associations, such as the Twenty-First Century Political Science Association, the Korean Peace Research Institute, the Sejong Institute and the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, to name a few, have been established.<sup>7</sup> Most of these institutions publish journals focusing on international relations with due interests in IR theories. Articles that critically review existing theories, apply theories to South Korean international relations and develop South Koreans' perspective have been published. Some articles by South Korean scholars have also been published in American journals, most of which try to apply American theories to Asia or South Korea-related affairs.

### **Korean international history from a theoretical perspective**

Korean history has been heavily influenced by international relations. As a relatively weak state in the region, the changes in the Asian continent determined the destiny of Korean dynasties. Looking back on international history of Korea, it tells us that theory building or a theoretical explanation of it is not an easy job. Whereas IR theory in the West mainly deals with interstate relations within the time period of a modern state system with a clear completion of each stage of development, Korean international history is still heavily influenced by a clash between

traditional regional order and Western civilization, modern and postmodern transitions at an overlapping stage and a composition of multiple organizing principles of regional politics.

Starting from the traditional organizing principle of regional politics, it can be characterized as the hierarchy made up of competing empires. Severe competition in the middle of Chinese territory determined the fate of Korean dynasties. Traditional regional politics can be divided into two periods; the first around the late fourteenth century when the Chosun dynasty in the Korean Peninsula and the Ming dynasty in China were established as Mongolian power was diminished. Before that time, pure power competition dominated the relationship between Korean dynasties and Chinese empires. Regional politics during the Period of Three Nations (– to seventh century) and the Koryo dynasty (918–1392) can be defined as inter-empire competition without a powerful normative structure. Korean dynasties had had severe military conflicts not only with Chinese dynasties but also with many Northern empires. During this period, territorial annexation and conquest was prevalent without clear ideas of mutual understanding of sovereignty.

In this period, Korea tried to survive and expand its power, especially territorial dominance based on military power. Koreans had the perception of imperial sovereignty surrounded by other empires. In this sense, regional politics was characterized by anarchy based on multiple empires.

The Ming dynasty in the late fourteenth century established a powerful empire with military forces and its own normative structure. Strife with the Mongolian empire gave impetus to the Chinese to build a strong empire with a well-developed political structure. The Chinese pursued the policy of developing a universal empire with military, political, economic and cultural dominance. With an influential philosophical system of neo-Confucianism, the Ming dynasty legitimized its dominance and established the regional order of the so-called, ‘事大字小’ (the order of observing the great, taking care of the small). Neo-Confucianism developed from the twelfth century and had the character of Chinese nationalism, because at the time of the South Sung dynasty, the Chinese had been threatened by Northern empires, such as the Jin dynasty of the Jurchen. Experiencing Mongolian domination, Chinese nationalism had been strengthened. Neo-Confucianism of the Ming dynasty even stressed this Chinese-centric view of the world, trying to universalize this normative perspective. The Chosun dynasty in the Korean Peninsula had been gradually absorbed into this regional order, accepting the normative idea of 事大字小.

From the late fourteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, Sino-centric order and the system of universal empire dominated regional politics of Northeast Asia. Neo-Confucianism succeeded in establishing a hierarchal system of values from the level of the family to the ones of the nation, and the world. The Korean layperson finally assumed that the power of ‘The Heaven’ permeates by way of the Chinese emperor–Korean king–local upper class. From this perspective, the regional order can be said to be based on the organizing principle of hierarchy composed of the centre and the periphery.

It was also the system of mutual rights and responsibility. The Chinese emperor

was assumed to have the absolute sovereign power given from the heaven. He/she was also assumed to have great responsibility to take care of the neighbouring small kingdoms, in their status and actual way of living. When the Japanese invaded the Korean Peninsula in 1592, Chosun asked for help from China. When China sent troops to the peninsula, there was a debate in the Chinese court regarding the actual interests. The Chinese emperor at that time argued that China, as a universal empire, had the responsibility of helping the neighbouring kingdom when it was invaded unjustly by other kingdoms. It means that the security order was based on helping another system, leading to dynastic collective security. For nearly 500 years, Northeast Asia preserved peace. From a realist perspective, peace could be possible by the hegemonic dominance of the Chinese empire. However, looking back on the Korean way of thinking, Koreans did not even plan to oppose or attack the Chinese empire, because Koreans had been constituted as a part of the Chinese empire. To follow constructivist terminology, the perception of dynastic interest was already socially constructed along the imperialist way of thinking.

The Japanese invasion, against this backdrop, was interpreted as a 'not civilized' policy, harming the good relations among neighbouring kingdoms (善隣關係). It is true that the realist way of thinking to maximize the dynastic empire actually worked in the Chinese mind during this incident. As Japan's war strategy seemed to be one of entering into Chinese territory by first conquering Korea, China thought that defence on the Korean Peninsula helping the Korean army might lessen the casualties and possible territorial loss of the Chinese mainland. However, the neo-Confucian normative system constructed thinking about how those interests should be socially defined. 'Confucian Peace', in this sense, was preserved among Northeast Asian dynasties, based on the organizing principle of hierarchy and the security system of dynastic collective security.

Moving towards the late nineteenth century, we can understand why it was so hard for Koreans to have theoretical understanding of Korean international relations, not only because the traditional order still works, but also because there was the logic of composition of traditional and modern organizing principles, and that of transition. National sovereignty, to Chosun people, was the strangest idea when the Japanese imposed a modern state system to Korea. Assuming Chosun as the rightful subject of modern international law, and the subject with the power of independently concluding modern treaties, the Japanese began to transform how Chosun people look at the world. Following Japan, many Western countries, such as the UK, the US and France, came to Korea concluding commercial treaties. By slowly accepting the basics of a modern state system, Chosun began to transform itself from the status of an inferior kingdom to the status of an empire equivalent to that of China. But it took as much as 30 years for Korea to declare itself as the Korean Empire (1897), and that was after the defeat of China by Japan in 1895.

For 35 years from 1876 to 1910, when Korea fell prey to Japanese colonialism, Koreans tried to understand the logic of the European sovereign state system because China was still the centre of the universe and the only sovereign political power in Koreans' minds. Korea had to adapt itself to a balance of power system, and also imperialist invasion. It was especially hard to figure out because three

different systemic imperatives had been working at the same time: the remnants of the traditional regional political order, the modern interstate system and imperialism. For Korea, the 1870s and 1880s was the period in which China tried to dominate the Korean Peninsula based on the mixture of traditional hegemony and modern imperialism. In regional hegemonic rivalry between China and Japan, China tried to take full advantage of traditional political order by dispatching imperial officials at the same time to colonize the Korean Peninsula based on modern imperialist economic logic. From 1882 to 1895, when China had been defeated by Japan, China dominated Korean politics through the intervention policy of Yuan Shih-k'ai. In this process, China left the system of mutual responsibility and rights only to exercise a pure exploitive system. Japan, on the other hand, assumed Chosun as a 'sovereign' state, only to negate traditional Chinese rights over the peninsula. Japan's true intention was to colonize Korea following the modern imperialist logic, temporarily to use the modern state system. Western powers first acknowledged Korea's right to be sovereign, but empirically tried to exploit Korea by having unequal treaties with ex-territoriality, a most-favoured nation clause and unequal rights regarding customs.

From the mid-1890s, after China was defeated by Japan in regional hegemonic rivalry, all remnants of the traditional tributary system were erased. Still maintaining juridical sovereignty, Chosun, later the Korean Empire (from 1897) suffered severely from imperialist rivalry among Japan, Russia and Western powers. In this period, the logic of the modern state system was deceptive, in that Korea could maintain its sovereign status because of transitional equilibrium among competing imperialist powers. Global competition between the UK and Russia was apparent in the Korean Peninsula, when the former tried to prevent the latter from coming down to the South. By concluding the Anglo-Japanese treaty in 1902, the UK actually handed over the Korean Peninsula to Japan, which tried very hard to expand its territory to the north of the Korean Peninsula.

When the Russo-Japanese War ended with an unexpected Japanese victory, Korea lost its sovereign status in most important national affairs in 1905. Western powers did not hesitate to recognize Japan's rights to colonize the Korean Peninsula, paying no sympathy to Korea's fate.

Korean scholars, at first, had a hard time understanding the logic of national sovereignty, by which states, regardless size and power, can be attributed equal juridical rights<sup>8</sup> (Chung 2004). They recalled the historical experience of ancient China in the period of warring states in which no superior powers existed above individual kingdoms. Balance of power logic had been applied to the system, which gave a clue to Korean intellectuals in understanding the modern Western interstate system. The so-called 'The Law of All Nations (萬國公法)', which was the translated text of international law by Wheaton, was imported, giving some hope of sovereign equality to Koreans. However, the sovereign system was intermingled with imperialism at that time. In the mid-1880s, the Port of Hamilton in Southern Korea was occupied by the UK, which tried to set up a naval base to confront Russian southward expansion. Koreans could not understand this 'illegal' foreign policy of the UK, just after they accepted the logic of sovereignty, in which territorial



integrity is supposed to be preserved. What Koreans could not understand at that time was that the sovereign state system was deceptive, used as a pretext for temporarily covering imperialist expansion. After experiencing tragic events, Koreans finally realized that '[a] thousand books of international law is not as worthy as one cannon'. Several policy alternatives had been attempted, such as acquiring neutral status like Belgium, or concluding alliance with Western powers like the US, only to find that it was too late to prevent Japanese imperialist expansion.

Japanese imperialism provided an opportunity for Koreans to realize the harsh logic of the Western state system. Korea tried to regain independence in many ways. In 1907 the Korean emperor dispatched representatives to the Hague Peace Conference, but Western powers did not pay attention to the voice of representatives from a *de facto* colony. In 1919, when the Versailles Peace Conference was in progress based on Woodrow Wilson's idea of national self-determination, Korea also dispatched representatives only to find that the principle only applied to colonies of defeated powers. Just after that incident, Koreans started a nationwide peaceful independence movement, which gave impetus to the Chinese May Fourth movement. A refugee government was also set up in Shanghai in April 1919, democratically representing Korean people. It is to be noted that the refugee government was based on the principle of democracy for the first time in Korean history, meaning that liberalism was gaining force. It is also to be noted that in 1921 the Korean Communist Party was founded, influenced by the Bolshevik revolution. From the 1920s, Koreans moved fast to follow the global trend in international affairs, trying to regain independence and sovereign status.

The division of the Korean Peninsula was the event that was not expected at all. With the traditional Sino-centric system and imperialism all gone, Koreans expected the final arrival of a genuine sovereignty system. However, confrontation between the winning powers did not permit any space for true sovereignty for Korean people. Koreans failed to build a unified, modern territorial state. Nation-building, in a modern political sense, was also incomplete. The problem of state sovereignty remained unsolved in a situation where two Koreas claimed to be the only legitimate political power representing the Korean people. The failed processes of state- and nation-building are closely intertwined with the superpower rivalry at the outset of the Cold War. Korea was liberated from Japanese colonialism, but was divided into two different confronting camps. John Lewis Gaddis once wrote that both the US and the USSR built new empires after the end of the World War II by insisting on national self-determination based on the philosophies of Wilson and Lenin. These are anti-imperialist empires (Gaddis 1998). In an empire-building process, two opposing camps came into being, and Korea failed to build one sovereign nation-state.

The Korean War consolidated the Cold War structure both at the global level and at the regional level. During and after the Korean War, ideological and diplomatic confrontation between the US and the USSR changed into more hostile and military confrontation. Each superpower consolidated military posture vis-à-vis the other, which also made the confrontation between the two Koreas irreversible. Both Koreas strengthened political, economic, diplomatic and military ties with

their patron superpower, in the forms of military alliance, economic partners and diplomatic supporters. Regional and peninsular actualization of the global Cold War had tremendous impact on the international relations of Korea.

First, the two Koreas failed to build sovereign states not only because of the division of the nation, but also by belonging to a superpower's camp. Alliance severely limited political autonomy of the two Koreas, although it benefited the security position of them. One of the most important norms for sovereign states, domestic non-intervention, had been frequently encroached upon in the name of the Cold War ideological confrontation.

Second, the two Koreas embodied the Cold War identities. Traditionally, one nation is divided not just for political reasons, but also for cultural, ideational and normative reasons. Experiencing irrecoverable trauma caused by the Korean War, the two Koreas regarded each other as evil. Nation-building, in this sense, seemed to be almost impossible (Chun 2001).

Third, the two Koreas belonged to the regional Cold War structure, by having exclusive alliance relations. South Korea concluded a military alliance with the US in 1953, and normalized diplomatic relations with Japan, the former imperialist, in 1965. The relationship with communist China and the USSR had been inconceivable. The other side of the coin was also true. North Korea had military alliances with the USSR and China, excluding the possibility of having friendly relationships with the US and Japan.

Alliance theory asserts that there should be trade-offs between security and political autonomy in every alliance, especially in an asymmetrical one (Chun 2000). The alliances of the two Koreas proves this point quite well. Foreign policies of the two Koreas had been heavily limited by global and regional concerns of the patron countries of each. For example, there was a *détente* between the two Koreas from 1972. At that time, the two Koreas maintained a very confrontational relationship with each other. The mini-*détente* on the Korean Peninsula, however, was strongly recommended by the US and China from the logic of superpower cooperation. The unintended mini-*détente* did not survive long. From late 1973, inter-Korean relationships started to worsen quite rapidly in a situation where there was no genuine intention to have an enhanced relationship with each other.

In summary, the long-cherished dream of building a modern sovereign state internationally guaranteed by norms of territorial integrity and domestic non-intervention did not materialize during the Cold War period. Japanese colonialism was gone only to have new patrons, global superpowers, confronting each other. Although it might be true that international relations at this time can be characterized as a global state system and the organizing principle of anarchy, the system the two Koreas had experienced was based on the principle of intracamp hierarchy, division of labour and surely unequal distribution of power. This was not just a peninsula phenomenon. Two other Northeast Asian countries, China and Japan, also failed to build modern states for different reasons. China became a divided country by failing to complete the process of modern transition. Japan also turned out to be an 'abnormal' state, ironically because it was too successful to attack the US and it eventually fell into the status of a defeated power.

International relations during the period of the Cold War in the region of Northeast Asia can hardly be characterized as typical modern international relations. All five powers, two Koreas, two Chinas and Japan, continued to exert efforts to complete the process of modern transition causing a lot of difficulties with other countries, in a situation where the logic of Cold War severely limited the degree of 'sovereign-ness' of each state. This is by no means a typical Westphalian system composed of like-units under the principle of international anarchy. It was the anarchy between two superpowers having an intracamp hierarchy under which incomplete modern states continued to finish the process of modern transition.

When the Cold War was ending at the global level from 1989–91, South Korea was filled with expectations and hopes to live in a peaceful environment and go for national reunification. South Korea normalized diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union in 1990 and with China in 1992. South Korea also made the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea, in which prospects for peaceful co-existence, military arms reduction, social and cultural exchanges and roadmaps for reunification were well planned. On the other hand, the ties based on military alliances between North Korea and China, and North Korea and Russia have been weakened, pushing the North into a rather isolated diplomatic position. The loss of a socialist market and strong military patrons made the North more engrossed in the development of nuclear programmes, finally giving rise to the first nuclear crisis in 1993.

Regional security order also became more complicated by the new setting of the Japan and US alliance from 1996, the rise of China, the initial development of multilateral security institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD), and the more lively economic relationship among all Northeast Asian countries. Domestically, democratization of South Korea, Japan and Taiwan accentuated the growth of civil society in those countries, and the relationship among NGOs in different countries.

The development of Northeast Asian regionalism, the clue of market peace or commercial peace, or the possibility of democratic peace, and the rise of multilateral institutions have been modest. Lacking any multilateral security institutions, the organizing principle in the region might be defined as Hobbesian anarchy, rather than a Lockean or Kantian one using Wendt's terminology (Wendt 1999). Modern logic of security competition, security dilemma, arms race, balance of power, alliance competition, the problems of relative gains and cheating and the dynamics of prisoners' dilemma with incomplete information and uncertain intentions of the other still dominates the security order of the region. Especially with the rise of China, and the phenomenon of power transition becoming more evident, it alerts the US to feel the need to strengthen ties with Japan, and militarily contain China using mechanisms. In this sense, the security environments in the post-Cold War era begin to resemble that of the late nineteenth century, in which China and Japan competed for regional hegemony, with the latter trying to excel by making an alliance in 1902 with the then extra-regional global hegemon, the UK. Korea, in the midst of this aggravating regional and global competition, did not work as a relevant actor to fill the gap among the great powers.

However, the situation becomes more complex as Korea and China try to accomplish the uncompleted task of making modern territorial and nation-states by unifying the divided nations. Inter-Strait conflict and inter-Korean competition make the security environments more complicated, giving leverage to other powers to take full advantage of these awkward situations. The combination of two logics of modern transition and modern balance of power makes IR scholars in this region think more critically of the assumption of Western IR theories, which pre-assume the existence of already-sovereign national units. China and Korea are not quasi-states (Jackson 1993; Krasner 1999) nor failed states, yet neither of them have completed sovereign states yet, making foreign policies of the two countries more complicated.

What the current security order will bring about in the future is one of the greatest concerns for Korean scholars (Chung 2001). Two paths are possible: 1) from bare balance of power system to the system of political equilibrium with normative commitment to diffuse reciprocity (as realized in the case of Vienna Concert system) (Schroeder 1994), and finally to multilateral security institutions or possibly security community; or 2) from bare balance of power system to bipolar regional confrontation and worsening of the security dilemma, and finally to a fully fledged clash between two poles; possibly China on one hand and the US-Japan alliance on the other. If the latter materializes, South Korea still lacks the power to fill the gap among great powers and will be in a difficult position to survive and have an autonomous voice among them.

The twenty-first century for Northeast Asia is defined not just by post-Cold War regional balance of power, but also by postmodern transition (Moon and Chun 2003). After the tragic terrorist attack of 9/11, the US security policy has fundamentally changed, bringing all these changes to the Northeast Asian region. Other fundamental changes complicate the international situations in this region. Four factors determine global systemic features of the twenty-first century: postmodern security threats, globalization, information and communication technology (ICT) and democratization. First, new enemies, such as terrorist groups exerting a considerable amount of violence based on modern technology but not with political legitimacy, pose threats to global security. The so-called asymmetrical threats are now the number one danger to security of all states. Second, globalization, complex economic interdependence and inter-cultural influence make international relations much more complex. Hard power balance or ideological confrontation hardly determine alliance configuration any more, complicating the calculating of security interests. Third, the development of ICT contributes to enabling postmodern reaction to postmodern threats. Military transformation based on network-based capability, ubiquity, rapid deployment and precision became possible thanks to the development of ICT. Another side of the coin is that terrorist groups also came to have ICT-based violent technology and networks. ICT also foments the development of national civil society and transnational civil society, ultimately leading to the situation of cosmopolitan democracy. Fourth, democratization on a global scale heavily affects foreign policy making process in developing nations. Now, developing nations make much of public opinion, which often lacks a precise perception

of international politics. To deal with a democratized world, soft power became more and more important for great powers, especially the US. The balance of soft power between the US and terrorists and between the US and anti-US states now affects more directly the success or failure of US strategy.

In the anti-terror/counter-proliferation era with the above-mentioned changing trends, South Korea is faced with unexpected fundamental changes. More than anything else, the US, as the only alliance partner, has asked South Korea to share its strategic purposes. The US asked South Korea to dispatch troops to Iraq, financially helping the US in post-war arrangements in Afghanistan and Iraq. The US is also executing the military transformation leading to alliance transformation, putting pressure on the Republic of Korea-US alliance. To retain more flexible military posture, the US asks South Korea to admit the idea of strategic flexibility by which the US forces in Korea can freely move in and out to cope with global challenges by terrorists. As South Korea needs strategic certainty to defend the modern enemy, which is North Korea, it is natural that the alliance should be under grave strain.

The issue of the North Korean nuclear programme is another example in which modern concerns of South Korea and the postmodern strategy of the US collide with each other. The US regards the crisis basically as a postmodern issue. What the US fears most is the possibility of North Korea transferring the nuclear material by North Korea to terrorists who might attack the US by using these weapons of mass destruction. However, the North Korean nuclear crisis is not just a non-proliferation issue. North Korea's intention, whether the development of nuclear material is for negotiation or military advantage, originates from modern logic. In other words, North Korea, in the post-Cold War period, in which most former allies gave up the communist system harming North Korea's vital interests, tried to survive and defend in modern international relations. Traditional logic of defence and deterrence of modern interstate competition is the basic imperative to drive North Korea to develop nuclear weapons. South Korea, in this sense, regards the issue not just as an anti-terror/counter-proliferation issue but also an inter-Korean issue about cooperation and unification. Some observers trace the origin of disagreement between South Korea and the US from the differences in their security strategies. But the problem is much more complicated than that. It comes from the underlying clash between postmodern US strategy, with emphasis on pre-emptive strikes and the dominance of human rights over national sovereignty on the one hand, and the modern Korean strategy, with the task of completing modern transition on the other.

In summary, the security order of Northeast Asia in the early twenty-first century is shaped by both modern (i.e. inter-state conflict and balance of power) and postmodern (i.e. transnational terrorism) challenges.

Historical enmity, doubt and a sense of revenge still hang around among Northeast Asian states (premodern or modern transitional phenomena). Bare logic of balance of power without powerful multilateralist institutions (modern logic) and postmodern transition initiated by the aggravation of an asymmetrical security dilemma between the US and terrorist groups, all work in the region. Hence, South Korea suffers from triple difficulties: memories of past colonialization still

affecting its foreign policies (as witnessed in the conflict with Japan over history textbooks and the Yasukuni shrine); the need to survive among great powers by adjusting to balance of power logic; and growing conflict with the US asking South Korea to conform to postmodern transition.

### **Reasons for the underdevelopment of IR theorizing in Korea**

If we think of the reason for the lack of non-Western Korean IR theories, with the historical background mentioned in earlier sections in mind, the following points should be noted.

First, academic and philosophical achievements in theorizing premodern, traditional regional politics were disconnected to academic works after the introduction of modern international relations. Traditional scholars maintained their own normative concerns and perspectives about the whole regional political order based on a neo-Confucian worldview. Korean scholars tried to think of the coherent explanatory logic from global to regional and national political order, even though positivist efforts to theorize political reality had been rather lacking. They pursued the purposes of regional peaceful political order and maintaining political autonomy from hegemonic Chinese dynasties. However, with the violent and abrupt introduction of the Western state system via imperialism, scholarly efforts to make sense of the reality had tremendous difficulty without systemic knowledge of the evolution of the Western world order. In short, inter-textual relations in Korea between traditional efforts and modern works had been completely broken.

Second, Western theories have been imported as completed products devoid of reflections on the theory-making process. As Robert Cox once wrote, 'every theory is always for some purpose and for someone' (Cox 1986). Western experiences of modern transition and the evolution of modern international relations are radically different from those of Asia. What the West experienced for nearly 360 years from 1648 to 2005 was transplanted to Korean international relations for only 130 years from 1876 to 2005, and what's worse, with imperialist and superpower intrusion. If we rightly import Western theories with their underlying historical contexts, the comparative notion of historical development should exist. However, these painstaking efforts would need more time to be executed. Despite a universalist disguise, every theory corresponds to very specific historical contexts and normative concerns. It has not been easy for Korean scholars to study Western theories with their own historical and normative contexts. In other words, meta-theoretical foundations of each theory, epistemological, ontological and normative, have not been thought over.

Northeast Asia and the West, in a sense, are living different times<sup>9</sup> (Kissinger 2001). For example, main security concerns for Western Europe are not just traditional security issues, but also non-traditional human security issues. However, in Northeast Asia, traditional security issues, such as security dilemma, power transition and territorial disputes, are central in determining the major motives of regional politics. Without clear notion of this anachronistic difference, theory-

building in Northeast Asia or in Korea will not be completed just by importing Western theories.

Third, Western IR theories, whether intentionally or unintentionally, marginalize the position and history of the Third World. For example, liberal IR theory cherishes the norms of order and stability, marginalizing norms of equality and emancipation. What is important here is not that equality and emancipation is more important than order and stability. What is important is that there should be concerns about meta-ethical judgement to evaluate relative importance of competing ethical norms. More often than not, norms that occupied Korean IR scholars are political autonomy and equality, which had been foreign to Western IR theories. Once IR theories need to be critical rather than problem-solving, Western IR theory stops to work as a theoretical and practical guideline for Korean scholars and policy makers.

Fourth, the reality of Asian international relations is inextricably complex. There has always been a combination of multiple organizing principles and structural imperatives. Northeast Asian countries have had several needs to understand and overcome multiple tasks at the same time, both intellectually and practically. Modern transition, in which Northeast Asian countries should complete their state-building process, has been intertwined with the task of adapting to modern logic of balance of power already in work, and also with postmodern transitional phenomena, such as anti-terrorist efforts and subsequent efforts to transcend modern international law. To solve this multi-layered puzzle, Korean scholars should combine existing Western theories in a more structured way.

Fifth, fundamental forces to determine the destiny of Korean people frequently came from the global level, not just from a regional and peninsular level. The process of colonization, the division of the peninsula, the outbreak of the Korean War, the conclusion of the ROK-US alliance, the inter-Korean reconciliatory process after the end of the Cold War and present restructuring of the alliance following the US logic of anti-terrorism, all came from international relations at the global level. When seemingly minor and local incidents are derived from global politics, Korean scholars have had a very difficult time tracing the origin of those incidents.

Sixth, some Western theories can be directly applied to the Korean experience. For example, theories of alliance, balance of power, security dilemma and hegemonic stability can be used to analyse the Korean reality with minor adaptations. The reason for this applicability is that those theories are micro-theories. Micro-level affairs in Asia frequently bear resemblance to those in other areas. And micro-theories, as problem-solving theories, are of short-term usefulness to Korean scholars and policy makers. However, if we investigate macro- or grand theories, things are different. For example, neorealism and neoliberalism assume that state actors are sovereign and they are competent to behave according to rational strategic calculation. However, states in Northeast Asia embody a different level of 'sovereign-ness' from the formative period of state-building process. South Korea, which was established with the help of US diplomatic, economic and military policies, cannot have complete autonomy from the influence of the US. South Korea still does not have the commanding rights of its own military in times of war. In

this situation, theories assuming functional undifferentiation among actors as in the case of Waltz's neorealism are sure to have defects in analysing the Korean case. These defects concern basic assumption at the level of grand theories.

Seventh, the fields of history and international relations in Korean academia are relatively separated. The field of history has its own approach and theoretical assumptions from those in the field of IR. However, without combining history and theory-building, it would be hard to have proper theories. (Elman and Elman 2001; Kim 2005).

Eighth, conversations among academia in Northeast Asian countries are rather lacking. IR scholars in Korea, China and Japan have different approaches, different conceptions about the usefulness of Western theories and different normative concerns. Without systemic conversation among scholars in the same region, it would be very hard to have regionally coherent IR theories.

### **From here to where?**

Why do we need non-Western IR theories to explain the reality of the non-Western world? Isn't the universal applicability of a theory the nature of theory? Do we need a number of different theories for different theorists, different nation-states or different regions? If not, what kind of theory can explain both the Western and non-Western world?

First, IR theories are induced from historical reality. If a certain IR theory reflects the history of a certain region, then it is a spatially limited theory. It also applies to the temporal dimension. If Western IR theories are limited only to the experience of the modern Western world, the reality of the non-Western world, which has the continuity from the traditional order, would not be properly theorized in the framework of Western IR theories (Cox 1997).

Second, every theory has both an explanatory and a normative dimension. From the perspective of critical theories, it is hard for theorists to have a value-free theoretical agenda, or theoretical orientation. Theorists select research subjects based on their research interests and values, marginalizing others. Also it is not something to be evaded for theorists to have normative underpinnings to build an explanatory or analytical theory. What theorists need is self-consciousness about the normative dimension of their own theorizing, and the openness to put that normative orientation on an academic agenda, hoping that their own normative positions may be communicated with other theorists based on proper meta-ethical or meta-normative standards (Frost 1986; Harbour 1999; Nardin and Maple 1992). For example, a liberal IR theorist might emphasize the value of cooperation rather than equality or emancipation. On the other hand, a Marxism-oriented structuralist IR theorist might give more attention to global class struggle and cherish the value of emancipation. What we need is to examine the interconnectedness between analytical theories and normative theories, and be open to put that relationship on an academic agenda.

Western IR theories have been very helpful in explaining the reality of Korean international relations, especially realism and security studies (Ikenberry and



Mastanduno 2003; Alagappa 2003). As the Northeast Asian region has been characterized by a balance of power system and security competition, theories about balance of power, hegemony, security dilemma and power transition have been especially helpful. This means that the modern dimension of this region has been excavated by insights of Western IR theories, because the reality those theories deal with corresponds to a certain aspect of the Northeast Asian reality. Micro-theories apply better than macro- or grand theories. However, the long-term modern transition of the Western world and relatively well-defined and well-demarcated modernity did not apply to Northeast Asia. As indicated above, what happened for 360 years in the West has been condensed into only 130 years in Korea. In the latter case, the past still lives with the present. Overlapping historical realities and temporal dimensions complicate the structural configuration of the regional order, mixing different organizing principles of international relations, and giving multiple identities to agents. Political groups in Northeast Asia actually embody different political identities – namely the traditional identity (civilized centre-periphery dimension), the early modern identity (imperialist-colony dimension), the modern identity (individual nation-state) and the postmodern identity (transnational civil society, members in multilateral institutions). Also, the problem of sovereignty is very complex. Unitary territorial sovereignty has not been completely established in China and Korea. Japan is also constrained by the post-war pacifist constitution especially in military affairs. The two Koreas, relatively weak states in regional distribution of power, are lacking in sovereign capacity, and are competing in the technical state of truce after the Korean War. The state of continuing war limits, for example, South Korea's commanding rights over the military in times of war.

Then, the assumption made by Western theories, especially neorealism and neoliberalism, naturalizing the completion of nation states that are functionally undifferentiated (like-units), cannot be uniformly applied to international relations of Northeast Asia. What we need is a historically sensitive, refreshed idea about the nature of the units or agency. By having an idea of multiple identities, overlapping identities and multiple organizing principles, we can theorize the multifaceted nature of each incident, as I exemplified in the case of North Korean nuclear crisis.

This complexity of analytical dimension naturally leads to the issue of normative underpinnings of Western theories. As it is natural that Western IR theories reflect the ethical concerns of Western people, values crucial for them directs the analytical concern. Stable security order, solving non-traditional or human security problems, managing the global order according to the leadership of the Western world and continuing the marketization and democratization of the Third World might be several examples. On the other hand, non-Western thinking is motivated by other concerns and claims. Political and economic autonomy from the domination of advanced countries, sovereign equality among states, receiving assistance and transforming the status quo, which is perceived as perpetuating the exploitation by the West, might be examples of the concerns. Different worlds appear to different eyes with different values and prospects for the future. If we cannot establish proper arguments about meta-ethical standards against which we judge

the rightness or comprehensiveness of the normative dimension of each theory, the analytical debate will continue without problematizing the real, underlying conflicts among theories, especially among Western and non-Western theories.

Now we begin to live in a period of transition. The US, in its fight against terrorism, justifies military pre-emption and political intervention into other nations' domestic affairs in the process of 'expansion of freedom', arguably according to its own unilateralist judgment. If the US succeeds to set the standard by its own values and material power, then the idea of national sovereignty will be severely transformed. If the future theory reflects only the newest phenomena happening mainly in the US and the advanced Western countries, limited in a spatial and temporal sense, the non-Western world would remain unnoticed and relatively powerless not just in real international politics, but also in the field of theorizing, losing value as an important object of theoretical studies. Untheorized territory of the non-Western world would not be grasped by policy makers, either. What is theorized has an opportunity to be problematized in academic and practical worlds.

It will not be easy to have a theory that has a comprehensive dimension, both geographically and historically, to deal with the most advanced world and the least developed world. However, those worlds are connected and influenced by each other, making partial theorizing inevitably incomplete. The uncomfortable coexistence of different stages and different logic among different regions should be dealt within coherent theoretical frameworks. Unlike modernity, which compartmentalized the world, the postmodern project in the field of international relations should include the reality and knowledge from the non-Western world. The challenge for the non-Western academia is to contribute to the making of postmodern IR theory, or postmodern global political theory.

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## Notes

- 1 Several South Korean IR scholars have contributed theoretical articles to major American journals. However, application of theories, rather than theory building based on South Korea's reality, are the main interests of these writers.
- 2 The period from 1876 to 1910 has been one of the most important subjects for South Korean IR scholars. Theoretical subjects such as systemic transformation, clash between civilizations, the role of imperialism, the balance of power system and the role of international law are main issues drawing attention of theorists.
- 3 Most of the scholars in this period had been trained in the Japanese school system, and after liberation, they slowly tried to have more autonomous views.
- 4 He was also the founder of the Korean Political Science Association (KPSA) and the department of International Relations in Seoul National University, both in 1956.
- 5 Theories such as systems theory, cybernetics theory, game theory and statistical theory were influential for the South Korean IR scholars who studied in the US for doctoral degrees.
- 6 In this period, Third World Study also developed.
- 7 The KPSA held the conference in February 2006 to gather the small-sized study team. Teams related to IR theories are working on subjects such as international relations theory, governance, information revolution, international relations and East Asian traditional regional order.
- 8 One good example is suggested by the response of Shin Hun, who was responsible for concluding a treaty with Japan in 1876. He had a hard time in understanding the concept of 'sovereign subject of treaty'.
- 9 Kissinger compares post-Cold War Asia to the early nineteenth century Europe.

## 5 Re-imagining IR in India

*Navnita Chadha Behera*

There is no Indian school of IR and any assessment of Indian scholars' contribution to IR theory depends upon what counts as 'IR theory'. This chapter starts with a critical overview of the state of the art of IR discipline in India by analysing disciplinary, pedagogical and discursive reasons to explain its poor conceptualization. This assessment is, however, predicated upon a very narrow disciplinary vision of IR, which for analytical purposes is termed as *traditional IR*. The next section analyses scholarly endeavours emanating from development studies, postcolonialism and feminism that lie *outside* the disciplinary core of (Indian) IR to reflect on issues being debated within the post-positivist domain of the 'mainstream' IR. To the extent these debates are yet to be owned by Indian IR and these intellectuals acknowledged as part of its scholarly community, it may be termed as *new IR*. To end, the chapter argues for creating alternative sites of knowledge creation in IR by devising different set of tools and exploring a new repertoire of resources that have, thus far, been de-legitimized or rendered irrelevant for knowledge production in IR.

Re-imagining IR in India is *not* about creating an Indian school of IR but redefining IR itself. This problematizes the basic formulation and idiom of our query: why there is no non-Western IR theory in India by highlighting its implicit binary character, which is not merely descriptive but hierarchical: the 'dominant' West and the 'dominated' non-West. From this standpoint, even if scholars were to succeed in creating an Indian school of IR, it would at best earn a small, compartmentalized space *within* the master narrative of IR (read Western IR<sup>1</sup>). The challenge, therefore, is not to discover or produce non-Western IR theory in India but for the Indian IR community to work towards fashioning a post-Western IR.

### **The state of the art**

When India became independent in 1947, its ruling elite believed India was destined to play a major role in Asian and world affairs commensurate with its geographical placement, historical experiences and power potential. Such self-conscious aspirations should have helped the growth of an IR discipline but nearly six decades later, it has yet to earn the status of a separate discipline. There are no undergraduate programmes and only four universities offer a Masters programme though it is

home to probably the world's single largest school of international studies – the School of International Studies (SIS) at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Although India's 'social science research capacity' has been in a state of 'crisis' due to several economic, political and demographic factors (Abraham 2004; Chatterjee *et al.* 2002), a detailed analysis of IR's poor state points to a different direction.

### ***Disciplinary location***

IR's relationship with the parent disciplines of political science and area studies has tremendously stilted its growth. The Indian conception of IR, known as 'International Studies', is a peculiar product of conceptual conflation of area studies and disciplinary-oriented IR (Rana and Misra 2004: 74). Area studies is multidisciplinary and IR is only one of the disciplines they embrace but they were wrongly equated with the latter based on a somewhat simplistic assumption that the areas being studied were 'foreign'. Funding for IR within the rubric of area studies was a fundamental mistake as the latter 'had, in fact, "emasculated" IR instead of advancing it' (*ibid.*).

IR's disciplinary location in political science departments also caused its severe marginalization. Even in the large and better reputed departments, 'the academic space available to this area of scholarship ... has relatively shrunk ... alarmingly so' (*ibid.*: 76). Unlike political science that is more deeply rooted in political theory, the theoretical component of Indian IR remains thin. Most syllabi consist of an amalgam of diplomatic histories of major powers (read Europe) during World War I and World War II followed by the Cold War and India's foreign relations with little attention devoted to fundamental concepts and theoretical debates in IR. The subfields of IR, including security studies, peace and conflict studies and international political economy, mostly remain confined to optional courses at the Masters level and others such as ecology, globalization and gender studies are rarely taught. This has resulted in a very narrow intellectual base of the discipline.

### ***Pedagogy concerns***

Institutional strategies for teachers' training and production of textbooks in English, Hindi and vernacular languages, at the national and regional levels, have been lacking. Unlike other social sciences where students graduate in the same discipline, most students are introduced to IR as a separate discipline at the MPhil and PhD level only. They often come with a frame of mind that 'they are coming to an inferior social science' (Bajpai 2004: 28). If asked why they are switching their field, their response frequently is that IR 'has no theory' or is 'contemporary' and therefore of practical interest, while many believe reading newspapers and current affairs magazines is good enough to study this subject.

Lack of funds and infrastructure has severely impeded IR's growth. For nearly 37 years, no funding was available for this discipline with the sole exception of the Department of Political Science at the University of Baroda (besides SIS at JNU) even though area studies programmes were regularly funded. State funding



for higher education is highly centralized in the University Grants Commission that is selective in what it supports while being driven by political imperatives of distributive equity. The Indian Council for Social Science Research operates under similar constraints. Local philanthropy and indigenous capital of the corporate sector has not been tapped to fund international studies though this is beginning to change.<sup>2</sup> Foreign funding for IR was also not encouraged mainly due to Nehru's aversion to 'outside' interference in India's foreign affairs (Behera 2003). The situation has changed considerably in the past two decades but the quantum of such funding remains small, confined to research institutions based in New Delhi and a few other metropolitan centres, and is predominantly devoted to producing 'policy-relevant' research.

There is no well-knit community of Indian IR scholars. Though they interact, they don't seem to have cumulatively tried 'to build a coherent edifice of work in well defined areas, related to key IR disciplinary concerns and problems in some kind of a dialectical correlation' (Rana and Misra 2004: 111). Seminars are held on topical issues but collaborative work on disciplinary themes, even within a department, is rare. The academic culture of peer review is conspicuous by its absence and lack of mutual acknowledgement is most evident in the footnoting protocols of the discipline. There are only a couple of refereed journals to which IR scholars can contribute and those too hardly ever address theoretical debates or epistemological issues. This is exacerbated by the 'perniciously growing tendency of producing ... banal edited volumes [which are] adding to the confused disparateness and non-accumulativeness of scholarship' (ibid.: 102). Career opportunities are very limited and with a heavy workload, teachers find little time to pursue their research. The Delhi-centric character of IR discipline has proved to be another serious impediment. Those trained in the capital show little inclination to migrate to regional universities due to their poor resources, especially library facilities, which also frustrates local scholars' efforts to pursue research.

### ***The practice of international relations***

For nearly two decades after independence, Nehru completely dominated policy-making as well as intellectual analyses of foreign affairs. His extensive knowledge of international issues resulted in the expertise in IR being concentrated largely in the Ministry of External Affairs. With no alternative intellectual pool emanating from the universities, the South Block gained experience to emerge as a dominant force resulting in a lasting divide between academia and bureaucracy. This was also because the structure of the Indian foreign service does not permit lateral entry by academics nor allows civil servants to move into academic institutions. This has begun to change recently with the constitution of a National Security Advisory Board having a separate and functional secretariat though the thick walls of suspicion between academia and government officials persist.

***The discursive domain: traditional IR***

The lack of a discipline-oriented growth of Indian IR has been exposed in vigorous state-of-the-field critiques (Rana 1988a, 1988b, 1989; Rajan 1997). Theorizing has also run aground due to an overwhelming insistence that social science must be relevant though this is not unique to IR or to India. Social sciences in India, including IR, have also contended with the dominance of Western theoretical frameworks (Misra and Beal 1980; Bajpai and Shukul 1995; Ray 2004).

Two schools of thought seek to explain the lack of state-of-the-art theorizing in Indian IR. Simply put, the first argues: 'we don't theorize,' and the problem does not lie with the Western frameworks *per se*, while the second proffers: 'we *do* theorize' but it is not recognized 'as theory' by the predominantly Western IR community. It is important not to view either argument in absolute terms as the two overlap at critical junctures. Bajpai draws upon Rana's vision to argue the first viewpoint that a call

on behalf of "Indian" IR ... that ignored the writings on IR theory being produced in the US and the UK, howsoever parochial ... would be not just well-nigh impossible but vulgar and self-defeating ... [he] wished to help produce an Indian IR and a tradition of IR theorising that fully comprehended, critiques *and if and when necessary*, transcended its Western origins (emphasis added).

(1995: 12–13)

Bajpai agrees that the 'Western' character of IR is not a problem but unlike Rana lamenting the lack of Indian scholars' interest in IR theorizing, he is far more optimistic (Bajpai and Mallavarapu 2004). Harshe endorses that Indian IR has 'enormous potential to theorize and scholars dispersed in different places have done wonderful work'.<sup>3</sup> The second school of thought, articulated by S. D. Muni, agrees that Indian scholars have theorized IR but criticizes theoretical and 'political' practices of using the 'West' as a referential point.<sup>4</sup>

To revert to the first argument: all intellectual endeavours situated *within* the Western systems of thought seek to apply them 'creatively' in their specific local contexts to qualify as an exercise in IR theorizing. Indian IR has produced a lot of such work defined as 'exceptionalist' or 'subsystemic' theorizing by Acharya and Buzan in this volume. This includes the literature on issues such as nuclear deterrence (Singh 1998; Subrahmanyam 1994; Tellis 2001; Basrur 2005; Karnad 2002), regionalism in South Asia (Sisir Gupta 1964; Muni 1980; Wignaraja and Hussain 1986; Bhargava *et al.* 1995) and conflicts and peace processes (Phadnis 1989; Ali 1993; Samaddar and Reifeld 2001) among others. Another genre of writings pertains to Indian perspectives on global issues such as international order (Behera 2005; Bajpai 2003), globalization (Harshe 2004) and international law (Chimni 1993). Some neo-Marxist writings include Dutt's formulation of 'proto second tier imperialism' (1984), Vanaik's writings on globalization (2004) and Harshe's work on imperialism (1997). These examples are clearly illustrative but not

exhaustive; though they do highlight Indian IR's theorizing mostly at the subsystemic level.

Muni questions the very idiom of this assessment by asking *who* decides what qualifies as 'sub-systemic' or 'systemic' theorizing. He agrees with Cox that 'theory follows reality', and Western theories of IR are dominant because they rode on the back of Western (read American) power. Underlining the role of 'disciplinary gate-keeping practices', Tickner notes that

IR reinforces analytical categories and research programs that are systematically defined by academic communities within the core, and that determine what can be said, how it can be said, and whether or not what is said constitutes a pertinent or important contribution to knowledge.

(2003: 297, 300; Aydlini and Matthews 2000)

This can be best illustrated with reference to the philosophy and theoretical formulations of non-alignment.

Jawaharlal Nehru is widely regarded as the founding father of non-alignment. He was joined by other Third World leaders including Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. The non-aligned movement created a coalition of more than 100 states from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Arab world, Latin America and the Caribbean that supported the decolonization process, literally changing the world's geopolitical landscape. Whether conceptualizations of non-alignment qualify as 'systemic', IR theory would, however, depend upon the criteria being used. If the first criteria – 'it be substantially acknowledged by others in the IR academic community as being theory' – is used, it will fail the test. Theoretical writings on non-alignment rarely figured in the core IR journals published in North America and Europe throughout the 1950s to the 1970s. On the contrary, most dismissed it as 'variants of neutrality' (Armstrong 1956–7). Disparaging references to these countries as 'uncommitted' or 'neutral' questioned non-alignment's political legitimacy (Debrah 1961; Dinh 1975). Indian scholars had little choice but to write books on non-alignment distributed by Indian publishers (Khan 1981; Jaipal 1983; Bajpai 1985), which probably never found their way to the West, or contribute to journals such as *Indian and Foreign Affairs*, *Socialist India*, *Seminar*, *Yugoslav Survey*, *The Indonesian Quarterly*, *Economic and Political Weekly* and *Africa Report* – none of which are mainstream journals in IR. So, non-alignment figures on the horizon of IR theory only as per the second or third criteria: 'it be self-identified by its creators as being IR theory even if it is not widely acknowledged within the mainstream academic IR community' and 'regardless of what acknowledgement it receives, its construction identifies it as a systematic attempt to generalise about the subject matter of IR'. Despite offering an alternative world view of how the global state system should function, non-alignment was never accorded the status or recognition as a 'systemic' IR theory because it did not suit the interests of powers that be.

Likewise, neither Nehru's idea of non-exclusionary regionalism, the concept of *panchsheel* nor the mandala theory of regionalism got recognition in the core

literature in IR. Exceptions figure only in the case of Indian scholars based at US or European universities or whose texts have been published and distributed by Western publishers. Ayoob's work on the state-making processes in the Third World and their security predicament is a case in point (1995) though this, too, got recognition largely in the context of the Third World. It is clearly not easy to move from the domain of 'particular' to 'universal'. Unlike Europe, where 'Western local patterns being turned into [general] IRT concepts is common practice' (Acharya and Buzan in this volume), this option is not available to the Third World including India. Why? Because the disciplinary boundaries of IR theory are ontologically and epistemologically constituted so as to largely preclude this possibility. That is why the poor state of theorizing in Indian IR cannot be explained without examining its epistemological bases and boundaries.

The real story lies in the Indian IR's uncritical acceptance of the state being a 'benevolent protector' rather than an 'oppressor' in the domestic/international domain. A subconscious albeit *complete* internalization of the tenets, philosophical ethos and legitimacy of political realism in its mental structures has tremendously stifled the scope of its intellectual inquiries. Together these characterize what was earlier termed as traditional IR. This kind of IR has steadfastly fought shy of critically interrogating the character and 'efficacy' of the Indian state. Its fundamental failure to historicize the Westphalian state, does not, in turn, allow recognition that the neorealist notion of state is that of a European nation-state while ground realities at home as indeed in most of the Third World are radically different. The internal vulnerabilities of the state and the insecurities of its people, I have argued elsewhere, are rooted in the very processes of emulating a particular kind of (Westphalian) state (Behera 2000: 21–31).

Realist notions of state-centric power politics have been thoroughly internalized by traditional IR. Characterizing it as a 'submerged theoretical base' of Indian IR, Rana and Misra point out that this has never been

an explicitly self-conscious activity [but] more the result of scholars being overly impressed and influenced by state practice. [Even] the idea of change echoes state practice. The state is concerned about ... Realist expedients to effect change, not for change which attempts to transcend Realist premises.

(Rana and Misra 2004: 79)

There has been no systematic questioning of the positivist logic underlying the realist paradigm. The third debate in IR is, by and large, eclipsed in (Indian) traditional IR. So, to do 'theory' remains essentially a positivist enterprise and creation of knowledge has relied on four main assumptions: a belief in the unity of science; distinction between facts and values, with facts being neutral between theories; the social world like the natural world has regularities, and these can be 'discovered' by our theories; and, the way to determine the truth of these statements is by appeal to these neutral facts (Smith 2001: 227).

The discipline of IR has been least self-conscious about its axiomatic claims to modernity. Walker strongly critiques modernity in IR as it 'ensconces itself in the

theory of Political Realism’ for perpetuating the presumed impossibility of ever conceiving an alternative to the account of political community that emerged in early modern Europe (Walker 1993). The lacuna in such ‘problem-solving theory’ as Cox terms it, is that it takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the *given* framework for action (1986). The effect then is to ‘reify’ and ‘legitimize’ the existing order and make it appear as natural. The choice of how to do theory is not an innocent one as Fay argues: ‘to choose a positivist, interpretative or critical theory approach to social science is at once to choose a political practice’ (1975). Traditional IR has, however, eschewed any serious debate on the politics of knowledge perhaps driven by the positivist logic that knowledge is immune from the workings of power.

The theoretical endeavours of Indian IR are hemmed in by three concentric circles as depicted in Figure 5.1 or three sets of ‘*givens*’ – the infallibility of the Indian state modelled after the Westphalian nation-state, a thorough internalization of the philosophy of political realism and a ‘positive’ faith in the wisdom of modernity. Bounded by these limiting assumptions, the terrain of traditional IR stands severely depleted as it has also impeded its undertakings in theorizing IR. Using Pierre Macherey’s formula for the interpretation of ideology, Gayatri Spivak notes that ‘what is important in a work is what it does not say. This is not the same as a careless notation [but] “what it refuses to say”’ (2000: 1445). Undertaking such an exercise in ‘*measuring silences*, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged’ (ibid.) in Indian IR is an eye opener because it exposes the enormous discursive power exercised by the rational and scientific ‘project of modernity’ in laying down the parameters of *what* belonged to the domain of IR and *what did not* and *how to* determine that, or perhaps, *who* determined that.

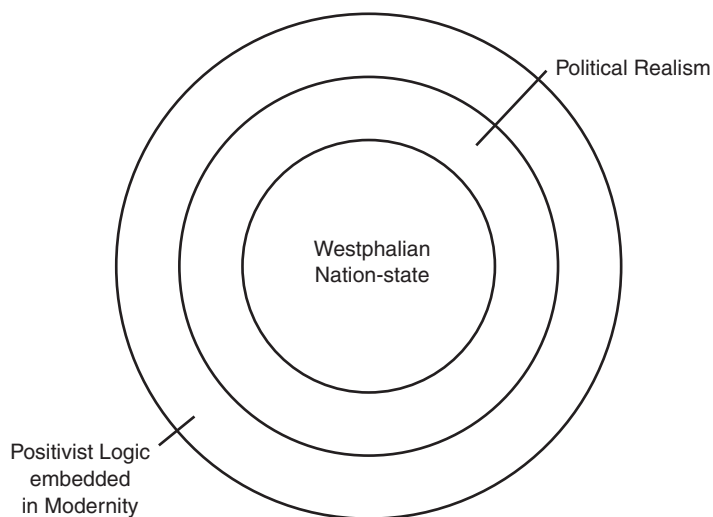


Figure 5.1 The theoretical endeavours of Indian IR.

So, IR is mainly concerned with power struggles among states. These are underpinned by two critical unstated assumptions: theorizing in IR *means* producing scientific knowledge and 'Europe [later America] remains the covering, theoretical subject of all histories [read IR], including the ones we call "Indian," "Chinese," "Korean," and so on' (Chakrabarty 2000: 1491). With its constitutive ideas and practices rooted in the Eurocentric experiences and an abiding faith in the 'liberating power of reason (*logos*) as it threw off the shackles of traditions (*mythos*)' (Davetak 1995: 31), the domain of IR was bounded in a manner that India's various 'traditional pasts' got de-legitimized as a possible source of knowledge creation in IR. A positivist enterprise precluded a debate about what issues of inquiry could be included in IR and how its key concepts of nation-state, nationalism, sovereignty and territoriality could acquire *different meanings*. This may be briefly explained with reference to nationalism.

Several conceptualizations and critiques of nationalism by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, M. S. Golwalkar, V. D. Savarkar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh were at play in the political arena in pre-independence India. Most of these were *not territorial* in their vision nor conceptualized in *rationalist* terms as understood in the modern instrumental sense. Ghosh wrote: 'For what is a nation? What is our mother country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty *Shakti*, [power] composed of all the *Shaktis* of all the millions of units that make up the nation ...' (cited in Singh 1967: 70–1). He looked upon India as a living and pulsating spiritual entity and nationalism was envisioned as a 'deep and fervent religious *sadhana*', a spiritual imperative essential for the emancipation of the motherland from the colonial rule (ibid.: 74). Chatterjee had earlier popularized this notion by constructing

a nationalist consciousness through *pure bhakti* (devotion to god), especially the popular *bhakti* of goddess Kali, eulogizing her with the hymn, *Bande Mataram* [I bow to thee, Mother], so as to reveal her as the *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) . . . as a divine entity worth struggling for.

(cited in Ahmed 1993: 119)

Savarkar argued that the Hindus 'are not only a nation but race-*jati*. The word *jati*, derived from the root *jan*, to produce, means a brotherhood, a race determined by a common origin, possessing a common blood' (1969: 84–5). He rejected the idea of a nation-state based on an abstract social contract with individualized citizens dwelling within its administrative frontiers. From a very different vantage point, Gandhi's ideals of *Swaraj* (self-rule) and *Ramrajya* were also rooted in the belief that society's *dharmically* ordered heterogeneity was prior to, and to a considerable degree autonomous of, state authority. The Gujrati text of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* makes a significant distinction between a genuine nation formed as *praja* (community) and a nation of individuals merely held together by state power characterized as *rashtra* (Gier 1996: 267). A most powerful critique of nationalism came from Tagore:

What is a Nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organised power. This organisation incessantly keeps up the insistence of the population on becoming strong and efficient. But this strenuous effort after strength and efficiency drains man's energy from his higher nature where he is self-sacrificing and creative. For thereby man's power of sacrifice is diverted from his ultimate object, which is moral, to the maintenance of this organisation, which is mechanical.

(2002)

Thus, nation 'controls the life of the individual insofar as the needs of the State or Nation make it necessary' (cited in Fenn Jr 1929: 321). Gandhi too forewarned that 'modern state does indeed swallow up individual persons, even as it is, ironically celebrating their autonomy, and that it has also destroyed the intimate ties of traditional community life' (cited in Gier 1996: 263).

Traditional IR does not debate the philosophical underpinnings, political strategies and goals of these diverse conceptualizations of nationalism nor are India's historical traditions and political philosophy taught as part of the IR syllabi. There are linguistic difficulties involved in capturing the spirit of some of these concepts such as *jati*, *praja*, *rashtra*, *swaraj*, *sadhana*, *bhakti* and *shakti*, but not insurmountable. While Western scholars may not possess the requisite cultural sensibilities or decide that it is not necessary to understand the 'Indian ways of thinking', it does not explain the *silence* of the traditional IR. Unless it may be argued that these problematiques *do not belong* to the domain of IR because many of these ideas especially the spiritual connotations of nationalism could be dismissed as metaphysical formulations that have no place in the rational and scientific world of IR. This illustrates the 'epistemic violence', to borrow a term from Gayatri Spivak, of political realism (2000: 1438–9). 'The *episteme*', Spivak quotes Foucault to point out 'is the "apparatus" which makes possible the separation not of the true from the false, but of what may not be characterized as scientific' (ibid.: 1459). A positivist enterprise deploys this kind of 'apparatus' to exclude various understandings of Indian nationalism from the domain of IR. Significantly, empiricism of a positivist IR takes a back seat because whether Indians conceptualized nationalisms in different ways as a matter of 'historical fact' is of little consequence. What matters is that the spiritual notions of nationalism cannot become part of a scientific, realist IR. The exercise of what is 'excluded' cannot be fully understood without understanding what is 'included'. Political realism recognizes only one kind of nationalism, à la European style, that led to the creation of the modern nation-state, which provides the bases of the IR discipline.

Nehru's modernist nationalism had won in 1947 and shaped India's political character thereafter. All 'older' conceptualizations of nationalism were now of 'historical interest', left to historians to debate. Even when they acquired a new life, say, Hindu nationalism in the late 1980s or when new subnationalisms were born, such as Naga, Assemese, Sikh and Kashmiri nationalisms, they became a subject matter of Indian politics. With their battleground being inside the state, they were of little interest to IR except when they challenged India's territorial

integrity. Second, in the Nehruvian vision of a modern and industrialized India, economics acquired a special significance. 'We want experts in the job,' Nehru wrote in his autobiography, 'who study and prepare detailed plans' (2004a: 608), and the Indian state indeed helped create a critical mass of very able economists and world-class institutions. IR had no such luck ironically because Nehru himself provided the much needed and much valued 'expertise'. Third, the foundational principles of the scientific spirit and rationality underpinned the entire enterprise of state making. Nehru believed that

the lack of modernity in colonial India had nothing to do with any essential cultural failings of Indian civilization ... [but] the consequence of a particular political circumstance [after] whose removal ... the Indian nation would take the first significant step towards coming in tune with the "spirit of the age"... It also followed that *by looking for its Present not in its own past, but Elsewhere, in the universal representation of the "spirit of the age", the Indian nation was only attempting to work back into the trajectory of its "normal" development* (emphasis added).

(ibid.: 137–8).

Doing so, however, conceded vital ground in that the 'Master Narrative' could only be written 'Elsewhere', and by accepting or presuming that 'India only had to find its place therein', it had perhaps precluded the possibility of India ever writing the 'Master Narrative' itself. In Nehru's 'search of the Present' that took him to 'foreign countries' termed as 'necessary, for isolation from it means backwardness and decay' (Nehru 2004: 624), India's 'future' was also getting mortgaged by colonizing its future thought processes and forcing a self-understanding only in terms of concepts and categories coined in the west.

To recapitulate our argument thus far, the disciplinary character of Indian IR cannot be understood without a thorough examination of its umbilical relationship with the Indian state, born as they both were on 15 August 1947. Unlike other social sciences, which study India's 'traditional pasts' to understand their respective notions of the 'Present' and as a legitimate source of learning, Indian IR takes the Indian state as a *given starting point* of all its scholarly endeavours. It has 'no pasts' to look into because they have been discredited or rendered irrelevant. Following the footsteps – metaphorically and substantively – of its 'Master Creator' (read Western IR) wherein 'the realist power ritual administers "silence regarding the historicity of the boundaries it produces, the space it historically clears and the subjects it historically constitutes"' (Ashley cited in Tickner 2003: 300), Indian IR has also shied away from critically interrogating the story of its birth. Unless it does so, it cannot come to terms with *exclusions* that have long been taken for granted, accepted and internalized even as they have denuded its intellectual terrain.

The impoverishment of traditional IR's political thought becomes further evident on its chosen ground – political realism – that does not recognize or *own* Indian political philosopher, Kautilya, as 'the father of realpolitik'. Kautilya is not taught in any 'principal IR theory courses' and though *Arthashastra* (Indian science of



politics dating from the fourth century BC) has much to offer for theorizing IR, the broader applicability of his ideas is not acknowledged – almost universally. Kautilya's theory of mandala (sphere or circle of influence, interest and ambitions) stipulates that every king or *vijigeesoo* (aspirant to conquest) is to regard his realm as located at the centre of a concentric circle of kingdoms or mandalas (rings), which represented alternately his natural enemies and possible allies. Each kingdom's similar aspirations spur a struggle for existence, self-assertion and world domination among *vijigeesoos* resulting into *matsya-nyaya* (the logic of the fish), that is, should there be no ruler to wield punishment on earth the stronger would devour the weak like fishes in the water. The mandala theory assumes and is prepared for a world of eternally warring states by stressing 'perpetual preparedness' or the doctrine of *danda* (punishment, sanction) (Sarkar 1919: 402; 1921: 83–9). International relations conceived in this political tradition derive from a purely secular theory of state with power as its sole basis permitting no ethical or moral considerations.

Kautilya is, thus, the forerunner of the modern fathers of the realist traditions in IR as *Arthashastra* predates Hobbes' 'state of nature,' Machiavelli's 'Prince' as well as Kenneth Waltz's anarchic international system and the 'security dilemma' of modern states. Sarkar gives a detailed account of how 'the diplomatic feats conceived by the Hindu political philosophers could be verified almost to the letter by numerous instances in European and Asian history, especially in ancient and medieval times when Eur-Asia was divided into numberless nationalities' (ibid.: 407). This political philosophy is 'neither exclusively oriental nor exclusively medieval or primitive' (ibid.), however, the disciplinary subject-matter of traditional IR only offers *silence* on Kautilya. Much like India's 'pre-colonial pasts', the 'pre-modern' world of Kautilya is disowned or excluded by traditional IR's modern worldview. He has to be either dismissed (Gowen 1929: 192) or suitably modernized. Resurrecting Kautilya is possible only by viewing him through modern sensibilities. So, Kautilya is reduced to becoming an 'Indian Machiavelli' and his ideas hold value because they *approximate* those presented in Hobbes's *Leviathan* or Machiavelli's *Prince* and not vice versa. A modernist reading of *Arthashastra* imposes western concepts such as 'external' and 'internal' sovereignty into the 'pre-modern' pasts of kingdoms and empires, which in view of the former's historical (European) specificity, mean something completely different. *Shookra-neeti*, bearing on the freedom of the *rashtra*, or the land and the people in a state, laid down that 'great misery comes of dependence on others. There is no greater happiness than that from self-rule' (Sarkar 1919: 400). Kautilya also stated that under foreign rule 'the country is not treated as one's own land, it is impoverished, its wealth carried off, or it is treated as a commercial article' (ibid.). But then the doctrine of *swarajya*, *aparadheenatva* (independence) is automatically implied to embody the Western conception of external sovereignty. Seen in this light, Indian history can make sense, if at all, only on the terms set by the West and through Western theoretical frameworks.

If it fared poorly in relating to its 'pasts', traditional IR's understanding of real-politik outside the state was also wanting. With its political imagination limited

by a state-centric and military-dominated notion of power-politics, Nehru and the IR scholarly community did not come to grips with the other, bigger challenge of reordering the world in the economic domain fought with the intellectual tools of a development discourse. 'The true power of the West', traditional IR has yet to fully realize, 'lies not in its political and technological might but in its power to define' (Nandy 1998: ix). The defining principle of that era was modernization that projected a developmental sequence through which all cultures of societies must pass 'as natural and universal', thereby defining the key problematique of the Third World – underdevelopment. The fact that nearly six decades later, many still characterize themselves as 'developing' countries shows how deeply the Western definition of the Third World has penetrated their collective psyche. Nehru's vision was also to create the right kind of modernized (read industrialized) India. The goal was 'given'; only the specific national path remained to be determined. Even after the creation of a sovereign Indian state, the 'Master Narrative' continued to be written 'Elsewhere' and the inbuilt, inequitable equations persisted because in the 'modernized states system equality is achieved only at the price of assimilation to Western liberal modernity [where] equality necessarily requires "sameness" . . . [and] difference is translated into inferiority' (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 107–8). This hegemonic framework 'retains the idea of a "pecking order" of cultures, and the implicit idea of dialogue remains a "dialogue of unequals"' (ibid.). The trajectory of 'evolutionary universals' was never systematically questioned by IR scholars – a task left to (left-oriented) economists. This was despite Nehru's belief that 'ultimately foreign policy is the outcome of economic policy' (1950: 201), and scholars of the modernization tradition arguing that the 'logic of modernization extends beyond the domestic "political system" to encompass and transform international relations' (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 108).

To recapitulate, bound by its fundamental '*givens*', traditional IR has truly been 'boxed in' – metaphorically and substantively. It is not our intention or purpose to dismiss the entire genre of Indian IR literature that remains grounded in the realist paradigm, but it is important to understand that the structural reason why traditional IR in India has not, indeed, *could not* produce a non-Western IR theory is because it has fought that intellectual battle on a turf chosen by the West, with tools designed and provided by the West and rules-of-game set by the West enforced, as they were, not just by its political and military might but more important, its all-pervasive discursive power. That is why Indian scholarship of traditional IR has remained on the margins of the larger discipline. And yet, it may be argued that the situation looks bleak only as long as traditional IR stays within the stifling confines of those concentric circles. What is needed then is to create alternative sites of knowledge construction by stepping out of this box.

## The new IR

Such sites can be found if we engage with scholars using different vantage points of postcolonialism, hermeneutics, development theory, critical theory and feminism to debate issues that lie at the heart of IR. This somewhat amorphous amalgam

of scholarly traditions comes together, only as an analytical category, to make up what is termed as new IR. In India, writings of this genre are few and rarely recognized as part of IR, though in mainstream IR these are broadly positioned in the post-positivist domain. There are differences among the post-positivists but they all agree the positivist ideal is methodologically unworkable and normatively perilous. They pay more attention to ontology while also recognizing the normative content and orientation of the discipline. What follows is a quick review of some possible vantage points that may be seen as part of the new IR.

Postcolonial thought has self-consciously examined the genesis, development and distribution of knowledge systems and thrown light on their 'uses' as an instrument of 'power and coercion', in the hands of the select few. They have yet to firmly establish themselves in IR since 'postcolonialism came to the international via its discursive treatment of colonialism ... This has not been a self-conscious move and indeed the word *international* hardly features in the lexicon of this discourse' (Darby 2003: 144). This is especially true of Indian IR though there are a few exceptions, such as Abraham's research on the making of India's atomic bomb (1998) and Appadurai's work on globalization (1996), who along with Bhaba highlights the hybrid 'in-betweenness' that characterizes the post-colonial subject 'allowing for the emergence and negotiation of marginal, subaltern, minority subjectivities' (1994: 25).

Feminists have sought to reframe traditional IR constructs to explain how modern states and the international state system depend in part on the maintenance of unequal gender relations in division of labour and power play. They question the state-centric concept of security, making security effectively synonymous with 'citizenship', which is historically and conceptually not a gender-neutral phenomenon. Unlike neorealists focusing on threats from 'outside' state boundaries, feminists highlight the structural violence of ethnic, class and gender hierarchies. In the Indian academe, anthropology, sociology and history have integrated gender-aware analyses far better than international relations. Feminists' theoretical constructions are only beginning to make their presence felt in IR (Rajagopalan 2005; Chenoy 2002) though women's involvement in conflict and peace processes (Manchanda 2001; Behera 2006; Butalia 2002) and the gendered nature of nationalism and state (Menon and Bhasin 1998; Hussain *et al.* 1997) have been much analysed. Feminist methods bring important insights to new IR in rejecting the positivist division between theory and practice and conceiving research as a communal exercise where the people and the subject of the research are equally involved throughout the research process.

Post-positivist theorizing in IR has also highlighted the importance of culture and identity for understanding the global process because

culturally specific notions of temporality and space are important sources of disjuncture between Western and non-Western models of knowledge. Modern Western belief systems are based upon an instrumental relationship between human beings (subject) and nature (object) that translates into the instrumentalisation of knowledge or the view of knowledge as a commodity.

Instead many non-Western cosmogonies view the self, community and nature as interdependent parts of a single whole, with which their understanding of the relationship between knowledge and the natural world, and of the social function of knowledge in general is markedly different.

(Behera 2003: 305)

This was underlined by Tagore in context of the Eastern and Western notions of man's relationship with the nature as:

the West sees a break between the world of things and the world of man. The East sees kinship and continuity. The scientific man of the West sees the interaction of the natural forces. The Eastern seer finds an eternal will working and manifesting itself in these forces. The West would subdue Nature. The East would seek unity with Nature. For the one, the goal is conquest. For the other, it is the realization of the infinite.

(cited in Fenn Jr 1929: 318).

Traditional IR may not find Tagore's insights meaningful or relevant, however, in the new IR, critical inputs are coming from indigenous people, social movements and grass-roots level players who have questioned the conventional categories of knowledge as well as conventional methods of producing knowledge. The new social movements have offered new sites for 'creating and regenerating subjugated knowledge' (Parajuli 1991: 183). 'The choice,' Ashis Nandy said, 'is not between traditional knowledge and modern knowledge; it is between different traditions of knowledge' (1987). The subaltern knowledge attempts to change the power relations between these traditions as it seeks to conquer not only political and economic autonomy but also the power to define themselves, their aspirations and the development process. Such local voices challenge the very basis of the positivist knowledge that there can be a single universalizing epistemology that will hold the answers to giving *all peoples in all* a better life, and that 'experts' and specialists, essentially from the West, had a monopoly to produce knowledge (ibid.; Sheth 1984).

IR needs to develop 'an increased sensitivity to its own cultural horizons and ideological functions', Walker argues because 'any account of an emerging global order must recognise the plurality of cultures in the world' (1984: 16). Among the earliest inter-disciplinary Indian critiques of Enlightenment modernity was the work pioneered at the Centre for Studies of Developing Societies (CSDS) by Rajni Kothari, Ashis Nandy, Dhirubhai Seth and Shiv Visvanathan among others.<sup>5</sup> Rajni Kothari, as part of the World Order Models Project in the late 1960s, advocated structural transformation by taking into account the larger mutations of religious, ecological and aesthetic consciousness at the popular, cultural level in large parts of the world. His quest for a 'just world order', led him to question the 'managerial approach to the world order maintained through "an oligarchy of governing elites"' (1979–80: 23).

Ashis Nandy's critique of modernity, the Enlightenment project, the underlying

psychological repercussions of colonialism and especially the nature of the modern state system, all go to the heart of issues that concern new IR (Lal 2000). Nandy has challenged 'all megalog-narratives built by the hegemonic classes in India' that are representative institutions of the project of modernity including a totalistic political organization called the nation-state, the knowledge systems of technoscience, the ideal form of social life, namely, Westernized secularism and the utopia of linear progress and development (Nagaraj 1998: xii). All these 'were born in the twin working of civilizational projects of colonialism and modernity in India ... [which] reproduced and sustained each other' (ibid.). His philosophical plea for 'scepticism to be directed at the modern nation-state' while stressing the need to take stock of the costs of the nation-state system and the nationalism that sustains it calls for retrieving such thinking by Gandhi and Tagore as well as revisiting the image of the state as an 'oppressor' that was eclipsed in traditional IR. Nandy's seminal contribution has inspired leading scholars worldwide to think of 'international' in a different light. It 'challenges our habituated ways of thinking about the international as outside or between', even though he is 'not usually thought of as a theorist of the international – partly, no doubt, because Nandy himself would reject any such compartmentalization of knowledge' (Darby 2003: 160). Nonetheless, it is productive to position him to put into critical relief the fluid and fuzzy terrain of new IR in sharp contrast to the modern vision of traditional IR that subscribes to 'the magic of straight lines' (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 191).

While the post-positivist domain offers a more hospitable ground for fashioning a new IR, one must be conscious of its limitations because they also had 'little regard for that other margin – the South' (Krishnan cited in Darby 2003: 148). Also instructive is the fact that ecology, feminism and cultural studies have been successfully domesticated and professionalized as new specializations in the knowledge industry. Kothari rightly warns against such processes of 'deep cooptation', which is perhaps what he sought to avoid by launching the journal *Alternatives* in 1975 that has since then proved to be a critical intellectual catalyst and almost become an indispensable institution for the leading luminaries from the Western and non-Western worlds to provide alternative perspectives on international relations.

## Re-imagining IR

Re-imagining IR is primarily about rethinking foundational knowledge of what constitutes IR. It calls for creating alternative sites of knowledge construction with an alternative set of tools and resources. Before suggesting such an alternative roadmap for the Indian IR, three generic issues need to be addressed.

The first pertains to the disciplinary boundaries of IR which 'are fundamental in determining who its legitimate speakers are, what rules of the game it condones, and what authoritative disciplinary practice consists of' (Bourdieu cited in Tickner 2005: 8). In critiquing the kind of knowledge Indian IR has produced thus far and urging its scholarly community to transgress its disciplinary boundaries by inviting in the 'outsiders' – postcolonial and development theorists, feminists and

cultural critics – we may be accused of committing *hara-kiri*. These propositions, critics will argue, may sound the death knell of this discipline rather than infuse a new life into it. Throwing open the disciplinary gates of IR no doubt entails risks but taking such risks are not only worthwhile, but they are integral to the process Indian IR must go through to redefine itself. Its existing boundaries are too narrow to allow any meaningful re-imagining and its ways of creating knowledge largely preclude the possibility of any new knowledge especially of universal applicability being created in the periphery, which are the present loci of Indian IR. Therefore, it may well be necessary to step outside the disciplinary core of IR to redefine its various problematics.

The second issue refers to privileging of ‘expertise’, invariably at the cost of devaluing ‘everyday life experiences’, in the practices of knowledge-building. Said advocates ‘adopting the role of the traveller or amateur’ that involves being responsive ‘to the provisional and risky rather than the habitual, to innovation and experiment rather than the authoritatively given status quo’ (1994: 64). A critical reflexivity in our academic pursuits calls for

dismissing the idea that experts are privileged knowers, by abandoning the role of gatekeepers and dismantling disciplinary gates, by asking who benefits from what we do as academics and by being more sensitive to our own lived experiences and those of “others”.

(Tickner 2005: 9)

An over-emphasis on the ‘applied’ nature of social knowledge has already hampered theoretical research in Indian IR. In a globalizing world, such thinking tends to privilege production of increasingly professionalized and ‘market-friendly’ knowledge. At the other end of this spectrum are a ‘growing number of voices calling for an opening up of the international to the grassroots’ (Darby 2003: 153), which need to be taken seriously – an issue, we will shortly revert to.

The third issue involves the indigenization of academic discourses in IR. Having discussed the genetic ethnocentrism of this discipline, it is important to clarify that the intellectual endeavour of re-imagining IR does not advocate ‘mimicking the west’ (Bhabha 1987) or ‘catching up’ with the West but to work towards making IR turn post-Western. If Indian IR were to follow the trajectory laid down by the West, it can *never* catch up and will remain stuck ‘in the transition narrative that will always remain grievously incomplete’ (Chakrabarty 2000: 1510). So, a call for indigenization is not aimed at producing ‘native’ Indian IR theory. Re-imagining IR cannot be a nationalist, atavistic or nativist project, which entails a ‘wholesale rejection of Western social science’ (Alatas 1993: 312). Nativism is the exact reverse of universalism; both lack certain forms of self-reflexivity. Chakrabarty rightly argues that

one cannot but problematize “India” at the same time as one dismantles “Europe.” This Europe, like the “West,” is demonstrably an imaginary entity, but the demonstration as such does not lessen its appeal or power. The project

of provincializing “Europe” has to include certain other additional moves: 1) the recognition that Europe’s acquisition of the adjective *modern* for itself is a piece of global history of which an integral part is the story of European imperialism; and 2) the understanding that this equating of a certain version of Europe with “modernity” is not the work of Europeans alone; third-world nationalisms, as modernizing ideologies *par excellence*, have been equal partners in this process.

(2000: 1512–13)

The idea is to create spaces for alternative thinking on IR, which cannot be accomplished without a critical self-awareness *and* questioning of the a priori assumptions, procedures and values embedded in the positivist enterprise. It means that ‘the question of what we keep and what we discard from the heritage of modernity needs explicit and ongoing discussion’ (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 201). Indigenizing also does not seek to reject everything modern (or Western) or eulogize the premodern (or Indian) world. According to ancient Indian wisdom, every *yuga* or age has its own distinctive problems and needs to come to terms with them in its own way. The past can be a resource or a great source of inspiration and self-confidence, but it can never become a model or blueprint for the present. Therefore, the scholarly community that may shape the contours of new IR cannot take the *dharma* of another age as its own.

Those re-imagining IR, however, must question the implicit yet ubiquitous usage of Western standards to judge knowledge produced through non-Western modes of thinking or at non-Western sites of knowledge making. That is because, ‘by defining what is “immutable” and “universal”, the West silences the visions of Other peoples and cultures to ensure the continuity of its own linear projections of the past and the present on to the future’ (Sardar 1998: 23). Taking a cue from Thomas Szasz’s declaration: ‘In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined’, Sardar argues that non-Western cultures need to

define their own future in terms of their own categories and concepts and to articulate their visions in a language that is true to their own Self, even if not comprehensible “on the other side of the global fence of academic respectability”.

(ibid.)

What also needs to be questioned is the West’s *assumed* right to impart legitimacy on all knowledge systems, that is, determining which ‘ways of creating knowledge’ are legitimate and which are not and especially using the yardsticks and values of a *particular* kind of knowledge-making enterprise – positivism – for judging the legitimacy of *all other* and often intrinsically different ways of producing knowledge. Nandy, therefore, insists that

an alternative that is genuinely an alternative cannot take the West as its

reference point [as] for him, the West is more than a geographical and temporal entity; it is a psychological category. His alternative then is located beyond the West/anti-West dichotomy.

(Sardar 1998: 4–5)

An argument for indigenization is, thus, not the same as calling for nativism but creating alternative spaces where we *can* ‘listen to’ the non-Western voices, learn from them and then use those insights together with those emanating from the Western hemisphere of the world, to create a post-Western IR.

The enterprise of re-imagining IR needs to generate an alternative set of resources. Two lines of inquiry are suggested to begin with; more, we hope, will emerge along the way. The first, already noted above, explores the role of everyday experience in theory-building by examining ‘the relationship between lived experience, understanding and knowledge’ to show how ‘lived world is fundamental for understanding how knowledge of the world is constructed’ (Tickner 2005: 1–2). Theorizing in IR needs to ask fundamental questions such as what it means to know, who legitimately knows, where knowers are situated, how certain issues achieve importance as objects of study and what the purpose of theory itself is (Sylvester 1996). The challenge is to bring these voices into the domain of IR and explore how they become a source for IR theory.

A second line of inquiry calls for IR scholars to undertake a thorough re-reading of the Indian history and analyse the political thought of various Indian philosophers and political thinkers including Manu, Valmiki, Buddha, Iqbal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Dadabhai Naroji and Tagore and political leaders such as Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad among others. In view of our analysis of Kautilya’s *Arthshastra*, the issue of ‘how to’ read history is of critical importance. There is much to learn from subaltern studies and postcolonial traditions. It is important to be aware and eschew modernist practices of imposing Western concepts and categories into the distant pasts of diverse non-Western societies because they ‘recreate only those structures which they want to see; intellectual projects become guided tours [and] we see only what we have been trained and told to recognize’ (Nagaraj 1998: x). A scholarly understanding of the past must be undertaken with a healthy dose of sociological and geo-cultural reflexivity.

How India’s ‘pasts’ could serve as a resource or Indian ‘ways of knowing’ contribute towards creation of a post-Western IR may be briefly illustrated with the following example. Modern IR privileges the claims of state sovereignty over all other kinds of political communities and assumes that ‘difference’, especially cultural difference, is ‘debilitating to the purpose of establishing order’ (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 94). Hence, its overwhelming emphasis on ‘universalization’ of state-making processes – Westphalian state becoming the role model for *all* – and following the European footsteps in pursuing modernist development. Against this backdrop, an alternative worldview of IR may be generated by drawing upon Indian ideas and practices. These cultivate a political imagination that recognizes, understands and nurtures differences and creates alternative ontological possibilities of social and political spaces for interactions between communities, tribes



and ethnic groups criss-crossing the spatial (territorial) boundaries of nation-states. For instance,

Hindu culture juxtapositions numerous religious and cultural identities that constitute a singular family in which each enjoys the same respect, importance and tolerance. The unity of all religions is based upon the fact that they each constitute different paths to God. *Contrary to the Western model of universality, which is premised upon a self-other binary in which the other's agency and identity must necessarily be negated, Hindu culture's universality does not require the suppression of difference*, given that each of the particularistic identities that comprise it are viewed as legitimate and equal parts of a unified whole (emphasis added).

(Tickner 2003: 304)

This becomes clear from a comparison of the modernist notions of identity with traditional conceptions. A modernist identity is a historical-political construct based upon convergence of individuals and communities' (abstract) interests for pursuing common political goals. The creation of a collective *self* inherently requires an *other* and so long as an 'us versus them' differentiation lies at the root of any identity assertion, it has an inbuilt element of hatred for the other. In precolonial India, peoples' sense of belonging and solidarity was based on habitat, religion, language and kinship where each aspect had a distinct social role to play but it did not have to be prioritized (Kaviraj 1995: 116). A person was not characterized as first a Hindu or a Muslim or a monk. Select tenets of more than one religious faith could be simultaneously followed<sup>6</sup> because identity had different meanings in different situations. More important, a dichotomy between the 'self' and 'other' did not exist as the plurality of a premodern identity figured on a horizontal plane. Traditional identities were not enumerated because they simply lacked the cognitive means to generate a global picture of the spaces in which social groups lived. This was accomplished by the British who introduced an entirely new cognitive apparatus of figures, maps and numbers – the census – that imparted a sense of territoriality to identities by imposing 'dualistic either-or oppositions as natural, normative order of thought' and taught people in the subcontinent that 'one is either this or that; that one cannot be both or neither or indifferent' (Miller cited in Kakar 1995: 196).

Recovering and exploring the dynamics of such a non-dualistic mode of thinking may have significant ramifications for maintaining political order in domestic and international domains in a contemporary world. The plural societies of Third World are torn by conflicts because their socio-cultural diversities are viewed as a political threat by the homogenizing impulses of the modern nation-state. What lies at the root of most such conflicts – between various ethnic, linguistic or religious communities and/or between such communities vis-à-vis the state – is a fundamental inability on the part of their political leadership to view differences and diversity as a source of strength rather than fear and danger. Internationally, there are divisive ramifications of externalizing the *other* in constructing a nationalist

identity. A nationalist worldview inevitably generates hatred for an alien community or foreign country and makes these biases and prejudices a part of its national psyche. This is true of Third World states like India and Pakistan whose enmity is historically cast in their conflicting religious ideologies and the sole superpower – the US – whose perennial search for an ‘enemy’, met the *other* in the communist ‘evil empire’ of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Subsequently, Cuba, Iran, Libya and Iraq were labelled as the ‘rogue states’ and the ongoing ‘war on terror’ targets the ‘axis of evil’. Even Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis that strives to rise above the statist paradigm assumes that different civilizations cannot co-exist peacefully. Bearing in mind the divisive nature of such thinking and politics, a non-dualistic mode of thinking that does not generate a ‘fear of the other’ has far-reaching implications for contemporary international politics.

In international relations’ disciplinary practices too, Western IR and all other variants of non-Western IR need not view each other in a ‘self-other’ binary mode. The purpose of alternative sites of knowledge construction is precisely to create non-hegemonic spaces where different traditions of IR can engage in a healthy dialogue and co-exist. Dismantling the hierarchies between western and non-Western IR will go a long way in enriching the discipline of IR. Re-imagining IR in India is only the first step in that direction. It calls for charting an untreaded path albeit a promising one, though whether Indian IR chooses to traverse this road remains to be seen.

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## Notes

- 1 Admittedly, the term 'Western IR' is problematic for its essentialist overtones. As used in this paper, it mainly points to the shared epistemological foundations of IR rooted in Anglo-American traditions – the birth place of IR – in a historical sense. In its subsequent evolution, it has predominantly been referred to as 'an American social science' (Hoffman 1977: 41–60, Crawford and Jarvis 2000). Waever recounts the growing differentiation between 'continental and American traditions in international thought' (1999: 80–3), and for a larger debate between the 'core and periphery', see Aydinli and Mathews 2000: 298–303.
- 2 The Observer Research Foundation, a think tank based in Delhi with another office in Chennai, is supported by Reliance Industries. Another centre, the Delhi Policy Group, receives support from the Sriram Group of Industries.
- 3 Email correspondence with the author in August – September 2005.
- 4 A conversation with the author in January 2006.
- 5 CSDS's work has been equated to the early Frankfurt School Critiques of Enlightenment (Dallmayr 1996).
- 6 Singh's survey lists nearly 600 communities or roughly 15 per cent of all Indian communities documented, which see themselves as having more than one religious identity – of simultaneously being Hindu and Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim or Hindu and Christian even today (1994: 51–3).

## 6 Southeast Asia

### Theory between modernization and tradition?

*Alan Chong*<sup>1</sup>

The notion of progress in the international relations of Southeast Asia tends to be the distinctive import of a *Western* modernization. When one searches for the traces of non-Western theorizing, it is most unlikely to be found in a scholarship that explicitly aims to reach a practical political science audience of university students, fellow academics, businessmen, political leaders and civil society activists. As pointed out in Acharya and Buzan's introduction to this volume, the nation-state in much of the world, including Southeast Asia, is complicit in Western ideas of developing modes of systematic and permanent territoriality vested in centralized Weberian administrations. If one accepts this as the default mode of studying the international relations of the ten Southeast Asian states (Brunei, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam<sup>2</sup>) the schools of international relations – an essentially Atlanticist heritage – ought to define the limits of theorizing.

The main task of this article is to make preliminary inquiries into the reasons for the absence of non-Western, or indigenous, theorizing on or from the Southeast Asian region. It will be argued that even though Western intellectual currents have attained Gramscian hegemony, there still exist possibilities for pluralism in the field. To establish a 'war of manoeuvre' in Gramscian counter-hegemonic terms, current and future scholars of Southeast Asian international politics will have to trudge the difficult road of interpreting Southeast Asia's political autonomy and traditions. Following the presentation of arguments that modernization has both categorized Southeast Asia's international relations *and* crowded out original non-Western international theorizing of Southeast Asia, this article will propose that two broad sets of scholarship would offer illumination of possibilities for non-Western theorizing.

First, there are transitional and hybrid scholars – both Western and indigenous (Asian) – who dissent from hegemonic modernization by inquiring after the autonomy of Southeast Asian international agency. In employing these labels, I take 'Western' to refer to scholars and their works identified through their location of academic domicile in North America, Europe and Australia. Similarly, indigenous or 'Asian/Southeast Asian' should be located as academically domiciled within Southeast Asia or more broadly, East Asia. Indeed, following Acharya and Buzan's query in the introduction about placing Western and Asian scholars academically



domiciled in each other's geocultural regions, I employ the label 'transitional and hybrid' scholarship for the purposes of this article. These labels are certainly not infallible. It must be borne in mind that it is the wider enterprise of encouraging non-Western theoretical perspectives for plurality in the field that is at stake, and not the niceties of pinioning academic orthodoxies strictly through nationality.

Second, traditions of political interaction that predate European colonialism may offer guidance for scholars interested in pre-theorizing. Although there is the temptation of convenience to label the past as 'premodern', the epithet 'traditional' is preferred since it avoids the opprobrium of implying that social patterns of the past stand inferior vis-à-vis the knowledge brought by modernization. All in all, ideas of theorizing are shaped in the interaction between intellectual mentalities and the dominant political orders of the historical epochs. Theory indeed fulfils the function of a historical bloc – fixing the order of knowledge – through its conventional meaning. As Acharya and Buzan (Introduction) defined it, 'theory is ... about simplifying reality. It starts from the supposition that in some quite fundamental sense, each event is not unique, but can be clustered together with others that share some important similarities'. In this regard, given the developmental status of most of the nation-states in the region, and the authoritarian tendencies that manifest in their domestic government, it would also be imperative to pay attention to the obsession of most mainstream scholars with reading foreign policy actions as the validation of political truth. Acharya and Buzan's introduction has drawn attention to the potential, or absence, of historical and political traumas as a conditioning factor for theoretical innovation. It is noticeable that even realism is threaded and contextualized from Machiavelli through to Kissinger. Such was the way Western schools of IR developed – by accumulating knowledge from experience.

### **Southeast Asia's international relations as a collective category**

Recent commentaries that assess the region's tainted promise of a 'Pacific Century' (Foot and Walter 1999; Ravenhill 2009) often neglect the fact that the baggage of modernization's trajectory was introduced by colonial design and locally adapted. The traditional political mosaic of Southeast Asia was fragmented along the gravitational pulls of Sinic and Indic influences, extra-regional eastern religions (Buddhism and Islam) and animism. Historians (Coedès 1967: ch. 1; Ricklefs 1993: ch. 1–2) are in agreement that since prehistoric times, the mountain ranges of the mainland inhibited internal communications whereas settlements along most coasts received transoceanic influences through invasion, trade and proselytization. The geopolitical unification of Southeast Asia occurred only after Western trading vessels and gunboats intruded into the picture on the basis of the lure of wealth acquisition, *and* the need to organize it systematically. The administration of colonization for profit, as Benedict Anderson (1991) put it so vividly, required the transformation of swathes of precolonial territories into imagined communities. The initial step of imagining the natives came across in neo-anthropological economic narratives like those of Julius Boeke and John Furnivall. Boeke's thesis of

economic dualism located the Southeast Asian native as pre-capitalist, as opposed to the colonial authorities' European conditioning as true capitalists. The former existed in a stylized organic community with nonexistent profit motive, underdeveloped exchange systems, resignation to economic immobility and modest understandings of private wants. European capitalism operated in these territories by either reforming the natives or operating in a separate superstructure of orthodox capitalism that interfaced internationally in trade and finance (Boeke, 1942: ch. 1). On this basis, Boeke implied that decolonization was not to be implemented lightly. Furnivall is better known for his alternative reading of the dual society in the form of the 'plural society'. In Furnivall's own words,

It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit.

(Furnivall, 1956: 304)

The intellectual upshot of all this was that 'tropical peoples forfeited their independence because, under the guidance of their native rulers, they were unable to qualify as citizens of the modern world by complying with its requirements' (Furnivall, 1956: 489). The territories contained diverse peoples who had to be partially educated and sufficiently trained to extract wealth for their colonial masters.

In the modernizing process, consciousness was ironically raised towards an awakening of nationalism. This was to be an anti-colonial nationalism that led its standard bearers in both landlocked Indochina and the Malay and Filipino archipelagos to the south, to find common cause. Nationalism also scripted into its discourse a cry for eradication of injustices. This is more than evident in the propaganda of Sukarno, Aung San Suu Kyi, Ho Chi Minh, Jose Rizal and Lee Kuan Yew, right through to even the aristocratic Norodom Sihanouk, Dato Onn bin Jaafar and General Pibulsongkhram of Thailand. Thailand, in fact, represented a peculiar case of neocolonialism in the pre-1945 era. Yet it subscribed officially to the nationalistic unity of Southeast Asian regionalism, despite exhibiting centrifugal tendencies at various moments. The desire to be the master in one's own modern nation-state was palpable in great intensity in the postcolonial years. The Japanese interregnum (1941–5) merely whetted local appetites for revolutionary political change. Ironically, this yearning for mastery brought forth the embrace of a materialist vision of development along Western lines. This third regionwide political commonality is known as modernization.

Modernization is popularly understood to be the process of liberating mankind's capacities for augmenting creativity, productivity and leisure through the accumulation of scientific knowledge for integrating social forces (Apter 1965: ch. 1–2). Nationalism, democracy, socialism, communism, the symbolic pursuit of anti-colonial justice, institutionalized representation, regularized administration and the importation of machine technology from the 'neo-colonial' West, are apparently

reconcilable in the mindset of the post-independence elites according to Western observers. Writing in 1963, Clifford Geertz observed that for the newly decolonized populations modernization frequently expressed itself in two interdependent and conflicting motives: 'the desire to be recognised as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions "matter" and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state' (Geertz 1963: 108). Michael Leifer (1972) warned that any understanding of Southeast Asian peoples' sense of loyalties meant appreciating their primordial nature – that is, through definitions by blood, race, language, religion, locality and received 'tradition'. These loyalties tended to be played out on subnational, substate, transnational, or in the case of religion, on supranational planes. Therefore whether one is elaborating a pattern of minority separatism through the issue of the Moro Islamic insurgency, the *Karennis* in Myanmar, the political incongruity of the overseas Chinese communities in maritime Southeast Asia or the Papuan and Timorese revolts against the federal government from Jakarta, there is the underlying tension structured by the aspiration to modernize into a cohesive nation-state.

At the same time, new issues such as investor-friendly governance, 'footloose' capital flows, free trade coordination, transnational biological threats and multilaterally coordinated scientific surveillance from inter-governmental multilateral agencies, arise from the condition of being modern. Modernity requires both a cohesive identity for social peace and, following Hobbes and Weber, a scientific, legal-rational leviathan that can impose order within a bounded territory. It must also direct the monopolistic legal powers of the state *and* its contained society against a common enemy. Where international policy coordination arises in terms of balance of trade, capital flows, disease control or transnational subversion, the legal-rational state is expected to decide and enforce internationally binding agreements *de rigueur*. With rare exceptions, Southeast Asian nation-states are often classed as quasi-sovereign in this regard because they are neither completely able to convince their populations to react in disciplined ways to scientific problems that attend to a global capitalist economy, or to the unconventional security threats posed by connected transport and communication networks.

Modernization, as the culmination of the regionwide processes of colonialism and nationalism, opens the final door to a wider understanding of a series of impediments to non-Western IR theorizing in Southeast Asia. This article can now proceed to argue that there is deep-seated neglect of the latter for two reasons. First, the embrace of the western logic of modernization in political and economic development has polarized perception of indigenous intellectual thought into the 'modernization versus tradition' debate. The discursive implication is that everything that predated the arrival of the colonial epoch could only be sparingly adopted for progress. Much of the social, political and economic past ought to be denied as valid for the scientific age. Both Western scholarship on Southeast Asian international politics and post-1945 indigenous scholarship from Southeast Asia are equally implicated in the confines of this discourse. Empirically driven and prescriptive, modernization narrows one's research horizons, theoretical or otherwise. An integrated survey of the state of the literature on

Southeast Asian international politics will reveal this in the following sections.

The intellectual framing of modernization as mainstream has been further reproduced in local universities and government-linked research institutes in Southeast Asian states. Western scholars writing on Southeast Asia assume primogeniture in scientific analysis of Southeast Asia. An inevitable consequence of this is that when post-independence generations of Southeast Asian students proceed to the ex-colonial metropolises for graduate training, they invariably reproduce the filters of their supervisors. Through the master-apprentice relationship in postgraduate programmes, Western presuppositions are woven into the contributions of 'new research' on the region. Subsequently, this process became localized when Southeast Asia's own universities, staffed with returned scholars, began producing their own doctoral candidates. Influenced by both preceding layers of Western socialization, indigenous Southeast Asian scholars began to publish their analyses from within their region of domicile utilizing Western lenses. This culture of reproduction constitutes the second explanation for the relative absence of non-Western theorizing. The Gramscian historical bloc is complete when the prospects of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and bilateral disputes are analysed as realist collisions. Conversely, they are largely denied liberal perspectives. Furthermore, due to the polarization of the Cold War, Marxist lenses with Asian labels also found affinity in prognosticating the ills of Southeast Asia's developmental security and foreign relations.

### **Restricting the field: Southeast Asia's international relations of modernization and weak states**

The issues of 'modernizing' nations and states appear to have dominated research about contemporary 'Southeast Asian international relations' since their formal inception around 1946 (Fifield 1958; Jorgensen-Dahl 1982; Charrier 2001). Mainstream Western observers of the region have consensually developed an obsession with empirical problems of building coherent states and nations as the logical framing for the embryonic international relations of the region. Samples of such scholarship range from Russell Fifield's (1958) diplomatic sketches to recent attempts at writing contemporary histories of the area such as those attempted by Nicholas Tarling (1992; 2001) and Clive Christie (1996; 1998). Fifield attributes the source of the independence movement to the 'matrix of the colonial period'. In particular, Western powers imported 'nationalism' into the local milieu, consolidated political boundaries and 'left behind them a Westernized elite, probably less than 10 per cent, which took over the reins of government' (Fifield 1958: 16). The modern history of Southeast Asian states began with the Anglo-Dutch rivalry that culminated in the 1824 treaty on spheres of control, then the Anglo-French rivalry in Indochina, the Spanish conquest of the Philippines and the Spanish-American War of 1898. Thereafter, inter-colonial boundary refinements up to and including the Japanese occupation, further consolidated what was to become the postcolonial map of the present-day region of ten Southeast Asian sovereignties. In this manner of process tracing, the roots of writing modern *interstate* relations

arise exclusively through Western sources. Fifield commented that the new elites would be holding the reins of modernizing states for the first time and their success in handling relations between themselves would hinge upon the prospects of managing political instability arising from change. He feared that 'independence came too soon' in some states where elites were either 'not adequately prepared and/or where areas were devastated during the Second World War'. The path to the future depended on choosing one of two precedents: 'the pattern widely found in Latin America or that in Western Europe' (Fifield 1958: 500). In similar fashion, both Robin Jeffrey *et al.* (1981) and Michael Leifer (1972) observed that due to their modernizing condition being both advanced and retarded by the legacies of colonialism in terms of boundaries, uneven literacy, cultivation of indigenous elites and infrastructural development, Southeast Asian states approximate mainstream international relations to very limited degrees. Against the contrast of West European economic integration, Leifer even observed that

An essential element in the popular movement for union which arose in Western Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War was a strongly held belief by some that the conventional nation-state has ceased to fulfil its primary function and has therefore lost its *raison d'être*. It was thus advocated that the nation-state in Western Europe ought to be superseded by a different kind of polity. No such ethic moves hearts or minds in Southeast Asia; if anything, it is the reverse.

(Leifer 1972: 150–1)

Clive Christie's (1998) selection of excerpts of indigenous writings by postcolonial elites also showed that modernization resonated strongly in the political outlook of the new power wielders. Ho Chi Minh was openly in awe of Lenin's 'Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions'. He exclaimed that 'Leninism is not only a miraculous "book of the wise", a compass for us Vietnamese revolutionaries and people; it is also the radiant sun illuminating our path to final victory, to Socialism and Communism' (Ho 1998: 76). In 1946, Sukarno's speech, elaborating his ideology of *Pancasila*, mentioned Ernest Renan and Otto Bauer as inspirations in the construction of an 'Indonesian national state'. His Indonesian nationalism was intended to evolve the psychological nationalism proffered by Renan and Bauer by exhorting the Sumatrans, Makassarese, Javanese and Minangkabau to focus their automatic loyalties upon an Indonesian territorial mindset straddling two oceans (Sukarno 1998: 134–5). In his fourth principle of the *Pancasila*, he called for the institutionalizing of a grand deliberative body to deliver plans for social justice throughout the archipelago. Similarly, Malaysian Chinese politician Tan Cheng Lock articulated the plight of Chinese domiciled in a future independent nation-state by comparing his appeal for equal multiracial rights to models already existing in the West. Modernization was to be welcomed in the form of

a policy of equal treatment, impartiality and justice to all of them [i.e. the racial communities in Malaya] alike without discrimination, thereby helping

to create a true Malayan spirit and consciousness amongst all its people to the complete elimination of any racial or communal feeling and to bring about a spirit of unity in their attachment to the British Commonwealth and Empire ... [In this way, ] all obstacles in the way of its constitutional progress and development towards self-government should vanish, as has been amply demonstrated in the case of other territories with mixed communities and races.

(Tan 1998: 190–1)

Mohammed Ayoob (1986) points out that the implication of this recurring ‘Third World problem’ of the disjuncture between racial nation and politico-legal privilege could evolve in either one of two ways internationally. The conventional response would be to treat nation-building as domestic modernization, and hence definitionally irrelevant to external affairs. On the other hand, Ayoob argued that in empirical terms, international security for developing countries is often a function of intrastate problems. Third World leaders, especially those educated in the West, may sincerely desire a total reproduction of Westphalian trappings around their borders and international economic transactions. Their local realities, however, frustrate these aspirations. Foreign policy, by way of the examples of South Africa and her neighbours, the Arab-Israeli interstate wars and the India-Pakistan conundrum, becomes a tool to secure domestic regime legitimacy. Alternatively, to paraphrase a Marxist tagline, foreign policy adventurism is a convenient ‘opiate for the masses’ diverting caustic scrutiny from an incumbent government’s failings in job creation, housing policies, agricultural failures and other wealth distribution. Southeast Asia’s ten new states created between 1946 and 1984 clearly fall into this category. Nations did not overlap neatly with state boundaries as the disputes over Borneo, Singapore, the various Indochinese and maritime frontiers showed. Many of them are still extant at the time of writing. In the 1950s and 1960s, the regimes of Sukarno in Indonesia, Macapagal in the Philippines and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam clearly viewed foreign relations issues as instrumental to the pacification of the masses. Ideology, fronting for modernization, seemed a logical discourse for explaining and encouraging enmity across postcolonial boundaries. Such foreign policy motivations might be more accurately addressed as specific regime insecurities, or even sincere normative aspirations for erasing the boundaries of injustice imposed by centuries of colonialism. Instead, the next crop of scholars focused on patterns of violence in transitional modernity as causality on its own. In this connection, modernization is complicit in spawning the parochial dominance of an empirically driven realist school in Western scholarship on the region.

### *Region of instability*

A number of western scholars have attempted to re-imagine a modernizing Southeast Asia in terms of a ‘region of revolt’. Southeast Asian states are explained as prone to conflict because they are insufficiently modernized along Westphalian lines. The implication is that the use of force as both problem and solution should

be objects of study. Milton Osborne (1970), for instance, characterized the pattern of revolt in the region as one predating western colonialism. Seen in this light, '[w]ith rare exceptions Southeast Asia is not modern. Countries are states rather than nations, seldom providing the opportunities for citizenship to all within their boundaries' (Osborne 1970: 6). He offered an analysis of the Cold War events in Indochina in 1969–70 in the following terms. The conflict between North and South Vietnam, including the intervention of the US, China and the USSR, had 'solid links with regional feeling in the past and with the Vietnamese search for an alternative worldview to replace Confucianism, which failed so patently to provide an answer to the colonial challenge'. Additionally, 'increasing evidence of regional disunity in Cambodia is a reflection of a centuries-old problem' (Osborne 1970: 6). Osborne further extended the rear-view mirror to account for the Indonesian Suharto regime's obsession with forestalling separatist tendencies by rotating regional military commanders. 'The European newcomer,' he observed, 'did not bring forth revolts as a new concept in those regions of Southeast Asia which became his colonies' (Osborne 1970: 22). What replaced traditional resistance to the alien oppressor, was less of a motivation for the restoration of ancient glory, but 'programmatic ideologies which urged revolt because of virtues of the future rather than the past' (Osborne 1970: 23).

Donald McCloud has suggested that the unity of the Southeast Asian region could ironically be characterized by its divisions within: geographic (the mainland-island subdistinction); religious (Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Taoism, Confucianism, animistic and syncretic); ethnic (Malayo-Polynesian, Chinese, Burmese, the *Karennis*, Viet, Khmer, Thai, Lao, Shans and more than 150 others); as well as a mosaic of overlapping and cross-cutting loyalties produced by combinations of the aforementioned categories. Yet the politics of governmental and socioeconomic adjustments have allowed political scientists to apply Western categories of systems analysis to study the region of instability – 'actors', 'boundaries', 'environment' and 'interaction' (McCloud 1986: 13). For McCloud, this enables the researcher to shift levels of explanations from above the region to below. Linkages between intraregional actors can connect with those that are extra-regional and so on. McCloud's analytical framework is clearly borrowed from American behaviouralism but he has wisely observed that even though the new states'

methods and organization may not find approval or understanding in the West, their neotraditional approaches to government are a statement that Southeast Asians have rediscovered and reasserted an indigenous identity. The tenacity of traditional patterns of behaviour within the domestic context is visible in the structures and the functioning of government as well as in policy prescriptions.

(McCloud 1986: 156)

However, McCloud went on to suggest that ultimately local political cultures were a lot more passive in the face of strong-armed tactics by governing elites due to

cultural conditioning. This would nevertheless be increasingly contingent upon the impact upon the local by educational streams fed by global information flows (McCloud 1986: 158).

McCloud's focus upon levels of conflict within and without territorial boundaries finds resonance also in studies of the communist perspective of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. Girling's 1969 study of the application of Maoist 'People's War' strategy in Southeast Asia assumed that the region 'with its natural resources, discordant nationalisms and unstable regimes, has long served as a lure for outside intervention and intrigue' (Girling 1969: 19). Once again, Western Marxist and Sino-Marxist lenses have been applied to frame the region as a theatre for wars of national liberation. The original Marxist-Leninist conception of a Communist International was extended into a practical doctrine of envisioning the frontlines for class warfare being extended into semi-colonies and colonies. Some scholars have thus noted the 'foreign' and 'dependent' origins of early Southeast Asian communism (Van der Kroef 1981: 58–69). By ideological extension, the struggles against bourgeois hegemony in Europe and North America had to be inclusive of the fight against Western imperialism in Southeast Asia. In this analysis, the personal travels and educational experiences of indigenous communist leaders such as Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), Than Tun (Myanmar), Tan Malaka, Musso, Aidit (Indonesia), Chin Peng (Malaysia) and Saloth Sar (Pol Pot of Cambodia) were symptomatic of a grand strategy for a revolutionary world order conceived from Moscow and Beijing. Girling cites abundant evidence that the triumph of the Chinese Communist Party over the *Guomindang* in mainland China emboldened Mao Zedong and his comrades to rally 'the people of Southeast Asia' for the grand cause of completing Asia's liberation from Western subjection. Thus by extension, the Chinese October Revolution would not be secured until it was supported by fraternal revolutions in the rest of Asia (Girling 1969; Colbert 1977: 127–31). In this way, analysts on both sides of the Cold War in Southeast Asia imagined themselves and their governments in a zero-sum struggle between one web with its centre either in Moscow or Beijing and the other spun from London, Paris, the Hague and Washington. Vietnam, the Malayan jungles, the Philippine countryside, as well as the corridors of power in Jakarta, Phnom Penh and Vientiane were depicted as the farthest reaches of these rival webs of ideological confrontation where physical wars could be fought for strategic advantage without resorting to nuclear annihilation. Local proxy governments, framed within this reasoning, were pliable as puppets of the distant power centres. In this way, the international politics of Southeast Asia belonged elsewhere.

### ***Realist regionalism: neorealism and power dependence***

Drawing similarly from the lenses of conflict and power inequalities arising from modernization, outright realists have also staked interpretations upon Southeast Asian regionalism. Not surprisingly, this group originated mainly from North America. Recent investigations into the archaeology of scholarship on Asian politics by Cumings (1997) and McCargo (2006) have argued that entire schemes



of research associated with the Ford Foundation and the Asia Society were influenced by US Government funding and diplomatic priorities in the 1950s and 1960s. Cumings read a distinct Cold War motivation for academic complicity in expanding 'area studies' to underpin CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and State Department efforts. Nevertheless, Cumings significantly noted for the purposes of our present study that Lucian Pye's works on guerrilla communism in Malay and Burmese politics were discreetly encouraged by US intelligence priorities at the time without Pye himself being aware of the connection (Cumings 1997: 13). McCargo, however, made the case that academics studying Southeast Asia while based in North America had, till the early 1980s, showed degrees of diffidence in responding to overtures from political authority. Neorealists dependent upon funding from Washington, DC, were opposed by 'idealist' scholars who zealously guarded their independence, as well as Marxist scholars who ideologically opposed all policy steering from political authority (McCargo 2006: 106–7). Nevertheless, the fact remains that in the evolution of policy bases from within the socio-political milieu of an American superpower assuming the mission of containing communism, concern with power capabilities and deficiencies heavily coloured research.

Characteristically, these scholars posited that the new states enjoyed a contiguous interdependence of power deficiencies arising from their geography. Michael Brecher's early study of the 'subordinate system of Southeast Asia' has in fact predated McCloud's scholarship by two decades but his level of analysis was clearly wedded to a distinctively power-political analysis. Brecher developed a two-level framework that classified states according to their location in either the 'Dominant or International System' and the 'Subordinate State System'. Like McCloud, Brecher believed the concept of categorizing states within systems, or straddling systems, helps the area studies specialist focus his or her analysis upon the context for foreign policy decision-making for any particular state. Furthermore, the levels of systems allow for explanation of geographically pivotal roles for states such as China, India and Pakistan who straddle several subordinate systems. The dominant system at the time was marked by the bipolar US-Soviet competition that intruded upon the alignments within subordinate systems. Brecher's scheme would be unfamiliar to most scholars, particularly since he conceived of 'Southern Asia' as one subordinate system encompassing Pakistan, India, Nepal and then-Ceylon, all of Indochina, the Philippines, then-Malaya and Indonesia. In describing the subordinate system, Brecher employed terms that would subsequently be regarded as ostensible Waltzian neorealism: 'structure' and 'texture'. Structure would denote the basic features of the pattern of relations between the units of the system. Texture would account for the broad characteristics of the environment in which the units would operate – the material, the political and the ideological (Brecher 1963: 218; 1964: ch. 3, 6). Brecher's North American-influenced, Cold War-tinged, neorealist lenses were burnished in his conclusion that all 14 Southern Asian states were weak in resources and jealous of their independence vis-à-vis one another and the dominant system; the 'region of Southern Asia is a power vacuum buffeted by both blocs in the Dominant System' (Brecher 1963: 234). In

his ultimate statement, Brecher made clear his superimposition of a western construct upon Southern Asia: the region

bears a striking resemblance to the Balkans before 1914. It lies between two centres of power and ideology. Its units are very weak compared with extra-area powers, three of which have actively intervened – like Germany and Russia in the Balkans; indeed, one of them is a member of the system. And conflicts within Southern Asia – for example, in Laos and Vietnam – attract intervention by the superpowers.

(Brecher 1963: 234)

Reporting nearly a decade later for the US State Department, Evelyn Colbert's work, *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941–56*, reinforced the neorealist framing of the region. Essentially a history of the early Cold War in Southeast Asia, Colbert's treatise contemplated power politics on two levels. On the first, World War II in the region was analysed as a conflict between the 'old imperialism' of the West and the 'new imperialism' of Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which left in its wake a 'war between emergent nationalism and resistant colonialism in both Indonesia and Indochina' (Colbert 1977: 13). On a second overlapping level, the bipolar Soviet-American contest was reflected in the post-colonial states' civil wars with international complications. Communist insurgents sought to replace existing nationalist elites through both force and ballot box. The now-debilitated imperialist Western powers of the UK, France and the Netherlands aggravated the local non-communist elites' state and nation-building efforts by attempting varying degrees of holding operations to stave off the dissolution of their pre-war empires in Malaya, Borneo, Indochina and the Netherlands East Indies. The US, being the least colonially entangled Western power, also wavered between supporting its European allies' imperial ambitions and its preference for implementing principles of national self-determination across Asia. While Washington was inclined by 1949 to support French anti-communist military operations in Vietnam, it was wary of associating with Dutch 'police actions' within the territories of the embryonic Republic of Indonesia. The UK's decolonizing role in Malaya and Singapore was appreciated more wholeheartedly simply because the US goals of fighting communism and granting self-determination attained near total coincidence. Philippine-American relations in this period have been singled out by Colbert for particularly sympathetic treatment as that of voluntary dependence upon the superpower in an era of bipolar uncertainty. The Chinese civil war had likewise been depicted as a domineering ideological shadow over Southeast Asia, along with Soviet Third World policy in courting non-aligned anti-colonial countries. Colbert's dismissal of any semblance of local agency was coloured consistently by the insinuation that modernizing weak states could never achieve the ideal of the Westphalian power container. The Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in April 1955, as well as its predecessors in the Asian Relations Conferences, were dismissed as charades rather than regarded as substantive regionalism. 'History, tradition and religion' in Colbert's analysis divided more than they

united. Insecurities of state institutions and national identities could not provide the adhesive for community. Hence 'when combined [regional] action was taken to meet pressing postwar economic problems, it was under external guidance and stimulus' (Colbert 1977: 111).

Subsequent realists analysing ASEAN's formation hardly strayed from the Brecher-Colbert frame. Writing also in 1977, Richard Mansbach observed that he had every reason to be pessimistic about the prospects of 'Southeast Asian integration and neutralization' in apparent reference to ASEAN's aspirations. Given ASEAN's intramural distrust behind all the rhetoric of community, he suggested American departure will only open an opportunistic vacuum for Sino-Soviet rivalry and Japanese diplomacy. Neutralization via ASEAN would be 'quixotic in the extreme' since it assumed that the region could be insulated; 'lacking unity, the individual states of Southeast Asia may be plucked singly by external powers using what diplomats call the "artichoke technique"' (Mansbach 1977: 40–1). Melvin Gurtov observed that even though international relations would continue indefinitely to be subject to heavy influence by the major powers, the initiatives by even weak governments in the region 'to reaffirm their independence and develop greater regional autonomy and self-reliance, have stimulated a confidence and a degree of cooperativeness that are unparalleled in the region's post-World War Two history' (Gurtov 1977: 237). But the basis of this autonomy in the realist perspective would still rest ultimately upon each state's capacity for military projection (Simon, 1982).

By the 1980s, a few more sophisticated studies attempted to step out of the shadow of mainstream realism by exploring ASEAN as an embryonic form of indigenous regional community attempting to realign the local patterns of power for collective self-help. Yet there is little doubt that realism in the form of the obsession with power politics still confined discussion of foreign relations. Jorgensen-Dahl (1982) argued, for instance, that Southeast Asian states had matured enough over their first two decades of practising foreign relations to realize they needed to invoke countervailing external powers to leverage against their respective local rivals. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) is an obvious example. Their local rivals were also their neighbours – equally embryonic states still hedging against domination, or liquidation, by all means possible. This state of affairs ironically produced several halting steps towards self-reliance in regional security. As portrayed in Jorgensen-Dahl's analysis of ASEAN's precursors, the Association of Southeast Asia (1961–6) and Maphilindo (for Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia) (1963–6), the non-communist states came to the common realization that some form of collective adherence to non-interference and incremental confidence-building among themselves would be a tremendous benefit for regime consolidation and balancing against the communist menace gathering momentum in Indochina. Beijing was perceived as *the* supplier of that momentum. Jorgensen-Dahl intended to account for motivations for interstate cooperation from within the region before 'relat[ing] the results to relevant elements of the wider body of theoretical understanding' (Jorgensen-Dahl 1982: xiv). Yet in trying to examine the contribution of regional organization to regional order, Jorgensen-Dahl could

not resist falling back on classical realism in explanation. Bearing in mind that in a world of unequal power, the weak would 'fall in line with what is acceptable to the stronger', the states most directly proximate to Chinese communist power would submit to Beijing. Those further away in power radii from communist China could, as ASEAN has done, project an anti-communist and anti-Beijing posture. And in this endeavour they were reinforced by 'shelter under the American umbrella' (Jorgensen-Dahl 1982: 100–1). As recently as 1999–2000, scholars scrutinizing the international political economy of ASEAN within the rubric of the 'Asia Pacific' were still aligning themselves to this line of legitimizing hegemonic underpinnings of regionalism (Gills 2000).

At this point, it may seem premature to terminate the literature survey of Southeast Asian international relations within the straightjacket of realism. But this is done to allow the reader to consider the revelation of a Gramscian hegemony. As Acharya and Buzan point out in their introduction, once realism becomes universalizeable for the non-West, mainstream research stops interrogating alternatives. This hegemony is evident in Table 6.1 where even the miniscule 9.5 per cent of theoretical contributions to the mainstream journal *Contemporary Southeast Asia* largely track Western debates using realism as an implied standard. This sketch of the hegemony of modernization-realism can only be completed within the next subsection following closely in the tow of the Western framing of modernization.

### **Reproducing restrictions: Southeast Asians on the international relations of modernization**

Scholarship as diverse as the earlier mentioned Furnivall, Fifield, Leifer, Brecher and Colbert, and Southeast Asians such as Noordin Sopiee, Kernial Sandhu, M. Rajendran, Kusuma Snitwongse, Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Dewi Fortuna Anwar and Chia Siow Yue share one common approach to the study of the relations between states in the region. It is research for problem-solving purposes. It assumes that in every issue in international politics, there exist mechanics that can be scientifically comprehended as a practical step towards resolving them. These efforts covering six decades have mostly fallen short of theory-building. The simple reason is their complicity in the hegemonic frame of practical modernization-realism. Conversely, it might be said that Western modernization imbues its Asian subjects with a sense of redundancy in pursuing 'impractical' theory. Table 6.1 reveals the extent of this tendency within *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Within the already marginal percentage of theoretical contributions, less than half of them can be labelled as non-Westerners writing theory. Understandably, deeper investigation needs to be conducted as to whether most of these theoretical contributions exist 'thinly' as pre-theorizing, or 'thick' theorizing. But this question is superfluous here. The overwhelming 90.5 per cent of issue and area studies confirms itself as 'mainstream'. Included among the contributors to this non-theoretical mainstream are the Southeast Asian scholars sampled in this section. Quite evidently they have chosen to follow in the wake of others, regardless of their locations of academic domicile.

*Table 6.1* Survey of Southeast Asia-related international relations ‘theory’ and issue/area studies’ coverage in Contemporary Southeast Asia 1979–2005

<i>Year</i>	<i>Volume/ issue numbers</i>	<i>Classification as pure area/ issue studies*</i>	<i>Classification as theory**(themes)</i>	<i>Classification of theory contributors as Western (W) and non-Western (NW)***</i>
1979	1/1–4	14	2 (modernization/ developmental foreign policy; neo-Marxist dependency; regionalism)	NW: F.E. Marcos, J.V. Abueva
1980–1	2/1–4	17	2 (cultural regionalism; modernization/ developmental foreign policy; neo-Marxist dependency)	W: G.W. Gong; NW: L.C. Chong
1981–2	3/1–4	18	2 (neo-Marxist dependency; balance of power)	NW: L.C. Chong, J. J. Lim
1982–3	4/1–4	23	0	Nil
1983–4	5/1–4	14	0	Nil
1984–5	6/1–4	9	0	Nil
1985–6	7/1–4	9	2 (comparative foreign policy; pedagogy in international relations)	W: J. Goldstein; NW: K.U. Menon
1986–7	8/1–4	13	1 (foreign policy makers’ belief system)	NW: Z.H. Ahmad
1987–8	9/1–4	18	0	Nil
1988–9	10/1–4	15	1 (regional security complex)	W: B. Buzan
1989–90	11/1–4	17	0	Nil
1990–1	12/1–4	16	0	Nil
1991–2	13/1–4	21	0	Nil
1992–3	14/1–4	15	1 (national security: linkages between growth, democracy and peace)	W: S. Chan
1993–4	15/1–4	14	1 (foreign-domestic two- level analysis)	W: Z. Abuza
1994–5	16/1–4	19	1 (political economy of subregionalism)	W: D.E. Weatherbee
1995–6	17/1–4	18	1 (debating neorealism against neoliberalism)	W: Z. Abuza

Table 6.1 (continued)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Volume/ issue numbers</i>	<i>Classification as pure area/ issue studies*</i>	<i>Classification as theory** (themes)</i>	<i>Classification of theory contributors as Western (W) and non-Western (NW)***</i>
1996–7	18/1–4	12	4 (foreign policy makers' belief system; culture in international relations; testing democratic peace; hegemonic stability theory)	W: R. Foot, L. R. Rosenberger, B. Catley; NW: M.J. Hassan
1997–8	19/1–4	15	3 (preventive diplomacy; foreign policy process)	W: Z. Abuza; NW: S.S.C. Tay and O. Talib
1998	20/1–3	9	2 (realism; cooperative security; historical sociology)	W: P.V. Ness, P.W. Preston
1999	21/1–3	15	3 (realism v. liberalism institutionalism; foreign-domestic two-level analysis; comparative international political economy)	W: E. Solingen, J. Ravenhill; NW: A. Acharya
2000	22/1–3	18	2 (historical sociology; non-state actorness in informal diplomacy)	W: P.W. Preston; P.P. Lizee
2001	23/1–3	14	3 (taxonomy of foreign economic policies via case study; balance of power contribution from ASEAN; pre-theorizing contingent security and shared sovereignty via case studies)	W: C.M. Dent, R. Emmers, S.M. Makinda
2002	24/1–3	15	4 (realism, liberalism compared with constructivism via case study; liberal institutionalism; human security)	W: C.M. Dent, R. Huisken, P.P. Lizee; NW: N.V. Tung
2003	25/1–3	16	2 ('ASEAN Way' and international regimes; pre-theory via empirically driven comparative regionalism)	W: M. Beeson; NW: H. Katsumata

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Year	Volume/ issue numbers	Classification as pure area/ issue studies*	Classification as theory** (themes)	Classification of theory contributors as Western (W) and non-Western (NW)***
2004	26/1–3	16	2 (bandwagoning logic in balance of power; securitization approach to multilateralism)	W: S. Tow, J.F. Bradford
2005	27/1–3	17	5 (ASEAN Regional Forum as constructivist confidence-building; testing Chinese foreign policy against neoliberalism; foreign policy strategy: hedging and balancing; pre- theorizing unconventional diplomacies; pre-theorizing a popular culture approach to regionalism)	W: D. Heller, A. Liebman, D. Roy; NW: S.S. Tan, N.K. Otmazgin
TOTAL		417 (90.5%)	44 (9.5%)	Western: 29; Non-Western: 15

\* This is defined by the following substantive focus in the content of the article: explaining and associating policy change with names of political personalities; narrating country-specific and institutional histories; exploring bilateral issues e.g. Sino-Indonesian or US-Philippine or Sino-Vietnamese; inquiring territorial disputes.

\*\* This is defined by the following themes inspired by Acharya and Buzan's introduction: explicit domestic-foreign distinctions at analytical levels; realism, liberalism, neo-Marxism and constructivism as vehicles; conceptual comparative regionalism and political economy; foreign policy theorising; historical sociology; securitisation; theory building from the empirical; conceptually-informed inquiry; pedagogy in International Relations.

\*\*\* According to academic domicile (i.e. by university or research institute) at the time of publication. Counting is on the basis of the number of contributions, and this takes into account those by repeat authors.

Leifer's writings advocating appreciation of the uniqueness of 'the new states' of the region is representative of the Western lead posited by modernization-realism. It is quite typical in Leifer's approach that modernization demands *order* be defined before *international security* can possess meaning for new states. In a 1975 diagnosis of the security of Southeast Asia, he argued that

the fundamental problems of Southeast Asia are essentially internal and arise from the very composition of some states. Internal tensions which are a product of ethnic conflicts and economic deprivation may be aggravated by actions across common borders but they are not likely to be decisive in themselves.

Security in the region 'rests on the ability of Southeast Asian states to put their political houses in order' (Leifer 1975: 26–7). He returned time and again to this theme in later works on both ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) (Leifer 1989; 1996).

Not surprisingly most think tanks in the region, which are invariably government-linked to be able to afford regular research publishing under their labels, adopt the order-consolidation model in research agendas. Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) has clearly taken Leifer's agenda to heart, and it declares on its website that 'its programmes are directed towards five central areas of national interest: (i) Defence, Security and Foreign Affairs; (ii) National and International Economic Affairs; (iii) Strategies for Nation-Building and National Unity; (iv) Policies on Energy and Natural Resources; (v) Science, Technology and Industry.' (ISIS Malaysia 2005). It is not surprising that its late chairman, Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, was supervised by Leifer for his doctoral research. In one of his more prominent works analysing the evolution of 'political unification in the Malaysia region', Sopiee tended to assign causation according to historically specific trends. The emergence of the new state of Singapore in 1965 was described as a series of conflict resolution phases beginning with 'depoliticizing contentious issues' between Malay and Singaporean elites, and ending with 'eviction' (Sopiee 1974: 227–9). This realist vein obviated any need for theorizing the partial fragmentation of Malaysia. Kernial Sandhu, a director of the Singapore-based Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), wrote in the preface of the first edition of the *ASEAN Reader* that it was quite irrelevant to comparatively assess ASEAN's progress with European models 'because ASEAN was not founded to promote economic co-operation or political integration à la European Community, or any other similar organization, but rather to promote *stability* and *security*' (Sandhu 1992). He went on to deny any possibility of producing an equivalent of a Jean Monnet or EC Chairman Jacques Delors, nor even an 'ASEAN Single Market'. Predictably, this foreclosed theoretical inquiry into comparative regionalism, or security community. Yet ironically, current initiatives towards implementing an ASEAN Charter, strengthening the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and fostering community might yet beckon the need for theorizing from other regional experiences.

M. Rajendran's (1985) explanation for ASEAN's shift to collective action between 1975 and 1979 is similarly biased towards the area-specific in its outlook. Indigenous causes and given geopolitical traits are stretched to account for ASEAN's difference from Western models of non-realist regionalism. Vietnam and China are depicted as neorealist powers in a local reproduction of the Cold War. ASEAN's concerted external power projection, albeit of the purely diplomatic kind, is dependent upon ASEAN states containing intramural pressures to go their separate ways on unresolved ethnic, economic and territorial rivalries. Interestingly, he observes that ASEAN can sustain its cohesion only if it draws inspiration from the Haas-Schmitter model of neofunctional integration characterized by the then-European Economic Community: the momentum towards institutionalization of joint decision-making, incrementalism, 'the spill-over effect' of cooperation in



low politics and the commitment to time frames in attaining objectives (Rajendran 1985: 12). Paradoxically, Rajendran's reflections on theory loiter only as far as the conclusion to the introductory chapter, while in the course of performing a literature survey of existing work on regionalism theory. His closing chapter tacks his arguments firmly to the problem-solving orthodoxy and declares ASEAN's future prospects to lie in practical intramural conflict management.

Snitwongse and Paribatra's (1987) edited volume treating the issue of *Durable Stability in Southeast Asia* as a simultaneously domestic and international problem fares little better than country-specific navel-gazing under the rubric of modernization-realism. The editor's introduction conceded ground completely to Lucian Pye's pronouncement that 'the common element in Asia is that it is a continent in pursuit of economic growth, national power, and all that can be lumped under the label of modernisation' (quoted in Snitwongse and Samudavanija 1987: 23). Apart from Walker Connor's single chapter on the cross-border implications of ethnonationalism, the rest of the contributors deliver country studies that ignore theoretical insights from either comparative politics or international relations. For instance, Carolina Hernandez's chapter on the Philippines ended with journalistic speculation: 'whether the Aquino government will be able to rise to the demands of social change remains an open question one year after the People Power Revolution' (Hernandez 1987: 165).

Another visible characteristic of mainstream indigenous scholarship is the indulgence in 'the small picture' as the genesis of understanding. One might characterize this as the pursuit of local truth at the expense of universal wisdom. As has been alluded to earlier, in relation to the aspirations of think tanks such as ISIS Malaysia and ISEAS, comprehending one's national policy evolution appears as professionally obsessive as the allergy towards theory imported from the West. Ironically, by persisting with the search for local truth, one is adhering to the localized modernization-realist project of a *Leiferesque* pattern. Dewi Fortuna Anwar's study of *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism* (1994/7) exhibits these tendencies despite being one of the more lucid works on Indonesia's foreign relations. While acknowledging overt intellectual alignment with Leifer, McCloud and Simon as Western scholars presenting relevant analyses on the subject, Anwar endeavours to

answer questions relating to particular problems of Indonesia's membership and role in ASEAN, which had not been covered by the Institute [for National and Cultural Studies (Jakarta)]'s annual projects, since they dealt mostly with more general aspects of the association. This work particularly focuses on the perceptions of Indonesian policy-makers and political elite as a whole regarding the most important functions of ASEAN for the country and Indonesia's proper role in the association.

(Anwar 1997: 3-4)

Anwar's study ends up as a diplomatic history supplying a train of evidence for pre-theory suggested by the Western scholars she had cited approvingly. In the

process, she had signalled a professional desire to re-narrate Indonesia's political position as the anchor of ASEAN's modernizing form but little else. There was no attempt to connect with any established literatures on images and misperceptions in international relations (Jervis 1989).

Indigenous studies of regional political economy have also not transcended the obsession with explaining area specificities and political distinctiveness over insights from theory. ASEAN states are approvingly micro-analysed as embracing foreign direct investment (FDI) for export-oriented development even though the quality and quantity of FDI flows have clearly been uneven from 1965 through 1997 (Chia 1997). Meanwhile the proliferation of growth triangles are analysed with undeclared expectations that these would ultimately duplicate subregional developmental zones existing in the European Union and North American Free Trade Area (Toh and Low 1993). Interestingly, globalization 'guru' Kenichi Ohmae (1995) has also categorized ASEAN's growth triangles as examples of 'region states' abetting the consolidation of consumption-friendly capitalist modernity. Similarly, the AFTA project has been touted as the region's answer to post-Cold War trade liberalization frenzy, and yet one that has progressed haltingly with several hedging strategies pursued by member states (Ariff *et al.* 1996; Ariff 1997). These afflictions of trade diversion and zero-sum FDI flows within a south-south context could have been considerably enlightened by reference to literatures published since the 1960s on theories of comparative regionalism by both Western and non-Western scholars who had adopted leftist perspectives to underscore problems in Third World economic regionalism.

Modernization-realism as a self-prescriptive discourse unto itself is perhaps not problematic if one assumes the world of practitioner politics has adopted what it regards as the pragmatic choice for the welfare of populations and their elites. But the value of theory transcends practitioner politics. It offers clarification and clusters complexity into ontological knowledge. It also supplies critiques, enabling reflective thought. It is on this level that 'young scholars' criticize their 'Asian elders' for complicity in modernization. To focus largely upon the micro-picture, attuned to the conventional wisdom of the IMF, World Bank and the G8, risks blindly translating 'modernization as dominant solution' into modernization as social scientific closure. The social science world is reduced to the legitimating agent of practitioner politics. Asian scholars resume the role of subaltern if they surrender interest in theorizing to those who prescribe development as monoculture. The master of theory is the controller of originality in Gramscian hegemony. That mainstream Southeast Asian indigenous scholarship has deluded itself within the discourse of modernization-realism is clearly evident in the contributions to the document *A New ASEAN in a New Millennium*, which was launched at the first ASEAN People's Assembly in 2000. Contributor after contributor inveighed against ASEAN's inadequacies in dealing with economic interdependence, human insecurities, environmental pollution and poverty. Few offered 'fresh' Asian ideas. Most pointed out that "intervention" could be done in a more acceptable way' (Wanandi 2000: 31) or sought to establish 'a community of caring societies' (Hernandez 2000: 117). How different is this from Ernst Haas' neofunctionalism

or Karl Deutsch's transactionalism? A straightforward reading of both Haas and Deutsch would lead to the conclusion that modernization produces the transnational spillover that leads towards Atlanticist models of international integration. Honest theoretical scholarship needs to draw attention to the Westernizing implications of the train of modernization for adherents of ASEAN/Asian values.

### **Dissidents within modernization-realism: transitional and hybrid theorizing from Western and Southeast Asian scholars**

In our examination of the absence of non-Western international theory, it is necessary to also acknowledge transitional and hybrid theorizing. These may appear inconvenient analytical categories shading out from the dominant orthodoxy of modernization, but they do represent serious attempts to produce originality. By 'transitional', I am referring to samples of theorizing, or pre-theorizing as the case may be, where Western authors are aware of modernization-realism, and are attempting to establish a bridge towards a more independent framework. 'Hybrid' theorizing still borrows from Western theory, but attempts to steer clear of realism and its variant themes. The borrowing is from the West, but there exists room for pluralism practised by Asians schooled in Western theory as well as Westerners pursuing theoretical innovations. This is exemplified particularly by those scholars who have embraced constructivism, postmodernism and study aspects of non-state regionalism.

#### ***Transitional scholarship: pre-theorising through studies of local 'autonomy'***

Shading out directly from realist approaches are a crop of studies supplying specific foci upon foreign policy and conflict analysis of ASEAN as a whole. For instance, Bernard Gordon's *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia* (1966), Robert Tilman's *Southeast Asia and the Enemy Beyond: ASEAN Perceptions of External Threats* (1987) and Donald Weatherbee's *International Relations in Southeast Asia: The Struggle for Autonomy* (2005) are characterized by their attempts to apprehend the problems of interstate political modernization from the perspective of Southeast Asian political leaders. Gordon asserts that the political region of Southeast Asia existed in real terms because the region's elites made publicly clear that they shared a number of common developmental problems. Although conflict existed among them, cooperation was nevertheless attempted between neighbours. Moreover, the experience of communism ensured that the elites who were its adherents travelled constantly to communicate with their counterparts across the region (Gordon 1966: 1–3). Indeed as echoed in Girling's 1969 study, the would-be Marxist liberators of Southeast Asia perceived themselves as one brotherhood in arms. While Gordon reiterated the basic modernization problematique treated earlier in our survey, he also states his awareness that 'western legalisms and ancient empires' do not coincide to smoothly vindicate the standard

Bodinian conception of sovereignty. Unsurprisingly, the nascent presidents and prime ministers of the region had to 'impose' a Westernized notion of law on boundaries that had been vague or dictated by colonial necessity. Gordon cites the Philippine claim to North Borneo (now Sabah) as an opportunistic irritant between Kuala Lumpur and Manila; similarly, Cambodian frictions with Vietnam and Thailand were updated and 'legalised' historical disputes dating back to the twelfth century. The 1963–6 Indonesian Confrontation towards Malaysia was also a quarrel ostensibly triggered by two rival visions of modernization – Jakarta's being more leftist; while Kuala Lumpur's was more right-wing and pro-British. Gordon helpfully adds a chapter titled 'Personality in Southeast Asian Politics' which addresses the idiosyncrasies of decision-making along the path to syncretic modernization. Gordon also includes a novel section devoted to the roles played by charismatic and promiscuous elements in the lives of President Sukarno of Indonesia and Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia. This in turn contributed to the mercurial turns in these states' highly personality-centric foreign policies in the 1960s (Gordon 1966: 120–32).

In a similar vein, Robert Tilman attempted to understand the new states' threat perceptions through *their* decision-making representations of foreign policy. As Tilman put it philosophically,

According to a well-known proverb in South and Southeast Asia, 'when elephants fight it is the grass that suffers.' ... As far as the ASEAN states are concerned, my sympathies lean toward the grass, and I write from this perspective. Elephants are highly visible, frequently examined, and can usually take care of themselves. The grass, which is far more vulnerable, is also much more interesting as a subject for research.

(Tilman 1987: 6)

Tilman's study still utilizes a largely Western frame – foreign policy analysis – in scrutinizing the domestic, regional systemic and dominant systemic variables. But this, at least, represents an attempt to elaborate ASEAN decision-making from its policy-makers' perspectives. Surveying the five founding member states of ASEAN, Tilman concluded that inputs of individuals mattered but their constellations and structures differed. In Thailand and the Philippines, it was found that rapid regime turnover and adjustments to various democratic transitions meant that foreign policy makers changed hands correspondingly. These were pluralistic in nature, but also uncertain. Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore witnessed a comparatively more elitist, even monolithic, pattern of decision-making over time. This style was influenced in many probable ways by the authoritarian corporatist nature of their governments, which were generally personality-centric. Much in the same vein, Weatherbee's 2005 volume tries to fuse both Gordon's allowance for the local idiosyncratic filter of modernization-driven foreign policies with Tilman's appreciation of national elites' perceptions of being weak states encountering transnational problems and great power demands. The latter tax the weak institutions of an 'ASEAN identity [that] is not superior to national interest when it comes to

actual policy choices' (Weatherbee 2005: 19). In this light, it is also helpful that Helen Nesadurai's recent survey of research on ASEAN published in the journal *The Pacific Review* has pointed to the need to pre-theorize the contested meanings of regional community within Southeast Asia. To her, a fresh critical approach to studying the international relations of ASEAN lies in examining how non-elites try to frame regional order through non-state initiatives. (Nesadurai 2009).

***Hybrid scholarship: testing and enhancing Western theory from Southeast Asian experience from East and West***

Hybrid scholarship as I have defined it, comes closest to tracking advances in Western theorizing, while also endeavouring to diversify it. The 1990s proved to be a turning point. The contributions of Sheldon Simon and Tim Huxley seem to herald a pronounced interrogation of modernization-realism with varying degrees of ambivalence. Although Simon's early work hewed to realism, he has applied himself to the task of testing realism and neoliberalism against Southeast Asian security developments (Simon 1995). Notably, the spur was the persistence of post-Cold War ASEAN and the efflorescence of overlapping security institutions such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the ARF. Simon's conclusion was that neoliberal institutionalism accounted for increasing amounts of intraregional interaction, while realism retained the status of 'an insurance policy' through self-help defence and balancing by the US against all Asian powers. By 2002, Simon was already attempting pre-theory upon the Track II diplomatic process in the region. Simon (2002: 168–70) argued that Peter Haas' concept of transnational epistemic communities, comprising non-governmental groups and academic professionals, explained the influence of national Councils for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) upon formal policy-making in the various member-states of the ARF. Writing in 1996, Tim Huxley had also complained of realism's dominance through extra-regional scholarship. He noted that precolonial Southeast Asia's pattern of international interactions remained obscure in scholarship and might contain valuable lessons for challenging orthodoxy. Furthermore, both indigenous (Ganesan and Mahbubani) and Western scholars (Higgott, Stubbs, Mack and Evans) had begun applying terms such as 'comprehensive security' and 'Asia-Pacific economic community' that transcended a Southeast Asian region. The political economy study of the AFTA by Helen Nesadurai (2003) continues the approach broached by Simon and Huxley by juxtaposing the drivers of economic regionalism in ASEAN against the structural patterns of globalization. Like Simon, Nesadurai deploys 'economic realism' and 'liberal political economy' as frames to explore rival answers to the question of whether AFTA is a neoliberal product. These works may not have served as deep critiques of modernization-realism but they have attempted to seriously consider liberal international relations as a plausible explanation of regional dynamics.

To date, a shift to an ideational referent of inquiry into the Southeast Asian international has taken place in hybrid theorizing. Subthemes include diplomatic style, identity politics and soft power. Writing in 1989, Michael Haas postulated that a

cultural semblance of an 'Asian Way' had evolved from the conceptual foundations of fledgling pan-Asian interstate conferencing in the late 1940s and 1950s. This predated ASEAN in utilizing Confucius, Buddha and Mohammed in rationalizing conflict mitigation without 'external power' intervention. Michael Antolik (1990) has, however, dubbed this the 'diplomacy of accommodation' while Alan Chong (2004) has elaborated the 'Asian way' as soft power for Singaporean foreign policy. Jürgen Haacke (2003) attempted instead to study ASEAN's intraregional *modus operandi* as a 'diplomatic and security culture' subject to the contingencies of observance and rejection by member states and dialogue partners. Haacke's conclusions suggest that the 'ASEAN Way' does not possess permanence about it. These strands imply that if Asian international theory can be burnished, it has to be read out from practice and its irregularities.

Amitav Acharya (2000; 2001; 2004; 2006) has taken this stream of research furthest in his constructivist exploration of ASEAN as a distinct security community with an 'ASEAN Way' of diplomacy. Acharya views 'ASEAN regionalism as a process of interaction and socialisation and focuses on the norms which underpin this process' (2001: 6). Recognizing ASEAN's viability as a manifestation of regional stability is possible if one apprehends that 'the organisation's approach to regionalism has been geared to inducing cooperative behaviour from its members through socialisation, rather than "constraining" uncooperative behaviour through sanctions' (Acharya 2001: 8). This borrows from Deutsch's concept of a security community whereby a group of states attain habits of community through formal and informal institutionalization of assurances of 'peaceful change' with reasonable certainty over a sustained length of time. For Acharya (2001: 36–7), constructivism enhances the explanatory value of 'community' if one considers how structure and agency are co-constituted within ASEAN. Whenever an ASEAN member practices in the presence of another member state, or an extramural power, a specific trait of 'the ASEAN Way' and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the identity of both the member and its collective are reaffirmed. Through such socialization, ASEAN states have conveniently shelved intractable border disputes indefinitely, papered over differences in implementing the neutralization of the region from external power bases, and gone on to marshal diplomatic defiance against Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978–91. In the post-Cold War era, ASEAN's norms have nevertheless been tested and frayed over issues such as membership expansion, non-interference in matters of political economy, and human rights and democratization debates. Ultimately, Acharya's study restates the question of strategic identity politics for the region: can ASEAN remain relevant to the times by adhering to a vague *modus operandi* such as 'the ASEAN Way'? (Acharya 2001: 208).

It appears that identity-construction is being taken up seriously in other recent thematic literature as well, in which it is argued that ASEAN's achievement cannot be compared with the increasingly troubled liberal integration model of the EU. Instead, ASEAN's normative dimension ought to be acknowledged for erecting not only a minimalist pacific community on the intergovernmental level, but also transnational confidence-building epistemic communities that have also to deal

with both the social fallout of economic globalization and transregional Islamic radicalism (Bellamy 2004; Stubbs 2004). Additionally, both Caballero-Anthony (2005) and Tan (2005a; 2007) have recommended that future scholars ought to evaluate regionalism 'beyond the ASEAN Way' by supplementing analyses with the complexities of fostering sub-elite cohesion through 'Track Two' non-official diplomacies and ASEAN People's Assembly sessions. Donald Emmerson (2005) has argued that the Asian financial crisis and war on terror have supplied useful 'shocks' for reiterating both insecurity-related realism, as well as its constructivist rival. Tan See Seng has gone further in his postmodern reading of Leifer's scholarship to suggest that progress means 'restoring a respect for practice in history' (2005b:75). Indeed, indigenous or outsiders' pre-theorizing from whichever direction would be welcome so long as they exhibit a dialogical imagination 'inviting reality to confront us, at times brusquely so – [only then] can we avoid, where possible, the unreflective objectification and reification of our claims' (Tan 2005b: 79). If this dialogical imagination and respect for historical diplomatic practices are regarded constructively as a direction for amplifying non-Western theory, future scholars must not overlook historical accounts of the traditional international relations of the region for purposes of pre-theorizing.

### **The difficult road ahead: initiating originality, pre-theorizing regional states and historians' contribution**

To dilute the Gramscian hegemony of modernization-realism, one might look theoretically to the organic intellectual (Gramsci 2000: 50–1). As the preceding surveys have indicated, this is impossible in a pristine manner. Modernization's scholarly progeny cannot deny their Western roots completely. Transitional and hybrid scholarship represent substantive efforts in democratizing theoretical debates about international relations. What might reasonably be interpreted towards greater originality might lie in two overlapping areas: the ideas of nationalists of the soil and the non-Westphalian narratives of the traditional proto-state.

Writing original Southeast Asian international theory via nationalist leaders' pronouncements is tantamount to developing a political theory approach. This is promising in originality in terms of interpreting modernization through specifically local perspectives. Indonesia's Sukarno could for instance be read for his philosophical endeavours to bridge nationalism with internationalism. He has, for instance, declared that 'the Nationalist who is not a chauvinist, can do no other, but must, without fail, reject all narrow-minded ideas of exclusivism' (Sukarno 1966: 5). Myanmar nationalist Aung San has also added his voice to those advocating a principled nationalism that can befriend great powers on the basis of sincere cooperation rather than power hierarchy. Until the advent of praetorian politics dimmed its internationalism, Burma/Myanmar even offered political discourse a potential philosophy of interstate neutralism. In a comparable way, Filipino Jose Rizal and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew offer variations upon the theme of embracing Western scientism in navigating interdependence while remaining true to Asian values. This task of philosophical scholarship is not hagiographic but serves to interrogate these

texts for Asian originality that can be potentially universalizeable on the subject of development (Chong 2008).

On the other hand, the traditional Southeast Asian polity offers a radical potential for imagining international relations without Westphalian sovereignty if historians' scholarship can be admitted to the international relations genre. Acharya (2000) has drawn attention to several possibilities of imagining Southeast Asian political community through patterns of its distant past. One starting point is the notion of the non-Westphalian proto-state. Clifford Geertz's 1980 work contributes the idea of the 'theatre state' based upon nineteenth century Balinese ideas of the public dramatization of elite pride and cultured status. The loyalty of the non-elites was earned through awe instead of sheer force. Family ties, patronage and other cognitive kinship spread authority spatially. Drawing upon archaeological analyses of royalty in Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines, Oliver Wolters generalized that traditional Southeast Asian political relations were comprised initially of patterns of kinship loyalty devoted to 'big men' who ascended to pedestals of total veneration among their fellow humanity by demonstrating spiritual merit and other godly capabilities (Wolters 1999: 18–19). The leader-follower relationship would be articulated in terms of the latter's need to be associated with a 'god-king', or '*devaraja*' in the Cambodian parlance of the ninth century, in order to gain favour with God through his designated representatives on earth. Kingdoms were defined by clusters of declared allegiances rather than territories. Within this system, 'big men' were distinguished in a hierarchy of kings, allies and vassals that were fluid within circles of governance called 'mandalas'. The latter was a Sanskrit term borrowed ostensibly from Indic civilization with strong Buddhist overtones. As Wolters described it, it was unstable and shifted 'in concertina-like fashion. Each one contained several tributary rulers, some of whom would repudiate their vassal status when the opportunity arose and try to build up their own networks of vassals' (1999: 28). If embassies were to be received, only a commonly recognized mandala overlord would have the authority to receive them and despatch reciprocal missions. As Wolters explained, a mandala could cover little more than all the districts on an island, or at the other extreme, encompass peoples and territories beyond the seas and mountains. In sum, the mandala was hardly contiguous with present-day sovereign states (Wolters 1999: 28). To capture this fluidity of boundaries, Victor Lieberman (2003: 31–3) interpreting the work of Stanley Tambiah (1976) prefers the alternative term 'solar polity'. The analogy being that 'insofar as each planet had its own satellite moons, its gravitational system replicated in decreasing scale the structure of the solar system as a whole'. Mapping this onto the subject of the *devaraja*, 'the farthest planets [are] ruled by hereditary tributaries; less distant realms, by powerful local families or relatives of the High King' (Lieberman 2003: 33).

If traditional polities in Southeast Asia are proto-states based primarily on control of people rather than territory, there are immense possibilities for original pre-theorizing of an indigenous model of international relations based upon lateral contests for non-territorial loyalties. Timothy Barnard has found records from Dutch and Malay sources of the period between 1674 and 1827 reveal a



'chaotic', 'piratical', or what Barnard (2003: 5) terms 'kacu' (mixed/confused) political relations, enveloping the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. If one adopts Barnard's assumption that his study is representative of the late traditional Malay world, the mandala concept would thus be seen as being duplicated throughout a large swathe of maritime Southeast Asia as well. This is in spite of the stronger imported Islamic influence upon these parts. Barnard's case study focused on the capricious politics of trade and administrative control practised by three equally matched 'great' powers of that subregion: the *Minangkabau* rulers of upriver territories in Sumatra, the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which had by then forcibly replaced the Portuguese at the port city of Melaka (Malacca) and the Johor Sultanate occupying much of the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. With the exception of the Dutch as moderns, the other local contenders manufactured legends and various local scriptures in order to attract the mass loyalty of the people to their charismatic rulers. Additionally, James Scott's (1985) work on everyday forms of peasant resistance might supplement Barnard's work with a 'non-elite' comprehension of the spatial shifting of loyalties as a determining factor of the strength and weakness of Southeast Asian polities involved in cross-border irredentist and insurgent claims.

In concluding this article, one might note that the road to originality in non-Western theorizing is a difficult trek in terms of defining the alternative to Western modernization. If we dissect the latter compound into its 'western' and 'modernization' elements, the non-Western international relations of Southeast Asia are by definition nonexistent because they are rarely free of Western influence. Moreover, scholarship is inseparable from the modern conditions of universities and think tanks in a developmental state. Duncan McCargo has starkly commented that the choices for indigenous Southeast Asianists lie in terms of pragmatic service to authority, idealistic independence and the academic-cum-activist for change (McCargo 2006: 111–13). Nevertheless, if one takes a complex view of Gramscian counter-hegemony, the organic intellectual can encompass our aforementioned categories of transitional and hybrid scholarship. Incrementally, modernization will lose its purchase on scholars from both East and West in the face of earnest theoretical inquiry. Any strong distinction between Western scholars and non-Western scholars, as Acharya and Buzan have argued in their introduction to this volume, is controversial, and one might add, irrelevant to serious theoretical departures. In surveying a handful of possibilities for non-Western international pre-theory, via the work of historians, the appellations of Western and non-Western lose some more credibility. To recover the past, via the 'theatre state', 'mandala state' or the 'solar polity', one will have to rely on pre-existing historical treatises. Getting resident Southeast Asians to reinvent the wheel is pedantic, unless a revisionist precolonial history is possible.

In the final analysis, the task of the theorist in Southeast Asian international relations is to contribute to the democratization of the wider discipline.<sup>3</sup> By attempting theory 'from here', one is attempting the universalization of local concepts and practices. By attempting to locate an indigenous contribution, one is also positively predisposed to the constructivist enterprise in mainstream and Western international

relations. As Alexander Wendt (1999: 371) put it, constructivists perform well in 'reclaim[ing] power and interest from materialism by showing how their content and meaning are constituted by ideas and culture'. In this regard, non-Western theorizing on and from Southeast Asia may serve the cause of democratizing the discipline of IR by calling attention to the roles of ideational forces, the possibility of Southeast Asian agency and ultimately community among Asian states. It would not be surprising if scholars find similar echoes in the cases of China and India in their intellectual quest for another golden age in the next century.

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## Notes

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- 2 Even though the nascent state of Timor Leste is potentially the eleventh member of the Southeast Asian political region, it is excluded from this analysis since it does not exert any significant analytical weight in the existing academic literature on Southeast Asia. In fact, some of the most recent writings on that country reproduce the modernization-realism frame which this article traces and criticizes. Refer to the literature survey by Weatherbee (2004), as well as Hill and Saldanha (2001) and Gunn and Huang (2006).
- 3 This analysis is shared by Ariel Heryanto (2002) in his wider inquiry into the status of indigenous Southeast Asianists.

## 7 Perceiving Indonesian approaches to international relations theory<sup>1</sup>

*Leonard C. Sebastian and  
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The study of international relations remains a reflection of a discipline that was self-consciously centred on North America and, to a lesser degree, the UK and Western Europe. The issue of whether international relations remains 'an American social science' or an international discipline and the implications of one's answer to that question is becoming more critical as we seek to understand how to not only exit our current discontents but to better comprehend why we have done what we have done, and why we are where we are. International changes, whether labelled 'the end of the Cold War', 'New World Order' or the 'War on Terror', like other less significant events in the past have introduced a large measure of either disarray (if one was previously content) or effervescence (if one was not).

Yet, what cannot be denied is the fact that there now exists greater possibility for theoretical innovation in the field in method, theory or perspective – and the likelihood that these innovations or insights may help not only to shape the field of study, but may have a practical impact on how people act and think. The field of international relations is after all a comparatively young one, which crystallized as part of the social sciences only during the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, how we interpret the history of the field and Asia's place in it will influence the future shape of the discipline itself, and our understanding of our collective evolution is one determinant of our current direction. Comprehending the invention of our traditions may be both illuminating and influential. As prospects improve for international relations that are fully international in the scope of its contributors, the broadening of the disciplinary narrative will become more necessary than ever. In this regard, Indonesia may provide a useful exploratory study into non-Western approaches to international theory that could be both innovative and emancipatory.

What is Indonesia's self-image and what are the consequences of this self-image? In the case of Indonesia we encounter an archipelagic nation-state that constitutes the islands that were part of the Dutch East Indies. While the Javanese can be regarded as being politically dominant in the Indonesian state today, the nation was conceived as a multi-ethnic one, with each ethnic group having its own distinctiveness and geographical domain within the national community. Unlike the situation in Malaysia, for instance, most of these ethnic groups enjoy the similar status of being the native population of the nation. The Indonesian process of nation-building, therefore, involves the integration of multiple ethnic groups and

regions into a shared national identity. Such a national identity was the project of two authoritarian leaders, Sukarno and Suharto, who sought a centralized model based on cooptation and if necessary coercion to construct an 'imagined community' based on *Pancasila* norms within unitary state structure.

Since the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, Indonesia's identity is in flux, being shaped by the forces of *reformasi* (reformation), democratization and decentralization. Indeed it is this very issue of shifting identity politics in the post-Suharto era which having reawakened primordial sentiments in Indonesia now requires a domestic structure approach allowing greater scope to analyse the preferences or identities of the actors studied. Realism and neoliberal institutionalism has rarely been used to good effect to examine the phenomenon of nationalism or for that matter ethnic conflict within states. The approach adopted in this chapter does not argue that the past can be a basis for the present, but that a distinctive Indonesian international relations tradition exists which can become the source of inspiration for alternative ideas about international order. In the open plural environment that now exists in Indonesia due to democratization, there are multiple identities within Indonesia's diverse polity that may shape international relations thinking and it may be useful to investigate the content of these identities and speculate how their worldviews contribute to a distinctive Indonesian approach to international relations theory.

## **Indonesia and the study of international relations**

The strategic perceptions of Indonesia stress integration and unity of regions in its sprawling geopolitical domain. Indonesia does not appear to be primarily concerned with military threats from outside to this geopolitical domain. The exception, as we will discuss later, is when the sphere of power of a Javanese/Indonesian ruler merges into the perimeter of his neighbour's. Indonesia though would be concerned with outside powers using ideological or economic means to encourage one of its outlying regions to turn against its political centre in Java. A concept of comprehensive security devised by the Indonesian military involving all the regions of the nation called *ketahanan nasional*<sup>P</sup> (national resilience) had evolved to deal with such a perception of threat to the nation. Indonesia's concept of security is holistic and national resilience connotes all aspects of national life, i.e. ideology, politics, the economy, society, culture and the military. In particular, in the language of security, security and prosperity are interwoven and cannot be separated from each other. According to a statement by Suharto in 1970:

National resilience encompasses ideological resilience based on a nation's own identity which receives the full support of the entire nation, economic resilience capable of meeting the nation's own basic needs, social resilience which ensures the feeling of solidarity and harmony among the peoples, and an appropriate military resilience to face aggression from outside. Without national resilience we shall always be afraid.

(Anwar in Alagappa 1998: 477)



In mentioning the Javanese it is important to stress their centrality as an ethnic group within Indonesia. Their influence depends not only on numerical superiority but to a certain extent on the potency of their culture. In significant ways, Indonesian 'national security' is understood in Javanese terms. The state itself, in accordance with the old Indian/Javanese mandala concept of polity, is defined by its centre, not its periphery. The concept of mandala according to Moertono is described as:

a complex of geopolitical relations, relating to boundaries and to contact with foreign countries. The doctrine emphasized the cult of expansion, a necessary spur to the struggle for existence, self-assertion and world domination, and the dynamic factor calculated to disturb the equilibrium of inter-state relations. A state's belligerence is in the first place directed towards its closest neighbour(s), thus making necessary the friendship of the state next to the foe, which, because of its proximity, is also a natural enemy of the foe. But if the mutual foe should be conquered, the two allies would become close neighbours, which would create a new enmity. So this circle of alignment and alienation would steadily expand until a universal peace is reached by the establishment of a world-state with a sole and supreme ruler (*charavartin*).

(Moertono 1968 cited in Anderson 1990: 44)

National sovereignty is less threatened by trespass at the borders than by assaults on the ideological order promulgated from the centre. Social disturbances at the centre are considered even more important than those occurring at a further remove. There are no political frontiers and such 'flexible, fluctuating perimeters' were a reflection of the 'Power of one ruler gradually fading into the distance and merging imperceptibly with the ascending Power of a neighbouring sovereign' (Anderson 1990: 41). Such perspectives on frontiers highlight the significant contrasts 'between the old idea of a Southeast Asian kingdom and the modern state' (Anderson 1990: 42). Here we would need to assess Javanese conceptions of power. In the Javanese worldview, the total quantum of power in the universe must be constant implying that any increase of power in a particular place means a corresponding diminution elsewhere. Since power is unstable and readily dispersible, interstate aggression becomes necessary to maintain the status quo so that a Javanese ruler's prestige is not diminished by the attraction of his neighbour's power (Anderson 1990: 44). Indonesia's neighbours are quite willing adopt such interpretations to explain Indonesian aggression in the 1960s and the invasion of East Timor in 1975. However, such perspectives also have explanatory power when analysing the willingness of Jakarta to use force in peripheral regions such as Aceh and Papua.

The product of such traditional Javanese thought is the division of the international realm into two different types of states, namely Java and Seberang (a word meaning overseas but within the local Indonesian context referring to non-Javanese groups) (Anderson 1990: 42).<sup>3</sup> In the final analysis though, the use of force is the option of last resort since a destruction of a rival power does not in any way result in any enlargement of a ruler's power, rather it results in the dispersal of a rival power,

which in turn could be absorbed by other rivals (Anderson 1990: 44). The use of force is considered a *kasar* (crude method) of subduing a rival. While the Javanese concede that 'wars are fought for truth'<sup>4</sup> there is no glorification of warfare since a decision to engage in warfare can be construed as an admission of weakness. Rather a more indirect method of absorbing a rival's power was through diplomatic pressure or other *halus* (civilized methods) like the recognition of superiority or some form of suzerainty (Anderson 1990: 44).

The 'centripetality of Javanese thinking' together with perspectives of 'graduated sovereignty' (Anderson 1990: 43) has two strategic outcomes. First, there was a need to emphasize control of populations rather than territory (Anderson 1990: 44).<sup>5</sup> Second, it is important that the power and influence of the centre are manifested in increasing social prosperity. The security of this prosperity – often identified in terms of agricultural production and economic development – becomes an essential element of national security. Indonesia's perceptions of the international community have been shaped by its past history and the internal make-up of the diverse traditions of its communities. Among those different traditions, Javanese ideas of statecraft are historically the most developed and coherent. They are also perhaps the most influential of the traditional orientations.

Both Sukarno and Suharto drew their inspiration from similar cultural traditions – a culture formed through syncretism between Hinduism and Islam (Yustinianus 2005). In the mindset of Javanese leaders, there is little to differentiate between reality and the supernatural world. Like their predecessors, Abdurrahman Wahid (Barton 2002: 38<sup>6</sup>), Megawati Soekarnoputri and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono are drawn to the practice of mysticism. All three have been seen visiting a variety of sacred sites. President Yudhoyono is said to draw inspiration from Bima, a powerful but virtuous warrior in Javanese folklore. For a Javanese leader there is the need to receive *wangsit* (divine guidance) in order to acquire political power. Such mysticism though is differentiated from *klenik* (black magic) and for Javanese leaders a spiritual avenue to getting closer to God (Yustinianus 2005). Further evidence of the marrying of cultural syncretism between Hindu and Javanese symbols could be seen in the manner in which both Sukarno and Suharto used *wayang* symbols drawn from the Indian epics the Ramayana and Mahabarata to express their ideas. Sukarno often identified himself as Bima (Legge 2003: 33) and Suharto took his inspiration from Semar. Yet despite such similarities both men chose to imbibe different identities drawn from Javanese history. Sukarno's inspiration was Kediri's King Kertanegara, and as the embodiment of national unity he identified with Gadjah Mada who was determined to unite the archipelago under the control of the Majapahit kingdom in East Java (Yustinianus 2005). Suharto, however, chose the methods commonly practiced by the *resi* (guru) during the Syailendra and Mataram kingdoms called *tapa brata kasunyatan* choosing to increase his power through communing with nature. Furthermore, Suharto was greatly influenced by the military traditions of the Mangkunegaran royalty, particularly the perspective that those who wanted to be part of the inner circle of the *kraton* (palace) were required to serve in the Mangkunegaran legion (Yustinianus 2005). Naturally there are practical reasons in the mid-1960s why Suharto rode on the coat-tails of the

military to establish his power (Jenkins 1984<sup>7</sup>). However, the desire to have military men as part of his inner circle and the establishment of the armed forces dual function or *dwifungsi* would also have been influenced by Mangunegaran military doctrine called the *Serat Tripama* first implemented by Raden Mas Said's successor, Mangkunegaran IV. The narrow role of regime maintenance prescribed for the Indonesian military by Suharto could be a direct consequence of his adherence to Mangunegaran military tradition which emphasizes three principles: *Sumantri* (referring to a knight who defends his king and people), *Kumbakarna* (representing patriotism) and *Narpati Basukara* (stressing the need for a knight to defend his king's throne as part of service to the king) (Yustinianus 2005). Even B. J. Habibie, the country's third president though not of Javanese origin closely identified with orthodox Islam and was not averse to Suharto's guidance on matters related to mysticism, which seemingly may account for why he choose not to adopt a foreign policy stance influenced by Islam.

### Indigenous sources for Indonesian IR theory

While there is still lack of effort among Indonesian IR scholars to develop an Indonesian IR theory, as we have discussed briefly, there are actually enough indigenous sources from which the scholars can theorize if they choose to do so. The two major potential sources of research can be analytical work on the political behaviour of leaders and detailed exploration of political thinking that are at least partially influenced by politico-cultural traits of the various ethnic groups inhabiting the archipelago. Such approaches are an important starting point allowing us to develop a sense of the cultural context whereby decisions are made without which our insights into strategic behaviour may be narrow and insufficiently grounded.

Indonesia is comprised of hundreds of ethnic groups and a coherent project aimed at exploring these indigenous traditions can provide useful background for significant theorizing. In the absence of such theorizing enterprises and the absence of an adequate body of literature among Indonesian scholars that draws from indigenous sources, our exploratory work emanates from a basic understanding of political cultures representing the two major clusters of ethnic groups. We may be guilty of oversimplification, but for starters let us evolve an experiment in pre-theory by analysing the politico-cultural traits of these ethnic clusters, namely, the Javanese and the outer islanders (Seberang tradition). There is pride in the greatness of the ancient Javanese and Seberang kingdoms taught in classrooms across the archipelago – admiration for Srivijaya and Majapahit, the Sultanates of Aceh and Mataram to mention the most prominent. Those who live in Seberang areas are likely to look back to Srivijaya as a golden age and the Javanese revel in the high courtly civilization they have inherited from Majapahit and Mataram. Indeed the Malay chronicles have highlighted the greatness of the fourteenth-century Javanese kingdom of Majapahit that enjoyed a brief period of 'empire-building' under Gadjah Mada though it is important to note that the power of Majapahit was conceived not only on the basis of military and political success but also on superior religious and cultural attainments. The ambiguity of power will always

be a source of contention. However, are material measures the only legitimate approach? What about the more cognitive aspects of power? (See, for example, Geertz 1983: 121–46; Milner 1982.)

### ***Javanese political culture***

Javanese political culture has been more widely explored by social scientists than the Seberang political culture. This is probably due to the fact that the Javanese are the largest Indonesian ethnic group and that theirs is one of the ancient civilizations in the world (Geertz 1960: 7<sup>8</sup>). Given their long history, the Javanese have built a culture that is complex, intricate, and rich in spiritual life. The cradle of Javanese civilization is the fertile agricultural land in central Java around the present day cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Historically, it has been an agricultural society. As in many such societies, the Javanese developed an inward-looking, insular, communitarian, status-conscious and hierarchy-minded culture (Liddle 1996: 65–6). Such cultural features are also due to the heavy influence of Hindu-Buddhism in Java, which had been the predominant beliefs of the Javanese prior to the arrival of Islam in the fifteenth century. The caste system of Hinduism created significant social differentiation and stratification, which became deeply embedded within the Javanese psyche (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 58–60). Due to its emphasis on hierarchy, the concept of Javanese leadership makes a clear distinction between *gusti* (lords)<sup>9</sup> and *kawula* (subjects) (Lubis in Crouch and Hill 1992: 297; Uhlin 1997: 52).

The idea of power in Javanese culture is rather peculiar. It runs against the common perception of power in the West. Anderson argues that for the Javanese, power is concrete and finite, and holders of power are expected to be able to demonstrate power through the possession of certain objects deemed to have supernatural powers<sup>10</sup> (Anderson 1990: 27). Power is also homogeneous. It means that there is no differentiation of types of power. It is also regarded as constant in terms of total quality. It means that an increase of one's power must happen at the expense of others. Thus, the quest for power is perceived as zero-sum. Lastly, power is detached from moral questions. It is neither good nor bad,<sup>11</sup> nor does it matter how it is achieved. What does matter is whether one has power or not (Anderson 1990: 22–3). In terms of accession to power, the Javanese believe that power is either received from inheritance or from a divine favour (*wahyu*). Such favour is believed to be bestowed upon rulers of relatively humble origins, coming to power after a period of turmoil and bloodshed (Koentjaraningrat in Ibrahim *et al.* 1985: 290; Anderson 1990: 38–9).

In the Javanese conception, power is closely associated with 'concentration' and 'oneness'. Conversely, diffusion of authority means an impurity in power, and therefore should be avoided by all power holders. Thus, for a Javanese leader, diffusion of power within the state is regarded as a sign of weakness. A Javanese leader will always strive to unite different segments of the society under his rule and try to mould different – sometimes opposing – ideas believed by different groups into a single new idea that can be accepted by all (Anderson 1990: 22–3, 28–33).

The search for harmony is the keyword in understanding Javanese social life,

including statecraft (Anderson 1990: 28–33). The Javanese have a profound ability to absorb new ideas, select parts of new ideas suitable to their way of life, merge them with the existing culture, and thus rejuvenate the old culture as well as creating a new, syncretic one. Therefore the Javanese are known to be tolerant to the ideas of others, so long as these ideas do not contradict the central assumptions of their social lives.

Another important facet of the Javanese concept of power is the idea of *pamrih*<sup>12</sup> to explain the ruler's downfall from power. A ruler is said to have *pamrih* in his leadership if he refuses or hesitates to carry out his duty to the state because of sympathy or empathy for his friends or family members. A *pamrih* is also said to exist if the ruler carries out a certain act in his personal favour (usually involving material benefits) or in the favour of his close associates or family members, or in other words corrupt and nepotistic practices (Anderson 1990: 51–3). *Pamrih* is a sign that the power of the ruler is weakening and that a change of power is imminent.

### ***Seberang political culture***

As opposed to the vastness of scholarship on Javanese political culture, the political culture of the outer islands is rather inadequately covered. It is perhaps due to the fact that, in contrast to the Javanese, there are various groups living in these islands, and they tend to be spread out all over the archipelago. A relative lack of communication among them, unlike in Java, has rendered the creation of a single civilization among these groups unimaginable. Hence, it is quite difficult to define accurately the presence of an outer islands (Seberang) political culture.

Nevertheless, there are some common qualities shared by many of these non-Javanese ethnic groups, or at least among the larger, more assertive and articulate ones. Among these groups are the Acehnese, Batak and Minangkabau of Sumatra, and the Bugis and Makassar peoples of Sulawesi, as well as the people of the Maluku islands. The people living in coastal towns in the northern parts of Java (*pesisir* Javanese) can also be classified within this group, as well as the people of Banten (the westernmost part of Java island).<sup>13</sup>

According to Koentjaraningrat, there are two categories in the socio-geographical feature of these peoples. First, the majority of these ethnic groups live on the coastal areas. This is the case of the Minangkabau, Acehnese, Buginese, Makassarese, the many groups of Maluku and the *pesisir* Javanese. Second, others of the Seberang ethnic groups live in remote interior areas. Prominent examples of this category are the Bataks, Toraja and Minahasa of Sulawesi and Dayaks of Kalimantan.<sup>14</sup>

These two categories of ethnic groups share a common feature concerning the extent of influence from Indic religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Compared to the vast Hindu-Buddhist influence in Java (and Hinduism in Bali), the presence of these two religions in the outer islands was much less prevalent (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 57–60).<sup>15</sup> As a result, social stratification did not become the main rule of the societies. While in many, if not all, of these groups there was a functional differentiation, especially the existence of the rulers and the followers, in general

the differentiation was not as complex and intricate as in the Javanese model. In many of these ethnic groups, especially in the coastal communities, the rulers were less shrouded in an aura of mysticism and secrecy, and generally were more accessible. The decision-making process in the Seberang communities was also generally more open and commoners were usually involved. The rulers frequently consulted the public for decisions regarding the societies in consultation meetings (*musyawarah*) (Sjamsuddin in Najib 1996: 40–7; Effendi in Najib 1996: 83–7; Sairin in Najib 1996: 142–6).

The socio-geographical difference between the coastal and the interior non-Javanese societies did not amount to significant differences in their worldviews about statecraft. While in the interior outer-island tribes there was a significant degree of mysticism developed around the idea of power, the lack of Indic influence rendered a relatively more relaxed social stratification. The coastal communities were traditionally engaged in commerce and seafaring activities. As travelling merchants, they tended to possess the qualities of being culturally open, direct and individualistic. This was due to the relatively small amount of time that they spent on land in their home villages, which did not enable them to contemplate or devise elaborate social customs and traditions. As a result, one's fortune was usually determined by individual rather than collective effort. Additionally, the lingua franca of the seafaring merchants in the archipelago in the sixteenth or seventeenth century was Malay. As opposed to the complex Javanese language, the Malay language was comparatively egalitarian and less stratified.<sup>16</sup> For these qualities, the Javanese have often regarded the Seberang people as '*kasar*'<sup>17</sup> (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 58; Anderson 1990: 50–1).

Compared to the Javanese, the cultures of the Seberang communities are less structured and elaborate. This is due to the small agricultural surpluses and high rate of mobility of the people (Liddle 1996: 66). In some instances, the effort to develop classes of civil servants and nobility was interrupted by the strengthening of colonial rule. Such was the case of the Bugis, where the direct rule of the Dutch colonial administration made the use of symbols of nobility decline rapidly (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 94–5).

Being maritime-based, Seberang cultures generally promote a greater sense of individuality than the agriculturally based Javanese culture. As opposed to Javanese inclusive and assimilative traits, the Seberang cultures tend to be more exclusive and rigid. The sense of 'we-they' is more prevalent in the Seberang cultures than in the Javanese one. As an illustration, a Javanese would likely approach a difference of opinion by attempting to reconcile the differences by finding a middle ground or a syncretic solution, whereas a typical Seberang person would likely approach a similar situation by recognizing the differences while maintaining each individual's position or suggesting a competition between the different ideas.

### ***Islamic influence***

The differences between the Javanese and Seberang political cultures are more apparent in the different reactions of the two cultures towards the influence of

Islam. Islam came to the archipelago in the thirteenth century, brought by merchants from southern India and Persia.<sup>18</sup> It first arrived in the archipelago in Aceh, the northern tip of Sumatra, where the first Islamic sultanate in Southeast Asia was formed, known as the Samudera Pasai. It then spread to Malacca, where a powerful sultanate dominated the busy strait separating Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. From Malacca, Islam spread to the coastal towns of Sumatra, which were under Malacca's sphere of influence. Islam was next brought to the northern coastal towns of Java, where a new sultanate of Demak was formed. During the fifteenth century, the rising Demak state challenged the power of the declining interior Javanese kingdom, Majapahit. After a series of power struggles, which involved a mix between peaceful and conformist proselytization of the local people and the use of force, Majapahit fell. In its place, a new Javanese sultanate of Mataram was established.

The next stage was the Islamization of the peoples living in the other islands of the archipelago. This was primarily conducted by the Islamic Sumatra, Malacca and Javanese sultanates. Before the arrival of European traders, Islam had become the predominant religion of the land. Its strongest foothold can be found all over Sumatra except in the interior of northern Sumatra, the whole of Java, the coastal areas of Kalimantan, all over Sulawesi except in the interior of South Sulawesi and the northern tip of the island, northern Maluku islands and western Lesser Sunda islands (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 20–2<sup>19</sup>).

However, there was a significant difference in the reception to Islam in Java from that in Seberang. Such a difference resulted in different forms of Islam being practiced in Indonesia. In Java, Islam won adherents among the people primarily due to the cultural approach taken by the Islamic proselytizers, known as the '*wali*'.<sup>20</sup> After the northern coastal towns of Java became Islamized through trading contacts with Sumatra and Malacca merchants, the effort to introduce Islam to the interior Javanese was carried out primarily by the Javanese *wali*. In an effort to convey the message of Islam to the Javanese masses, these *wali* employed the symbols, folklore, legends and rituals of the old Hindu culture, such as *wayang* and *gamelan* (Anderson 1972: 68). Such a strategy proved highly successful, and in a relatively short period of time, Java was Islamized.

The message carried by the *wali* through the conformist strategy led most Javanese to find Islam suitable to their way of life. This was aided by the fact that Islam came to Indonesia from Persia and southern India, where it had already been patrimonialized<sup>21</sup> (Anderson 1972: 68–9). Hence, in the interior of Java Islamic practices were mixed with the existing Hindu cultural attributes. In many cases, Hindu practices were more dominant than the Islamic rituals. From time to time, the Javanese would engage in Hindu ceremonies glossed over by some Arabic words said to be derived from the Qur'an. However, most Javanese would claim that they were Muslims, even though they would rarely execute the Islamic rituals as defined by the 'Five Pillars of Islam'.<sup>22</sup> The people who practice this variant of Javanese nominal Islam are known as the *abangan*.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the religious practices of the interior Javanese, signifying a balanced syncretism between animistic, Hinduistic and Islamic elements, are so different from Islam, so as to create a new religion

altogether (Geertz 1960: 5; Liddle 1996: 65; Koentjaraningrat 1975: 21, 112–19, who called this belief as '*Agama Jawi*' or '*Kejawen*'<sup>24</sup>).

In East Java, which was considered a hinterland of Java, outside of the sphere of influence of 'proper' Java but still heavily influenced by the interior Javanese values, Islam was practiced more piously. Islam in this part of Java was developed through a complex schooling system known as the *pesantren* and its followers known as the *santri*. Historically, during the height of Hindu Javanese kingdoms, religious and intellectual powers were not held by the ruling class residing in the *kraton* (palaces) in the heartland of the Javanese culture (Yogyakarta and Surakarta). Rather these powers were possessed by the *kyai* (teachers) living in the eastern coastal and interior areas of Java. As opposed to the decadent lifestyles of the urban *kraton* ruling class, the *kyai* built, taught and led a frugal lifestyle in the *pondok* (boarding schools), located mostly in the villages (Anderson 1990: 126–9; Feillard 1999: 3–5).

As in the other parts of Java, Islam was also welcomed and generally took over the social institutions in eastern Java. And as in the *kraton*, the *pondok* also embraced Islam syncretically. For the most part, the teaching styles and rituals in the *pondok* did not abandon the previous Hinduistic practices. Islamic teachings basically just glossed over the Hindu recitations. Additionally, the patrimonial worldview of the *kyai* towards power and leadership remained similar to that held by the Javanese *kraton*. But in contrast to the *kraton*, in most *pesantren* the relationship between the *kyai* and the *santri* was rather informal. Most *kyai* were relaxed and casual when they related to their *santri*. Nonetheless, this interaction was marked by the most stringent rule, namely that the *kyai* were to be respected and the *santri* were to follow the creeds laid out by the *kyai* at all times. The *santri* were also expected to protect and defend the honour and dignity of the *kyai* from outside criticism. It did not mean, however, that criticisms were not allowed to be uttered within the *pesantren*. In fact, in some *pesantren* the learning atmosphere could get very lively. But when it came to the interaction with the outside world, all *santri* were behind their *kyai* without any reservation. In essence, therefore, the presence of Islam did not alter the existing political culture and institutional power relations in Java.

Islam took the purest form in the outer islands. Due to the lack of powerful Hindu kingdoms when it entered, Islam was embraced without any major resistance. Many local rulers in Sumatra and later on in Sulawesi and Maluku perceived that Islam was the religion of the merchants. Because of the flourishing trade with Islamic Malacca, the major trading power in the region at that time, the peoples of the outer islands quickly embraced Islam in order to facilitate their businesses. They also did not have any major cultural objections to Islam. Islam seemed to fit the egalitarian lifestyle and simple social structure that these maritime trading societies have developed over centuries. Furthermore, Islam was seen as an alternative to the Hinduism then embraced by the Javanese.

When Islamic reformism entered the archipelago in the early twentieth century by way of Malaya, the Seberang peoples were the first to welcome it. Islamic reformism was then a new movement propagated by the Egyptian Muhammad



Abduh, aimed at purifying the teaching of Islam from local mystical practices. Reformist Muslims called for the return to the Qur'an and *Hadits/Sunnah Rasu*<sup>25</sup> as the sole guidance of Islamic teaching. The teaching also intended to rationalize Islam and update it to the needs of the contemporary era, through the concept of '*ijtihad*'.<sup>26</sup> Hence, it was also called 'Islamic modernism'. Again, the more straightforward Seberang peoples accepted this movement wholeheartedly because it seemed to suit their cultural traits (Anderson 1972: 69–70; Koentjaraningrat 1975: 45; Feillard 1999: 6–7; Feith and Castles: 201). Therefore, the type of Islam developed in these communities was different from the Javanese variants.

### **Political behaviour of Indonesian leaders as a source for theory**

As the world's largest Muslim nations, there is a natural inclination to consider Indonesia as a source for alternative thinking or behaviour that reflects Islamic tradition. But this has not been the case. There are three reasons why Islamic thinking and praxis on international relations have not prominently come out of Indonesia. First, as mentioned above, purist Islam grew mostly in Seberang areas, and while the Seberang have been actively involved in Indonesian politics, they have not been able to occupy national leadership positions, which have been by and large dominated by the Javanese. Hence, no distinctive Islamic praxis can be observed from the Indonesian experience. Second, in the Islamic world, Indonesia and Southeast Asians have been perceived largely as occupying marginal positions. The Middle East remains to be seen as the centre of Islamic excellence. While many Indonesians went to educational institutions in the Middle East, such as the Al Azhar in Cairo or Medina Islamic University in Saudi Arabia, there is practically no internationally renowned Islamic educational institution in Indonesia. Third and perhaps most important, the preoccupation of Islamic groups in Indonesia has traditionally been revolved around statehood and issues, that is, the state foundation (the issue of Islamic versus secular state), open political competition versus authoritarian control, and centralized rule versus regional autonomy. This fact indicates two things. First, Indonesian Muslim groups do not hold particular affinity towards the idea of global Islamic *ummah* ruled under an Islamic *khilafah*. They see Indonesia as a de facto basis for allegiance. If discussions on a global Islamic *ummah* occurred, they are usually carried out in a theological rather than political sense. Second, international relations does not occupy a major position in the list of priorities of Islamic groups. As most Indonesians view it, it is rather seen as a luxury.

So instead of Islam, the Javanese political culture seems to have dominated modern Indonesian leadership. Undoubtedly, studies on the Javanese political culture are much more explored and refined than the Seberang one. This is due to three reasons. First, the Javanese are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia. They comprise around 45 per cent of the whole Indonesian population. Second, the Javanese had a long history of civilization, which is reinforced by the presence of a number of powerful and influential kingdoms. This has enabled them to develop

their political culture. Third, the majority of modern Indonesian leaders hailed from this ethnic group. Since independence, all but one Indonesian president have hailed from Java. As such, the bureaucracy and decision-making process have been dominated by Javanese culture.

Indonesian foreign policy, during the Sukarno period but especially during the Suharto era, is a reflection of this political culture. The so-called 'ASEAN way', which stressed the consensual basis of forging and maintaining relationship among ASEAN countries was supported, if not insisted upon, by Suharto. It can be perceived as a manifestation of the Javanese conception of achieving and maintaining harmony as one of the primary goals of social life. The Javanese tended to avoid open disagreement and would naturally be inclined to attempt solving differences by having closed door discussions, away from the eyes of the general public.

This does not mean, however, that the Javanese are willing to bend backwards in order to maintain harmony. In fact, the belief that power is 'indivisible' and must be 'concentrated' required the Javanese to attempt to subdue the interests of others to those of their own. Although this does sound like typical realist argument, it carries an important difference. The Javanese would do their utmost to avoid using force as a means to coerce others into doing or becoming something they desire. They view the Western conception of 'power through the barrel of a gun' as '*kasar*', and therefore unappealing. Instead, the Javanese would attempt to use the power of 'personal charisma' to influence others. The power of 'personal influence' may sound to Western scholars as fluffy and unsubstantiated, but for Javanese leaders, it lies at the very heart of leadership. As mentioned above, the Javanese believe that one becomes a leader due to *wahyu* (divine favour), in which charisma is an integral part. A charisma-less leader is an oxymoron for Javanese (Leifer 1983<sup>27</sup>).

And in many ways during the New Order, Suharto was able to use this power of influence quite effectively. Indonesia was able to secure much of its interests during the New Order without having to undergo an expensive arms build-up. This is in stark contrast to the '*Konfrontasi*'<sup>28</sup> policy of Sukarno, which was supported in the mid-1960s by one of the most well-equipped armed forces in the developing world, but achieved practically nothing in terms of national interests.

From the Javanese viewpoint, leaders who attempt to achieve what they want by using force or threat of force except in contexts where 'wars are fought for truth' are weak leaders whose leadership is artificial and not worth respecting. The Javanese also view leaders who transform their approach from using the power of influence to resorting to violence as performing '*pamrih*'. The key is the manner in which power is exercised. Is it exercised in a self-interested manner? This shortcoming was what the Javanese saw in Sukarno. Sukarno had relied primarily on the power of his charisma during much of his presidency. He was successful in getting international recognition for the republic, and managed to persuade the federal states of Republik Indonesia Serikat (RUSI, Republic of the United States of Indonesia) to disband themselves and return to the unitary form of the Republic of Indonesia. He also successfully hosted the first Afro-Asian Conference in 1955 in Bandung, which eventually inspired mass decolonization in Asia and Africa. Despite displaying and eventually using some force during the liberation of West Irian, it was

eventually the power of diplomacy that brought the territory back to Indonesia. But the whole approach was changed during '*Konfrontasi*'. The threat of force began at the outset of the crisis and followed by the use of it. Therefore, Sukarno had committed '*pamrih*'. That being said, the use of force as part of official policy cannot be ruled out completely. But it has to be used as a last resort, and has to be grounded on a solid rationale. Leaders have to know when to use force. And if the situation dictates that they should use it, but they hesitated or decided against it, then they are also performing '*pamrih*'. One episode in the epic of Bharatayudha where the God Wisnu advised Arjuna not to hesitate in going to war with their evil brothers, the Kurawa, is often used as a learning point.

For practical purposes Indonesian leaders basically view the world as a hostile, uncertain and unsafe environment (Weinstein 1976: 128). Dutch attempts at neocolonialism in the late 1940s, tacit US support for the PRRI-Permesta regional rebellion in 1958 and the destabilizing influence of communist China through its support for the PKI in the early 1960s had reinforced the perception that Indonesia was vulnerable to practices of divide and rule carried out by stronger, foreign powers bent on exploiting and/or subjugating Indonesia for their interests. This, together with the continuing fear of dismemberment of the Indonesian nation, and the resulting emphasis on unity, political stability and the absolute sanctity of national borders, led to the promulgation of the 'archipelago principle' or *Wawasan Nusantara* – a concept of territorial and national unity which regards Indonesia as an inseparable union of land and water (*tanah-air* or homeland) first mooted in 1957. Hence, although Indonesian leaders may view the world in neorealist terms, interestingly, concepts of deterrence and security have consistently been articulated by and large through ideational and non-material strategies.

Note the language used by Sukarno addresses Indonesia's security vulnerabilities. That Sukarno consistently emphasized the theme of unity relating it to questions of domestic and international solidarity was strikingly evident in his political thought, with its emphasis on continuous revolution and self reliance (*Berdiri di-atas Kaki Sendiri* or 'standing on one's own feet') for a domestic audience imbued with revolutionary fervour from the War of Independence since the late 1940s and familiar with *gotong royong* (self-help principles) drawn from Javanese tradition where many necessary village tasks were accomplished through communal effort. At the same time, his brand of nationalism combining anti-Western connotations were motivated by a desire to brandish his credentials as a leader of the developing world. These elements were established in his thinking from the 1930s. In the 1950s, concerns over the excesses of liberal democracy and the divisions created by it drew him towards establishing a political system with a normative structure that emphasized reaching decisions based on Indonesian values of consensus (*musyawarah*) and deliberation with the aim of preserving national unity. Similar motivations were at work when in the early 1960s he devised the acronym NASAKOM to symbolize the unity of nationalism, religion and communism concerned that an Indonesian identity remained elusive. If the preservation of unity and the practical difficulty of achieving it seemed to consume his

thinking since 1957, Sukarno nevertheless sought to return to one of his favourite pre-independence themes, namely, anti-imperialism. It was clothed however in a different guise. His view of the outside world *Nekolim* (neocolonialism, colonialism and imperialism) was a 1960s variant of the anti-imperialism stance he held in the 1920s, the only difference being a worldview that saw the last vestige of colonial rule manifesting itself in the form of continuing economic domination or remaining Western spheres of influence in the developing world. Such thinking was articulated in the concept of a new struggle between new emerging forces and old established forces 'between imperialism in its new forms on the one hand and justice, equality and freedom for the long exploited peoples of the world on the other' (Legge 2003: 386–7), which was to be transformed in Sukarno's own inimitable language as concepts of NEFO and OLDEFO.<sup>29</sup> These concepts were not actually his theories of international order but could be seen as a useful reference point for Sukarno on who were his friends and foes. In this regard, the West, particularly through its support of rebels who were behind the regional rebellions of 1958 in Sumatra and Sulawesi, became his undisputed adversary. Following this line of reasoning, the Indonesian government opposed the presence of British bases in British North Borneo, Malay and Singapore as well as US bases in the Philippines. Sukarno's 'ideas were no longer attempts at a description of reality or even weapons of revolution but were a means of manipulating the immediate political environment' (Legge 2003: 389). If the 1920s version of anti-imperialism meant fighting the Dutch, then his attempt at forging unity and solidarity within the Non-Aligned Movement was geared towards highlighting the 'antithesis between wealth and poverty – the new emerging forces, said Sukarno were warning the affluent societies that they could not go on exploiting the poverty-stricken nations' (Legge 2003: 387). At the 1961 conference of non-aligned states held in Belgrade, Sukarno delivered his NEFO and OLDEFO concepts thereby establishing Indonesia at the forefront of like-minded nations by declaring a political philosophy that viewed Western economic development as evidence of continuing nineteenth-century practices of imperialism. Following Indonesia's withdrawal from the United Nations in January 1965 Sukarno had proposed a Conference of the New Emerging Forces (CONEFO), which would formally incorporate Indonesia's leading role in world non-aligned nations and provide an alternative voice on international affairs to the United Nations. This initiative proved stillborn and the fact that the conference did not take place was a reflection of Sukarno's waning status, both domestically and internationally.

This consistent theme of 'unity' and its employment in new circumstances, for instance, the need to safeguard national self-determination, national security and territorial integrity, had justified the decision to invade East Timor in 1975 and forcibly integrate the territory. Indeed, virtually the same justification and the same vocabulary as Sukarno had been employed by two very different Indonesian governments during the 1960s, and were ultimately successful in realizing Jakarta's long-standing claim to the much larger and strategically more important area of Irian Jaya, now known as Papua. As Michael Leifer explains,

both the East Timor and the Irian Jaya acquisitions, although viewed by some as representing expansionistic tendencies on Indonesia's part, actually had much more to do with a widespread and historically-based Indonesian perception of the innate vulnerability of the Republic, especially to any conjuncture between dissension and external interference.

(Leifer 1983: 174).

This last point is particularly crucial in terms of understanding Indonesia's approach to external security for it reaffirms the extent to which Indonesia is prepared to do whatever it deems necessary to safeguard its most basic concerns – in this case the security and territorial integrity of the nation itself – even at the risk of doing damage to the conduct of its foreign policy in less immediate and crucial areas. There is no doubt that the East Timor takeover had created additional complications and difficulties in Indonesia's relations with its major Western trading partners and aid donors. Equally important, the Timor invasion served to revive (in some sectors, at least) the unfortunate spectrum of an Indonesia bent on further expansion or at least on asserting its primacy and dominance as the largest and most populous state in the region. As a consequence of concerns that these suspicions and fears persist among Indonesia's neighbours, the Indonesian response since 1975 has been to greatly expand bilateral contacts as well as to step up regional diplomacy. These moves would benefit Indonesia in two ways. First, they would provide a platform to build an understanding and appreciation of Indonesia's positions on policy in regions within the country prone to succession. Second, they would bring to the forefront an effective non-military approach to resolving this perennial problem of territorial vulnerability without raising the spectre of Indonesian expansionism.

With tensions in the Southeast Asian region increasing following the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea (Cambodia), there was an effort to broaden Indonesia's comprehensive security doctrine or the doctrine of National Resilience (*Ketahanan Nasional*) to a concept of Regional Resilience. The fundamental reason for the need of a strong national and regional resilience is due to the fact that political stability is indivisible among the ASEAN states. Political instability in any one state would have repercussions for all other states since such political instability often spills over the state's boundary. Hence, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord signed by the five heads of government in 1976 stated that 'the stability of each member state and of the ASEAN region is an essential contribution to international peace and security. Each member resolves to eliminate threats posed by subversion to its stability, thus strengthening national and ASEAN resilience' (ASEAN Secretariat 1978: 111).

The main concern was, of course, internal instabilities with external implications, that is, communist subversion (supported either by the People's Republic of China or the Soviet Union) and radical Islamic extremism (supported by certain Middle East countries). The history of post-independence Indonesia is rife with incidences that indicate that internal instabilities often provide the incentive for external intervention, which in turn would aggravate the situation. The lack of a credible defence force to serve as a deterrent for external intervention has

led to the need to develop effective non-material strategies to ensure, first, that Indonesia's national integrity is not compromised, and second, that a favourable regional security environment is maintained. What is important to remember is that strategic doctrines like *Wawasan Nusantara* (Regional Resilience) do not emerge from a void. They are a product of culturally informed strategic practices that, while recognizing neorealism's imperative for need for survival in an anarchical material environment, conceive of a *realpolitik* practice in graduated terms. These terms employ both material and ideational strategies where calculations are based on whether or not distributions of power are advantageous or disadvantageous and the degree to which valuable national resources can be mobilized against the emergence of a predator state altering the social structure of state interaction in the region.

### **Study of international relations in Indonesia**

During the Dutch colonial period, universities only offered courses on selected subjects, mostly on non-political or non-sociological topics such as technology, medicine or law. These fields of study were deemed as useful to fulfil the professional posts by indigenous Indonesians needed by the colonial government in managing and consolidating its rule in the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>30</sup>

So in Indonesia, international relations, like many other branches of social science, is a postcolonial field of study. The first IR department in Indonesian universities was established at the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta in 1950 as a study programme within the Faculty of Law, and Social and Political Sciences. Other universities then followed in establishing IR departments in the 1950s and 1960s. Not much is known about the curriculum, direction or research agenda of these departments in the early years, except that most of the programmes were most probably directed towards producing graduates to fulfil the administrative and bureaucratic posts of the new state, especially on foreign affairs.

Indonesian universities have been known as the hotbed of political activism. Successive governments rose and fell due to pressure of student activism. But ironically, students of politics or international relations were not known to become the student leaders. As in the pre-independence era, most of the activists either came from more established fields of study linked to technology, medicine or law, which drew on a larger student cohort.

Currently, there are 43 universities that offer IR baccalaureate degree programmes in Indonesia.<sup>31</sup> But only 25 of these programmes have received government accreditation. It may seem like many, but it is very small in proportion to the more than 2,600 academies, colleges and universities all over the country. However, there are only two universities that offer a Masters degree programme, and only one of them, the University of Indonesia (UI), actually has students enrolled in the programme. No higher educational institutions offer a doctoral degree programme. The latter statistics are probably more indicative of the state of the discipline in the country.

Other statistics indicate the condition of relative deprivation of IR education

in Indonesia. There are more than 10,000 students (52 per cent male; 48 per cent female) currently enrolled in the baccalaureate degree programme in the field, while only 77 are currently studying in the Masters programme at UI. These students are tutored by 514 registered lecturers. Of these lecturers, the majority (285) are holders of a Masters degree, but only 32 of them hold doctorates, slightly more than six per cent of the total number of lecturers. Large percentages (38 per cent) of them are baccalaureate degree holders.

The relatively low educational level among the IR educators is due to two factors: first, the very small number of domestic educational institutions offering IR graduate degrees. Most of the educators attaining graduate degrees most probably received their graduate education either abroad or in a related non-IR discipline such as politics, government or public administration, which is in better condition than IR with regard to graduate education. Second, the universities generally do not offer a competitive incentive and a clear career path. Additionally, the excessive teaching load provides a time constraint for the educators to engage in meaningful research activities. Hence, many IR graduate degree holders from abroad usually do not make teaching their full-time job, unless of course they already taught prior to pursuing graduate degrees. These foreign graduates tend to pursue a career either in the government sector, which provides more job security, or in the private think tanks that offer higher incentives and more time to do research. While many of them still teach, they do it on a part-time basis.<sup>32</sup>

The institution of IR research is also weak. There are not too many university-based research centres. The existing ones, such as the Centre for International Relations Research (CIRES) in the University of Indonesia, usually do not have rigorous research programmes. This is due to the excessive teaching load of the lecturers. A typical undergraduate programme in Indonesian universities requires students to complete 140–160 credits to receive the baccalaureate degree. So a lecturer typically has to teach 5–6 courses per year. There are typically more than 100 students in a class. Most university-based research institutes usually carry out projects whose funding comes from government agencies, such as the Policy Research and Development Agency (BPPK, Badan Pengkajian dan Pengembangan Kebijakan) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Deplu, Departemen Luar Negeri). The research done here is primarily policy rather than academically oriented, because there is practically no domestic funding for academic works.

There are not too many IR-specific think tanks, either. The most notable is the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) based in Jakarta and the publisher of Indonesia's most high profile English language journal – *The Indonesian Quarterly*. The journal, however, is not devoted solely to IR-related topics and is a reflection of the fact that the CSIS is actually not an IR-specific think tank. In fact, IR is just one of the three issue areas covered by the CSIS. The others are economics, politics and social change. The think tanks are usually very much issue-oriented. Many think tanks in Indonesia, such as the CSIS, CIDES, the Habibie Center, the Indonesian Institute, Reform Institute, Akbar Tanjung Institute, Wahid Institute, Soegeng Sarjadi Syndicate, Center for Indonesian Reform and so forth focus primarily on domestic matters due to the salience of such issues

in contemporary Indonesia and correspondingly the promise of better funding. The nature of think tanks in Indonesia also does not support academic enterprise. Many, if not all, Indonesian think tanks were either established by political figures or hold a certain political orientation. While this phenomenon is not uncommon in many other parts of the world, it does mean that purely academic works aimed at theory-building that demand conceptual rigour are usually avoided.

The other factor that contributes to the lack of serious IR academic endeavour in Indonesia is the absence of an IR epistemic community. There is currently no professional association of IR scholars. The closest thing to one is the Indonesian Association of Political Science (AIPI, Asosiasi Ilmu Politik Indonesia). But the IR component in AIPI is very much overshadowed by overwhelming interests on domestic politics. There is also an annual meeting of heads of IR departments. But the issues discussed here are mostly about comparing curricula and other teaching related matters. From time to time, IR scholars would meet at conferences organized by Deplu, but the topics are understandably Indonesian foreign policy oriented.

In addition to the lack of epistemic community, there is also practically no incentive at all for the scholars to carry out theory-related studies. In fact, the lures of practical politics, involvement in policy circles and media appearances are much greater. There are only a handful of academic journals on IR. The most renowned of which is probably *Global*, issued by UI's IR department. But the readership of this journal is very low in number, and the journal has to struggle just to keep publishing. The financial and economic crisis that hit the country in 1997 also contributed to the lack of academic writing. In a situation of meagre salaries, scholars are pressured to publish in order to make additional income. The honorarium for publishing in academic journals and in the print media is roughly similar, while the effort is of course markedly different. As a result, there is no incentive for carrying serious academic writing. There is even a critique for Indonesian academia, saying that instead of making their doctorate degree as a start of an academic career, they stop writing once they receive their doctorates, and start to enter politics or become involved in policy circles or even become media personalities.

The above factors define the core themes covered by Indonesian IR researchers. Most of the research themes usually follow the priorities of funding agencies, domestic or international. The post-9/11 world has brought the attention of the world to the issues of security and Islam. As the largest Muslim country in the world, naturally some of these attentions have focused on Indonesia's Islam. This is also reflected in the increased amount of project funding on this topic, which in turn has made this theme one of the main research themes in Indonesia, combining international and domestic aspects. Related to that, the nexus between domestic and regional security, usually related to the issues of illegal logging, human trafficking and terrorism, has also become one of the most popular topics.

The curricula of various IR educational institutions have actually shown much improvement during the last few years. During the 1970s until much of the 1990s, the discussion on IR theory in classes usually revolved around the so-called first and second debates in the discipline, that between realism and liberalism, and



between the legal-institutional approach and behaviouralism. With the return of many lecturers from graduate studies in Western universities at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, the curricula became more updated. It is not uncommon, nowadays, to find students' papers and discussions on the topics such as postmodernism and constructivism. However, most of the literature used usually comes from Western textbooks and journals. The effort to locate indigenous sources for IR thinking does not seem to attract a great deal of attention both in and outside of the educational institutions. The IR department at UI offers a single week on discussion on 'International Relations Thoughts in Indonesia: Soekarno, Hatta, Sutan Syahrir' in the course of 'Introduction to International Relations'. But there is no discussion on non-Western traditions in the course 'International Relations Theory' taught in two semesters at the same department (Jurusan HI FISIP UI 1996).<sup>33</sup>

### **Concluding puzzle: why then the absence of an Indonesian IR theory when there are rich potential sources to be tapped?**

Indonesia as a nation-state positions itself within the international community by adopting different roles in different cultural or political contexts, all of which are central to its identity. These roles are inspired and given substance by indigenous traditions which have informed Indonesian international relations thinking. However, they are not coherently articulated by the Indonesian academic community for a variety of reasons, namely weak institutional structures in Indonesian IR departments, lack of physical resources like libraries and the lack of a viable incentive structure through proper funding and recognition of research, resulting in IR-trained scholars gravitating to topics more pertinent to domestic affairs. Furthermore, diminishing written English language skills may also be a factor explaining the predominance of Western scholars writing on Indonesian foreign policy.

Nevertheless, our exercise in 'pre-theory' is a first cut at attempting to glean from the long established body of literature on Indonesian studies the sources of IR thinking and the possibility of multiple identities influencing IR thinking. This exercise serves not only the purposes of this book being 'a systematic attempt to generalize about the subject matter or IR' but captures the possibility that international relations thinking operates within differing conceptual frameworks in Indonesia. If realism is the only IR theory that matters, then the obvious conclusion is that the Indonesian case does not count. Yet, are such perspectives pragmatic considering the fact that the Republic of Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country, the largest democracy in the Islamic world, geo-strategically Southeast Asia's most significant state and having been the driving force behind the formation of one of the world's most enduring regional institutions – ASEAN? For purposes of practical policy determined by contingencies surrounding the 'War on Terror', the relevance of Indonesia as a voice of reason in the Islamic world will continue to grow enabling it to fulfil its role as a 'pivotal state', a point of view promoted in an influential study on US foreign policy (Chase *et al.* 1999: 6, 9<sup>34</sup>). While social constructivist variables like identity, symbols, values, institutions and

norms have great explanatory value in elucidating Indonesian IR practice, to be relevant for the Indonesian context constructivist approaches need to explain deviant behaviour, specifically why culturally motivated *realpolitik* practice, particularly the use of force, has been evident both in domestic and international affairs since independence.<sup>35</sup> In a sense, privileging parsimony, the hallmark of the Western IR approach focusing solely on either rationalist explanations or constructivist explanations may not capture the essence of the Indonesian approach to IR. As our paper suggests, establishing the complex links between power, identity, interests and norms in the Indonesian case may not be amenable to capture by any one paradigm and may require eclectic theorizing particularly in contexts where theories merge.<sup>36</sup> Naturally this is a speculative essay but it is designed to explore a range of possibilities on how the language of Indonesian statecraft can be employed for domestic theorizing on the subject of international relations. It is a subject worthy of more contextual research. However, at this juncture three observations should suffice providing us a sense of factors that will continue to shape Indonesian thinking on international relations.

First, Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim country and demographically the largest democracy in the Islamic world, thereby allowing it scope to conceive of itself as a leader among Islamic nations. This role has generally been one of mediation, of principled neutrality, that is intended to provide stability and moderation, and to avoid extremism. However, this role is undergoing significant change in concert with developments within the Islamic world. In Islamic intellectual and socio-political circles there is a vigorous ongoing debate on the role of Islam in a democratic and pluralist state. It is a domestic debate enframed within the context of an Islamic resurgence prominent since the late 1980s particularly on the island of Java (long known for its adherence to Islam fused with syncretistic beliefs) influenced by a small but vociferous constituency of Muslims who view Islam as a universalistic ideology. Such developments may have an important corollary: namely, possible new directions in foreign policy. Certainly within Indonesia's new democracy a reassessment of the relationship between the secular nationalists and Islamic nationalists and debates focused on the re-evaluation of Indonesia's Islamic identity, issues pertaining to the Jakarta Charter and its relationship with the 1945 Constitution, and the meaning of the *Pancasila* (national ideology) could become more pronounced in the new millennium. Significant normative concessions to Islam have occurred, for example, relating to the introduction of a new Education Bill and such developments are useful indications of Islam's greater bargaining power and influence in the evolving democratic nation-state structure which characterizes post-Suharto Indonesia. Thus far, Indonesia has avoided having an Islamic cast to its foreign policy. However, if Indonesia no longer adopts conciliatory positions to issues of significance to the Islamic world, then such changes in its international outlook will be the consequence of domestic factors related to state formation in post-Suharto era, namely, changes in the religious affiliation requirements of the political elite coupled by moves toward the implementation of *syariah* law.

Second, since independence, Indonesia has also aspired to a major role in the

Non-Aligned Movement and over time this role has shifted from the radicalism of the Sukarno era to the developmental orientation of the Suharto era and a significant emphasis on democracy, anti-militarism and Islam during the *reformasi* (reform) era. ASEAN presents yet another forum within which Indonesia regards itself as the key player and stabilizing force. Perceptions of the international community have therefore been formulated in terms not of competing nation-states but rather of defined forums or blocs, in which it plays a more or less pivotal role. Dealing with nations outside these blocs like the US, Russia, Japan or China is more ambiguous. For example, China during the Suharto era was often viewed as a threat, partly on the ground that it represents a rival civilization and ideology. Within the blocs themselves Indonesia sees its own role to some extent in traditional terms reminiscent not of territorial nation-states with clearly demarcated borders, but of centres of foci which radiate power and prestige over larger or smaller regions from one period to another. Indonesia is assumed to stand at the centre, even of the Islamic world. This does not necessarily imply that Indonesia is to be active in dominating policy making; rather it suggests a sense of playing a dignified central role. In this regard, in relations with countries outside its specific forums Indonesian behaviour seems relatively pragmatic. Indonesia's occasional irritations with Malaysia's assertiveness are an indication of this sense of decorum. So too is the way in which Indonesia seems satisfied with a type of mediating role among Islamic countries. Indonesia expects recognition among Islamic nations as the world's largest Islamic country. This role has generally been one of relative neutrality, a desire to avoid unnecessary involvement in irresolvable issues yet a concern to provide mediation to avoid extremism. For the Javanese, the ultimate end result of such intermandala relationships is the emergence of *chakravatin* or in Javanese, *prabu murbeng wisesa anyakrawati* (world ruler). Such an ideal condition refers to a 'world empire, in which all political entities are combined in a coherent unity, and ebb and flow of Power implied in a universe of multiple *mandala* locked in conflict with one another (for a time) no longer exists' (Moertono in Anderson 1990: 45).

Third, the absence of support for Indonesian institutions and researchers working in the field of international relations and a lack of necessary infrastructure and funds to support IR teaching, coupled with the relatively low educational level of lecturers, means the situation for IR research in Indonesia remains bleak and ominous. Furthermore, the lack of IR theory research is due also to a preoccupation with domestic issues among the think tanks on account of the possibility of greater recognition and the availability of funds. Such a situation is unfortunate considering the need for Indonesian IR scholars with their progressive Islamic backgrounds to contribute constructively global and regional debates relating to the 'War on Terror' in an era when Islam has achieved such a high profile. In such a context, wouldn't a project targeted at rebuilding and strengthening Indonesian research capacity within the IR discipline for the purposes of facilitating the development of Indonesian expertise on interpreting the evolving system of IR, its implications for Indonesia and Indonesia's role within it be a worthy cause to support?<sup>37</sup> On the question of an absence of an IR epistemic community, without the aid of further

fieldwork it is impossible to prove to what extent the dominance of the Western IR paradigm is responsible for such a situation. However, there is a general perception among the IR academic community in Indonesia that IR is a 'western' science, and this point of view is taken for granted with local IR scholars seeing little reason to question such interpretations. Unfortunately, such a situation has produced a sense of alienation among IR scholars. The fact that so many Indonesian IR scholars tend to veer towards analysis of domestic politics later in their careers is probably symptomatic of this alienation.

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## Notes

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- 2 The doctrine of National Resilience enunciated through the use of carefully crafted Sanskrit words consists of eight aspects of national life (*Astagatra*). Those aspects are divided in two categories, namely three natural aspects (*Trigatra*) and five social aspects (*Pancagatra*). The three natural aspects are geography, natural resources and population. The five social aspects are ideology, politics, economy, social-culture and defence-security.
- 3 While still evident in traditional Javanese thought, such dichotomies are less emphasized in Indonesia since independence to stress the importance of Indonesian nationalism and national unity.
- 4 Note the Javanese saying: *Akek wong kang wedi kahanan perang, awit hokum kang becik akeh kang ora kanggo, mula banjur wedi perang. Iku kabeh keliru, jalaran perang iku uga kepingin mbelani kabeneran*, meaning: Many are afraid of war, because in

war good rules are ignored. This is wrong because wars are also fought for truth. See Sebastian 2006: 16.

- 5 Nearly half the people of Southeast Asia are Indonesian. The concentration of large population clusters around a ruler was an undeniable indication of power, which in turn revealed continuing possession of *wahyu*. A large population also meant a bigger workforce for rice cultivation, which could result in economic surpluses and the presence of manpower that could be tapped for building monuments and armies.
- 6 The family of Abdurrahman Wahid's paternal grandfather Kyai Haji Hasyim Asy'ari had claimed that they descended from the sixteenth-century Javanese King Brawijaya VI. Brawijaya VI's son Jaka Tingkit has been credited with introducing Islam to the northeast coastal region of Java. Jaka Tingkit's son Prince Banawa was known to have renounced his royal privileges to become a recluse devoted to teaching Sufism. See Barton 2002: 38.
- 7 On how military elite, especially those within Suharto's inner circle, were deployed to secure the regime's interests, see Jenkins 1984.
- 8 In the words of Geertz, Java 'has been civilized longer than England'.
- 9 The word '*gusti*' is also used to refer to God, which signifies the deep reverence toward the leaders.
- 10 Known as '*pusaka*' or sacred things. These can be in the forms of certain *kris* (dagger), spears, carriages, musical instruments etc.
- 11 Conflict in the world of the *wayang kulit* is not between good and bad but generally cast in shades of black and white. More significant is the emphasis placed on those who are spiritually developed versus spiritually underdeveloped.
- 12 The approximate meaning is 'concealed personal motive'.
- 13 The classification of the Sundanese of West Java is rather difficult. Due to the historical rivalry with the Javanese kingdoms, the Sundanese always insist that they are non-Javanese. However, to classify them as Seberang is quite problematic, because the extent of Hindu influence is equally extensive in the Sunda land as in Central and East Java, especially in the eastern part where the courts of the old Sundanese kingdom of Padjadjaran was located.
- 14 It is important to note here that some interior Seberang ethnic groups were still living in a fairly simple, secluded style, and still practice certain kind of animist beliefs (usually in combination with the practice of major religion, most notably Christianity). This is especially true in Papua (Irian Jaya), as well as some ethnic groups in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Being situated in the margins of the country's social and political relations, they are relatively less significant in shaping up what is being considered here as the Seberang political-culture.
- 15 The high level of influence of Hinduism in Bali shares many similarities in political culture with the Javanese. Historically, the royal families of Bali originated from the Majapahit court fleeing from Java during the power struggle with the Islamic sultanate of Demak.
- 16 The variant of the language used as the lingua franca was the *Melayu pasar* (market Malay). A different variant is used among the Malay aristocracy, which is a more stratified one. But even the extent of stratification of the latter variant is not as complex as the Javanese language.
- 17 The literal translation is 'rude'. However, it may also be read as 'uncivilized'.
- 18 More recently, there has been a speculation that Islam also came to Indonesia from China, brought by some of the Muslim Chinese envoys, the most popular of whom was Admiral Zheng He, and that it came directly to Java. However, such claims are contentious and require verification.
- 19 The Western Protestant and Catholic missionaries, who later accompanied the traders, converted the peoples in areas where Islamic influence was weak. Such peoples were primarily the interior peoples of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua, as well as the coastal people of southern Maluku and the eastern part of the Lesser Sundas. Until

- today, the Protestants and Catholics of Indonesia, who make up around 10 per cent of the whole population, come primarily from these ethnic groups.
- 20 There were nine prominent *wali*, affectionately known to the Javanese as '*Wali Songo*'. Each of these *wali* were said to possess supernatural abilities. Many stories surrounding the *wali* and their proselytization efforts were imbued with tales of mysticism. These myths, as well as the use of local folklore in conveying religious messages, greatly facilitated the spread of Islam in Java, as the Javanese felt that they could relate easily to the new religion.
  - 21 The version of Islam that arrived in Southeast Asia might have been infused with Sufism that had previously taken root in the subcontinent where it came from. This appeared to facilitate its compatibility with local existing religions.
  - 22 These consist of belief in one God – Allah, performing prayer five times daily, fasting during the *Ramadhan* month, giving alms (*zakat*) according to Islamic law and performing the *Hajj* to Mecca if financially viable.
  - 23 This means 'red'. The term was introduced into academic circles by Geertz in 'The Religion of Java'. The term came from the colour of the cloth (actually the colour was red earth) that these Javanese wore, as opposed to the white cloth worn by the more pious Javanese Muslims (*putihan*).
  - 24 After the failed communist coup in 1965, there was fervour for religions, partly induced by the government. Hence all Indonesians had to declare faith in one of the five officially recognized religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism). Most of the Javanese claimed Islam as their religion. However, in the 1970s, there was a movement to get the *Kejawen* recognized as a religion. Later it was acknowledged as the '*Kepercayaan atas Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*' (belief in the one God). Although it was not officially acknowledged as a religion, it acquired equal legal position with the religions. For a concise account of *Kejawen* practices, see Koentjaraningrat 1975: 112–19.
  - 25 The words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, which deal mainly with social and political issues.
  - 26 'Interpretation' or 'reinterpretation' of the Islamic texts.
  - 27 From this perspective, Michael Leifer's 'sense of regional entitlement' came as a natural result of the Javanese conception of leadership. Every Javanese leader would have this sense of entitlement, for without it, he or she would not have become an effective leader.
  - 28 A policy derived from the changing external policies under Sukarno's Guided Democracy, which was an expression of Indonesian foreign bellicosity. It was a strategy designed to daunt the Dutch in the West Irian campaign and the British in the Malayan campaign through the use of diplomatic and military measures of intimidation.
  - 29 For an analysis on the concepts NEFO and OLDEFO, see Weatherbee 1966.
  - 30 As history has it, the selective education given to the indigenous population did not actually halt the growth of self-determination sentiments. Like in many other colonial societies, the struggle for independence was spearheaded by the intellectuals, products of the colonial government's education system. As a result, Indonesia's founding fathers were either engineers (like Sukarno), doctors (like the founders of the first nationalist organization, Boedi Oetomo) or lawyers (like Hatta, the Republic's first vice president).
  - 31 The statistics presented here are acquired from various publications published by the Directorate General for Higher Education (Dirjen Dikti, Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi) and Department of National Education (Depdiknas, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional). Note that the year of data collection varies, but the most recent data available is from 2005. NGOs are also not interested in foreign policy issues.
  - 32 Building a career purely on international relations expertise generally results in poor job prospects unless there are adequate avenues for consultancy work. In a country where the basic salary for an academic is significantly low there is a need to combine scholarship

with supplementary consultancy-based income. Those specializing in international relations theory or foreign policy analysis rarely get many opportunities to augment their meagre salaries hence the majority will gravitate to the more lucrative fields of domestic politics or development-related studies. If IR-trained scholars do write, they invariably contribute to the mainstream press such as *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, *Tempo*, *Sinar Harapan*, *Republika* and the English language daily *The Jakarta Post* where the prospects for decent remuneration are better. As a consequence, the record is better and there is a wide range of commentary available in the media on topics related to foreign relations. The lack of incentive, particularly to publish in English has resulted in just a handful of books published over the last decade by Indonesian-based scholars. The most significant being: Anwar 1994; Djiwandono 1996; Djalal 1996; and Sukma's two books of 1999 and 2003. With the exception of Djalal, a former Foreign Ministry official and currently President Yudhoyono's spokesperson for international affairs, all of the above scholars are based in think tanks. This is a sad indictment on the state of university-based research on international relations in Indonesia.

- 33 Even the Indonesian language publication on IR theory published almost a decade ago did not hint on any possibility of looking at indigenous sources for theorizing. The articles in the publication merely reported the state of the art of IR discipline in the West, and the possibility of the application of its theories for the Indonesian context.
- 34 A 'pivotal state' is a 'geo-strategically important state to the United States and its allies' and its importance is attributed to its ability not only to 'determine the success or failure of its region but also significantly affect international stability'. See Chase *et al.* 1999: 6, 9.
- 35 For an attempt to reconcile both rationalist and constructivist explanations in analysing the sources of Indonesian military doctrine, see Sebastian 2006.
- 36 For the most substantial analysis on the subject of eclectic theorizing, see Katzenstein and Okawara 2001: 153–85.
- 37 An audit of the international relations discipline in Indonesia similar to an initiative embarked upon recently in China by the Ford Foundation would go some way to addressing some of the problems highlighted in this paper and provide the way ahead in terms of reinvigorating the field. See *International Relations Studies in China: A Review of Ford Foundation Past Grantmaking and Future Choices* (Anon 2002).



## 8 International relations theory and the Islamic worldview

*Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh*

### Introduction

When, in the mid-1980s, Holsti (1985: 127) made the claim that international theory barely existed outside Anglophone countries, perhaps he was asserting bias, parading as universal, towards the European experience with state formation, power and influence, and a particularly Anglo-American preference for empiricism (knowledge inferred from observable characteristics of reality) and for materialism (causation sought in material factors). The expanding literature on the subject ever since has been able to clarify that Western-based international theory does not necessarily fit the reality and experiences of other spaces. In this chapter, we shall further examine whether empiricism and materialism are also the only possible and acceptable methodology for organizing and processing data. If, as Acharya and Buzan ponder, there is disjuncture between Western international relations theory (IRT) and the universality of human experience, can one use the Islamic worldview, and by extension the Islamic world, as the basis for generalizations that could provide alternative optics for theorization?

To answer such query, distinction must be made between the construct of Islam as a culture/religion/identity/worldview within international relations theory and IRT in the Muslim world as a region. In the first instance, the question is how has Islam constructed its own vision of international relations and whether that can contribute to theory construction. We shall propose, in this chapter, that Islam as a worldview, as a cultural, religious and ideational variant, has sought a different foundation of truth and the 'good life', which could present alternatives to Western IRT. In the second instance, how IR is conducted in practice in the Muslim World, for example in the Middle East, would need to examine whether the behaviour of Muslim states and elites vis-à-vis each other and vis-à-vis others is a convergence or divergence with mainstream IRT. We shall propose that to understand behaviour among Islamic states, a constructivist approach that allows for norms, religion, culture and identity is more appropriate than a mainstream realist and liberal approach. Yet, when behaviour is also a departure from the Islamic view of IRT, as it is, we could submit that the classical model of Islamic IRT does not fit the inherited nation-states that have been formed in the region as a result of colonization and modernization. We should conclude, then, that although an alternative Islamic IRT exists and is possible, the challenge is to put

it in practice. The ultimate tension is between the *raison d'état* and the *raison* of Islam.

It may be tempting to concur with Acharya and Buzan that given the head start and pervasive influence of Western IRT, the global imposition of the European state and its distinctive form of inside/outside relationships, as well as the failure of the practice of IR in the Islamic world to adhere to its own epistemological principles, the search for a non-Western IR theory may be challenging in this case, as much as in the other ones in this book. Yet, the fluctuating and dynamic path within which Islamic thought is seeking its own epistemology, by deciphering among its own variety of sources and adapting them, sometimes in rejection, sometimes in imitation, often times in hybridity, makes it premature to conclude that a non-Western IRT does not exist.

### **The context: multiple confrontations**

In the case of Islam, one cannot ignore the context within which theorization is taking place. Contemporary debates among Muslims and between them and the so-called 'West' are shaped by a number of limitations in the political world that will have to be taken into consideration in theory-making.

One is the challenge of secularization, or secular institutions, which have defined modernity since encounters with Europeans/Westerners encrusted the durable modern nation-state. Even if secular modernism may have failed as a political and economic project in the everyday life of the Muslims, its syntax has perpetuated and is framing discussions of alternatives. The second challenge is the globalization of the liberal-modernist project outside the Western cultural zone. When democracy, development and modernity are being proposed in the new globalized liberal order as preconditioned on secularism, the 'theology of liberal secularism' (Pasha 2003: 120) seeks legitimacy through not just interstate relations but also as domestic orders. The very identity of Islam is already tainted by its supposed position as the 'other' of Western modernity and affirmation of Islamic faith is inevitably associated with resistance instead of an embracement of alternative identities based on religion, faith and morality. The debate has already been framed within the very limited space allowed by Huntington and Fukuyama's (1992) Eurocentric views of world orders. Islam, in these discussions, is assumed to be a specific, essential, unchangeable system of thought and beliefs that is superior or inferior to the Western (or Christian) system (Arkoun 2003: 19).

Although these views have been criticized from all perspectives, the cascade reactions to Huntington's thesis have already placed Islam in the realm of the geopolitics rather than an object of cultural understanding (Pasha 2003: 111). This not only has increased attention among Western scholars to 'understand' Islam, but has also led to unnatural pressures on Muslim scholars to 'explain'. In such an environment, the exercise of open theorization, and the needed conversations based on mutual regard, parity and pluralization, are often hijacked by inclinations to 'tame Islam' (Pasha 2003: 112), especially by experts linked to corridors of policy and state power.

Thus, the search for non-Western IRT needs to both recognize the context of Gramscian hegemony of so-called universally accepted systems of knowledge as well as the current international political order and the discourses it has given rise to, from the Westphalian Peace to the post-9/11 world. Yet, the existence of Islamic IRT, as espoused in the classical texts, and as revived by various Muslim thinkers since the past century, cannot be dismissed altogether. A new epistemological project is in flux, with tools such as history of thought rather than political events, with a focus on principles such as justice, collectivity, solidarity and emancipation, rather than power and materialism, and using Islam as a religion and worldview rather than merely as a social-historical space.

### **What could be the sources for an Islamic IRT?**

If it is premature to conclude that an alternative to non-Western IR theory cannot be found within Islam, it is because Islam as a religion, better than the Islamic world as a region, has presented its own perspectives of what relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (by extension, their 'states') are and should be. As Mirbagheri (2006) argues, Islam, by claiming to understand man and have the right responses to his/her needs and demands, acts by itself as a theory, just as Western political philosophy has theorized on man and his actions.

We propose three different sources within the Islamic world for framing the debates about international relations or how Islam is supposed to interact with others. We have chosen these as potential sources in answer to the 'choices' presented by Acharya and Buzan for what they present as possibilities for 'late comers' to join theorization in IR in this book and among the general categories of sources and actors whose contribution to the 'soft conceptions' of IRT they recognize.

1. A primary foundation for the classical understanding of IR in Islam is based on the original sources of the Qur'an, the *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet), the *Sunnah* (the conduct of the Prophet) or *ijtihad* (interpretation), which could correspond to what Acharya and Buzan call classical ideas, traditions and thinking contributing to 'localist exceptionalism'.
2. A second debate, which directly corresponds to what Acharya and Buzan call 'rebellions against prevailing orthodoxies', and was led by national leaders, is examined within the framework of imitation/reaction that came about as a result of encounters with the West. Both the rationalization of Islam as a modernist project, or the fundamentalist reaction to modernism, we shall argue, are two sides of the same coin for they are defensive and reactionary mechanisms, which by themselves acknowledge and reaffirm Western hegemony.
3. A third recreation/reconciliation attempt is presented around the Islamization of knowledge movement as the reconceptualization of social sciences, and international relations by extension. This creative path tries to replace existing theories by offering alternative ways of conceptualizing the world, and can be considered as Acharya and Buzan's 'contribution of local scholars in drawing independent generalizations from local experiences that might have

transregional or universal applicability'. We shall discuss this ambitious attempt with all its limitations as the culmination of Islamic debates about international relations and theorization.

### ***The classical sources***

Acharya and Buzan remind us that classical traditions and the thinking of religious and political figures in Asia have often served as the basis for international thinking. Similarly, an authentic source that should be examined for the search of alternative non-Western theories is the classical heritage of the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* (traditions), the *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet), and the Sharia (Islamic law) which present original sources where international relations have been predetermined. But here too, as shall be argued below, these have not escaped functionalism in theory construction.

A jurisprudential approach to Islamic international relations theory can be identified in the discussions around the concept of *jihad* within the Qur'an. *Jihad* is one of the most complex terms within Islam, with multiple definitions that may seem to contradict one another, but in essence, it does not mean war but struggle or to strive towards something. According to Rajaee (1999) there are two separate ways that *jihad* is used in the Qur'an. One, a greater *jihad*, as an internal struggle, based on striving to understand the Qur'an itself or to follow God more closely, and a lesser *jihad* involving external striving/struggle to remove obstructions to the path of God, which includes struggling against unbelievers. It was based on these two distinctions that Islamic jurists devised foreign relations in Islam, dividing the world into the two realms of *Dar al Islam* (the realm or abode of Islam) and the *Dar al Harb* (the realm/abode of war) (Khadduri 1955). *Dar al Islam* refers to an abode where Islam dominates, submission to God is observed and peace and tranquillity reign. By contrast, the domain of war refers to regions where Islam does not dominate, or territories come under the hegemony of unbelievers, which are threatened by the *Dar al Islam*, and presumably hostile to the Muslims living in their domain. The distinction is made on the basis of the rule of Islamic law, the Sharia, which is supposed to protect Muslim's lives, property and faith (Abo-Kazleh 2006: 43).

A number of elements need to be considered when the classical sources are used for the origins of international relations theory in Islam. First, it must be clarified that the binary divisions are judicial approaches to the Qur'an. The two terms of *Dar al Islam* and *Dar al Harb* are in fact not stated explicitly or explained in the Qur'an or in *Sunnah*, but were coined by Muslim jurists/scholars in the process of the codification of Islamic law. Islamic perceptions of foreign relations were guided by a religiously based domestic law that proclaimed the legality and universality of Islam. By extension, then, *Dar al Harb* could not be recognized on an equal footing as legitimate or sovereign. Thus, the division is legal and normative rather than theological, making it particularly open to interpretation by subsequent jurisprudence.

Second, the assumption of divisions regulated relations between Islamic states and non-Islamic ones only, not because the theory was a priori one of war, but because the existence of more than one Islamic state is unlawful by definition of Islamic legal theory (Bouzenita 2007: 36). Hence, Islamic law did not set legal rules for relations between Islamic state entities.

Third, such a law of nations based on the division of the world appeared within the context of the five centuries of Arab conquest of vast territories from Spain to India after the Prophet's demise when Islamic lands expanded. It was the conquests that prompted the need to codify relations with other worlds that Islamic states were conquering, or were rival to. From the time the Muslim world created its first empire during the Abbasid period (750–1258) to the height of Islamic civilization during the Ottoman period (1281–1923), this dualism was supposed to constitute the central concept of Islamic international relations. The ultimate goal of Islam, according to this view, is to establish the *Umma*, where the Sharia rules and defines the duties of Muslims. In Mirbagheri's (2006) view, this means the concept of power lies in the heart of such interpretation of Islam, bringing it close to the realist and neorealist view in international relations, which treats war and peace as instruments of policy. The equivalent of binary divisions of the world, some scholars argue, is found in the very Peace of Westphalia of 1648. The two abodes thus find echo in the peace agreements by European princedoms which ended both the Thirty Years' War in Germany and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Netherlands, effectively concluding wars between Protestant and the Catholic political entities (Bouzenita 2007: 26). The Westphalian peace agreement can similarly be seen as the beginning of the formation of a Christian community of states, set against the 'other abode', which at the time was dominated by the Ottoman empire.

Fourth, the Islamic law of nations seems to be a realist division of the world based on power and war, derived from a particular interpretation of the verses in the Qur'an, the experiences of a particular époque and the supremacy of the Sharia. Scholars have consequently questioned whether an alternative read of the related verses and prophetic traditions could in fact be reinterpreted to establish peace and not war as the organizing principle of Muslim foreign relations with non-Muslims (Abo-Kazleh 2006: 46). The Qur'an commands Muslims not to fight those who do not fight them. Fight could be justified or might become a religious duty upon Muslims only for reserving themselves, protecting their properties or defending their faith. Building power is encouraged only for deterrence and self-protection. An alternative read would therefore establish that peace is not only the origin, but also the most important objective of interstate interactions, and war is an exception that states may restore to only in cases of self-defence.

We shall return below to the revision of this binary construction as part of contemporary debates within Islam.

### ***Adoptions/rejection as defensive reactions***

A second source of thinking about international relations in the Islamic world came about directly as a result of encounters with modernity and European empires. The cosmological outlook that assumed 'the orderly nature of human existence' (Rajaei 1999) was challenged by a secular worldview in which power replaced righteousness as the ultimate end of politics. The new international order was to be based on 'non-sectarian territorial demarcations, the equality of all political units, and international peace as the permanent norm' (Piscatori 1984: 319).

The reaction of the Islamic world to its initial encounter with the engine of this so-called modernity was set off by the defeat of the Ottoman empire, colonization and the carving up of nation-states. By the end of the nineteenth century, not only had the Ottoman become the 'sick man of Europe' (Rajaei 1999), but the heartland of the Islamic world, the Middle East, became, 'the most penetrated international relations subsystem in today's world' (Brown 1984: 7). For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the loss of confidence within a penetrated Islamic world led to two distinct responses, both of a reactive and defensive nature: one camp advocated for integration into the modernization project, and the other, absolute rejection of the encounter of modernity and Islam. Far from being opposites, the two positions of absolute conformity or rejection were in fact both defensive attempts to come to grips with the introduction of a new dynamics. Both in effect, according to Rajaei (1999), ruled out the possibility of an alternative Islamic participation within the emerging new rules of the game and precluded any attempt at evolving an indigenous response.

Both camps, it must be emphasized, were led by Islamic leaders who came up with ideas and approaches in dialogue or in defiance of Western intellectual traditions. The commonality in thinking among leaders in Asia that Acharya and Buzan recognize in this book are that they advocated for Asian unity and regionalism over nationalism. If political leaders like the Egyptian Nassir followed such a path in trying to revive pan-Arabism as the distinct unity of the region, the Islamic thinkers and leaders were, by contrast, idealists who advocated for the distinctiveness of an 'Islamic abode' in the realm of ideas and principles if not of political constructs around nation-states. Ayatollah Khomeini, although a political leader, is examined below for his thinking around Islamic ideals. Yet, it must be emphasized that the contribution of Islamic leaders with 'principled ideas' to organizing international order, as in the Asian cases examined by Acharya and Buzan, have not been interpreted enough from the perspective of IRT.

### ***Islamic reform: rationalization of Islam as a modernist project***

One reaction to the penetration of the 'other' world was the attempts to revive, reform and strengthen Islam both against the encroachment of the West and also as an internal reform, known in the Arab world as the *Asr al Nahda* (Age of Renaissance). The movement is best known through the writings of such modernists as Jamal-al-Din Asadabadi, known as al-Afghani (1839–97) and his student

and colleague, the Egyptian Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905). Both shared the conviction that modern rationalist methods and scientific discoveries were both true and absolutely necessary. The survival of the Muslim *Umma* in the face of European ascendancy required, in their views, a recognition of the compatibility of Islam and reason (Euben 2002: 29).

In their works, they distinguished between ‘authentic Islam’ as ‘the rational religion’ and ‘degraded Islam’ as corrupted and distant from its glorious foundations. According to Afghani, ‘authentic Islam’ encouraged the use of reason, even or especially when interpreting scripture to guide human action. ‘Abduh claimed that Islam ‘did not impose any conditions upon reason other than that of maintaining the faith’ (‘Abduh 1966: 176). The Qur’an and the traditions in fact encouraged the pursuit of knowledge of the material world as the means necessary for survival and well-being, and already either contained or prefigured truths about the world that were now associated with modern scientific discoveries (Nasr 1968). Consequently, reason was no less a gift from God than was revelation (‘Abduh 1966: 83 quoted in Euben 2002: 30). The exhortation to reason about the world precluded the uncritical acceptance of dogma (*taqlid*, or blind imitation) on the authority of tradition against the clear weight of sensory evidence. Afghani and ‘Abduh’s battles thus targeted both European rationalists and Islamist traditionalists. Islam, when properly understood, was not opposed to rationality and modernity, for it was largely constitutive of modern truths such as rationality. Therefore, rationalism could not be equated with the West, modernity and Westernization to serve non-Islamic interests.

Even though the modernists were not ultimately successful in proposing a well-defined position on international relations, apart from claiming that the West did not hold the monopoly on rationalism, they succeeded in opening up the debate, through *ijtihad* (the exercise of reason in the reinterpretation of religious sources) and *tajdid* (innovation), that had hitherto been declared unacceptable.

### ***The Islamist reaction***

The project of Islamic modernism has not been welcomed by contemporary Islamic traditionalists/fundamentalists, not least because of the opening up of the door of *ijtihad* in the context of the dialogue or reaction with the West. The rejection of reforms within Islam coincided with the resurgence of religion in social and political life in the Muslim world. By the second half of the twentieth century, the liberation movements of the former colonies in Africa and Asia had restored confidence in the non-Western world, and Islamism had made a comeback, riding on the failure of dominant secular ideologies in various Muslim countries, such as liberal nationalism and pan-Arabism to improve welfare for people. Rajaei (1999) calls this period that of ‘Islamism’, when Islamic movements and Islamic ideologies provided thinking around politics and international relations.

Revivalist debates were led by thinkers such as Muhammad Baqir Sadr (1935–80), the ideological founder of the Shiia Iraqi Islamic Dawa Party, Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903–79), the founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami Islamic revivalist party in Pakistan, Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), the leading intellectual of the Egyptian

Muslim Brotherhood, to an extent Iranian sociologist and revolutionary Ali Shariati (1933–77) and especially Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–89). For these Islamists, the challenge of modernity was that ‘rationalist epistemology erodes divine authority, expresses and accelerates Western power, and inhibits the establishment of a legitimate Islamic social system’ (Euben 2002: 34). Modernists, by inadvertently acquiescing to the given terms of debate, had implicitly put Islam on trial and in need of justification, thereby exacerbating the subservience of Islam to Western power (Qutb 1962: 17–20). ‘Abduh, in particular, was branded as an apologist for Islam who capitulated to Westernization by letting ‘reason in the back door’ (Euben 2002: 34). Zubaida writes, for example, that the reforms included elements of secularization of religion, and the reformers’ concept of *ijtihad* was a ‘free intellectual pursuit’ which disregarded the historical accumulations of and traditions of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), hence of authority (Zubaida 2005: 438–48). Engaging with rationality had meant not only succumbing to a particular language and method, but also defining what was worth knowing, presumably only material phenomena. For Khomeini and Qutb, however, reason was limited when confronted with metaphysical questions of moral judgment, human purpose and the divine authority. Both insisted then on the primacy of human intuition and the truths of faith over reason.

Unlike the modernists, Qutb and Khomeini presumed the survival and integrity of Islam depended on purifying it from the corruption of foreign influence, ‘Westoxification’ in Khomeini’s view and *jahiliyya* (ignorance of divine guidance) in Qutb’s. These evils could only be combated through an acknowledgement of the omniscience of God and the unity of religious and political authority in Islam. The Islamists seemed to have had a more clearly defined view of the nature of the state and international relations than modernists did. Khomeini, for example, posited his view of the duality of Islamic IR theory in terms of not the Realm of Islam and the Realm of War, but in terms of the oppressed (*mustadafun*) and the oppressors (the arrogant and powerful *mustakbirun*), both terms taken from the Qur’an, and cast in a realm of the moral. According to the Qur’an, God had promised the earth to the oppressed. In Khomeini’s view, citizens of an Islamic state were moral by virtue of membership in it, and through daily adherence to the laws of God (Euben 2002: 37). By contrast, any society built upon human authority deified human beings and deviated from God’s authority by presuming that human beings may legitimately define moral and legal rules. In contemporary arrangements, the only way to avoid the un-Godly world was to submit to the message of Islam as embodied in its law. The Sharia, being total and comprehensive, hence self-sufficient, did not need borrowing or dialogue.

Despite the reactionary rhetoric, scholars such as Abrahamian (1993) and Fischer (1980) have seen in Khomeini’s arguments a modern understanding of social dimension of justice, political theory, nationalism, the state and the idea of the ‘people’ as agents of change. Fischer (1980: 99), for example, argues that ‘Khomeini’s rhetoric is not only traditional Islamic phraseology, but incorporates contemporary meanings and demands, domestically and internationally’, such as ‘populist concerns with the welfare of the lower classes; anti-dependency trade



relations, nonalignment foreign policy'. For Euben (2002: 40), such a discourse meant that the influence of Western political thought had already set the terms of the debate even for those seeking to ignore such influences (*ibid.*). Another read, mostly favoured by Iranian scholars (Mirbagheri 2006), however, would emphasize instead the influence of gnosticism, or mysticism, in the writings of Khomeini, which introduces the agency of mankind and engagement with the spirit of religion and the episteme of Islam as opposed to the jurisprudential approach to institutionalized religion.

### ***The creative path to reconciliation***

If the modernization of Islam was merely seen as imitation, and Islamism as a mere objection, a more creative path opened up in the last quarter of the twentieth century which built on these various trends in an attempt to 'Islamize' modernity. This third debate within the Islamic world can be considered as a postmodern response to globalization of ideas.

This phase is still in its formative phase but can be an impetus for the renewal of an Islamic IR theory. For the purposes of this chapter, the importance of this movement is seen in its emphasis on the end purpose of 'good life' in terms of morality and ethics for the Islamic good, and for introducing faith in addition to rationality and materialism as the principles of knowledge. The reconciliatory discourse is an epistemological attempt to negotiate a path between modernists and Islamist options, a 'third way' using the language and tools of Western political and social theory but in consideration of Islamic ends. The most prolific pole of this movement in terms of writings comes from the Islamization of knowledge project based at the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Virginia (IIIT)<sup>1</sup>, although this intellectual endeavour is advanced by a variety of Muslim thinkers in both the Muslim world and outside (see, for example, Furlow 1996: 259–71). According to some sources (Ragab 1998), the Islamization of knowledge was introduced by Ismael Al-Faruqi in 1982 to seek synthesis of modern knowledge and Islamic legacy. For Faruqi, Islamization meant

to redefine and reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating the data, to re-evaluate the conclusions, to reproject the goals – and to so in such a way to make the disciplines enrich and serve the cause of Islam.

(Al Faruqi 1988: 15)

In other words, it adds normativity, morality and the ultimate end to social sciences. In this respect, it can be compared to Mahbub Ul Haq (1996) and Amartya Sen's (1999) human development movement, which brought ethics in economics (the freedom and choices of people as being the ultimate end goal of development, as opposed to materialism), or even to the human security approach, which argues that security 'should be' about the survival, well-being and dignity of people rather than of states only (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2006). The Islamization of knowledge similarly focuses on the logic of ultimate ends, in this case, serving the cause

of Islam. As no field of 'inquiry can be value-free, nor should it be', Abul Fadl (1991: 27) contends that the task for Muslim social scientists is to reconstruct a methodology going beyond the 'present post-positivist phase' in social sciences to reunite the pursuit of knowledge with the 'higher purposes for which creation was intended by the Creator' (see also al-'Alwani 1995: 93).

The project starts with the assumption that the multidimensional intellectual and moral malaise plaguing the Muslim *Umma* originates in 'epistemological imperialism' (Al-Masserri 1994: 403). This imperialism, grounded in ethnocentrism, is characterized by a devotion to the abstraction of knowledge and separating it from the metaphysical and ethical values that must inform it (ibid.; Abul-Fadl 1993: 33). Those who ignore the Creator are said to produce a purely positivistic understanding of knowledge which is overly preoccupied with ends, 'the end of history, of civilization, of progress, of modernity, or of humanity itself' (Al-'Alwani 1995: 88 quoted in Euben 2002: 41–2). Those who solely rely upon revelation and exclude the sciences are also guilty of transforming religion 'into something mystical that accords no value to humanity or nature, rejects cause and effect, and ignores the usages of society, history, psychology, and economics' (ibid.: 41). Ultimately, the Islamization of knowledge perspective invites an exercise à la Foucault to invest in the deconstruction of dominant paradigms to unearth the contradictions, complexities, discontinuities and missed opportunities obscured by the language of progress, modernization and rationalization (Abul Fadl 1993: 111 quoted in Euben 2002: 44). But unlike post-structuralism and deconstruction that questions claims of authenticity, origin and foundation, the Islamization of knowledge project deploys deconstruction to resurrect the authority of religious knowledge.

Within this movement, Ragab (1996, 1998) attempts to combine reason (rationality), faith (intuition) and senses (empiricism) towards a new paradigm of social sciences.<sup>2</sup> He bases his work on that of sociologist Pitrim Sorokin (1985), for whom the value system that shapes the truth of knowledge includes a) the ideational, b) the sensate and c) the idealistic super systems of culture (Sorokin: 226–83). Ideational truth pertains to truth revealed by God and his messengers, the sensate based on truth constructed on the basis of what can be perceived through senses, hence empiricism and the idealistic as the synthesise of both made by our reason. Ragab (1998) proposes that the challenge is to unify the three sources of knowledge, i.e. revelation/faith/intuition, reason and senses in a unified paradigm.

### ***A revised look at the divisions of the world***

Most writings on the Islamization of knowledge or the Islamization of social sciences so far have been devoted to the methodological steps needed for the development of this episteme. So far, very little has been written about international relations using this postmodern lens. What has been written returns to new interpretations of classical sources, especially of the division of the world into *Dar al Islam* and *Dar al Harb*, which is said to have only responded to the circumstances of the time to define the space and the rules of Islamic territories. Abu Sulayman (1994), for example, contends that the narrow application of classical Muslim

methodology has led to rigidity and exclusiveness. Al Alwani (1998: vii) further argues that the division of the world into regions of war and peace diminishes the possibility of a genuine dialogue between civilizations. They take as the point of departure the fact that the divisions of the world were not found in the Qur'an and *Sunna*, but were instead human attempts to make sense of relations between states. 'So it is not at all obligatory for us to uphold these concepts' writes Tariq Ramadan (1999: 130), not necessarily part of the Islamization of knowledge movement but an Islamic thinker living in Europe.

Yet, the theorization of a new IR theory based on morality and intuition in addition to materialism has not been pursued enough to date. Instead, revisionist scholars are precisely using empiricism and positivism to understand contemporary relations between Muslims and the nation-states they find themselves in as a result of globalization and migration. Globalization, with its flows and open borders and population movements, forced or voluntary, has led to the settlement of Muslims all over the world. Their fate is linked to that of the society they live in, making it problematic to draw a line of demarcation between them and the non-Muslims on the sole considerations of space. The challenge is what to call Western countries where Muslims live as minorities, and where the *Dar al Harb* does not define their environment. Ramadan prefers the use of *Dar al Ahd* (abode of treaties) or *Dar al Amn* (the abode of security) to define Western countries, given that the fundamental rights of Muslims are protected there and that treaties are signed between nations directly or through the United Nations (Ramadan 1999: 125–7).

If relations between two distinct 'abodes' in the sense of space are no longer the adequate dyad, instead, it is necessary to classify relations between human beings belonging to different civilizations, cultures, ethics and religions, as well as relations between citizens' continuous interaction with the social, legal, economic or political framework of the spaces they live in (Ramadan 2005: 75–6). Sabet (2003: 185–6) proposes that the revision of the binary is therefore necessary along dynamic flows of forces and values. A new neoclassical Islamic framework is needed to juxtapose a new conception of relations between norms and values on the one hand and interests and interactions on the other. Such an updated Islamic theory of nations should be based on religio-political reconceptualization of the modern state as contingent rather than necessary.

Thus, the objective of the new Islamic IR theories in construction is to 'balance the three forces of local heritage, modern demands, and Islamic commandments' (Rajaei 1999) in a way that is inclusive and respectful of a dialogue between civilizations (Abu Sulayman 1994).

### Analysis of the options and differences

From the various attempts described above, it becomes apparent that the search for non-Western IR confronts the tension between space and ideas. The Islamic world needs scrutiny not as a 'region' where international relations plays out, but as a culture zone where thinking goes on about what constitutes as knowledge, the 'good life' and its ultimate purpose. A number of observations can be made:

***A potential Islamic IR theory differs in essence from Western approaches***

The nature of the Islamic theory on international relations is decisively normative, in the Aristotelian sense of sciences as not only a reflection on what is, but also on what should be/what must be done. It is based fundamentally not on empirical observations of behaviours between states and predictions of what behaviour would be, but on how institutions reflect the essence of an idea, a norm, a morality.

Mirbagheri (2006) argues that while Hobbes and Kant believe peace is a better way of life and a state of peace can better achieve progress and stability, in Islam, peace is advocated as a divine quality, a transcendental guidance to be pursued in order to achieve the original state of 'felicity that we were in paradise, our former dwelling'. In Islamic tradition, peace is based on justice and associated with the quality of virtue. Justice is the ultimate ethical impetus that structures political community in Islam (Barazangi *et al.* 1996). 'Peace that is based on justice would mean a balanced, fair and tranquil state of affairs, where all concerned would enjoy their due rights and protection' (Mirbagheri 2006: 3). This conception of peace is therefore at odds with the realist dictum that order should precede justice, based on the premise that justice cannot be sought or implemented in a state of chaos. In the Islamic definition of justice, a wrong order itself constitutes injustice. Order therefore cannot appear to precede justice, which by itself would require the undoing of unjust orders and replacing them with just ones. Within Islam, the dictates of morality and ethics as well as the interdependence between man, God and nature, are supposed to replace the pursuit of individual happiness and the reason of state.

***The debate is more dynamic than merely reactionary***

A first read could debunk the idealism of potential independent thinking. IR theory-making in the contemporary world continues to be vis-à-vis the 'other', the West in this case. If not rejecting or adopting the mainstream theories of IR, the experience of behaviour that can provide the basis of observation is still constructed in the context of a 'dialogue' in the best of cases, and substitution or conflict otherwise. Indeed, as Acharya and Buzan argue, Western IRT has gained a Gramscian hegemony. The quest is already set against an a priori, to either find an adoption of IRT to 'fit' a particular region, or its rejection. The alternative has to be 'created' in imitation or rejection of existing models. But both adoption or rejection, we argued, are part of the same reaction, hence far from a genuine creation, and ultimately meaningless as a creative exercise because they are already succumbing to the power of the hegemonic Western IRT. By default, by reacting they assert the powerlessness of alternatives.

But a closer read points to a plurality of dialogues and points of view. It may be more appropriate to talk about Muslim theories of international relations than a single Muslim theory. In fact, alternative vision(s) exist within the Islamic viewpoint that together have 'other' visions regarding relations between state and society, the individual and community, morality, justice and emancipation. These visions,

different as they may be, together build on traditions that question scientific reasoning without spirituality (Nasr 1997 quoted in Pasha 2003: 117), the supremacy of the sovereign individual and the 'conception of human agency and purpose' (Nasr 1975 quoted in Pasha 2003: 117).

Theorization is thus being conducted in parallel with debates on modernity. As Euben (2002: 46) argues, modernity emerged through a process of self-redefinition born out of dialogue between the West and its own past. Islamic thinkers, then, are simultaneously engaged in two dialogues: one across time with their own historical genesis and their examination of the place and function of reason in Islamic thought and divine knowledge, and the other across cultures, in an inescapable engagement with how the West for itself and for others decoupled the pursuit of knowledge, truths and reasons. Islamic modernist theorization is conducted then within a simultaneous engagement in conversations past and present and in traditions Western and Islamic. All these make the worlds of Islam and Islamic thinking, heterogeneous, fractured and dynamic (Pasha 2003).

***The heart of the multiplicity of dialogues within Islam lies in two essentially different approaches***

Mirbagheri (2006) rightly points to the two main and potentially contradictory categories within Islamic thinking: a jurisprudential approach and an epistemic one. The jurisprudential framework, based on *fiqh* and the Sharia, sees humanity as absolute and ahistorical. The word of God does not require perfection, all that is needed is the proper implementation of Divine Directives as revealed in the Qur'an and the deeds and words of the Prophet. The epistemic approach, on the other hand, pursued by the modernists and the Islamization of knowledge movement, for example, as well as by the gnosticism and Sufism traditions, sees virtue in interaction and exchange between humanity and history. Religious knowledge can only advance through a dialogue with reason and other branches of human knowledge continually. When religion is separated from religious understanding, the words of God may be perfect and immune from historicity, but their understanding, which is an entirely human affair, is subject to change and reinterpretation (ibid.). Time, place and historical developments affect mankind's ability to understand. If jurisprudential Islam is preoccupied with the question of human duties, epistemic Islam concerns itself with the 'spirit of Islam and interacts with its environment, accepts the historicity of man and that of his interpretation of religion' (ibid.). As to what concerns thinking around international relations, the jurisprudential viewpoint leaves the debate to the clerical hierarchy which decides on the meanings of *jihad* and hands them down to followers. The epistemic approach, on the other hand, leaves the door of *ijtihad* open for reinterpretation. This is at the core of continuous debates among Muslims.

***Theorization can best be understood through the constructivist and critical approaches in IRT***

To be able to accept that these debates constitute a complex interaction of ideational and material factors at play in domestic and international arrangements within the Islamic worldview, the constructivist road needs to be pursued. The realist and liberal orthodoxies have already come under assault within Western IRT in any case, with attempts to put ethnicity, gender, culture and religion into them. The introduction of norms, values and ideational viewpoints/dimensions compete with utilitarian state or power-focused theories. An opening for the understanding of a potential Islamic IRT should begin by addressing the role of religious legitimacy or ethics in international relations. This would build on the growing literature on the role of normative power in international relations (Spruyt 2000; Wilmer 1993), or put in other words, how 'being perceived as morally correct is becoming a source of influence on the international stage' (Fox 2001: 67). In the constructivist challenge to mainstream IR theories, three variables are of specific interest to the potential of an Islamic IRT: religion, culture and identity.

Religion has indeed been a neglected factor in international relations theory. For Fox and Sandler (2004) the tendency to ignore religion to explain behaviours and outcomes in world politics lies in the Western-centric orientation of IR theory and – more specifically – its internalization of the Enlightenment norms of secularism and rationality. From a realist position, the Westphalian Peace was based on the very idea of the demise of an era in which religions caused wars (Laustsen and Wæver 2000: 706). Similarly, classical liberalism advocated for the separation of church and state.

Fox (2001: 54) further associates this negligence to the fact that the social sciences have their origin in the rejection of religion in their early search for seeking rational explanations and guidelines for human behaviour to replace theocratic ones. Twentieth-century political scientists believed modernization would reduce the political significance of primordial phenomena such as ethnicity and religion (Haynes 1994; Fox 1997, 2001). From Voltaire to Auguste Comte, Emil Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx, all predicated their theories on the disappearance of superstition and authoritarian religion. The result is that religion has been delegated to the private sphere, a banishment from public life that 'becomes the basis of political judgement, of evaluation (and indictment) of other cultures and societies where this experiment allegedly has not been performed' (Pasha 2003: 115). The appearance of religion in other spaces then is labelled as a primordial leftover, a 'return' (Lewis 1976) or an 'ideology' when it mingles with public institutions. Yet, those who do look at religion conclude, like Clifford Geertz, that not only do they include a belief system that affects behaviour, but that most people also find religion necessary to interpret the world around them, especially when bad things happen (Geertz 1973). As has been argued above, Islam as a religion offers its believers a moral claim that colours the purpose of life, that of serving God and a *raison d'état* by extension, that of protecting the faith, lives and property of Muslims.

Since the 1990s, culture has also emerged as a factor within IRT (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996). Some scholars, such as Robinson, see globalization as having created a new type of culture: one that is translational based on accumulation, consumerism and individualism, and which has eroded 'nationally defined geographic identity' (Robinson 1998: 578, 581). But Pasha (2005: 548) argues against such economic determinism, which is also adopted by the neo-Gramscians preoccupied with the consolidation of global hegemony and its extension from the core to the periphery. For Pasha, neo-Gramscians offer a nominalist and formalistic view of culture: culture as intersubjectivity restricted to the domain of dominant ideology (Cox 1987). In this view, neo-Gramscians are preoccupied with the clash between the homogenizing forces of the West-centred liberal order and an essentialized Islam, 'an atavistic residue of an unfinished modernity' (Pasha 2005: 555) which resists against assimilation and engages in counter-hegemonic struggles. Pasha thus labels the neo-Gramscians' views of culture as 'Soft Orientalism': culture appears as ideology, and the conception of culture as counter-hegemonic 'resistance, native, local and particularistic', a potential impediment to the establishment of West-centred global hegemony (ibid.: 548). Yet, this is a marked departure from Gramsci's own understanding of culture as a complex ensemble of materialist, symbolic and interpretative practices (Gramsci 1992, 1996), which better fits the understanding of the contribution of Islam to international relations.

Vahdat (2003) argues for the use of critical theory to examine the relationship between culture, economic development and political democracy in the Islamic world. Critical theorists' understanding of subjectivity as a key feature of modernity, and Habermas' attempts to analyse the synthesis between subjectivity and universality, are useful frameworks to understand the world of Islam, even though it may seem at first glance that the principle of human subjectivity is diametrically opposed to the Islamic culture in particular. Vahdat, however, argues that within contemporary Islamic discourses, especially by followers of Islamic mystical traditions and philosophy, the 'theomorphic ontological foundations of modern subjectivity' (Vahdat 2003) are being questioned. Subjectification is derived from the notion that the individual, as a member of community, derives authority from God and is His agent by virtue of submitting to His authority. Through recognition that sovereignty belongs to the Divine Subject and through submission to no other authority than that of Divine authority, the individual gains an indirect subjectivity vis-à-vis other profane entities (ibid.). This mediated subject of modernity in a collectivist and historicist configuration, may not be, however, the same conception perceived in its atomized incarnation within liberalism. The difference, for Vahdat, is the question that needs to be probed by contemporary critical theorists.

Constructivist scholars, since the late 1980s, have been engaging with an examination of the role of identity, debunking the IR literature dominated by materialist/structuralist neo-utilitarian approaches. As Hinnebusch (2005) demonstrates in his study of the role of identity in IR between constructivism and neo-utilitarianism, the construction and domination of a particular identity is a product of complex interaction of ideational and objective factors. For what constitutes as the Islamic world, constructivism can contribute to an anti-essentialist analysis of ideational

dimensions of identities, such as Arabism or Islamism as both cause of and constraint upon leadership's decision-making (Teti 2007: 135). Constructivists would acknowledge that pursuit of material interest may motivate state elites, but the necessity to legitimize this in terms of norms and identities, be it Arab or Islamic identities shared with their population, constrains their policy options (Barnett 1998).

In the Westphalian model, states' legitimacy is derived from the congruence between identity/nation and sovereignty/state. In the Middle East, by contrast, the existence of strong substate and powerful suprapstates identities challenge loyalty to the state (Hinnebusch 2005). The divergence from the Westphalian model is because identification with such units as tribes, society or an Islamic *Umma* has historically been stronger than with the territorial state. States were not formed naturally out of wars but imposed through Western imperial powers, disrupting the potential for pre-existing cultural unity, which was the basis of empires ruling in the name of *Umma* in the Islamic world.

Suprapstate identities, such as Arab nationalism, came about as a result of the vacuum created after collapse of the Ottoman empire as a struggle against Western imperialism after World War I. Pan-Arab identity led to a distinct belonging to an Arab world (*a'lam al-arabia*) with shared memories of unity over victories and humiliation. When pan-Arabism saw its decline after the 1967 Arab defeat, the 1973 oil boom that enriched the more conservative Islamic states, as well as the Iranian revolution, saw the rise of an alternative, that of pan-Islamism instead. Pan-Islamism became the ideology that supposedly replaced the decline of secular ideologies that had once expressed the discontentment of subordinate classes.

In Iran, the Islamic regime sought to export a pan-Islamic revolution aimed at creating similar Islamic states that would act against the world arrogance in the name of the oppressed (*mustadafun*) of the Muslim world and Third World.

Yet, the example of Iran did not lead to the overthrow of any secular regimes within the Middle East. The Saudi-promoted Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), in the meantime, seems also not to have become a unifying institution of pan-Islamism (Hinnebusch 2005: 168; Sheikh 2003). It does not have the power to coordinate common action and has had no record in settling inter-Muslim disputes or creating consensus among Muslim states. It may be possible to concur that the state structures, anarchy of the state system and the absence of economic interdependence among Muslim states as well as their dependence on the core, deprive supra identities such as pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism to be used for effective common action. And yet, the existence of mutually inclusive, multiple levels of internal identities, be they Islamic or loyalties to Arab kin and tribe, continue to present formidable challenges to the legitimacy of states from within. It is precisely the tension between external structures of dependency and fragmentation with internal identity that deviates from the traditional IRT predictions on Middle East politics.

Political Islam as a movement, for example, by seeking the further Islamization of the state and of public life, education, the media, laws etc., is a reminder that legitimization of the state not only comes from its external sovereignty but its



internal adherence to the 'rules' of a majority Muslim population. This creates a specific challenge for the external/internal dynamics of governance in the Islamic world. States have to follow the reason of state in order to survive but the reason of Islam in order to maintain their legitimacy. Hinnebusch (2005: 159) argues that they overcome this challenge by satisfying a supranational identity as the official state ideologies, as Egypt did with pan-Arabism and as Saudi Arabia has done with Islam. To understand the specificity of congruence between state and mass identities that exist in the Islamic world would require an IR approach that looks at the interaction of material structure and norms, of interests and identity.

The modern nation-state in the abode of Islam, argues Sabet, is 'a constituted object not a constitutive subject, existing as a contingent by-product of outside formations and not necessary as a sign of inside principles' (Sabet 2003: 187). Yet it operates within a framework where beliefs continue to determine and influence policy and thus are potentially constitutive of the domestic and the external environment.

Classical Islamic jurisprudence clarifies the role of the Islamic state in the binary division of international relations, whether war or peace is the organizing principle between the two, on the imperative of abiding by the rule of Islamic law: internally, preaching Islam and protecting the lives, property and faith of believers within, and externally, inviting people to Islam because Islam is a universal religion (Abo-Kazleh 2006: 43). In the Sunni tradition, this dual duty falls directly under the domain of Islamic caliphates historically. In the Shia alternative, the legacy of Islamic spiritual and political rule after the Prophet Muhammad was handed down not through elected caliphs but through the 12 direct descendents, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (members of the house), known as the Imams. But even in the Shia tradition, where religious jurisprudence was separated from the government after the disappearance of the last Imam in AD 939, the duty of any state, regime or monarchy ruling over the Islamic population is to serve this dual function. Such was the predicament of the fifteenth-century Safavids, who were the first dynasty to accept the Shia faith as the official religion, or in the twentieth-century theocracy by guardianship of Islamic jurists (*velayat-e faqih*) in Iran.

Thus, Islamic jurisprudential theory has a different conception of the meaning of the state. The state is a means towards securing an Islamic or 'good' life, and of spreading Islamic values, and not an end in itself. In this regard, Sabet (2003) argues that the conceptualization is much like globalization, which sets the states in the service of transnational flow of capital, goods and information. For the fourteenth-century Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldoun (1332–1406), the state emerged as an outcome not of anarchy but of human cooperation, based on reason, social solidarity with an emphasis on group consciousness and social cohesion, what he called *assabiyya*. In his *Muqaddimah* (1958), Ibn Khaldoun identified three broad types of regimes and forms of domestic leadership: 1) a government/leadership based solely on natural social solidarity, 2) one based on reason and natural law and 3) government/leadership based on divine law (sharia) (Sabet, 2003: 183–4). Should the purpose of *assabiyya* be solely concerned with the worldly or material goods of both the rulers and their subjects, then this polity would fall into the

category of what Ibn Khaldun termed rational regimes. Should, however, the leadership be concerned as well with the good of the subjects in the hereafter (*akhirah*), then a Regime of Law (Sharia) unfolds. This regime, according to Ibn Khaldun, is superior since its purpose is to maintain a balance between both life dimensions, providing for moderation against excessive materialism. It reflects a community (*Umma*) upon which God's favour and pleasure is bestowed (Sabet 1994: 587). Sabet argues that such classification, when extended into international relations theory, would classify realism and neorealism in the category of rational regimes and classical (jurisprudential) Islamic theory under the Regime of Law.

The Islamic law of nations thus constitutes a way of thinking about the world, a conception of 'order' with its own set of assumptions and premises that are entirely different from rational-based theories. If power/capability is the driving force in realism and neorealism, Islamic theory relies on social cohesion and a social unity towards a moral good. Western mainstream IRT (realism, neorealism and liberalism) and Islamic theory represent therefore 'distinct philosophical and religious discourses which influence and structure both conceptions and actions' (Sabet 2003: 183).

## **Conclusions**

We can conclude that the basis does exist within the Islamic worldview(s) for alternative ways of organizing knowledge about international relations. These alternatives are built on the power of ideas such as faith, justice and striving towards the 'good life' of religious morality, as opposed to the pursuit of material interests and power per se. Yet, the Islamic world as a region is challenged in its ability to apply Islamic theories in practice. This may not only be due to the fact that the Islamic world lacks the material independence to be able to present and adhere to an alternative worldview, but also because the discourses within the Islamic world are fragmented while being dynamic.

By way of conclusion, we shall then engage with the five hypotheses drawn by Acharya and Buzan for why a non-Western IRT does not seem apparent to the naked eye.

### ***1. Western IRT has discovered the right path to understanding IR***

The case of Islam, like the other ones examined in the book, also shows that mainstream Western IR theory does not capture the realities of the Muslim worldview, nor always the behaviour of states and elites in the Islamic world. This is mainly due to the insistence of Western IRT on states, power and sovereignty. The authority of Western IR rules in the Islamic world as well, because of the general acceptance of its method, epistemology and ontology. The evidence is that Islamic scholars engage with these in explaining their adoption, rejection and hybridity. However, the choice does not stop at explaining or debunking the theories as applied to the particular situation of the Muslim world. Islamic scholars instead seek to return to the original sources of the Qur'an, the *Hadith* and *Sunnah* to see whether other

worldviews are possible. In this exercise, values such as justice, emancipation, morality and variables, such as intuition and faith, try to co-exist with empiricism, utilitarianism, rationality and materialism as the foundations for theory.

## ***2. Western IRT has acquired hegemonic status in the Gramscian sense***

Acharya and Buzan's second hypothesis fits the case under consideration, not only because of the hegemonic standing of Western IRT *sui generis*, but because of the circumstances in which alternatives are being sought in the Islamic world. The Islamic point of view cannot overcome this hegemony, precisely for reasons contrary to the Chinese case in this book. If the emerging and unstoppable status of China has allowed for Marxist and Maoist ideology and worldview to compete as a respected competitor, the assault under which the Muslim world operates today – the weaknesses of the artificial states, material dependency on the core and fragmentation of dialogues within – make the Islamic IRT a challenged applicant for alternatives.

## ***3. Non-Western IR theories do exist, but are hidden***

We have argued in this chapter that an Islamic vision of IRT is actually being created as a dynamic framework caught between two dialogues. One vis-à-vis Western IRT, the other vis-à-vis its own past, historical legacy and classical sources. This process is alive and dynamic, both reactionary and creative. The question is not therefore whether it does or does not exist, but whether it can survive the multiple debates both within the Muslim world – between Islam and other religions/culture zones – and among Muslims in Western societies. But through the lens of rationalism, state power and utility, the non-Western alternative from the Islamic worldview, based on justice, faith and emancipation, cannot be easily recognized, even when seen.

## ***4. Local conditions discriminate against the production of IR theory***

Although this chapter has not dealt with the institutional production of IR theory through publications, research and pedagogical institutions in the Muslim world, theorization or thinking around Islamic IRT has been brought about because of local conditions and circumstances if one broadens the understanding of 'local conditions' beyond Acharya and Buzan's understanding to include the Islamic world's past expansion and responses to external challenges. Thus, we have examined this in the context of Islamic jurisprudence's codification of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims at the time of the Muslim conquests, in the reactions and adoptions as a result of encounters with the European empires, and the reinterpretation of classical sources that has been prompted by globalization and by interest in reviving the episteme of Islam. Muslim intellectuals, whether in the region or in the West, are engaged in an active dialogue about the

relevance of these theories in the context of modernization, both in practice and in theory.

### **5. *The West has a big headstart, and what we are seeing is a period of catching up***

The Islamic world as it stands today does indeed have to deal with the penetration of the postcolonial international political economy, with the creation of modern nation-states in the first place, as well as with the construction of a Westphalian-based IRT. However, we have argued that within the Islamic worldview, in theory if not in practice, other 'truths' are possible for the very purpose of the 'good life' and for the instruments, such as the state and the international system, that are supposed to achieve this ultimate end.

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## Notes

- 1 Most of this literature in the English language comes from the proceedings of the two major conferences: one held in Pakistan in 1982 published under the title *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge* (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought 1988), the other under the title *Toward Islamization of Disciplines*, (Herndon Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought 1989).
- 2 See Ragab's work on his website [www.ibrahimragab.com](http://www.ibrahimragab.com) (accessed 16 November 2008).

## 9 World history and the development of non-Western international relations theory

*Barry Buzan and Richard Little<sup>1</sup>*

It is now well over a decade since we first began to argue that an important and necessary way for IR theorists to make progress is to work from a world historical perspective. Underpinning this suggestion was the assertion that mainstream IR theory, or what in this book is being identified as Western IR theory, is chronically underdeveloped, especially when its conception of the international system is brought into focus. This underdevelopment is primarily the product of theorists operating within a methodological straitjacket that makes it difficult for these theorists to break free from five fundamental and interdependent shortcomings which severely constrain the potential for understanding and explaining international relations. These shortcomings were identified as *presentism*, or the tendency to view the past in terms of the present; *ahistoricism*, or the insistence that there are trans-historical concepts that allow us to identify universal regularities; *Eurocentrism*, or the privileging of European experience in our understanding of international relations; *anarchophilia*, or the propensity to equate international relations with the existence of an anarchic system; and *state-centrism*, or the preoccupation with the state at the expense of other international actors (Buzan and Little 1996; 2000). Although the emergence of constructivism in Western IRT is now promoting a methodological toolkit that has the potential to encourage theorists to overcome these shortcomings, in practice, they still continue to influence much of the thinking engaged in by Western IR theorists.

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is in the first place, to reassert the importance of embracing world history for the purpose of developing IR theory, but then, in the second place, to suggest that non-Western IR theorists have a crucial and distinctive role to play in the promotion of a world historical perspective on IR theory. Such a perspective requires us to move away from the assumption that the history of modern Europe encompasses the quintessential elements of international relations. As a consequence, once we shift the focus of attention away from Europe, then long-established truisms in Western IRT are quickly called into question. It becomes apparent, on the one hand, for example, that anarchic systems have taken very different forms across the course of world history and, on the other, that anarchic systems have also regularly broken down and given way to more hierarchically structured international systems. As a consequence, the balance of power cannot be regarded as a reliable mechanism that has perennially ensured the



survival of any anarchic arena; nor can the balance of power provide the basis for a universal law of international relations. As a recent series of case studies illustrates (Kaufman, Little and Wohlforth 2007; Wohlforth *et al.* 2007), there is no corner of the globe where the balance of power has ever succeeded in generating a stable anarchy across the course of world history. It follows that the only way to sustain the validity of a balance of power theory, therefore, is either to extend the concept and/or severely circumscribe its scope of application.

Once it is acknowledged that it is unhelpful to rely exclusively on modern European history to provide the evidential basis for a comprehensive theoretical understanding of international relations, then not only is it obviously useful to call on non-Western theorists to help in the development of IR theory, but it is also clear that these theorists will generally have a substantial comparative advantage when it comes to formulating and applying theory that relates to their own area of the world. Drawing on this expertise should help to promote a world historical perspective on international relations and at the same time it could also, potentially, help to establish a theoretical perspective that world historians could usefully employ. So far, IR theory has failed to have much or indeed any impact on the work of world historians.<sup>2</sup> Although, *prima facie*, it is self-evident that IR theory should provide an obvious source of ideas that are useful to world historians, in practice, these historians have looked elsewhere for their theoretical frameworks. In the past, however, these frameworks have not necessarily allowed world historians to escape from the dangers of Eurocentrism that have so beset IR theory. But non-Western historians have played an important role in helping world history to break free from long-established Eurocentric thinking. By the same token, there is scope for non-Western IR theorists to help IRT to escape from Eurocentrism, along with the other shortcomings that constrain theory building in the field, but also to help the field to build a framework that could prove more useful to world historians than established IRT.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the continuing dominance of the West, and specifically the United States, on the theorization of world history. But the section also takes account of the growing impact of non-Western world historians on the development of world history theory. Without doubt, this impact helps to explain a growing sensitivity to the nature and consequences of Eurocentrism on the orientation adopted by world historians in the past. World historians are now increasingly conscious that Eurocentrism has distorted our understanding of developments in both the East and the West. To overcome these distortions, there has been a growing emphasis on *comparative* and *connected* world histories and, as a consequence, there is an emerging recognition that the established periodization of world history has been profoundly influenced by Eurocentrism and indeed, so too has our contemporary conception of geographical space. These points are illustrated by focusing on the burgeoning interest among world historians in the early modern epoch, defined from a Eurasian rather than a European perspective.

The second section argues that Eurocentrism continues to bedevil established IRT. So, for example, although there are individual theorists who contest

conventional Eurocentric wisdom, the main theoretical frameworks continue to be dominated by a Eurocentric perspective.<sup>3</sup> We have argued elsewhere, however, that the English School, by contrast, has made a serious attempt to work from a world historical perspective (Buzan and Little 2000; Little 2004). However, when we look at the English School's account of the expansion of international society the analysis once again becomes resolutely Eurocentric. This perspective, moreover, has not yet been seriously challenged by non-Western IR theorists. A world historical perspective reveals, however, that the English School assessment is deeply suspect and indeed serves to reproduce a powerful Eurocentric myth that was established in the nineteenth century and then perpetuated in the twentieth century. The resulting English School myopia is particularly surprising given English School sensitivity to world history and the fact that the first generation of its theorists was well aware of an alternative and more historically nuanced approach to Europe's relations with the rest of the world. The focus on this aspect of English School theory helps to highlight, therefore, that all IR theorists still have a substantial amount of work to do before they can effectively accommodate a world historical perspective. Non-Western IR theorists are particularly well positioned to take up this challenge.

## **World history**

There is a significant tension within the study of history between the attempt to develop increasingly detailed accounts of the past based on microscopic readings of the available primary evidence and, at the same time, the desire for a macroscopic perspective to ensure these accounts can be fitted into a larger spatial, temporal and explanatory framework. The macroscopic perspective is provided by world historians but their approach is still often regarded with considerable suspicion by historians who see themselves as working at the coalface of historical research. There is, however, a growing awareness that it is not possible to privilege either of these putatively divergent perspectives and there is an acknowledgement that not only is it necessary to proceed on both fronts but that it is also essential to ensure there is constant interaction between them. From a world historical perspective, therefore, there are two major problems with many existing attempts to study history: first, because of growing specialization, historical knowledge is becoming so fragmented that any sense of the bigger picture is lost, and second, there is the danger that the nation-state is still too frequently drawn upon to provide the broader context within which most detailed research is located. For world historians, the continuing emphasis on national states effectively inhibits the development of an ecumenical understanding of world history. Nevertheless, there is growing confidence amongst world historians. As Bayly (2004: 469) puts it, 'All historians are world historians now though many have not yet realised it.'

McNeill (1986: 71), who is often seen to have resuscitated the contemporary interest in world history among professional historians, has argued that world history was once viewed 'as the only sensible basis for understanding the past'. So, for example, at the start of the fourteenth century, Rashid al-din Tabib, a court historian in Tabriz, then the capital of the Mongol empire, the largest ever

land-based empire, wrote a world history that embraced all of Eurasia (Rice 1976). Because contemporary historians have generally been so suspicious of attempts to write history from such an expansive temporal and spatial perspective, the initial attempts in the twentieth century to fashion world history frequently came from 'amateur' historians. In the aftermath of World War I, for example, novelist and futurologist H. G. Wells decided that the only way to make sense of the tragic events surrounding the war was to view them from a very long world historical perspective. In the process of writing his history, however, Wells (1925: 2) also became very conscious of the extraordinary extent to which European historians had 'minimised' the role of non-Europeans in the 'drama of mankind'. In other words, Wells recognized the need to increase the spatial as well as the temporal reach of history.

But embracing these two dimensions is not necessarily sufficient to produce a useful world historical perspective as the recent and very rapid growth of interest in world history in the US illustrates. Northrup (2005: 259) argues that it is 'no coincidence that world history is an American passion'. Students and historians, he suggests, want to identify and understand the historical processes whereby the US emerged as the dominant global power and, presumably, whether these processes will continue to work in its favour. The problem with this perspective is that it risks linking the study of world history with a particular teleology. Bentley (2005), for example, argues that there has been a determined effort by some conservatives in the US to co-opt current attempts to teach history from a world historical perspective. But, while 'flying the flag of world history', their aim, according to Bentley (*ibid.*: 63), is to 'display American values in a flattering light'.<sup>4</sup> But even genuine world historians can fall foul of the same problem. For example, when he reassessed his own view of world history, McNeill (1991: xvi) acknowledged that he had been unconsciously influenced by the 'imperial mood' that prevailed in the US after World War II. Hence the title of his world history: *The Rise of the West*. But, by the same token, Bentley is also disturbed by attempts from the left to use world history to reveal that the collapse of capitalism is inevitable. It is on these grounds that he attacks what he otherwise sees as Wallerstein's very serious attempt to develop a world historical perspective.

Nevertheless, this line of argument establishes an interesting and important area of congruence between the study of international relations and the study of world history because both can be viewed as approaches to knowledge that are not only dominated by American academics but which have also been dominated by an essentially Western perspective. As a consequence, it is unsurprising to find that the kind of arguments made by Acharya and Buzan in the context of IRT have also been made in the context of world history. So, for example, Sachsenmaier (2007: 472) observes that 'Western world historians can afford to ignore non-Western research without hampering their professional reputation, while scholars outside the West cannot do the equivalent'. Sachsenmaier argues, therefore, that although this privileged position may well be 'rooted in an unequal, Eurocentric past', it remains the case that Western scholarship in the field of world history is 'primarily an exporter but not an importer of theory'. Moreover, although there

are some academic links between the Western and non-Western worlds, it remains true that 'research approaches in "peripheral" academic regions are hardly connected' (ibid.: 473).

But Sachsenmaier also suggests that there have long been 'countercurrents to Eurocentric thinking' and that 'efforts to delink from Western theories became an important part of identity politics in many national theatres' (2007: 474–5). Stuckey and Fuchs (2003: 21–2) make the same point, that non-Western countries 'experienced an increase in the estimation of their own history after 1945, distinguishing themselves from Western interpretation of history'. By the same token, Thornton (1998: 3) notes that from the 1970s onwards 'Eurocentrism met numerous challenges from the historians of the newly emerging non-Western world'. Conscious of this development, world historians have become much more sensitive to the nature and impact of Eurocentrism than have IR theorists. So there is a much clearer recognition that world-systems theory, for example, which represented a Western attempt to critique Eurocentrism from a world history perspective, actually has the effect of depriving the 'oppressed' of their subjectivity 'rather than making them the centers of alternative narratives' (Sachsenmaier 2007: 476). More specifically, Indian intellectuals have insisted that nationalist and Marxist approaches to history 'forced the Indian past into a straitjacket of exogenous, Western concepts' thereby 'perpetuating the intellectual patterns that had supported European supremacy in the geopolitical arena' (ibid.: 478).<sup>5</sup> These counter-currents, however, have not only been developing in independent centres on the academic periphery; because faculties in American universities have become much more diversified in recent decades, academics from the periphery have been hired and 'diasporic networks' have been established and they have become significant and vociferous. Sachsenmaier concludes, therefore, that provided these trends persist, then it is possible to envisage that what Véliz (1994) has called the 'Hellenistic Period of Anglo-American civilization' is now coming to an end (ibid.: 480–1).

Sachsenmaier acknowledges, of course, that transforming world history into 'ecumenical history' is not an easy or straightforward task. Nevertheless, in contrast to IR theorists, world historians are now increasingly conscious of the need to make this move. They are acutely aware that from liberalism to Marxism, the major Western perspectives on history and social science are deeply entrenched in a generally unrecognized and thus essentialized Eurocentrism. As a consequence, Bentley (2005: 77) acknowledges that while we need large-scale empirical narratives, it is essential to move beyond what Lyotard has called metanarratives, which are both ahistorical and totalizing and derive from 'specific ideological positions'. Because these metanarratives derive from the European Enlightenment, they invariably provide accounts that view world history from a European perspective and that are designed to account for the 'rise of the West'. There is, of course, a practical as well as an empirical reason why this perspective has proved to be so resilient. As Braudel notes, because Europe invented historians, its own history is particularly 'well lit'<sup>6</sup> (cited in O'Brien 2003: 72). Unsurprisingly, Western social scientists from both Marxist and Weberian camps have drawn on the extensive work of these historians to show why the political, institutional and cultural frameworks

developed over many centuries enabled the West to surge ahead of Asia. As O'Brien (*ibid.*: 73) insists, however, modern historical research has 'effectively rendered a whole corpus of Marxian and Weberian interpretations redundant'. But there is, nevertheless, an empirical reason for the resilience of Eurocentrism because no one denies that Europe did have a significant and distinctive impact on world history. But what world historians are beginning to suggest is that this period is much shorter and possibly less significant than traditional Eurocentric accounts have indicated. Certainly, the assumption that the political, economic and cultural systems that developed and prevailed in the West were inherently more dynamic than those of the East is now seriously challenged.<sup>7</sup>

But Stokes (2001: 524) has suggested that as the approach of world historians has become increasingly sophisticated, so they are now 'moving away from Eurocentric versus anti-Eurocentric polemicizing'.<sup>8</sup> There is a growing recognition that the key task of world historians is to break down the artificial barriers that have been built up in the past by historians working within both particular time periods and specific geographic areas. There is an increasing interest in comparative method and in particular the principle of 'reciprocal comparison', which entails 'viewing both sides of the comparison as "deviations" when seen through the expectations of the other, rather than leaving one as always the norm' (Pomeranz 2000: 8).<sup>9</sup> By employing this method, Pomeranz is able to show that prior to 1800 there were no differences between Europe and China that would obviously lead one to dominate and the other to decay. In a similar vein, Lieberman (1997, 1997a, 2003) argues that between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries there were sustained, and broadly synchronized movements towards territorial consolidation, as well as administrative centralization, cultural or ethnic integration and commercial intensification in both Europe and Southeast Asia. As a consequence he is undertaking a systematic comparison of six regions (modern-day Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam in Southeast Asia alongside France, Tsarist Russia and Japan) in an attempt to account for these common developments. Following the same route, Moore (1997: 600) argues that instead of seeing the emergence of Western Europe as a unique event, it should be treated as 'an aspect of the reshaping of complex civilization in Eurasia after the decline of its ancient empires'.

In an interesting riposte to Lieberman, however, Subrahmanyam (1997) draws attention to another important development in the study of world history that is the focus on connected history or what the French refer to as *histoire croisée*. From this perspective, according to Kocka (2003: 42–3), comparative method is too 'analytical' because it establishes 'units of analysis' whereas it is essential to identify a 'web of entanglements' that joins these units and is identified by such factors as 'travelling ideas, migrating people, and transnational commerce'. McNeill played a key role in introducing this approach to world history. Reassessing his initial assumption that world history could be recounted in terms of four essentially independent civilizations, McNeill now argues that he failed to take sufficient account of the 'communication nets' which link people together and that as he has taken this factor into account, so his focus of attention has shifted from the idea of 'civilisation' to the idea of 'world system' (1991: xii) and that much more attention needs

to be given to the existence of transcivilizational links (1998; McNeill and McNeill 2003). In the first instance, McNeill asserts, civilisations were autonomous, but that between 1700 and 500 BC, a cosmopolitan world system came into existence on the basis of the ever-widening boundaries of a succession of great empires.

Although there is a potential tension between comparative and connected history, Kocka (2003) insists the approaches are not incompatible and an attempt should be made to combine them.<sup>10</sup> From Subrahmanyam's perspective, however, such a development poses a problem for comparativists like Lieberman who presuppose that we can accept the boundaries of states and regions that are defined by contemporary area studies.<sup>11</sup> Subrahmanyam (1997: 743) insists that if connected history is taken into account, then these established boundaries become problematic and, for example, he challenges the idea that Southeast Asia represents a 'well-defined region' with a right to an 'autonomous history'. During the period that Lieberman focuses on, Subrahmanyam insists that the most important dynamic was provided by the interface between the 'regional' and the 'supra-regional', and so, for the historian 'willing to scratch below the surface of his sources, nothing turns out to be quite what it seems in terms of fixity and local rootedness'. Subrahmanyam (*ibid.*: 745–6) illustrates his argument by focusing on the Bay of Bengal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and he argues that the littoral areas of the bay at that time formed 'a far more tightly knit unit of interaction in this period than the Indian Ocean taken as a whole', with the substantial trade links establishing 'a significant nexus by which military elites, courtiers and religious specialists crossed the bay on a regular basis'. It is on the basis of these links, for example, that it then becomes possible to understand the influence of Persia on Ayutthaya (a Thai kingdom that lasted from 1351 to 1767).<sup>12</sup>

By the same token, Subrahmanyam (1997: 737) also presupposes that connected history has a significant impact on our notion of periodization and like most world historians, he wishes to break free from a view of periodization that operates from a 'particular European trajectory'. Subrahmanyam is here following a similar route to the one charted by Bentley (1996) who drew on the idea of 'cross-cultural interaction' to provide a distinctive periodization of world history. From Bentley's perspective, it is important to recognize that not only has the level of cross-cultural interaction waxed and waned over the course of world history, but the character of cross-cultural interaction has also undergone successive changes. On this basis, for example, he distinguishes between an era of transregional nomadic empires from AD 1000 to 1500 that underwrote direct interaction between individuals from as far apart as Europe and China and the modern era initiated by the Europeans that has given rise to global cultural interactions. While broadly supportive of this approach, Manning (1996) argues that it will inevitably be affected by future empirical investigations and by further conceptual refinement. He notes, in particular, that Bentley's conception of both culture and interaction need to be problematized.

Subrahmanyam is unlikely to disagree with this assessment and, moreover, perhaps unsurprisingly, he is unwilling to see the emergence of the modern era tied so closely to developments initiated from Europe. So, following Lieberman, he accepts the need to identify an 'early modern epoch' and he also acknowledges

that many regional specialists around the world now accept this periodization with 'growing comfort and confidence'. In the context of Eurasia and Africa, he defines this period, 'generously' albeit 'provisionally', from the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century and sees it as representing 'a more-or-less global shift'. For Subrahmanyam, from around 1350 onwards there were attempts to 'push back the limits of the world' on land and at sea, often giving rise to 'momentous changes in conceptions of space' as well as 'an ecological shift of global proportions'.<sup>13</sup>

There were, of course, many other factors that help to characterize this early modern era. Subrahmanyam points, for example, to the importance attached to the idea of 'universal empire' that can be identified in Africa, Europe and across Asia. He also acknowledges the importance that has traditionally been paid to world bullion flows, firearms and the 'Military Revolution'. But his major focus is on Lieberman's interest in state-building across Eurasia in the early modern period and the tendency to 'downplay the global and connected character of the early modern period, in order to reify certain chosen national entities' (1997: 740). He points to the 'permeability of what are often assumed to be closed "cultural zones"' and the importance that needs to be attached to the 'change in the nature and scale of elite movements across political boundaries' (ibid.: 748) during this period. Subrahmanyam accepts, of course, that there were substantial regional variations across Africa and Eurasia but he insists, nevertheless, that we need to seek out 'the at times fragile threads that connected the globe' in the early modern era (ibid.: 762) and acknowledge that they 'often transcended the boundaries defined for us retrospectively by nation-states or Area Studies' (ibid.: 759).

But Subrahmanyam goes on to suggest that nationalism and historical ethnography, with their emphasis on difference, have also 'blinded us to the possibility of connection' (1997: 761). He argues, moreover, that ethnography itself was the product of some of the factors that identify the early modern era such as 'the intensification of travel, the desire to be able to map the world in its entirety and locate each human species in its niche'. More specifically, ethnography made it possible to 'separate the civilized from the uncivilized, as well as to distinguish different degrees of civilization' (ibid.: 761). This conclusion, however, can be seen to be the over-simplification of a much longer and more complex process. In the first place, it is well known that ethnographic distinctions of this kind were made much earlier and this has been clearly documented in the case of the Chinese and the ancient Greeks.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, in the study of international relations, it has been argued that the Europeans only began to institutionalize the distinction between civilized and uncivilized states in the course of the nineteenth century and this process has been very closely associated with the expansion of the international society (Gong 1984; Bull and Watson 1984).

The problem for world historians is that this process of differentiation also had a very significant impact on the establishment and consolidation of the social sciences during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Only relatively recently have social scientists, such as Goody (1996: 226–7) insisted that we need to recognize that 'the major societies of Eurasia were fired in the same crucible' and that many

of the 'general advantages that Westerners have seen as characteristic of their country or continent can reasonably be shown to be illusory'. Goody (*ibid.*: 229) goes on to assert that although this fact is well known to specialists, 'it has rarely been incorporated in the approaches of those historians, sociologists and anthropologists who continue to "primitivise" the East'. It follows that the 'distinctiveness' of the West has been 'puffed up at the expense of the other, distorting not only the understanding of the Orient but of the Occident as well' (*ibid.*: 226). Ironically, therefore, the era identified as 'modern' has been associated with an ethnocentric process whereby our social scientific understanding of 'modernisation' has been systematically distorted. World historians are now, however, beginning to play a crucial role in rectifying the situation and there is a growing acknowledgement, as a consequence, that it is necessary to push forward the point in time when the early modern gave way to the era identified as modern to the start of the nineteenth and possibly the twentieth century (Bayly 2004).

Subrahmanyam (1997), locates the transition from 'early modern' to 'modern' in the middle of the eighteenth century, but because his focus is on the start of early modern period, he eschews any systematic examination of the factors that brought the period to an end. But as already noted, world historians working from an economic perspective are now starting to argue that the 'temporary' gap between East and West did not begin to open up until 1800. World historians are now increasingly relying on comparative and connected history to explain why the 'Great Divergence' took place at this juncture.<sup>15</sup> This date, however, also coincides with another important development initiated at this point in time and that has been clearly identified by historians interested in the relationship between East and West. As Lack (1965: xiii) observes, 'From 1500 to 1800 relations between East and West were ordinarily conducted within a framework and on terms established by the Asian nations.'<sup>16</sup> Much more recently, Northrup (2005: 262) develops a similar argument, when he suggests that from the late 1500s

Atlantic Africans, South Asians, and East Asians were all trading with the early European mariners freely and from positions of strength. In China and Japan, centralised states were able to put limits on the degree of involvement, whereas in India and Africa, local interests seeking to expand involvement generally won out over those wishing to limit it.

From 1800 onwards, however, the balance of power was dramatically transformed and there is no doubt that global relations were subsequently conducted on the basis of a framework established by the West. Specialists in international relations should be able to throw more light on this transformation, but as we shall discuss in the second part of the paper, their understanding of this transformation has been severely constrained by an overriding Eurocentrism.



## International relations

When we endeavoured to provide an account of the international system from a world historical perspective, surveying 40,000 years of history, we inevitably relied on extraordinarily broad brush strokes (Buzan and Little 2000). Moreover, because of the magnitude of the task, we were also willing to work inside the parameters set by conventional wisdom within the study of world history. Of course, there were substantial differences within these parameters that we had to circumnavigate, but there were also significant points of agreement. So, for example, although coming from different perspectives, both McNeill and Wallerstein agreed that the modern era could be traced back to AD 1500.

Although our thinking has undoubtedly moved on since writing *International Systems in World History*, we still broadly endorse the main theoretical conclusions for the analysis of international relations that we drew from our study of world history (see Buzan and Little 2000: 385).<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the overall orientation of our analysis for the period after AD 1500 reflects a strongly Eurocentric and also, to some extent, a materialist bias that largely corresponds to the reading that we had done in world history. In particular, our broad-brushed account overlooks the significance of the transformation identified at the end of the previous section. Instead, sticking close to conventional world historical accounts, we date the start of the modern period from 1500, when we argue that the global international system began to emerge, and then identify secondary turning points in 1648, when we argue that the modern European international society and its component units crystallized, and then around 1850 when Western dominance of China and Japan effectively brought about geographic closure and the consolidation of the global international system.<sup>18</sup> This orientation, however, very largely closes off the idea that prior to 1800 there were other international societies in existence.

From the prevailing world historical perspective, therefore, our approach to periodization is irredeemably Eurocentric because it ties the modern era so tightly to the formation and global expansion of Europe. Our approach, however, followed the lead given by both McNeill and Wallerstein, still identified in the 1990s as providing the leading approaches to world history (Sanderson 1995). But world historians are offering new ways to think about international relations from a global perspective, ways that not only make it possible to eschew Eurocentrism, but also to overcome the familiar dichotomies that confront the structural approach to theory-building that we favoured. These dichotomies include the gap exposed in purely structural approaches between local process and global structure, between structure and agency, as well as between culture and economy. In an important intervention, Benton (2002: 4) argues that rather than trying to find ways of bridging these gaps, thereby maintaining established ways of defining global structure and global order, it is necessary to 'reimagine global structure as the institutional matrix constructed out of practice and shaped by conflict'.<sup>19</sup> From her perspective, then, global institutions 'broadly defined include widely recurring, patterned interactions' that emerge from cultural practice.

This perspective represents a rather different view of global order from the one proposed by Bull (2004). He views order from an essentially functional perspective and argues that patterned interaction only generates order if it helps to promote what he identifies as the fundamental goals of the society.<sup>20</sup> Whereas Bull is drawn to a view of order as a product of design, Benton seems to have a much more spontaneous view of order. The difference turns out to be important because Benton's approach gives much greater purchase on the question of how an international society emerged and it also allows us to address the question of whether the European international society expanded across the globe during the nineteenth century, as members of the English School have suggested, or whether an established global international society was transformed during the course of the nineteenth century.

In general, IR theorists have displayed remarkably little interest in the emergence and expansion of a global international system/society. Indeed, neorealists and neoliberals simply take the existence of such a system/society for granted.<sup>21</sup> Constructivists, however, are now investigating the evolution of the European international system/society very seriously although they have yet to develop a global take on this issue.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, the English School has always favoured a comparative and world historical perspective on the study of international relations (Wight 1977; Watson 1992). However, at the end of the day, because of the preoccupation with idea of a states system together with the lack of interest in the world economy, the founding fathers failed to explore the links between different states systems.<sup>23</sup> It follows that they were interested in comparative history but not in connected history and this was one of the gaps that we endeavoured to fill (Buzan and Little 2000).

This assessment, however, needs a slight gloss, because there is no doubt that in their individual and joint contributions to *The Expansion of International Society*, Bull and Watson (1984), central figures in the first generation of the English School, demonstrate a clear awareness of the need to consider the question of global connections in their attempt to establish a 'grand narrative' from an international relations and world historical perspective. They work, however, from an essentially Eurocentric perspective and argue that the basic features of the contemporary international political structure have been inherited from Europe. Moreover, because 'it was in fact Europe and not America, Asia, or Africa that first dominated and, in so doing, unified the world, it is not our perspective but the historical record itself that can be called Eurocentric' (Bull and Watson 1984a: 2).

It is unsurprising, therefore, that Bull and Watson then draw very heavily on what Bull (1984: 123) depicts as the 'standard' European view of how the contemporary international society emerged; according to this view, 'non-European states entered an originally European club of states as and when they measured up to criteria of admission laid down by the founder members'. In the nineteenth century, these criteria were associated with the 'standard of civilization' (Gong 1984). Bull acknowledges, however, it is now recognized that there is a need to question this account because prior to the nineteenth century, European statesmen did not always think of the international society as exclusively European. Indeed, natural

law theorists from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century worked on the assumption that there was a global international society. Even more significant, during that period European states entered into commercial, military and diplomatic relations with Asian powers. But Bull (1984: 123) then goes on to identify an even bigger problem with this account when he asserts that there is an

element of absurdity in the claim that states such as China, Egypt, or Persia, which existed thousands of years before states came into being in Europe, achieved rights to full independence only when they came to pass a test devised by nineteenth-century Europeans.

What is interesting about Bull's position, is that despite acknowledging these problems, and while being willing to identify the existence of a global international system by the start of the nineteenth century, he is not willing to accept that the international system can be constituted as an international society. His reasoning is very clear: there was no global conception of common interest, no agreed structure of rules and no common institutions.<sup>24</sup> In other words, although the European states may have thought they were operating in a global international society, from Bull's perspective they did not because his prerequisite conditions for an international society were not in place. When contemplating the expansion of the international society, therefore, Bull and Watson presuppose, in the first instance, that there was a set of regional international societies that became linked by an international system. But only over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did a global international society emerge.

In establishing this position, moreover, Bull and Watson were well aware that an alternative line of argument had been developed by Alexandrowicz (1967, 1973) as the result of researching the treaties that the Europeans signed with Asian states between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and with African states in nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> He argues that as the Europeans made contact with the Asians, they not only found a well-developed international society in place, but also that some of the principles they employed were familiar to the Europeans. The argument that Alexandrowicz (1967: 2) developed was that by the end of the eighteenth century as the result of the interaction between Europeans and Asians, the law of nations was 'for all practical purposes a complete discipline' but then at that juncture, it began to contract and it was transformed into a purely European legal system as the long-established and universal tradition based on the doctrine of natural law gave way to a new system based on positive law. In other words, the idea that all states were linked on the basis of natural law gave way to the idea that laws were only valid if they were based on mutual consent. But the newly derived conception of positive law did not provide a basis for 'extra-European intercourse' and Alexandrowicz (1962: 508) argued that some legal theorists at the end of the eighteenth century were aware that this lacuna created problems for Europe's relations with the outside world. The shift in legal theory effectively meant that non-European states which had been acknowledged by the Europeans as having a legal status in the family of nations in the past were now viewed as 'candidates for

admission to the European circle of States which assumed the role of recognizing or not recognizing external entities’.

From Alexandrowicz’s perspective, therefore, there was a fundamental shift in the nature of international relations at the end of the eighteenth century, which the members of the English School are unwilling to acknowledge. So Gong (1984: 12), for example, denies that the idea of a universal family of nations had any practical significance prior to the nineteenth century or that it is valid to suggest that the scope of international law was truncated at the start of the nineteenth century. Bull supports this position.<sup>26</sup> But Keene (2002: 27–8) argues that Bull’s position is extremely weak primarily because he endeavours to argue that the natural law view of international society was purely ‘hypothetical’ but then, at the same time, he wants to assert that natural law was used by the Europeans to justify the establishment of colonies. As Keene intimates, when thinking about the expansion of international society, it follows from the latter argument that ‘we should devote the bulk of our attention to the forms of international governance that Europeans created in their colonial and imperial systems’.

Although the first generation in the English School were well equipped to integrate the idea of colonialism as an institution or form of international governance into their theoretical framework, as Buzan (2004: 215–16) has stressed, they singularly failed to do so.<sup>27</sup> However, world historians are beginning to fill the gap. Benton (2002), for example, has examined the expansion of colonialism across the globe during the early modern and modern eras and, in doing so, she rejects the widespread tendency to exaggerate the differences between Islamic and European colonialism across this time period. So as well as examining cases of European colonialism around the world, she also explores the Ottoman conquest of southwest Asia and North Africa and identifies important areas of similarity.<sup>28</sup> It is on the basis of the resulting common colonial practices that she identifies across the Americas, Africa, the Indian Ocean as well as the Ottoman’s colonization of Europe itself, that she identifies colonialism as a ‘legal regime’.<sup>29</sup>

Benton’s starting point, therefore, is the way that empires come to terms with the institutional problems encountered when operating in territories that are distant from the metropolis. She rejects the familiar diffusionist model that depicts the imposition of colonial institutions from the imperial hub because although imperial powers may frequently have wished to establish a common institutional structure across their colonies, they were, in practice, unable to overcome the complex and competing forces they encountered on the ground. These competing forces not only embraced the indigenous population but often also included settlers from other European states. What tended to prevail, therefore, was a form of ‘legal pluralism’ – a multicentric legal order where the state is only one among many legal authorities. From Benton’s perspective, territorial colonial expansion by Christian and Islamic states ‘prompted a turn to legal pluralism as a colonial project’ (2002: 253). For several centuries, this was the dominant legal order in colonies because it generally proved to be the most effective structure for dealing with the social differences that existed in all colonies across the globe.

As a consequence, Benton (2002: 3) argues that because there was persistent

'jurisdictional jockeying' among the competing authorities within a colony as well as among factions within the colonized community, legal pluralism was identified by multisided legal contests that were 'simultaneously central to the construction of colonial rule and key to the formation of larger patterns of global structuring'. Benton goes on to assert, however, that there has been very little attempt to investigate these larger patterns, despite the fact that the law worked 'both to tie disparate parts of empires and to lay the basis for exchanges of all sorts between politically and culturally separate imperial or colonial powers' (ibid.). But she also suggests that legal pluralism precipitated a global order that was 'far more complex and institutionally less stable than many approaches to world history and to global economic change suggest' (ibid.).

There is no doubt that Benton has made a substantial contribution to understanding the nature of this global regime. She shows that the legal pluralist order within a colony generated a continual struggle over definitions and markers of cultural difference. At the same time, it also played a crucial structural role by helping to shape and constrain political and economic interactions by reproducing knowledge about internal and external power. During the early centuries of colonialism, moreover, Benton argues that, in an important sense, colonial states did not 'exist *as* states' because they neither claimed a monopoly on legal authority nor the assignment of political and legal identity (2002: 259). However, Benton then significantly extends her argument by identifying a major historical shift in colonial rule during the course of the nineteenth century with the emergence of a new global regime as colonies were transformed when legal pluralism gave way to a new state-centred legal order. With this development, colonies were defined by a much more state-like structure.

What is so striking, according to Benton (2002: 261), is the 'synchronicity' of the transformation in the structure of colonies around the globe in the middle of the nineteenth century. However, she insists that the transformation was not the consequence of the expanding power of the European states. On the contrary, the space for the newly constituted colonial state was carved out by indigenous processes and it emerged, in many cases 'decades before imperial powers were ready either to concede or consciously to propel such a shift, and before colonial elites were motivated or prepared to advocate it' (ibid.: 263). Because of the conflicts among the various legal authorities within any given colony, there was a constant search for intermediaries, and increasingly, there was an appeal to the metropolitan state. As a consequence, these states were increasingly drawn into conflicts taking place within the colonies over issues like property and status, despite a desire to escape the expense of more intensive sovereignty. Although Benton very effectively illustrates this process, she underestimates the extent to which colonial officials must have also become more willing to intervene during the nineteenth century as the result of the very general shift in legal thinking identified by Alexandrowicz. Certainly this is the conclusion reached by McKeown (2003: 261) who observes that the emergence of the new colonial regime 'corresponds with a theoretical shift away from universal natural law toward more positivistic and constructed law that was seen as the possession of more advanced civilizations, a shift that was clearly

relevant to the growing presumption of the colonial state.' What this observation suggests, therefore, is that there is the potential to develop an important synergistic relationship between IR and world history theorists.

In terms of this volume, however, the analysis in this section also suggests that non-Western IR theorists are also well placed to help produce a more rounded and less-Eurocentric account of how a global international society emerged. Following Alexandrowicz, it is clear that we need to develop a much more nuanced understanding of the international societies that existed around the globe in the early modern era. Although the English School have made some moves in this direction (Wight 1977; Watson 1992; Buzan and Little 2000) it is clear that much more work needs to be done and non-Western IR theorists are well placed to do it. By the same token, Western IR theorists have paid virtually no attention to the complex process of colonization in the early modern era, despite the enormous impact of this development in both the metropolitan countries and the regions where the colonies were established. Again, non-Western IR theorists have a strong incentive to challenge the rather crude Eurocentric accounts that exist of these developments. Such a challenge might not only generate a reconceptualization and re-prioritization of developments beyond the boundaries of Europe, but it is also very likely to precipitate a re-evaluation of developments within Europe.

## **Conclusion**

On the face of it, there should be a substantial amount of fruitful overlap between world history and international relations. In practice, there is very little interchange between these two fields and indeed it could be argued that divergence rather than convergence is taking place. This is primarily because world historians are rapidly moving away from a Eurocentric perspective, whereas IR scholars are largely unaware of the extent to which they are still locked into a Eurocentric framework. Moreover, there is no doubt that most IR theorists would accept Bull's argument, that it is not they who are Eurocentric but rather the facts that they have to examine. What I have endeavoured to do in this chapter, therefore, is to outline the direction that is being taken in world history and then draw on English School thinking to illustrate some of the problems with Bull's defence of Eurocentrism. In the conclusion what I want to do is briefly to reprise these problems and then follow through on some of their implications.

When talking about the expansion of the international society, from a world historical perspective, the first generation of English School theorists start by making two highly contentious moves. On the one hand, they argue that while Europe was expanding overseas and across the Eurasian steppes 'the states of the European system were also working out by trial and error, an elaborate and remarkably successful international society' (Watson 1984: 23). On the other hand, they then assert that during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the boundaries of this society slowly but steadily expanded across the globe. The most obvious difficulty with this formulation is the way that European overseas expansion is excluded from the process of establishing an international society.

It follows that it is only when the first wave of decolonization took place, at the end of the eighteenth and start of the nineteenth century, that the English School identify an expansion of the European international society. As a consequence, this development is not seen as part of the on-going 'trial and error' process whereby the European international society evolved; it is simply defined in terms of expansion. By contrast, Alexandrowicz (1959) is able to show how the demise of dynastic international politics within Europe, at the start of the nineteenth century, led to a reformulation of the rules of recognition and this development had significant consequences not only within Europe but also for the process of decolonization that was taking place at the same time, with the United States already playing a leading role in changing the rules governing the recognition of new states.<sup>30</sup>

Excluding colonies from the institutional structure of the European state system also has the effect of eliminating any need to examine the changing nature of colonization as an institution in international society. Yet as we have seen, it has been argued that the institutional character of colonization changed dramatically during the course of the nineteenth century (Keal 2003) and this was also accompanied by a major new wave of European colonization. But both the transformation in the structure of colonies and the expansion in the number of colonies are effectively excluded from the English School narrative.

Once colonization is embraced as a feature of international society, however, then the relationship between European and non-European states as a dimension of international society is inevitably raised. The first generation of English School theorists certainly took note of this relationship, but they did very little with it. So Watson (1984: 127) identifies a 'series of modifications introduced into the European system as it expanded, in order to manage more effectively the relations of the European powers with Asian (and to a trivial extent non-Asian) states'. At the same time, Bull (1984: 119) acknowledges that 'within the Eurasian system' there were links prior to the nineteenth century between Europe and the south Asian powers and these did, indeed, represent 'some approximation to the working of an international society'. By the same token, Bull and Watson (1984a: 5–6) also acknowledge that between 1500 and 1800 'a loose Eurasian system or quasi-system grew up in which European states sought to deal with Asian states on the basis of moral and legal equality' and they go on to suggest the 'evolution of the European system of interstate relations and the expansion of Europe across the globe were simultaneous processes, which influenced and affected each other'. But they are very keen to keep the two processes separate.

Maintaining the distinction, however, becomes much less plausible once the European colonies are encompassed within the institutions of international society because they are physically distant from Europe, thereby raising questions about the relationship among European colonies and the impact of colonies on relations among the European metropolises, but more especially about the nature of the relationship that developed between European states and non-European states. World historians have become interested in all these relations as they have become increasingly aware, for example, of the Atlantic as a complex region that embraced the Americas, Africa and Europe from the sixteenth century onwards. For many

years it was simply taken for granted that this region was dominated by the Europeans and could, therefore, only be understood from a European perspective. But it is now recognized that this position rests on a fundamental misrepresentation of the role of the Africans in both Africa and the Americas, where for a period they far outnumbered the Europeans. Thornton (1998: 7) concludes, for example, that the Europeans were the subordinate party in Africa until the nineteenth century and that the Africans 'controlled the nature of their interactions with the Europeans' and that 'all African trade with the Atlantic, including the slave trade, had to be voluntary'. Because of the failure to recognize the independent role played by the Africans in their relations with the Europeans, our understanding of the politics and international relations of the African end of the Atlantic world is extremely underdeveloped. But Thornton (1999: 15–16) has gone on to argue that the nature of the political systems within this area of Africa has been generally misconstrued, with a failure to recognize the state-based nature of these units and the complex nature of the relations among these states. What Thornton then shows is that slavery was a crucial dimension of war in this region of Africa before becoming an institutional feature of the Atlantic world.

Although Bull (1984a) acknowledges the importance of some state-like entities in Africa as well as the significance of slavery, there is no suggestion that an international society could be identified in Africa or that the Atlantic world could be construed in international societal terms. Nevertheless, Bull and Watson (1984: 2) do acknowledge that the evolving European international society co-existed with other important regional international systems and Watson (1992) went on later to examine some of these systems. But, in practice, the international relations community has virtually no understanding of these regions or, following through on Subrahmanyam's analysis, how the boundaries between them shifted and changed across time. The problem is that Eurocentrism is so widespread. As Tanaka notes, most Japanese, for example, simply accept the Eurocentric idea that Japan became a closed society when it cut relations with the West during the Edo period and then re-opened them when relations were restored by the Meiji regime. It is hard from the Japanese to imagine he argues 'that Japan developed in relation with other Asian countries, since they are hardly used to appreciating Asian cultures' (cited in Subrahmanyam 1997: 735). As Toby (1991: xvi) insists, to understand this era, it is essential to acknowledge that Japan had an active foreign policy and to place the state 'at the *center* of the world as the Japanese conceived it, rather than at the margins of a China-centered world or beyond the periphery of a Eurocentric one'.

Although the first generation of English School theorists undoubtedly helped to give IR theory greater historical and geographical range, it is still deeply problematic to start the clock running, effectively, from the start of the nineteenth century, as they tend to do, when considering the contemporary international arena. It is important to acknowledge that when the Europeans first ventured around the globe, they often came into contact with long-established international rules and customs. Indeed, as Alexandrowicz (1967: 65) argues, when Grotius attacked the prevailing European idea that the high seas could fall under the jurisdiction of a specific



country and formulated the alternative principle that the high seas constituted international territory, he clearly took into account 'the outstanding precedent for maritime freedom offered by the régime in the Indian Ocean in contrast to maritime practice in Europe'.<sup>31</sup> Rather than arguing that the expansion of the international society took place from the end of the eighteenth century, there are good theoretical reasons to discuss this era in terms of a transformation of global links that had been established by trial and error in previous centuries. Indeed, a failure to adopt this perspective distorts the significance of the move and underplays the change in the distribution of power that took place during the nineteenth century. But it also becomes necessary to acknowledge the role played by the US in transforming the nature of the international society, a dimension that the Eurocentric perspective also tends to underplay.

It is, however, all too easy to overplay the dominance of the West especially during the nineteenth century. As noted earlier, institutional changes in the nature of colonies can be attributed to local factors rather than any changes in the balance of power. By the same token, the emerging rules of recognition that had such significant consequences when linked to the idea of 'the standard of civilisation' were formulated in the context of colonies breaking away from Europe. In line with this assessment, Bayly (2004: 476) stresses the 'multicentric nature of globalization in the early modern world and its persistence into the nineteenth century beneath of surface of Western hegemony'. The origins of change in world history, he insists, 'remained multicentric throughout'. This leads him to the aphoristic conclusion that we 'need not so much to reorient world history as to decentralize it'.<sup>32</sup> Exactly the same conclusion applies to the study of international relations. In *International Systems in World History*, we endeavoured to move in this direction, but reassessing the world history literature a decade later, it is clear that we remained to some extent in the grip of Eurocentrism. To make progress, much more needs to be known about the development of international relations in the different regions of the non-Western world. It is important, therefore, that non-Western IR theorists follow the route charted by non-Western world history theorists and take up this challenge, which will not only transform our understanding of international relations in the non-Western world but also require us to re-construe developments in the Western world.

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## Notes

- 1 Richard Little wrote the initial draft of the paper.
- 2 But this is slowly beginning to change. See, for example, Benton (2002: 5) who acknowledges that her approach to developing 'global theory' has much in common with the constructivist approach in IR.
- 3 Kang (2003, 2004) and Hui (2004, 2005), for instance, focus on different phases of Chinese history in an attempt to break free of Eurocentrism, although Acharya (2004), coming from a constructivist perspective, challenges Kang's views about what breaking free of Eurocentrism implies.
- 4 Bentley also shows how the Christian right in the United States has also co-opted world history in a similar fashion.
- 5 Note too Subrahmanyam (1997: 736) who makes reference to 'the notorious recalcitrance of South Asianists, and their well-known lack of desire to be cannon-fodder for other people's model building'.
- 6 Even this generalization needs some qualification. Stuurman (2008), for example, carries out a fascinating comparison of the similar historical conclusions reached by Herodotus writing about ancient Greece and Sima Qian writing three hundred years later about ancient China.
- 7 See, for example, Chakrabarty (2000) who sees the need for 'provincializing Europe'. For a useful survey of the debates amongst world historians about the rise of Europe, see Stokes (2001) and O'Brien (2003). Note also Thornton's (1999: 8) argument that because the European model of the so-called 'military revolution' that took place in the early modern era is treated as both 'the norm and the necessity' for modernity, it was generally assumed that African armies in this period must be 'primitive' or 'undeveloped'. But he argues that in Angola at the end of the sixteenth century 'the fact that the Europeans were not particularly successful, and largely adopted African organization and technique that did not follow European models of organization and technique, certainly does not support the idea that African armies that did not follow European models of organization were less effective'.
- 8 As Mckeown (2003: 261) argues, 'The greatest strength of recent discussions about the early modern world economy is not that the rise of European industrial power has been discredited but that local European economic transformations are increasingly located at a nexus of global structures and contingencies.' But the polemics persist. See, for example, the review of Bayly's (2004) world history, by Pieterse (2005) who argues that it fails to 'transcend' a familiar Eurocentric story and Bayley's (2005: 137) reply, attacking 'present-centered revisions of world history'.
- 9 This method is most closely associated with Marc Bloch although it is now seen to be a particularly effective route for overcoming conceptual Eurocentrism. See Austin (2007). In a fascinating case study, that illustrates the method very effectively, Ringman discusses the fact that in the fifteenth century, despite the evident 'benefits of trade' and the 'temptation of foreign possessions', the Chinese rejected both while the Europeans embraced them. Ringman (2006: 176) starts from the premise that 'Looked at from a Chinese perspective it is clear that there was nothing imperative about what the Europeans did. On the contrary, the European expansion becomes a puzzle in need of an explanation.' Ringman goes on to show that divergent attitudes to the giraffe open the way to such an explanation.
- 10 For a recent attempt to follow this injunction, see Bayly (2004: 4) who also draws

a distinction between 'vertical' and 'lateral' history, with the former identifying connections and comparisons across time and the latter identifying connections and comparisons across space.

- 11 Note, by the same token, Dale's (1994: 3) argument that although it is essential to study Indian economic history as a provincial segment of a much broader region, this is rarely done because economic history studies of the Middle East and South Asia 'tend to be compartmentalized in terms of modern political boundaries'.
- 12 See Lewis and Wigen (1999) who argue that focusing on maritime interactions brings to light a set of historical regions that have largely remained invisible on the conventional map of the world.
- 13 Subrahmanyam (1997: 738) acknowledges the importance of Crosby (1986) in developing the ecological thesis, but gives preference to Grove (1995) who 'pays far greater attention to Asia'.
- 14 Stuurman reveals, however, that both Herodotus and Sima Qian adhered to much more complex views of the 'uncivilised' nomads that operated on the borders of Greece and China than is generally recognized.
- 15 O'Brien (2003) provides an excellent review of the complex literature that is addressing this issue.
- 16 Donald Lack devoted his academic career to exploring the relationship between East and West, generating a massive multi-volume work entitled *Asia in the Making of Europe*.
- 17 There were seven conclusions. So, for example, in our discussion of the second conclusion we disputed the neorealist claim that the biggest type of system change relates to transformations in the deep structure of the system (anarchy to hierarchy) and depicted this assessment as an artefact of the focus on post-Westphalian history. We argued instead that world history revealed that a transformation of the dominant units that constitute a system represents the most significant change in the nature of international politics.
- 18 There are then three further secondary closure points identified in 1900, 1945 and 1989.
- 19 This reflects very closely what Adler and Pouliot (2008) identify as 'the practice turn in international relations'.
- 20 The primary goals of any society are identified by Bull as the security of its members, the maintenance of promises and some degree of stability in the ownership of 'things' which presumably extends from property to status.
- 21 By contrast, the expansion of the international economy from 1500 onwards plays a crucial role in world systems theory, but as noted in the previous section, this model is being overtaken by a more complex approach to the early modern economy. See, for example, Benton (1996).
- 22 See, for example, Daniel Nexon's (2008) important study of the impact of religious conflict on the emergence of the modern state, which poses a serious challenge to the conventional Westphalian thesis.
- 23 But it is important to note that Wight and Watson were also interested in empires. Watson (1992: 125), for example, makes reference to 'imperial organized societies of states'.
- 24 Keene (2002: 27) argues that the idea that international society did not extend beyond Europe was 'empirically, highly debateable'.
- 25 The Asian area that he examined embraced the Indian subcontinent, Ceylon, Burma, Siam and the Indonesian islands, collectively identified as 'the East Indies'.
- 26 Wight (1977: 118), by contrast, argues that Alexandrowicz deserves 'careful and sympathetic scrutiny' and acknowledges the practical consequences of the issue, asking whether 'emergent' states are 'new' states or 'recovering an ancient sovereignty'.
- 27 See Martin Wight, for example, who carried out an extended research project on colonial constitutions. See *The Development of the Legislative Council* (1946), *The Gold*

*Coast Legislative Council* (1947) and *British Colonial Constitutions* (1952). And at the level of practice, Adam Watson was Ambassador to the Federation of Mali, 1960–1, and to Senegal, Mauritania and Togo, 1960–2. The failure to foreground colonies is particularly strange given the importance attributed to colonies in Heeren (1857) who played an important role in English School thinking (see Little 2008).

- 28 Along similar lines, Abulafia (2008) argues that the Spanish extended a tribute system in the Americas based on the system tested on the Muslim peasants in Iberia during the reconquest era. This system, in turn, was partly developed from Islamic models.
- 29 Benton recognizes that her use of 'regime' is very different from the way the concept has come to be defined in international relations.
- 30 A new generation of English School scholars is recognizing the importance of Alexandrowicz's contribution to thinking about the practice of recognition. See Fabry (forthcoming).
- 31 On the politicization of the oceans, see Manke (1999) and Steinberg (1999).
- 32 He is here presumably posing a challenge to the kind of arguments developed by Frank (1998) and Hobson (2004).

## 10 Conclusion

### On the possibility of a non-Western international relations theory

*Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan*

In the conclusion, we first offer some thoughts addressing the main question posed in this volume: the absence of a non-Western IRT and possible explanations behind it. We then reflect on whether the question of a non-Western IRT is a meaningful one, and whether the way it is approached in this collection could result in a productive debate that would advance the discipline of IR. Although our empirical focus is on Asia, we suggest some insights that have more general relevance for non-Western IRT. To this end, we incorporate and compare insights from the Islamic world and reflections on the importance of world historical perspectives in advancing the prospects for non-Western IRT.

#### **Why the absence of non-Western IRT?**

The question why there is no non-Western IRT required us to look at a number of areas. First, what is meant by international relations theory in the different countries and regions? Second, what is the extent of Western dominance in these areas: are some countries under more such dominance than others? A related issue was to ascertain where there were Western-inspired theories which are more popular in a given country than in another. A third question is to compare the main non-Western sources of IRT following our four-fold source matrix: classical ideas, the thinking of modern leaders and elites, attempts by IR scholars to apply Western theory to the local context (looking outside-in) and similar attempts by scholars to generalize from the local experience for an wider audience, but on its own terms (looking inside-out). In this section, we offer some generalizations about the reasons for the absence of non-Western IRT, in accordance with our five hypotheses:

1. Western IRT has discovered the right path to understanding IR.
2. Western IRT has acquired hegemonic status in the Gramscian sense.
3. Non-Western IR theories do exist, but are hidden.
4. Local conditions discriminate against the production of IR theory.
5. The West has a big head start, and what we are seeing is a period of catching up.

Perhaps the first point to make is that our driving question seems to be justified. There is not much current IRT to be found in Asia, even when using the broad



definitions of IR and theory set out in our introduction. There is an abundance of pre-theoretical resources, but not all that much has been made of them and in some cases they have been largely forgotten or marginalized. We find Western dominance to be a uniform factor in all cases; although it is difficult to rank countries or subregions in this way (South Korea does, however, seem to be an extreme case, where 'most IR theories have been imported from the West, especially the US' (Chun, Chapter 4). The real distinction seems to be degree of interest in theoretical work per se, or the distinction between theoretical and atheoretical work. It is reasonable to assume that a great deal of work on international relations in Asia falls into the latter category, although this is changing, as economic and institutional conditions in Asian countries develop. This, however, does not automatically translate into great appeal and room for non-Western IRT; indeed, the reverse may be the case. Scholars are more likely to turn to Western IRT first before they discover the possibility and sources of non-Western IRT. So it is reasonable to look to our five causal hypotheses to see what the case studies reveal.

There is no suggestion in any of the chapters that Western IRT is unchallengeable because it has found the right path to understanding IR. Again, Korea comes close to invalidating our hypothesis; here Western IR theories, 'especially realism and security studies ... have been very helpful in explaining the reality of Korean international relations' (Chun, Chapter 4). But generally, IRT does not have the same standing as the natural sciences developed in the West. For them, their weight of authority broadly derives from an acceptance of method, agreement on epistemology and acceptance of the knowledge produced as either true, or able to deliver on explanations and predictions, or at least as the best approach available. At least some of the dissatisfaction and/or disinterest in IRT in Asia arises from the perception that Western IRT does not adequately capture the needs and conditions to be found in Asia. We sense growing realization and dissatisfaction about the lack of fit between Western IRT and the local milieu, and this in turn suggests a clear link to the arguments of Badie (1992) about the highly imperfect way in which the Western state system was imposed on the Third World. Moreover, there is a realization that the narrowness of Western IRT contributes to the marginalization not just of Asian scholars, but also of their countries. Interestingly, one manifestation of this is a sense of 'alienation' (Acharya 2000), evident in the lack of interest in IRT in Asia. Arguably, this is part of the explanation for the atheoretical nature of work on international relations pertaining to Asia, because of the widespread view that IRT as it stands now has very limited applicability to Asia. Whether this is a matter of perception or reality can be debated, and to some extent, this is certainly a matter of perception (and a perfect excuse for not doing the hard work of mastering the IRT literature, especially in classrooms). But it is also a genuine concern in all the countries studied. The sense that IRT, not only as employed by Western scholars in their study of Asia, but also as used by local scholars in studying their home country, contributes to the marginalization of local scholarship and the country itself is perhaps more acute in India, although a similar sense is evident in South Korea, Southeast Asia and China.

The case studies suggest that a much more powerful explanation for why there

is no non-Western IRT in Asia is the hegemonic standing of Western IRT. Indeed, with the possible exception of China, this hegemony means that the expanding discipline of IR in Asia may generate more and not less Western dominance. The exception in China is qualified however, because of the peculiar dominance, at least in terms of the four cases studied here, of Marxist and Maoist ideology and worldview. But once China began its process of reform and opened up to the world, its IR community almost naturally and quickly turned to Western theories and texts. It is only when the Chinese became increasingly aware and convinced of their emerging and 'unstoppable' status as a world power that they started looking to the possibility of a Chinese IRT, or at least at IRT with 'Chinese characteristics'. This may suggest the link between power and ideas applies as much to China as to the West, although we do not foresee a Chinese dominance of Asian IRT, in the way Western IRT has shaped global IRT. Apart from the fact, as will be seen later, that national approaches to the development of IRT (including IRT in China, as Qin's essay shows) remain important, Chinese ideational dominance in East Asia, past and future, can be overstated, especially by those who imagine Asia's return to the benign power configurations of a tributary system (Kang 2003; Acharya 2004). More on the link between power and IRT later, except for an observation that in Southeast Asia, which has no aspiration to great power status, and where IRT has had less appeal (or where writings on IR tend to be more atheoretical than in Northeast Asia), there too is a growing realization among the academic community that Western IRT inadequately captures regional dynamics that centre around efforts by a group of weaker states to construct a regional order binding the great powers of the current international system. This challenges the top-down conception of both power politics and multilateralism that has dominated Western IRT. Moreover, this disjuncture between the power bias of Western IRT and the regional dynamics of Southeast Asia cannot be appreciated by the 'modernization' perspective, which, as Alan Chong's essay shows, is commonly found in post-war theoretical framings of Southeast Asia's politics and international relations.

The conjecture that non-Western theories exist but are hidden from the public eye (in this case the global community of IR scholars) is only marginally relevant to our overall question. Unless they are very well hidden indeed, even from the eyes of the locally based case-study authors, it is not the case that an undiscovered horde of IR theoretical riches lies unrecognized in Asia. Language is no doubt a barrier, as much within Asia as between it and the West. The experience of Europe, where IR discourses in French and German (and to a lesser extent other languages) is not well integrated with the English-language mainstream (Friedrichs 2004), suggests the language barrier problem will be difficult to overcome. Since in Asia, as in Europe, there is no local *lingua franca*, English is the most likely language to serve as common ground, but also one that reinforces Western hegemony. IRT-relevant material could also still lurk in places where the hegemonic form of IRT would not suggest that one look. But we suspect that while there are no doubt significant cultural barriers to entry from outside into the Western IR discourse, most of what is hidden is pre-theoretical resources rather than fully fledged 'Asian' conceptions of international relations.

Our fourth hypothesis about local conditions discriminating against the development of IRT also seems powerful, though very varied in form from place to place. The paucity of institutions, journals, research cultures, career incentives, research resources and training facilities is especially acute in Southeast Asia (other than Singapore), and is also a major problem in India. It would have been true of China until recently, but now the institutional side of IR is developing rapidly there. The impact of how IR came to develop in particular countries is also influential, particularly in terms of what discipline (e.g. political science, history, law, sociology, area studies) acted as the carrier for IR. Japan offers a quite different take on local conditions, where there is an IR discourse, but it is quite inward-looking. The impact of local conditions extends to the economic predicament of IR scholars, which often leads them to the path of policy-oriented research and writing. Indonesia offers a particularly stark example. Here, IR scholars not just shun theoretical studies for policy work or media appearances, but also enter politics.

The evidence from the Islamic Middle East only adds weight to our foregoing observations about why there is no non-Western IRT. Here too one finds the apparently paradoxical situation in which no one seems to think Western IRT has found the right path, yet it has acquired hegemonic status. But unlike the Chinese case, the Islamic world, weak and divided as it is, cannot yet imagine overcoming this hegemony. One exception to the general observation that local conditions discriminate against the development of non-Western IRT is where local responses to external challenges prompt conceptual innovation and ideational shifts. Examples of this can be found in the codification of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims at the time of the Muslim conquests, and the revival and reinterpretation of classical sources that has been prompted by globalization.

The fifth hypothesis that the West has a head start is also powerful. Perhaps the main test here will be the challenge hypothesized in the China paper about the imminent rise of a 'Chinese school' of IR. Playing catch-up does not and need not mean that Asia is in a mere copying mode, whether it comes to developing theories of international relations or practices from which such theories can be derived. Copying may be part of the process, especially in its early phases, but there is room for divergent development. More on this in the next section.

One final point here concerns our assertion at the very outset that there is a growing recognition and dissatisfaction over the relevance of existing IRTs in capturing and explaining the experience of the non-Western states and societies. Although this is no longer debatable, at least in terms of the findings of this project, there are differences on this question among the various IR theories. To be sure, this is not a project about the relative merits of realism, liberalism, constructivism or analytic eclecticism (Katzenstein and Okawara 2001), but there are some insights of interest to those interested in the so-called great debates in IRT. No evidence emerges of the demise of realism. Even though constructivism has not replaced realism, there is evidence that it is increasingly being perceived as more relevant to theorizing non-Western realities and practices. In the case of Islam, there is a clear argument about constructivism's fit, especially in capturing the role of religion, culture and identity that are critical to developing theoretical discourses and

concepts from Islamic states and societies (Tadjbakhsh, Chapter 8). And for all the seeming incompatibility between Chinese and Western IR thought, it is still possible to find parallels between the two. Thus, the Confucian way of governance, consisting of five core relationships (father-son, emperor-minister, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife, friend-friend) and of four social bonds (propriety, righteousness, honesty, a sense of shame) can be likened to the 'logic of appropriateness' (Qin, Chapter 2). In the case of Japan, the contributions of Nishida, Tabata and Hirano could be used to identify what Inoguchi (Chapter 3) calls a 'constructivist theory with Japanese characteristics'. In the case of South Korea, although concepts such as the 'balance of power system and security competition, theories about balance of power, hegemony, security dilemma and power transition have been especially helpful', in explaining its security environment and behaviour, Chun still finds an important role for constructivism when it comes to explaining the conflict with North Korea, where questions about 'multiple identities, overlapping identities and multiple organizing principles' that are germane to constructivism assume special significance. Similarly, the case of Indonesia attests to the relevance if not of constructivism exclusively on its own terms, then at least of constructivism as part of an analytic eclecticism, whereby social constructivist variables like identity, symbols, values, institutions and norms are seen to inform and condition 'culturally motivated *realpolitik* practice' (Sebastian and Lanti, Chapter 7).

### Sources of non-Western IRT

In the introduction, we hypothesized a number of possible sources of non-Western IRT, including classical traditions and thinking of religious, military, political and military figures (e.g. Sun Tzu, Kautilya), thinking and foreign policy approach of leaders, the work of non-Western scholars who have taken up Western IRT, and the policies and praxis of non-Western countries. There is plenty of evidence that these could be useful sources of non-Western IRT in different national settings. Thus, historical tradition and philosophy come up as powerful sources of IRT in China. In Japan's case, the *staatslehre* tradition, especially when conducted by government-related think tanks of historical-institutional backgrounds and describing events and personalities, and the writings of Western-influenced local scholars such as Nishida Kitaro, Tabata Shigejiro and Hirano Yoshitaro, have a similar potential as a source of IRT. The classical tradition and the thinking of nationalist leaders are important in the Indian context, while for Southeast Asia as a whole, precolonial forms of polity and writings of contemporary scholars influenced by the West, but clearly finding distinctive patterns and anomalies, are identified as rich potential sources of IRT. Indonesia comes up with its distinctive but not entirely homogenous cultural traditions and nationalist thought influenced by both Western and Eastern – Indian and Chinese – ideas. And in the Arab-Persian Islamic world, classical jurisprudence/scriptures/ tradition, modernist yearning, revivalist impulse and syncretism reconciliation between tradition and modernity are presented as possible sources of non-Western IRT.

Japan's case shows both Western influence and local innovation. In Japan, the influence of Western or imported theories is very much evident, in both mainstream American and critical Marxist traditions, the latter even predating the former and enjoying a long-term influence. Yet, Nishida's attempt to problematize and conceptualize, if not construct, Japanese 'identity' in international relations (between East and West), constituted an authentic departure and can claim to be a precursor to later discourse on identity in international relations. A more controversial Japanese contribution, which speaks not so much to the identity question but to the communitarian element of modern constructivism, could be traced in Hirano's work on regional integration which lent justification to the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Area 'by noting that instead of the struggle among imperialist sovereign powers, his cherished goal of upholding a communitarian principle might be materialized at long last' (Inoguchi, Chapter 3). Even more controversial was the Kyoto School's thinking about 'post-White power' and how Japan could take the lead in rebalancing world politics away from Western hegemony (Williams 2004). Although now politically incorrect in terms of its racial framing, in its underlying conceptualization, this line of thinking is not all that far removed from those such as Buzan and Little (2000) who argue that the current rise of non-Western powers suggests a return, after the few-centuries aberration of Western dominance, to a more multicultural world like that of the ancient and classical era, with several powerful centres of civilization. Somewhere in between was the work of others like Tabata who adapted Western concepts to suit the local context. In contrast to Hirano, Tabata's work on popular sovereignty and the concept of equality of states was used to argue against the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Area (the core of which was the inequality of states). At the very least, all these attest to the diversity, if not puritanical originality, of Japanese international thought. Japanese contributions both presaged Western theories and adapted from it.

China's case is interesting because it is in clear juxtaposition to many central Western concepts of IRT. The Confucian *Tianxia* worldview (an inward-looking perspective emphasizing harmony, in contrast to the West's extroversive outlook emphasizing competition) and the Chinese tributary system (which institutionalized and rationalized that worldview), clearly challenge the modern Westphalian and European-derived principle of sovereign equality of states. *Tianxia* does not correspond to the Hobbesian state of nature, where relationships are 'equal and hostile', nor to Lockean society's equality and competition, nor to Kantian notions of equality and friendship. Instead, it posits a hierarchical but orderly relationship, as with the relationship between the father and sons in the Confucian family, 'unequal but benign' (Qin, Chapter 2. See also Song 2001: 70; Yan 2001: 37–8; Zhao 2006; Callahan 2004, 2008; Li 2008: 292).

Compared with Japan's modernist turn and China's emphasis on the classical tradition, the sources of IRT in India combine both. Kautilya's notion of mandala has been used by historians to describe traditional Southeast Asian polities, suggesting the universalization and broader applicability of classical Indian concepts. At the same time, the modernist critique of Western conceptions of nationalism by Indian nationalist leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim

Chandra Chatterjee and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh is notable because of their adoption of a non-territorial and non-rationalist/instrumental conception of nationalism, imbued with the notion of spiritual power. According to these writers, Indian culture, which accommodates social, ethnic and tribal diversity transcending the territorial boundaries of nation-states, can be a powerful alternative to the universalized model of the Westphalian state (Behera, Chapter 5).

The very fact that Japan, China and India are seen as possible sites of Non-Western International Relations Theory cannot but be of significance to those who inevitably draw a close link between power and theory. As Inoguchi (Chapter 3) puts it, 'Great powers often produce theories of international relations.' If this is true in the case of the West, why cannot it be true of the non-West? Qin (Chapter 2) goes as far as to suggest the development of a Chinese school of IRT, if it is to happen at all, cannot be delinked from a certain degree of Sinocentrism. Crudely put, Chinese IR scholars may well respond to Western ethnocentrism by putting forth an ethnocentric paradigm of their own making. This tendency might be reinforced by China's recent economic and strategic (if not political) transformations, massive and multidimensional as they are. It is indeed tempting to believe that since the development of IR theory tends to follow real world developments, the larger the shift in the status quo, the greater the possibility of the emergence of an indigenous IRT. And the more powerful the said indigenous tradition and its bearer is, the greater the possibility that it will offer the basis for a new IRT. This view is further supported by Islam's expansion in an earlier historical stage, which led to the codification of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Islamic jurisprudence, itself a possible source of Islamic IRT.

This perspective also resonates with the view noted above that the world is returning to a culturally and politically polycentric form reminiscent, though certainly not a mere re-creation, of the several centres of civilization during ancient and classical times. Now, of course, all these civilizations are much more sharply aware of each other than they were before the expansion of the West, though it is fair to say that the non-Western societies are still much more aware of the West than the West is of them. The powerful, sustained and often deeply intrusive Western penetration of the non-West also means that 'non-Western' societies are no longer pristine. All have been deeply changed by the encounter with the West, and to a lesser extent by the encounter with each other mediated through the West. Not the least significant of the ideas universalized by the West has been nationalism, a doctrine that encourages cultures to draw identity from their history, and to use history and identity for political purposes. As just suggested, this may well have profound significance for the type of IRT that gets developed in the non-West. It can be argued that much of Western IRT is fundamentally Eurocentric in the way it uses history, though for the most part this ethnocentrism is unacknowledged and hidden underneath assumptions of universality (Buzan and Little 2001). Partly in reaction against this, and partly because non-Western IRT is likely to be developed in response to particular policy needs, we might expect it to take a self-consciously nationalist form. It is, for example, not difficult to encounter in China a rather Coxian (1986: 207) discourse that 'theory is always *for* someone

and *for* some purpose'. In this view neorealism and neoliberalism are for the US and about keeping it as number one. The English School is for the UK and is about using institutions to enable a declining power to punch above its weight. A Chinese school would be for China and be about how to facilitate its peaceful rise. One could see Latin American *dependencia* theory and Mao's 'three-worlds' theory in a similar light. This suggests two ways in which the nationalist impulse might affect the development of non-Western IRT. One way would be an attempt to recover the civilizational histories before the encounter with the West, and look to them for alternatives to the Eurocentric Westphalian model. Another would be more consciously and more politically to construct history to serve the purposes of current policy. Probably both will happen. And both will constitute, in different ways, attacks on the universalist assumptions of Western IRT.

Yet, our studies also indicate that IR theory, whether Western or non-Western, need not be the exclusive preserve of the powerful. Just as the Scandinavian countries have made themselves significant and distinctive players in Western IRT, so Southeast Asia, a region of weak states and a 'region of revolt' in Western representation, can also be seen as a fertile source for non-Western IRT. Southeast Asia's traditional polity, conceptualized by some historians (whose essential role here testifies to the need for going beyond political science in the development of alternatives to Western IRT) as a mandala system (Sanskrit for concentric circle, connoting polities without formal territorial sovereignty and known for their symbolic and ritualistic exercise of authority) 'offers a radical potential for imagining international relations without Westphalian sovereignty' (Chong, Chapter 6). A noted historian of Southeast Asia, O. W. Wolters, even claims rather controversially, that the mandala system in Southeast Asia was more peaceful than Europe's nation-state model, with its history of extensive internecine warfare. Similar constructs by anthropologists Clifford Geertz (the 'theatre state') in Bali and Stanley Tambiah ('Galactic polity') in mainland Southeast Asia, present interesting contrasts with the European conceptions of territorial sovereignty and its close corollary, the balance of power system of order management (Acharya 2000).

Hence, we argue that the attempt to think of an indigenous IRT in terms of traditional historical-cultural concepts need not be unique to the major powers or classical centres of civilizations, such as China and India. The Indonesia chapter in this volume supports this view. It demonstrates how traditional Javanese thought and statecraft associated with past kingdoms offer a platform for developing indigenous IRT in Indonesia. Moreover, in Indonesia, traditional Javanese culture also becomes a source of the political behaviour of the indigenous elite (such as the Suharto regime that ruled Indonesia from 1967 to 1989), itself another potential source of non-Western IR theory.

The case of Islam is interesting in this context. Once powerful, it's now almost universally seen, including by those who would like to look for possibilities of developing international theories out of its doctrines and practices, as a declining system. But decline can be as interesting as ascent in creating the potential for international relations theory. For example, within Islam there exists several potential sources of IRT: the Qur'an, the *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet), the *Sunnah* (the

conduct of the Prophet) and *ijtihad* (interpretation). Other sources of IRT in Islam include the ideas of nationalist intellectuals and leaders, not just those in positions of power, but also those inspired by struggles against Western colonialism and postcolonial dominance, and the intellectual ideas of non-Western scholars based in the West, such as those engaged in the Islamization of knowledge project in the United States (Tadjbakhsh, Chapter 8). What is especially interesting about these potential sources of IRT is that several of these are responses to the decline, actual or perceived, of Islam's place in world order.

To be sure, it is difficult to take a uniform view of these potential sources of challenge to the Western orthodoxy in IRT. Kautilya is often regarded, including in India, as an authentic forerunner of 'Western style' realism, while Tagore or Ghosh stand as challengers to Western concepts of nationalism. Somewhat in between them will be people like Nehru, who are localizers of Western ideas and concepts such as sovereignty and non-intervention. Similarly, classical Southeast Asian polities may be regarded as challengers to the modern nation state, but perhaps less so (and this needs further investigation) to the pre-Westphalian polities in Europe.

### **Is non-Western IRT possible?**

Our project throws up a number of important issues concerning the possibility of a non-Western IRT in a situation where Western IRT has seemingly hegemonic status. In the sections below, we discuss a number of conceptual and practical issues that must be addressed if one is to talk meaningfully about the possibility of non-Western IRT generalizing from the Asian or the Islamic experience. For reasons that will become clear below, we are *not, repeat not*, concerned with identifying or advocating an Asian school of international relations. This would link us to constructs (and debates surrounding them) such as Asian values, Asian democracy, Asian way etc. We want to stay clear of such reifications, which, while they may have their usefulness in building non-Western IRT, are also hugely problematic because of the extent of generalizations they involve, and the suspicions they evoke as an elite-driven and politically motivated exercise. Our main concern here is: can one use Asia or Islam (including Islam in Asia) as the basis for generalization that could meaningfully address the disjuncture between international relations theory and the universality of human experience?

The first issue has to do with the fact that the West/non-West distinction may cause some unease as being old-fashioned and confrontational and misleading given the diversity that undoubtedly exists within both camps. It is not possible to give any concrete or precise definition to what constitutes non-Western, not the least because it would involve making judgements about what is 'West'. Moreover, it can be argued that there exists now a single global conversation (or confrontation in some views), which is impossible to unpick into West/non-West. In acknowledging this reservation, we still believe a critical review of IRT that highlights the marginal place of non-Western experience, discourses and up to a point, persons, is defensible and important not just because different histories exist, but also because very substantial North-South differences in the ideational



and practical world of international relations continue to exist. These differences are not just political (the very unevenly realized transplant of the European state to the rest of the world) and economic (position in the centre-periphery structures of the liberal international economic order), but also cultural (ways of thinking, different conceptions of inside/outside).

Just because international relations is an increasingly *globalized* subject of academic teaching and research today, in terms of courses on IR being taught in more countries and in more universities within countries (as is borne out in the China paper in Chapter 2), does not mean it is being *universalized*. The latter would require greater incorporation of ideas from the non-West and contributions by non-Western scholars from local vantage points. This clearly has not happened in any general way, though as the paper on Japan suggests, there are some enclaves of localism. If we mean by 'a single global conversation' that people are no longer thinking along the lines of West versus the rest or North-South, then this is far from an accomplished project. Contributions like postcolonialism in IR, Indian subalternism (e.g. Spivak 1988) and Mohammed Ayooob's (1998) notion of 'subaltern realism' attest to a continuing effort to represent the South as a distinctive political and intellectual space.

Moreover, we see evidence that far from becoming a single global conversation, IRT is developing along regional or subregional lines: hence, we have a distinctive ideational and constructivist turn in continental Europe, which challenges US dominance of the field. In this context, our focus on Asia suggests we are not assuming the non-West to be a homogenous category. Recent debates about Asian regionalism contrasting its trajectory from European regional institutions underscore the importance of the regional focus as a subset of non-Western IRT. Peter Katzenstein's (2005) recent book *A World of Regions*, which compares European and Asian regional orders under the assumption that these are the two most 'important' regions of the world today, is a good example of such 'regionalised' West/non-West differences in thinking and praxis about IR. So too is Buzan and Wæver's *Regions and Powers* (2003), which shows how different the conditions of international security are in different regions. And as noted in our introductory paper, studies of Western IR also show significant patterns of differentiation between the US and Europe (see, for example, Buzan and Hansen 2009). On this basis we should not have high expectations of an Asian or non-Western approach to IR emerging. The injection of Asian experience and thinking into the global debates about IR seems much more likely to come in more fragmented, possibly nationalist, forms, the nature of which is suggested by the papers on China and Japan.

It is also possible to view (and dismiss) the West/non-West framing of IRT as a matter of simple disjuncture between the modern and the premodern. In this sense, Western IRT reflects a modernist enterprise, while that of the non-West remains mired in premodern discourses and practices. We are deeply uncomfortable with such dichotomization. As Alan Chong's essay in this collection shows, the tendency in the West to see Southeast Asia as a premodern entity, and as a poor and sometimes laggard student in the process of modernization is highly overstated. International relations in the region, as elsewhere in the developing world, is much

more complex and multifaceted than these simplistic and outdated labels would imply. What, for example, is 'premodern' about the non-alignment doctrine, discussed in Behera's essay in this collection, so popular in India during the Cold War? Can China's uncompromising adherence to Westphalian sovereignty, which Qin discusses in his essay here, be considered 'premodern'? Perhaps we are dealing with the disjuncture between modern and postmodern here, but even these distinctions are problematic: how is the US approach to state sovereignty, especially when it comes to outside role in its own domestic affairs, postmodern? (Spiro 2000)

Following Ayoob (1995), we do not question that there may be a certain element of 'time lag' between the international relations of the non-Western world and that of the West, especially in terms of experience in state formation. But in our view, this does not mean that Asian or developing countries are simply in a 'catch-up' mode. We allow for the possibility, as raised in all of the case study papers, that the latter could move in entirely different trajectories towards outcomes that are constitutively distinct from the West, or at least could 'localize' the pattern of international relations established in the West in ways that inject substantially distinctive local elements which would require a significant broadening of IRT, if it is to become a truly universal discipline.

We would also agree to a certain extent with the view (most strongly developed by Qin and Chun in this collection) that Asian states have been cut off from their own classical intellectual resources and need to rediscover them and reconnect. This means a certain amount of look back or rediscovery of one's past. The same applies to the prospect for Islamic IRT. This is why we have identified classical ideas and experiences as one possible source of non-Western IRT. But this is hardly unique to Asia or to non-Western approaches to IRT. IRT as developed in the West drew heavily, and continues to do so, from the thinking of classical figures, dating back to the Greco-Roman era, and patterns of interstate relations in the premodern periods of Western history. Why cannot the same happen in the non-West? At the dawn of the postcolonial era in Asia, for example, there was a growing awareness in the region that Asia needs to rediscover its past. More recently, the re-emergence of China and India as world powers has led to a tendency among academics to reassert their historical identities and practices as the basis for thinking about contemporary international relations. Some of it may seem rather controversial and self-serving, for example: attempts to justify India's claim to be a nuclear power from the Vedic notion of the ultimate weapon *Brahmastra* (Karnad 2002), or efforts by some Chinese scholars to evoke the 'peaceful' voyages of the famous fifteenth-century Ming dynasty Admiral Zheng He as a metaphor for the peaceful rise of China. But such efforts, which have their own parallels in the West, do also underscore the existence of a classical tradition of statecraft in Asia that can be used as the basis for IRT, in support of both power politics and cooperative/communitarian politics.

Another possible objection to our concern with non-Western IRT concerns the fact that many of the leaders we cite as sources of pre-theory were Western educated or heavily influenced by Western ideas. Hence, their contributions cannot be legitimately be regarded as non-Western. This is true to some extent, but does

not invalidate our approach and interest. We recognize that non-Western IRT can develop in opposition not only to Western ideas and approaches espoused by Western agents, but also non-Western agents who are educated in and influenced by the West. Hence, we allow for the possibility that sources of non-Western IRT must also include resistance to Western ideologies espoused by local elites and governments in the non-West. Moreover, we have looked at the ideas and approach of anti-colonial and more contemporary leaders in the non-West as but one of a range of possible sources of non-Western IRT, the above generalization does not apply to all the nationalist leaders. Myanmar's Aung San went to Japan. Sometimes, being in a Western environment could trigger a greater yearning for returning to one's local intellectual roots; a fact illustrated somewhat perversely in the case of some Muslim extremists in the West today.

More importantly, those who did not accept or adopt Western ideas about governance or international relations uncritically might, in most cases, engineer considerable adaptations to ideas learnt abroad. One example here is Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence, an idea he initially borrowed from the Western notion of 'passive resistance', but which became the basis of his approach to anti-colonial resistance and international relations only after being reshaped as *satyagraha*. In so doing, Gandhi married 'passive resistance' with the 'traditions of nonviolent resistance and of saints offering political advice, in his native region of Kathiawar', in Gujarat, India (Green 1998).<sup>1</sup> So abstract Western ideas learnt by nationalist non-Western leaders or intellectuals are not important in their own right: it is how these are 'localized' (Acharya 2004) and developed in practice that constitutes a more authentic source of non-Western IRT.

This leads us to reflect on a possible pathway to the development of non-Western IRT, one that directly concerns our reservations about pushing the West versus the rest dichotomy. The case of Islam in Indonesia provides a graphic example of Acharya's notion of 'constitutive localization' (Acharya 2004, 2009). Constitutive localization is defined as 'as the active construction (through discourse, framing, grafting, and cultural selection) of foreign ideas by local actors, which results in the latter developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices' (Acharya 2009). Localization leaves idea-takers in the driver's seat in the development of IRT, as agents who selectively borrow and contextualize outside ideas for their own context and need. As Sebastian and Lanti (Chapter 7) observe,

in the interior of Java Islamic practices were mixed with the existing Hindu cultural attributes. In many cases, Hindu practices were more dominant than the Islamic rituals. From time to time, the Javanese would engage in Hindu ceremonies glossed over by some Arabic words said to be derived from the Qur'an. However, most Javanese would claim that they were Muslims, even though they would rarely execute the Islamic rituals ...

This suggests that the development of non-Western IRT need not be a matter of projecting pure indigenous ideas, nor should it be a matter of wholesale adoption/borrowing of foreign ones, but that it can proceed through mutual adaptations and

localizations between the two that leave the local component dominant, at least in the initial stages.

In her chapter on Islam, Tadjbakhsh talks about 'hybridity' in a similar vein. The aim of the Modernization of Islam project is 'to seek synthesis of modern knowledge and Islamic legacy', and it 'deploys deconstruction to resurrect the authority of religious knowledge' (Tadjbakhsh, Chapter 8). This is localization, as the primacy of local is affirmed and a foreign idea, deconstruction, is borrowed and deployed to resurrect pre-existing religious knowledge. And Southeast Asia provides yet another example of constitutive localization; consider, for example, the thoughts of nationalist leaders such as Sukarno and Aung San which are 'promising in originality in terms of interpreting modernization through specifically local perspectives' (Chong, Chapter 6).

The contextualization of Western ideas and the importance of *praxis* are strikingly evident in the case of Marxist IRT. Some argue that much of the first-round response of the non-West to Western hegemony was framed in variations of Marxism, taking a basically oppositional stance using Western intellectual resources against the West.<sup>2</sup> But although Marxism did exercise a considerable appeal in some places, local variations in Marxist ideology were undoubtedly important, as in Mao's formulations on peasant struggle and the broader three-worlds theory that in some ways developed from it. The same applies to nationalism, another Western idea around which not only the first round of the Third World's response to Western hegemony, but the initial foundations of the non-West's approach to international relations (such as non-alignment) was framed. Nationalism (without Marxist connotations, although the two could be fused in cases such as Vietnam) was a more popular response to Western dominance because it could be more easily grafted onto local historical traditions and even polities, including historical memories of the struggle against foreign invaders and occupiers of all sorts. The ultimate triumph of nationalism over Marxism in places such as India and Indonesia was due to the fact that nationalism had more grafting potential onto the indigenous consciousness, and would ultimately prevail not only over imperialism, but also over Marxism itself. Moreover, the defeat of Marxist approaches to resistance to Western hegemony offers another reason why Western IR theory has found little appeal in Asia and why there is now a search for alternatives drawing upon local histories, experiences and needs. In a very important sense, the Third World, including much of Asia, thus suffered a double defeat/humiliation: not just the crushing of its own premodern traditions and cultural/political legitimacy, but also the defeat of its first choice of ideas (Marxism) around which to build independent postcolonial resistance and legitimacy. This double defeat and weakening in confronting the hegemony of Western ideas is a powerful factor that underlines the growing discomfort with Western IRT in the non-West, including in Japan where, as Inoguchi's chapter in our collection demonstrates, Marxism had been a popular element in Japanese IRT in the post-war period.

So is a non-Western IRT possible given not just the headstart and pervasive influence of Western IRT, but also the global imposition of the European state and its distinctive form of inside/outside relationships? Yes and no. The case studies

certainly suggest there are significant non-Western intellectual and historical resources to feed such a development. They also suggest ample motive for such development in the different positions, needs and cultures of countries outside the Western core. Although the case studies here are mainly from Asia, their content suggests similar resources and motives will exist in other parts of the non-West than East and South Asia. Since there is no suggestion in these studies that Western IRT has found all the answers, it should also be possible to envisage the erosion of both the West's intellectual hegemony in this field and the effects of its headstart lead. As Japanese industrialization has shown, there is no reason to believe that the initiator in any field of human endeavour either possesses all of the answers or can hold their lead indefinitely. So in principle there is room for non-Western IRT as well as need and sources for it.

In considering the possibility of a non-Western IRT, the relationship between the universal and the particular assumes considerable significance. The question, simply put, is this: should theory be developed for each region, or for non-West or West, but should it have universal applicability? Just because sources of non-Western IRT exist does not mean that there would be a national school of IRT. The two are different things. We tend to see little likelihood of an 'Asian school' of IRT emerging, although we do see greater scope for national perspectives. But even here, the prospect is not a straightforward one. We have already seen that the possibility of an Indian school of IR is scarce (Behera, Chapter 5). A Chinese school is more likely, at least the discourse on its emergence within China is more advanced than elsewhere in Asia, but even here there is a debate between the proponents of a Chinese school, to which Qin belongs, and those who argue that IR theory should be universally applicable (Acharya 2008). Even subregional unity is not feasible. In the case of Northeast Asia,

conversations among academia in Northeast Asian countries are rather lacking. IR scholars in Korea, China and Japan, have different approaches, different conception about the usefulness of Western theories and different normative concerns. Without systemic conversation among scholars in the same region, it would be very hard to have regionally coherent IR theories.

(Chun, Chapter 4)

The question of an Asian school is not one of where there can be, but whether there should be. Chun argues that

It will not be easy to have a theory that has a comprehensive dimension, both geographically and historically, to deal with the most advanced world and the least developed world. However, those worlds are connected and influenced by the other, making partial theorizing inevitably incomplete ... The challenge for the non-Western academia is to contribute to the making of postmodern IR theory, or postmodern global political theory.

(Chun, Chapter 4)

Many of the varied challenges to developing a non-Western IRT come together in the case of Islam. Islam deserves a special note in considering the prospect for a non-Western IRT, not only because it allows us to test and extend our findings beyond East Asia or South Asia, but also because of its sheer reach in terms of numbers (its share is growing in the world's population and the number of countries that are Islamic), but also because it is seen by many today as the chief challenger to Western dominance of contemporary world order (China being the other candidate). In this book, we have given particular emphasis to Islam as a source of non-Western IRT. But several caveats emerge from the analysis of Islam as a source of theorizing. The first and most obvious is that Islam as a system of thought and practice is not monolithic. Islam itself becomes the basis for conflicting perspectives on international relations both within and between states, especially when it interacts, as it must, with pre-existing traditional local cultures and practices. One example is Indonesia, where significant differences exist between the Javanese and Sebarang cultures, which are not only different from each other, but neither can claim total autonomy from previous religious and cultural traditions, including Indian Hindu beliefs and practices. The fragmented nature of Islamic thinking in the Arab-Persian world challenges the development of an Islamic IRT. While an Islamic worldview does provide the basis for non-Western IRT, this is challenged by both divisions within Islam and the consequent inability to apply Islamic theories into practice. Moreover, it might be argued that the very core ideas of Islam negate the possibility of IRT, in the sense that it is 'international' relations, since for Islam there can be no state as a permanent condition. Furthermore, and perhaps negating the above, Islam has not been an unchanging phenomenon. Hence, noteworthy is the historical shift from classical jurisprudence, the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* (traditions), the *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet) and the Sharia (Islamic law) to a secular-oriented modernism 'in which power replaced righteousness' (Tadjbakhsh, Chapter 8) and which rejected any oppositional relationship between Islam and rationality. This challenges the West's claim to be the sole repository of rationality in response to Western colonization, to Islamism and revivalism (Qutb, Islamic Brotherhood, Jamaat Islami and Ayatollah Khomeini) in response to liberation (from colonial rule), and finally a reconciliatory path to Islamize modernity. While taking note of such wide historical shifts and variations poses powerful challenges to the simplistic Huntingtonian view of Islamic civilization and ideology as a monolith, especially when conceived as an enemy of the West, it unfortunately renders an Islamic IRT even less plausible.

These insights from Islam are applicable to other regions and cultures around the world that may aspire to develop their own 'schools' of IRT. Added to these, one must not underestimate the advantages of the first mover or the difficulties of overcoming them. Western IRT has not only built the stage and written the play, but also defined and institutionalized the audience for IR and IRT. Latecomers face not only the brute fact of the postcolonial international political economy, but also the embedded construction of IRT. Most of them will already have been penetrated heavily by both the brute fact and the construction. They do not start with a clean slate. Like second and third phase industrializers, new entrants to IRT

thus face a range of choices. As suggested above, they can simply join in to the existing game seeking to add local colour and cases to existing theory. This is perhaps so far the main response in Asia. A bit more ambitiously, they could strive for localist exceptionalism à la 'Asian values' and 'ASEAN way' of diplomacy. Here the main driver would be the relationship between distinctive local praxis within international society and the local development (or not) of IRT as a distinctive way of thinking about this. Yet more ambitiously, they can construct themselves as rebellions against prevailing orthodoxies (most obviously realism and liberalism) as *dependencia* theory once sought to do. Doing this would mean increasing the diversity of what is already a very diverse field. Western IRT is not a static target. It already contains many critical strands against its mainstream orthodoxies. Perhaps this is where the emerging 'Chinese school' or any other theory driven by the Coxian imperative to be for some purpose and for some interest group, might find their place.

Most ambitious of all, latecomers could seek to replace Western IRT by offering some alternative way of conceptualizing the world political economy. This seems unlikely. Western IRT almost certainly does not have all the answers, but it does contain a very wide range of approaches, which makes it quite difficult to outflank with something wholly new, especially so long as the brute fact of the Western style of international political economy continues to dominate real existing international relations. The internal dynamism of Western IRT also counts here. There are already many powerful challenges to realist and liberal orthodoxies. The globalization perspective, as noted in our introduction paper, posits a rising tension between territorialist and de-territorializing dynamics in the world political economy, looking forward to a fundamental transformation in the whole inside/outside construction of the world political economy. This perspective might be a natural home for those seeking to bring into IRT the historical resources of Asian models that took a less divided view of domestic and international than that underpinning much Western IRT. If there is to be a wholesale transformation of IRT, it is more likely to come about from a combination of the internal dynamics of the Western debates with the impact on non-Western inputs than from the victory of a wholly outside new construction.

Western IRT does not, in our view, need to be replaced (though some might think that it does). It needs more voices and a wider rooting not just in world history but also in informed representations of both core and peripheral perspectives within the ever-evolving global political economy. To resort to the oldest IR theory of them all, the likely role of non-Western IRT is to change the balance of power within the debates, and in so doing change the priorities, perspective and interests that those debates embody. Mainstream IRT may have been for the West and for its interests, and there is no doubt that this skewing needs to be rectified by the inclusion of a wider range of voices. But there is also no doubt that if IRT is to fulfil its founding mission of clarifying the causes of war and peace, it needs to for all of us and for our common interest in a progress that is peaceful and prosperous all round.

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## Notes

- 1 Gandhi's own description of this localization is revealing:  
None of us knew what name to give to our movement. I then used the term 'passive resistance' in describing it. I did not quite understand the implications of 'passive resistance' as I called it. I only knew that some new principle had come into being. As the struggle advanced, the phrase 'passive resistance' gave rise to confusion and it appeared shameful to permit this great struggle to be known only by an English name. Again, that foreign phrase could hardly pass as a current coin among the community. A small prize was therefore announced in *Indian Opinion* to be awarded to the reader who invented the best designation for our struggle. We thus received a number of suggestions. The meaning of the struggle had been then fully discussed in *Indian Opinion* and the competitors for the prize had fairly sufficient material to serve as a basis for their exploration. Shri Maganlal Gandhi was one of the competitors and he suggested the word 'Sadagraha', meaning firmness in a good cause. I liked the word, but it did not fully represent the whole idea I wished it to connote. I therefore corrected it to 'Satyagraha.' Truth (Satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement 'Satyagraha,' that is to say the Force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence, and gave up the use of the phrase 'passive resistance', in connection with it, so much so that even in English writing we often avoided it and used instead the word 'Satyagraha' itself or some other equivalent English phrase. This then was the genesis of the movement which came to be known as Satyagraha, and of the word used as a designation for it. Before we proceed any further with our history we shall do well to grasp the differences between passive resistance and Satyagraha ...  
M. K. Gandhi (2003), *Satyagraha in South Africa*, trans. Valji Govindji Desai, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, p. 102.
- 2 Indeed, it is not difficult in parts of East Asia to find Marxists who interpret Marx's opposition to liberalism (capitalism) as placing him outside the West. The idea that a thinker so deeply embedded in Western philosophy and sociology as Marx could be seen as non-Western comes as a big surprise to Westerners who encounter it, and underlines the difficulties of making the West/non-West distinction.

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