INTRODUCTION

If a single factor characterises post-Cold War history in the last one and half decade, it is the rise of China. While other Asian countries are also rising, the rise of China has been phenomenal. A sustained growth rate of around nine percent since early 1980s, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the end of murky Cold War politics along with it, shifted the focus of policy-makers and international relations (IR) scholars to China. A new wave of scholarly interest arose and scholars began to use established theories in international relations to explain and predict the behaviour of China. China's rise was related to the adoption of market-oriented strategies, as in the case of newly industrialized countries (NICs) in the 1980s. Those who have studied East Asian economic development will, however, attribute the success to the 'developmental state' model.1 China's rise also led to the evolution of 'China-threat theories'. A famous architect was Samuel P. Huntington, who dubbed China as a civilizational threat. He contended that Western ideals like individualism, liberalism, democracy and equality are alien to Islamic or Confucian cultures and, therefore, East and West will be pitted against each other.2 Huntington's apprehensions were preceded or followed by a series of other publications that supported the China threat theory in one way or the other.3 Fifteen years have passed and Chinese foreign policy behaviour has tended to alley 'China threat' apprehensions so far. It is not for the first time that the West has

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been caught on the wrong foot while explaining China’s behaviour. Historically also, China was most often (and wrongly) interpreted in Western writings. This could be because the Western scholars’ views about China were “conditioned partly by the conscious interests and subconscious needs of their own personalities”. For instance, in one of the books, the Chinese were described as “deviously cunning villain thrifty... murderers... and masses of ant like creatures indifferent to human life”. Such views could be attributed to the superiority complex among Europeans as a result of the ideological and political-economic revolution represented by the Renaissance-Reformation and Industrial Revolution.

As Michael Adas notes:

> The Europeans came to view scientific and technical achievements not only as the key attributes that set Europe off from all other civilizations, past and present, but as the most meaningful gauges by which non-Western societies might be evaluated, classified and ranked.

This superiority complex created the foundation for Western perceptions of the Chinese worldview. China was described as a ‘Middle Kingdom’ having a Sino-centric world order based on hierarchy and tribute system. For much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the West perceived China as having a ‘Middle Kingdom’ complex and, therefore, inimical to its trade interests in East Asia. China was defined as a ‘yellow peril’ to the Western civilization. In many ways, the

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contemporary China-threat theories are a continuation of the eighteenth and
nineteenth century Western apprehensions.9

An inevitable conclusion is that the West has broadly failed to understand
China, both in the past and at present. The Western tools and techniques for
understanding China and Chinese foreign policy behaviour are inadequate and
often self-defeating. In contemporary international relations, the West has not been
able to empathise with China’s position on issues such as human rights,
democracy, sovereignty, international organizations and world order, and there are
perceptible differences between the two sides. In addition, understanding
contemporary Chinese foreign policy is one of the most difficult tasks as China’s
policy statements are often loaded with ambiguities, dualisms and theoretical
propositions. Thus, if the Western theories of IR do not help us in understanding
China’s position on major international issues, it implies that the Chinese
obviously act and explain their actions differently which cannot be explained
within the dominant framework of Western IR theory. It also means that given the
long history of China as a political, cultural and civilizational unit coloured by
periods of domination and subordination, and the overbearing influence of
nationalism and ideology in its foreign policy behaviour, China has a distinctive
theoretical perspective on international relations. Though this does not mean that
the Western theories of IR should be discarded in any investigation of China, it
does mean that China has an alternative theory in IR, which can be constructed by
the same standards as ‘theory’ generally, and IR theory specifically.

9 Abanti Bhattacharya, op. cit. n. 4, pp. 110-124.
The concept of theory in IR

The word ‘theory’ has been used so vaguely and indiscriminately within the parameters of the social sciences that it has virtually lost meaningful content.\(^{10}\) While the term suffers from multiple interpretations, there is broad agreement that “a theory is a set of propositions and concepts that seeks to explain (some) phenomena by specifying the relationships among the concepts; theory’s ultimate purpose is to predict (that) phenomena”.\(^{11}\) Another definition of theory views it as a “systematic reflection on phenomena. It is designed to explain and show how they are related to each other in a meaningful, intelligent pattern, instead of being merely random items in an incoherent universe. Every discipline requires theory to guide research, to provide a basis for explanation, and if possible, to lead to predictive capability”.\(^{12}\) According to Mohammed Ayoob, theories are ‘lenses that one puts on to view, understand, structure, or construct reality’.\(^{13}\) Kenneth Waltz distinguishes theories from empirical data and defines theories as “not merely a collection of laws but statements that explain them”. According to him, “statistical correlations, even when significant, are not facts, and they can never establish causal connections. While explanation is the (major) function of theory, theories evolve through a creative intellectual process that takes a number of disparate laws and generalizations, simplifies them by isolating key factors, abstracting them from what is not relevant, aggregating them in a previously unknown way, and


synthesizing them in a new, ideal, quasi-perfect system".14 In essence, theories help in understanding or constructing reality and at the same time have explanatory and predictive capability.

In every field, there are different kinds of theories — almost as many, perhaps, as there are different questions to be answered. This is more so in the field of international relations (IR), where there is an "inescapable link between the abstract world of theory and the real world of policy". Even policymakers who are contemptuous of ‘theory’ must rely on their own (often-unstated) ideas about how the world works in order to decide what to do. It is hard to make good policy if one’s basic organizing principles are flawed, just as it is hard to construct good theories without knowing a lot about the real world. (In IR), everyone uses theories — whether he or she knows it or not — and disagreements about policy usually rest on more fundamental disagreements about the basic forces that shape international outcomes.15 Thus IR theory, in its modern sense, means efforts by social scientists, especially political scientists, to account for inter-state and trans-state processes, issues and outcomes in general causal terms.16 As early as 1967, Raymond Aron lamented what passed as IR theory. He noted that observations as commonplace as ‘the virtues of nonalignment’ or ‘the influence that the priority of economic considerations in modern societies allegedly exerts in favour of peace’, were presented in full regalia as ‘theory’.17 The claim to a grand, formulizable, and

universal theory of IR has since been questioned\(^1\) and, in fact, scholars like Martin Wight have argued that there does not exist an IR theory. Instead, the discipline is marked by ‘intellectual and moral poverty’. According to him, the IR theory is nothing more than ‘mere speculation about relations between states’. The discipline of IR lacks a theoretical richness like its counterpart, political theory, which has a glorious tradition from Plato onwards.\(^2\) ‘International theory’ so-called, does not have a progressive outlook; is at constant variance with diplomatic practice; and is at best, a ‘theory of survival’. In Wight’s view, international theory, to be properly understood, needs to be subordinated to political theory.\(^3\)

Hans Morgenthau agrees with Wight but goes on to explain why there ‘was’ no international theory in the past. First, until the Napoleonic Wars, the relations among nations were regarded as natural and hence beyond the power of man to change. Nothing could be said about their characteristics and about their manipulation that could generate a specific theory of IR. Given this outlook, the best ‘theory’ could do was what political philosophy actually did, that is, to describe the state of nature and the rudimentary legal order that existed, or was assumed to exist, among nations. Second, the main theoretical concern during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was not with understanding the nature

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\(^2\) This viewpoint is substantiated by Arnold Wolfers who says that IR theory is the product of “a single persistent historical situation extending back over more than four centuries”. Modern international relations or the equivalent of it were unknown in the Roman Empire and in medieval Christendom. See, Arnold Wolfers, ‘Introduction’, in Arnold Wolfers and Laurence W. Martin, (eds.), *The Anglo-American Tradition in Foreign Affairs: Readings from Thomas More to Woodrow Wilson* (New Haven, 1956). On the other hand, there is a school of thought that believes that IR theory has a history, and tradition, which goes back to the days of Plato. All the key political thinkers reflected on domestic as well as international political situations (even though in a limited sense). See, Kenneth W. Thompson, *Fathers of International Thought: The Legacy of Political Theory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1994); James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., op. cit. n. 3, pp. 6-11.

of IR but with developing legal institutions and organizational devices that would supersede the type of IR then existing. 'Power politics' itself, as a synonym for foreign policy, was a term of opprobrium, referring to something evil, not to be understood but to be abolished. Woodrow Wilson, during and after World War I, provides a classic and most impressive example of that position: he was interested not in understanding the operation of the balance of power but in getting rid of it, in reforming IR in such a way that one did not need to resort any more to the balance of power. As long as such a negative orientation toward the nature of IR and foreign policy persisted, it was both intellectually and morally impossible to deal in a theoretical, that is, an objective and systematic manner, with problems of IR. Finally, the limitation of theoretical analysis inherent in the very subject matter of IR placed limits on the development of theories in IR. So while Morgenthau examines why IR theory did not develop in the past he does see the possibility of its development within the self-conscious realization of the limits and the subject matter of IR. Even otherwise, Wight's views can be overlooked as the view of the traditional English school, which focused on 'approaches and perspectives' in IR and not on theories. The school's underlying logic has been that to understand IR, it is necessary to identify and investigate all relevant international sectors (and not IR theories). It is only now that the English school is moving towards methodological and ontological pluralism.


23 Richard Little, 'The English school's contribution to the study of international relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2000), pp. 395-422. To know more about the contribution of the English school in IR, log on to http://www.leeds.ac.uk/polis/englihschool. For a comparative study of how the subject of IR has developed, and has been studied in two academic communities of Britain and the United
The doubts and allegations over theory is unending, but the fact remains that there are theories, rather contending theories, vying for space and domination in IR. Kenneth Waltz not only defines ‘theory’ in the context of IR and mentions the requisites for a theory, but also goes on to describe the types of theories in IR. ‘All theories in IR’, he says, ‘are either reductionist or systemic, based on the arrangement of their materials’. Reductionist theories explain international outcomes through elements and combinations of elements located at national or subnational levels. His own preference is, however, for systemic theory. ‘A systemic theory of international politics deals with the forces that are in play at the international, and not the national level’.

However, according to another view, in international relations there are comprehensive or grand theories on the one hand, and partial or middle-range theories on the other. Grand theory purports to explain in a generalized way a wide range of phenomena. Examples include the realist or power theories of Hans J. Morgenthau and Henry A. Kissinger; the neorealist theories of Kenneth Waltz, Gottfried-Karl Kindermann; the system theories of Morton Kaplan and Richard Rosecrance; the neo-Marxist theories of the capitalist world economy of Immanuel Wallerstein and Christopher Chase-Dunn; and the dependencia theories of J. Samuel and Arturo Valenzuela, among others.

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Examples of partial, middle-range theories designed to explain a limited range of phenomena with as few variables as necessary include those pertaining to (a) the influence of the geographical environment; (b) communications pattern and community building; (c) functionalism and sector integration; (d) deterrence; (e) international development and conflict; (f) alliance behaviour; (g) bargaining behaviour; and (h) decision making.\(^{26}\)

According to Hedley Bull, a theory of international relations contains various types of propositions. It includes normative propositions, stating the moral or legal considerations that are held to apply to international politics, as well as positive propositions that define or explain its actual character. It includes comprehensive theories, concerned to describe or to prescribe for international politics as a whole, but also partial theories concerned with some element of it such as war or peace, strategy or diplomacy. It includes theories about international society or the international system, which deal with the interrelatedness of the various units (states, nations, supranational, transnational, sub national groups, etc.) which constitute world politics, as well as theories about the units themselves. It includes theories developed in the self-conscious attempt to emulate the methods of the natural sciences, thus rejecting whatever cannot be either logically or mathematically proved or verified by strict, empirical procedures; and it includes theories propounded without a self-denying ordinance of this kind. It embraces theories derived by way of a deliberate simplification of reality, e.g. by the elaboration of deductive models, as well as theories built up by a process of inductive generalization. It includes theories that, at all events in their explicit aim or intention, are not concerned to provide any guide to policy or any solution to

\(^{26}\) The important works on these issues are cited in James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., op. cit. n. 12, pp. 15-16.
problems of a practical nature, as well as theories that are avowedly “policy-oriented”.27

The development of IR theory

It is widely recognised that modern international relations has been in existence since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). However, international relations as a discipline emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, gaining momentum after the end of the First World War. The large-scale loss of lives during the War led to the study of international relations, with the chief focus on the factors precipitating war and the means to prevent its recurrence. During this period the first university chairs and departments in Britain were established at the London School of Economics and Oxford University, while the Royal Institute of International Affairs was set up to guide public policy. Contemporaneously, and for similar reasons, academic departments and the Council on Foreign Relations were established in the US.28 Two types of concerns were broadly identified: One was analytic – the role of the state in international relations, the problem of order in the absence of a supreme authority, the relationship between power and security, the interaction of economic with military strength, the causes of conflict and the bases of cooperation. The other was normative – the question of when and to what degree it was legitimate to use force, the obligations people owe the state, and the place of morality in international relations.29

29 Ibid, pp. 4-5.
In its initial phase, IR adopted a predominantly legal approach and came close to constructing its first grand theory – ‘idealism’, sometimes erroneously called ‘utopianism’. This school of ‘peace through law’ arose in part out of the liberalism of Woodrow Wilson, faith in negotiation procedures and the growth of international organisations, notably the League of Nations. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, the idealists with their progressivist doctrines dominated the study of IR. They were essentially optimists and believed that under the impact of the awakening of democracy, the growth of an “international mind”, the development of the League of Nations, the good works of men of peace or the enlightenment spread by their own teachings, a more peaceful and just world order was possible; and that their responsibility as students of international relations was to assist this march of progress to overcome the ignorance, the prejudices, the ill-will, and the sinister interests that stood in its way. This was the standpoint from which in the 1920s Philip Noel-Baker studied the problem of disarmament, James T. Shotwell analysed how war could be outlawed, and David Davies contended that “the problem of the twentieth century” was the need to establish an international police force. In the 1930s, in response to the challenge presented to “the League system”, the emphasis changed to the study of collective security and of “the problem of peaceful change”, but the progressivist premises of these writers remained intact.

Idealism was challenged with the crises of the 1930s which initiated the first debate in IR, that between the idealist vs. realist. This emerged initially in the work of E. H. Carr and later in the work of a range of US-based writers, including

31 Hedley Bull, op. cit. n. 27, pp. 32-34. For a reappraisal of the early idealist contribution to international relations from the present perspective, see, Andreas Osiander, ‘Rereading early twentieth-century IR theory: idealism revisited’, International Studies Quarterly No. 42 (1998), pp. 409-432.
Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger and Kenneth Waltz. They took as their starting points the pursuit of power by a states’ centrality of military strength within that power, and the enduring inevitability of conflict in a world of multiple sovereignty. While not denying entirely a role for morality, law and diplomacy, realists laid great stress on armed might as an instrument of maintaining peace. They believed that the central mechanism for regulating conflict was the balance of power, through which the undue strength of one state would be compensated for by increased strength or expanded alliances on the part of others: this was something inherent in the system but also capable of conscious promotion.

In a parallel development, a group of realists on the European side of the Atlantic developed what came to be known as the ‘English school’: Charles Manning, Martin Wight, Hedley Bull and Fred Northedge emphasises the degree to which the international system was ‘anarchical’, that is, without a central ruler. They saw it not as straightforward chaos but as in a certain sense a ‘society’: that is, a group of states that interacted according to certain conventions. These included diplomacy, international law, the balance of power, the role of the great powers and, most controversially, war itself. This school has continued to produce work of consistent orientation and quality.

After the Second World War and during the subsequent Cold War, realism became the dominant, if not sole, approach to the study of IR. It possessed a

powerful and comprehensive explanation of international relations and conflict. However, the dominance of realism began to be challenged in the 1960s and has remained under pressure ever since. The new ‘scientific’ school of IR, almost wholly based in the US, sought to establish a new, quantifiable, study of what could be observed, i.e. ‘behaviour’, in this case international processes and interactions. Karl Deutsch studied the growth of international communications; James Rosenau focussed on informal interactions between societies that bypassed orthodox state-to-state relations, Morton Kaplan developed more ‘scientific’ theorisations of the international systems. A wide-ranging and often acerbic debate between ‘traditionalists’ and ‘behaviouralists’ (called the second debate in IR) took place, mirroring in substance and tone many of the themes raised in parallel discussions within political science.

Apart from behaviouralism, realism also came to be challenged by foreign policy analysis, interdependence and international political economy approaches. Foreign policy analysis, the study of factors determining foreign policy outcomes and decisions in particular, was an attempt to challenge the core tenets of realism. In particular, it challenged the realists’ claim that states could be treated uniquely as units in an environment, without reference to their internal structures and changed therein. It could provide a more persuasive account of the making of


foreign policy and of its irrationalities.\textsuperscript{37} At the same time, concepts such as interdependence emerged in the 1970s as a response both to economic events – the decline of the dollar, the OPEC (Oil Producing and Exporting Countries) price rises – and to the political impact within the US of the Vietnam War. As a theory, it was formulated in the work of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye and rested on three propositions: that the state was losing its dominant position in international relations to ‘non-state’ actors and forces, such as multinational corporations; that there was no longer a hierarchy of international issues, with military and strategic affairs, ‘high politics’, at the top and economic and welfare issues, ‘low politics’, further down; and that military power was losing its salience in international relations. International political economy emerged as a significant sub-field of international relations and Keohane and Nye’s formulation of ‘complex interdependence’, security communities, international organizations, and the broader concept of international regimes posed a real challenge to the dominant realist conception of international order.\textsuperscript{38}

Realism also faced challenges from an altogether different perspective: Marxism. Although both Marx and Engels had done some work on ‘international’


issues, it was only in the twentieth century that the Marxist contribution to IR theory was recognized through the work of Lenin on imperialism. The Cold War atmosphere and the Soviet leadership helped the Marxist perspective gain some space in international relations. The Marxists spoke against the tenets of colonialism, neo-colonialism and several other structures of exploitation in which the newly independent countries of the Third World were trapped. The Chinese also contributed their bit and perceived the world initially being divided into 'two camps' and later 'three worlds'. The centres of exploitation could be uprooted only through a 'permanent revolution'. However, Marxism became famous in 1960s and 1970s by way of three major theoretical contributions: dependency theories; 'world system' approach, and the neo-Gramscian insertion into the sub-field of international political economy.


The reaffirmation of realism, ‘neo-realism’, engaged with the concerns of international political economy but sought to re-establish the primacy of states, and politico-military concerns, within the overall analysis.\(^4^5\) The pioneer of neo-realism, Kenneth N. Waltz, in his influential book, set out to convert the loose and disjointed body of realist “thought” into a formal “theory”.\(^4^6\) As in realism, in neo-realism anarchy and absence of central institutions above states characterize the structure of the system. States remain the primary actors acting according to the principle of self-help and seeking to ensure their survival. Further, states do not differ in the tasks they face, only in their capabilities. Capabilities define the position of states in the system, and the distribution of capabilities defines the structure of the system.\(^4^7\)

In the 1980s, IR theory entered a new phase characterised by the post-positivist challenge to the realist domination of the field leading to the ‘third’ debate’ in international relations. There are four main groupings involved in this challenge: critical theory, historical sociology, feminism and post-modernism. All of them are committed to an IR theory far removed from the assumptions of positivism and realism and have laid the foundations of what can be called as the ‘enlightenment tradition’ in the field of IR theory.\(^4^8\) The critical theory was developed by scholars such as Richard Ashley, Robert W. Cox, Andrew Linklater, John Maclean and Mark Hoffman who began to address epistemological, ontological and normative questions traditionally marginalized in IR theory. The

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\(^4^5\) Fred Halliday, op. cit. n. 28, p. 16.
\(^4^6\) Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Relations (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1979).
epistemological questions largely revolved around the relationship between knowledge and values, especially identifying latent interests guiding the main theoretical traditions of IR. The ontological questions were concerned with identifying and analysing not just relevant agents and structures in IR but revealing their historical transformations and complicity with various forms of domination and exclusion. The normative questions, already implicit in the epistemological and ontological aspects, were essentially driven by an interest in emancipation. Critical IR theory, building especially on the lineage of emancipatory politics extending from Kant via Marx to Habermas, sought to enquire into the possibilities of transforming international relations in order to remove unnecessary constraints on achieving universal freedom and equality.49

A second strand of thought has developed from a concern with the overlap between sociology and international relations, under the heading of historical sociology. This is a broad grouping, ranging from the meticulous research of Michael Mann and Charles Tilly to the very specific studies of social revolutions by Theda Skocpol. The point here is that historical sociologists show that the state, made by war in many cases, is the product of the interaction between internal forces and an external setting. This undermines realist, and especially neo-realist, claims of the power of the external setting in determining state behaviour, and of the functional equivalence of states, whatever their internal make-up and regardless of their location in time and space.50

An even more radical critique emerged in the form of feminism that criticised realist approach for its gender indifference. The feminist writings began

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50 Steve Smith, op. cit. n. 48, pp. 24-25.
to engage with some of the core concepts of IR from a gender perspective. These include the concepts of national interest, security power and human rights. All are presented in the mainstream literature as gender-neutral concepts; yet, as feminist re-examination has shown, each has implicit gender significance. Feminist scholars also offered fresh and intriguing insights on global politics. For example, Cynthia Enloe, in her book, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1989), exposed how international politics frequently involves intimate relationships, personal identities and private lives. These informal politics are altogether less transparent than the stuff of official politics and IR scholars typically ignore them. Jean Elshtain (*Women and War*, 1987) discusses the assumptions about females and males in thinking and writing about war, while Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan (*Global Gender Issues*, 1993) look at the manifestations of global gender inequality. Arguably more radically still, Christine Sylvester (*Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Post-Modern Era*, 1994) offers a post-modern feminist repainting of international politics in a post-modern era. Centrally, each of these writers challenges the assumed genderless nature of IR theory and shows how assumptions about gendered roles, and even gendered knowledge, run through IR theory. IR theory is not so much gender neutral as gender blind.

Finally, there are those writers concerned to develop post-modern readings of international relations. Taking their cues from writers such as Foucault, Derrida, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Virilio, post-modern international theorists attack the very notions of reality, or truth, or structure or identity that are central to IR theory as well as all other human sciences. Representative examples of the work in this

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53 Steve Smith, op. cit. n. 48, p. 25.
area would be R. B. J. Walker's re-reading of political and international theory (Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory, 1993), James Der Derian's study of 'anti-diplomacy' (Anti-Diplomacy: Spies, Terror, Speed and War, 1992) and David Campbell's interpretation of US foreign policy (Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity, 1992). The post-modernists' assumption that there is no 'single rationality' and that even the discipline of international relations can have 'diverse meanings, identities and interpretations', has led to new debates within the discipline.

Although the discipline of international relations is now almost a century old, the last two decades have been the most productive ones from the theoretical point of view. Not only is there a new level of maturity within the discipline, but there are also "paradigmatic disagreements" about competing theories and perspectives. Inspite of the dominance of the realist/neo-realist paradigm, there is "space" for other contending theories. At the same time, the theoretical evolution within the discipline is far from over. For the first time the discipline is not developing as a prisoner of history or within the contours of war or the threat of war (as was the case earlier because of the First World War, the Second World War and later the Cold War). The end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War and the unlikely prospects of a new Cold War in near future have enabled IR scholars to concentrate their energies on new actors in international relations such as non-state actors and take up new issues such as health, environment, governance, poverty and development. These offer enough opportunities for further theory building exercises within the discipline.

55 Fred Halliday, op. cit. n. 28, pp. 37-46.
56 The phrase is borrowed from James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., op. cit. n. 12, p. 541.
A defective theory of IR

For all its apparent successes, attraction and internal dynamism, the discipline of IR could not emerge as an independent and autonomous discipline. Part of the reason, as critics remarked, was because of its failure to break its linkages with the twentieth century history. The theoretical framework that emerged was mostly concerned with twentieth century incidents and hence the dominance of realism. But a more fundamental reason was the failure of IR to develop a grand vision for itself.\(^{57}\) However, a serious debate on the shortcomings of the discipline of IR started only in the aftermath of the Cold War. The failure of the discipline either to predict the death of the Soviet Union/end of the Cold War or to explain it satisfactorily led to a virtual ‘crisis’ within the discipline. As John Lewis Gaddis suggests, the immense significance of the end of the Cold War should have been sufficient to allow at least one major theory or another to have predicted or forecasted its coming.\(^{58}\) The realist/neo-realist theory was the prime target of the attack. The theoretical posers to them involved, first, the question of why the Cold War ended without the Soviet Union having been militarily defeated in armed conflict, or why armed rivalry did not lead to a Third World War? What was responsible for the existence of a condition that, in retrospect, is called the ‘long peace’? Did the Cold War end without war between the United States and the Soviet Union because of the deterrence provided by nuclear weapons, which created unacceptable risks that overshadowed any conceivable gain? In what ways were alliances, especially NATO, stabilising contributions to the long peace? Were


negotiations leading to arms-control agreements and treaties themselves contributing factors?\(^{59}\) Ken Booth, in this context, blames the failure of IR theorists to develop a futuristic orientation or a vision for the future. Part of the reason, according to Ken Booth, lies in the fact that the 'intellectual archive' of IR theory has been very impoverished. This archive comprised an authoritative 'tradition' of thought which emphasised an unbroken list of realists. Peace theorists and others who did think about the future were dismissed as 'utopians', and were ridiculed, marginalised or ignored in the construction of courses.\(^{60}\)

But Ken Booth as well as others attribute a more fundamental reason for trouble within the discipline. Their contention is that IR theory has largely been the product of Western ideology. In fact, it would be justifiable to argue that IR theory was developed as a theory 'of the West, for the West and by the West'. No space was given to non-Western contributions in the development of IR theory. For instance, the *Arthashashtra* philosophy of the great ancient Indian strategic thinker, Kautilya was quietly forgotten in tracing the history of IR thought. Similarly, another classic, written by K. M. Panikkar, was absent in mainstream discussion of international relations though by any standards the book is a masterpiece.\(^{61}\) Right from its inception until the present, IR theory was deliberately derived from an Anglo-American tradition. Much of the literature in the field has been produced by scholars from Europe and America leading to an Anglo-American hegemony in the discipline. As Stephanie G. Neuman has observed, "mainstream IR theory –


\(^{60}\) Ken Booth, 'Dare not to know: international relations theory versus the future', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), op. cit. n. 48, pp. 328-350.

realism, neo-realism and neo-liberalism – is essentially Eurocentric theory, originating largely in the United States and founded, almost exclusively, on what happens or what happened in the West”. Historically speaking, this was unavoidable. It was in the United States that international relations became a discipline. As Stanley Hoffman has argued, certain circumstances and causes gave the country an early lead in the discipline. The circumstances were the rise of the United States to world power and the establishment of the ‘realist’ school in the writings of Nicholas Spykman (America’s Strategy in World Politics, 1942) and Hans Morgenthau (Politics Among Nations, 1948). The latter, a refugee from Europe, became the father of the realist school, and in fact, of the discipline itself. In addition to Morgenthau, there was a galaxy of foreign-born scholars: Arnold Wolfers, Klaus Knorr, Karl Deutsch, Ernst Haas, George Liska, and the young Kissinger and Brezinski, to name only a few. All these scholars became prominent spokesmen of realism. Institutional factors also helped in the eventual growth of international relations with a realist tinge. These included close cooperation and exchange between the bureaucratic world and the academic world; a network of foundations that fed international relations research; and the autonomy of the universities themselves. However, as Hoffman himself accepted, the development and proliferation of international relations studies in the United States was obsessed with ‘superpower mentality’ and ignored those factors that were important to the understanding of the dynamics of international relations.63

Jacinta O’Hagan, in her recent book, concurs with Hoffman and suggests that the conceptual evolution of international relations is closely linked to the

intellectual and historical evolution of the ‘West’. For example, the ‘classic’ texts of the discipline are drawn from Greek, European and American scholars such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Carr and Waltz. The historical memory of the discipline is almost exclusively that of the evolution of the Western states system. The models of behaviour upon which theories are based are drawn primarily from the history of European, then American, engagements in international politics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The power of the West, in terms of political and economic capabilities has facilitated the expansion of Western ideas, institutions and structures.  

As a result, according to Stephanie G. Neuman,

Most IR theorists believe that studying the Western experience alone is empirically sufficient to establish general laws of individual, group, or state behaviour irrespective of the point in time or geographical location. Few look to the non-western world to seek evidence for their arguments.  

During the Cold War period, even minor issues in Europe were taken care of and conflicts minimised. But the same attention was not accorded to address the roots of Third World conflicts that outnumbered Western conflicts. Some of these issues had to wait for the formal end of the Cold War rather than precede them (such as Cambodia, Namibia, South Africa among others). Even after the end of the Cold War, IR theorists continued to study Third World conflicts from a Western perspective. Some of them came with pessimistic predictions based on realist assumptions. While Stanley Hoffman envisaged a “new world disorder in the Third World”, Robert Jervis predicted a more conflictual future for the Third World.  

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65 Stephanie G. Neuman, op. cit. n. 62, p. 2.
67 Cited in Ibid, pp. 159-160.
All this means that the contemporary IR theory while being a partial theory is represented as a universal one. The fact is that this Western theory fails to meet the expectations of the non-West, in particular, that of the Third World. Alcalde, for example, contends that Western theories maintaining a positive linkage between economic development, political stability, democracy and world peace have been proven wrong in the Third World. These linkages, he argues, "crumble at the most cursory confrontation with historical reality".68 Similarly, there are many Western concepts that do not fit into the Third World reality or fail to explain the Third World situation. To take just one example, the assumption of an 'anarchical' international system is difficult to apply in case of Third World countries because it is not anarchy but 'hierarchy' in the global system that constrains the external behaviour of most Third World states, and that this is how their leaders and intellectuals see it.69 The views of the Third World authors, such as Frantz Fanon, C. L. R. James, Basil Davidson, Amilcar Cabral, Lee Kuan Yew and Muhammed Hussain Fadlallah who have been writing on Third World issues and of Western commentators as giving for Third World views such as Barbara Harlow, Immanuel Wallerstein, William Pfaf and Timothy Brennan, have been consistently marginalized.70 The concepts that give meaning to Third World experience such as colonialism and neo-colonialism, North-South relations, a New International Economic Order (NIEO) etc. rarely figure in the Western/mainstream agenda. The Third World demand for sovereign equality, security of small states, genuine and comprehensive global environment and restructuring of the United

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69 Stephanie G. Neuman, op. cit. n. 62, p. 3.
Nations so that a new and just world order could be fashioned has never been taken seriously by the West. The noblesse oblige attitude of so many IR theorists and policy analysts is all the more puzzling when their "we know best what is in your interests" stance, despite the lack of empirical evidence to support it, pervades the debate over economic growth, political development, human rights, peacekeeping, arms control and nuclear proliferation taking place principally within Western forums. Non-Western members of the 'international system', comprising some three-quarters of its membership, are generally considered objects of great power policies rather than independent, autonomous players in the system.71

Thus, despite some recent attempts to overcome the cultural and civilisational barriers,72 the discipline is still far from being comprehensive. It does not have space for diversity, pluralism and cultural perspectives within its fold. The West-dominated IR theory today does not have prescriptions for many of the Third World problems. After five decades of experience with Western IR theory, Third World countries are neither secure nor developed. The Western models of security and development have brought them only disillusion. Instead, they have become victims of various forms of internal conflict from revolution, insurgency, civil conflict and secessionist struggle.73 In South Asia itself, every country suffers from some or the other form of internal conflict. All the regional hot spots or areas of potential localised conflicts are in the Third World. The Third World has also

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71 Stephanie G. Neuman, op. cit. n. 13, p. 13.
become the victim of a recent phenomenon, 'humanitarian intervention' in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq with possibly many more nations confronted with this uncertain future. The dominant theories of IR — realism/neo-realism do not focus on the real areas or issues of conflict in the Third World which are mostly 'internal'; their level of analysis resting on state and inter-state interactions. It is for this reason that K. J. Holsti rightly concludes that existing theories of IR do not have a great deal to offer the Third World. 74 Mohammed Ayoob, too, agrees with him and pleads for the development of an alternative perspective capable of explaining two things: (1) the origins of the majority of the current conflicts in the international system and (2) the variables determining the domestic and external behaviour of the majority of the members of the international society regarding conflict and order, as well as matters of war and peace. 75 There is, therefore, a need to promote a non-Western perspective that will understand the security and developmental needs of Third World countries and at the same time contribute to the development of IR theory. In this context, the attempt to construct a Chinese perspective on international relations adds an interesting dimension to the existing theory of IR.

Towards a Chinese perspective on international relations

The defects in Western theories apart, there are many compelling reasons why one should look towards China for an alternative perspective on international relations. As one Chinese scholar has noted, "a Chinese theory will enable the study of the objective rules that govern the changes and development of


international politics from a Chinese perspective”. Such a theory, he suggests, would enable Chinese as well as non-Chinese scholars to “face the world from the Chinese base”. A further consideration is derived from China’s unique position in the international system. It is the largest country in terms of population, a rising power, a socialist country undergoing transition to ‘market socialism’ and the only country with a ‘one country, two systems’ policy. Besides, as mentioned in the initial paragraphs, it is at times very difficult to explain China’s foreign policy behaviour. It fits neither the democratic nor the socialist mould and, therefore, predictions from either of these perspectives are difficult. Here, the Marxist-Leninist theories of IR do not appear to be very useful analytical tools in studying Chinese foreign policy. This is particularly true when there has been a general process of ‘de-ideologizing’ in Chinese society today. In China’s economic interactions with other countries, its ideas and practices are now much closer to Robert Gilpin’s characterisation of economic nationalism than the traditional Marxist perspective. Since China has had a totally different political, cultural and civilisational tradition, the Western theory of IR is clearly not applicable in its entirety to the Chinese foreign policy experiences. Therefore, a Chinese perspective that examines its roots in its unique position and cultural tradition needs to be developed.

However, unlike the Western theory of IR, the basic issues and principles of which are grounded in a systematically represented epistemology, constructing a Chinese perspective is slightly difficult for several reasons. First, China has historically been a closed society with a ‘seclusive’ culture distinct from others. 

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The Chinese belief in 'culturo-centrism' distinguished China's 'virtuous' culture from the non-Chinese barbaric culture. This Chinese tendency to set itself apart culturally and epistemologically has resulted in an overall ignorance by non-Chinese scholars about a possible Chinese perspective on IR. Second, Mandarin is a difficult language for non-Chinese people. Since most of the writings that may provide clues to a Chinese perspective on IR, it becomes difficult for non-Chinese scholars to understand the same. Third, the development of IR as an academic discipline is itself a recent phenomenon in China. As such, not enough effort has been made by Chinese scholars to develop and systematise a Chinese viewpoint. 78 Finally, Chinese scholars do not attach importance to theory building. They stress that the contents of international relations textbooks should be based on practice, not on theory. They prefer a narrative, historical type of analysis, and are not at ease with Western scholarship that suggests that theory should lead and set the framework for empirical analysis. In fact, theory in China serves as a policy guide rather than providing a systematic body of knowledge. 79

Besides, historically speaking, the career graph of international relations has been short in China, or for that matter any Third World country when compared to the West for several reasons. First, whereas the Western states were essentially expansionist and outward looking, countries like China and India were inward looking and rarely resorted to expansionist methods outside their geographical boundaries. Second, whereas the European countries' relations with each other were based on trade and wars, China and India relied essentially on culture and virtue to influence other countries. Wars for them were exceptions

79 Ibid.
rather than rule and were defensive in nature. For example, China’s war with the northern tribes in ancient times or its ‘Opium Wars’ with Western countries were essentially defensive. Similarly, in ancient times, Indian kings and princes had to cross swords with the Greeks, Bactrians to defend India. Even the Sino-Indian War of 1962 is viewed as defensive in Chinese as well as Indian perceptions. Both the countries never had any colonies outside their territorial domains and were not lured by any ‘gold rush’ like the European states. The spread of Buddhism in East Asia or the existence of Hindu and Buddhist temples in South East Asia was cultural expansions rather than territorial expansions. China, despite being the largest state in Asia, tried to influence its neighbours more through cultural influence than by resort to force. This was done through the spread of Confucian values and notions of Chinese emperor enjoying the ‘mandate of heaven’. Indeed, China was more of a cultural state than a territorial state and the Chinese ‘world order’ was based on the ‘Chinese’ notions of tributary neighbours enjoying the protection of the Chinese emperor. Third, the fifteenth-sixteenth century ideologies of Renaissance and Reformation provided the underpinnings for Western IR thought linking it to the concerns of the modern era resulting in territorial expansion and industrial revolution in the subsequent centuries. The expansion of the Third World states lay largely outside of these developments, except in few subjects, as late as the twentieth century. Instead, the Third World including China had a different and humiliating experience of colonial exploitation, which was largely a consequence of European modernisation. Therefore, any construction of international relations perspectives in Third World and China has to be based on issues in three different periods: (a) before the coming of the West; (b) the colonial
period; (c) the post-colonial period. In the pre-colonial days, the Third World, particularly China and India, had specific notions about inter-state conduct, the security of the state including strategies of warfare, treaty-making and conflict resolution. In the wake of the colonial onslaught, with the breakdown of the traditional framework of inter-state relations, the Third World’s international relations concerns were voiced primarily in terms of imperialism versus nationalism.

In the post-colonial period, the Third World countries have developed some specific concerns hitherto alien to Western countries. Development partially necessitated by the consequences of colonialism, has been a predominant concern for most Third World countries. One of the most pressing questions in the Third World today is that of food and hunger. These are no longer Western concerns. This has been complicated by another issue specific to the Third World today – demographic explosion. The West dealt with this in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by occupying the ‘empty’ spaces of the New World. Without previous experience of population control, one of the pertinent questions before the countries of the Third World is how to feed the ever-increasing number of mouths. This compels them to address on priority the management of land, population and other resources. Moreover, an imbalance among these factors has also led to ‘ethnic conflicts’ in many regions of the Third World. Not only this, continued population migration from many parts of the Third World to the ‘fortress’ of Europe and America have also brought them into direct confrontation with the developed world. Indeed, for the West, this is one of the most important questions in their relations with the developing countries and there is incessant talk of containing this ‘coming anarchy’ in Western world. The developmental demands
of the Third World have also forced it to seek more resource allocation from international institutions like the UNDP and the World Bank Group. To sustain their development, the Third World countries are also concerned about the need for a long peace. Hence, the quest for security and stability in the Third World is crucially linked to ‘survival’ defined in the most basic term, while governments in West are mostly concerned with the protection of their power.

The Western theory of IR lacks the theoretical formulations to address these issues and concerns. As such, we have to search for a ‘Third World’ or ‘Chinese’ perspective on IR. In its concern for development and the need to mobilise resources and ensure equitable distribution, individual rights are replaced by a communitarian approach by the Third World. Similarly, in the ongoing ‘democracy-development’ dilemma’ in many of the emerging industrialised economies of East Asia, hitherto associated with the Third World, the preference for democracy as it is understood in the West, is clearly weak. In many countries of Africa and Asia, totalitarian and autocratic systems are involved in resource mobilisation, development and modernisation. In the same vein, the agenda of the Third World countries at the international level has been different from that of the West. Whereas the West has been pursuing the concepts of liberal democracy, human rights and peace aggressively, the Third World has been pressing for concepts mainly economic – the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO), overcoming the North-South gap, trade imbalances to name a few, besides being at loggerheads with the West on concepts such as hegemony, the emerging world order and the place of international organizations within such a world. Hence, the quest of a Third World perspective on IR is necessarily based on
different notions of governance, development, conceptions of international organizations and world order.

**Constructing a Chinese perspective on IR**

A Chinese perspective on IR can be constructed within the broad contours of the Third World paradigm with which it shares many of its contemporary concerns. But unlike many of its counterparts in Asia and Africa, where there were no unified states and there existed competing localities within the boundaries of those states on the basis of tribal, ethnic and regional affiliations, China existed as a single state for most parts of its history. Hence, China was able to develop concerns that are expressed only by a modern state. Because of its inward orientation, civilisational supremacy, Confucian values and the belief that it symbolises virtue and culture over the universe under the 'Mandate of the Heaven', territorial expansion was rarely on the agenda of China's rulers. Rather, its concerns reflected a one-point agenda: how to consolidate China into a strong state while securing it from the threat of alien barbarians. China, therefore, was concerned with maintaining peace along its borders, preventing demographic shifts from the north in the form of Hun invasions, the defence of its 'sinic' civilisation as well as the management of its resources and trade relations.

These concerns shaped the Chinese understanding of inter-state relationships, and the Chinese political elite developed concepts, strategies and tactics to deal with other states that are as relevant today. For example, as early as 220 BC, when Han civilisation was still in its fledgling stage, the Chinese developed a worldview described in contemporary Western scholarship as the
Sino-centric world order.\textsuperscript{81} Similarly, traditional strategic thinkers such as Sun Zi and Sun Bin wrote extensively on war. In the twentieth century, Mao Zedong’s extensive writings on war seem to have been influenced by the writings of Sun Zi and Sun Bin, although Mao did not acknowledge this debt. In one of the most contested view, Alastair I. Johnston is of the opinion that China developed a strategic culture, based on its classic texts, to deal with neighbours along its borders. Called the ‘parabellum paradigm’ by Johnston, this strategic culture was based on realpolitik wherein China did not hesitate to use force in case the neighbour was weak and vulnerable. Johnston is also of the opinion that this tradition of strategic culture has continued in China’s foreign policy behaviour even after the establishment of the PRC in 1949.\textsuperscript{82} Again, there existed a full-fledged ‘Legalist’ school of thought, which developed in the sixth century AD and contributed extensively to techniques of strengthening and consolidating the state from within. In many ways, the Legalists are considered forerunners of present day realist theories in the West. Lastly, the Chinese also had clearly defined notions of power, domination and the rise and fall of hegemonies in a cyclical view of history.

Under Mao Zedong’s leadership, China developed some perspectives on IR such as (a) Mao’s theory of ‘people’s war’; (b) the ‘five principles of peaceful coexistence’ in governing IR; and (c) Mao’s ‘three world’s theory’. Although, no theoretical formulations have emerged from the post-Mao leadership\textsuperscript{83} and there is (presently) no officially sanctioned Chinese view on IR comparable to Mao’s

\textsuperscript{82} See, Alastair I. Johnston, op. cit. n. 80.
'three world’s theory', an attempt can be made based on China’s present concerns.

Scope of the work

There is no doubt that China, by virtue of its important position in the international system has its own concerns and viewpoints about a number of issues which provide fodder for the development of Chinese perspectives on IR. It is however, difficult to deal with all issues. Hence, two concepts of ‘security’ and ‘development’ are proposed as case studies. These reveal sharp differences of opinion between China and the West and can be said to be of primary concern to China. At the same time, China is in a position to speak on these twin issues out of a position of strength, given its historic experiences after 1979. Above all, ‘security and development’ are the paramount concerns for the Third World and to that extent, China is in a better position to place them in the mainstream IR theory to make it more diversified, comprehensive and cater to the Third World needs.