

Theorizing the Global South in IR: Problems and Prospects*

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Abstract: The inadequacy of mainstream IR theories to properly analyze the Global South continues to disturb scholars and academics. Admittedly Global South (GS) is not a homogeneous category, and therefore, not easy to theorize. But this was not the major reason for the inadequacy of mainstream theories to analyze the GS. These theories, mainly products of the North, failed to comprehend society and politics of the GS effectively. With changing times, the GS may require alternative theories for better understanding of its politics and society. This paper seeks to search the alternatives, and highlight the problems and prospects for an appropriate theory for the GS.

Keywords: Global South, Mainstream IR Theories, Conflict Resolution, Economic Development, South Asia

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Introduction

The southern part of the world which is occasionally referred to as the 'Global South' is geographically vast, culturally heterogeneous, and politically diverse. The Global South (GS) comprises, in the strict geographical sense, economically well off, economically developing, and (economically) poor countries. It consists of authoritarian, hereditary, democratic, and semi-democratic political systems. Therefore, it is indeed difficult to comprehend the GS as one concrete entity' – the GS may be termed as an ideational abstraction, providing a loose term of reference, - mostly economic, - in international relations. However, in international political economy (IPE), GS has been mainly associated with poor nations. Although terms like the 'North' and the 'South' have a latent geographical connotation, they are not used in the study of the IPE in a strict geographical sense. Advanced countries south of the equator, like Australia and New Zealand, are considered part of the North in the discourses of IPE. In the terminology of the IPE, North is thus synonymous to technologically advanced rich post-industrial countries of the first world, whereas South is associated with the poor, less-developed countries of the third world. However, irrespective of conceptual ambiguity over terminology, the fact remains that the vast majority of the world's population today live in abject poverty in the South. More than a billion people in sub-Saharan Africa, South and Central Asia, Latin America, and Central America live in extreme poverty without access to basic needs like food, shelter, water, sanitation, education, and health care. On the contrary, people in the North are affluent with high levels of income, employment and social security. But why is this disparity? Scholars of international relations (IR) hold different opinions on the issue of this large gap between the North and the South, commonly known as the North-South Divide.

The North–South divide is a controversial area in the study of IR today. This is evident from the fact that at present this issue is linked to many theoretical debates in the discipline of IR. For instance, Critical theorists, following the Marxist ideas, analyze this disparity in terms of division of society into economic classes, mainly owners and non-owners. The fact that every society is controlled by the rich owning class who oppress the poor non-owning class holds true for the international order too. Critical theory scholars have opined that the poverty of the South is the direct fallout of accumulation of wealth by the rich capitalists of the North. The accumulated wealth is recycled in industries of the North to earn more profits and to buy workers there. Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory (WST) link colonization by the rich North to the ultimate impoverishment of the South. WST scholars (like Immanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank and others) believe that the rich North has become the 'core' in international politics and economy by extracting raw materials from their colonies over centuries. Through such exploitation, the erstwhile colonies of the South have become the 'periphery' in the international system. The core continues to dominate the periphery because of its advantageous position in the present international order. As a result of this exploitation, the core gets all the blood while the 'periphery' remains anaemic. The Dependency-theorists believe that it is not possible to sustain a country's economic growth only with internal resources. The capitalist path of development has created an interdependence of capital outflow, where the rich countries need to give loans and the poor ones are compelled to borrow to sustain their respective economies. But this interdependence is not marked by equality, as there is a perceptible imbalance in power relations between the North and the South, which is highly tilted, obviously, in favour of the North.

Liberal theorists, on the other hand, relate the impoverishment of the countries of the South to their failure to accumulate wealth and manage their economic and political systems effectively. According to the Liberal view, the countries of the South have got enough time following independence to revamp their economy. But due to political instability and lack of adequate infrastructure, these

countries have failed to improve their economy. In an interdependent world economy, there exists ample scope for a developing economy to reap the benefits of globalization and capital outflow to become a developed one, believe the liberals. Political stability and development of socio-economic infrastructure are prerequisites for economic prosperity. Many South-East Asian countries have achieved development in this way.

Theorizing the GS were mostly done by IR scholars from economic points of view, seeking to unearth the poor economic conditions of nations of the GS, as evident from the broader framework of Marxist and Liberal theories outlined above. In this process, IR theories got heavily dependent on IPE to analyze socio-economic milieu of the GS. This trend led to scholarly indifference and negligence, willy-nilly, about other crucial issues concerning the GS today, for example, the security dilemma of the countries of the GS, and / or the problem of conflict resolution in the GS. Many areas of the GS, like South Asia, are conflict-prone and suffer from security dilemma, due to heavy nuclearization of the area and adjoining states. But mainstream IR theories have not provided adequate explanations of reasons behind, and possible solutions to such security concerns in the GS. This paper seeks to highlight the inadequacy of mainstream IR theories to analyze the GS properly, with reference to its current concerns. Two important issues of contemporary relevance to the GS, - conflict resolution and economic development, - would be analyzed in this paper with reference to four mainstream IR theories, representing the rationalist, IPE and the post-positivist trends. These mainstream theories are: Liberal (and neo-liberal), Marxist (and neo-Marxist), Realist (and neo-Realist), and Constructivism (with its variations). While Liberal and Realist theories are considered as the two most fundamental theories of IR, I have taken up these two for analysis. The Marxist theory has been chosen as an alternative current to liberalism and realism. Lately, constructivism has attracted renewed attention of IR scholars as a 'sufficient' theory to answer many problems relating to the GS. It has also revived the normative debate in IR theory. Therefore, constructivism made its way, somewhat naturally in my article. I begin my paper with the liberal theory.

Liberal Theory of IR and the Global South

The evolution of liberal philosophy covers a vast period in history—from the Reformation Movement in the sixteenth century till today. During this long span of existence, liberalism came under the influence of various intellectual minds, trends and historical forces. Individual liberty, believed early liberal thinkers like Immanuel Kant, J. S. Mill, and T. H. Green to name a few, could be nurtured best within a cooperative organization of humans, like the state. An individual's liberty and freedom are not in contradiction to the creation and existence of the state; in fact these are ensured by a liberal, less interfering state. This view of the liberal, encouraging and less-intrusive state influenced scholars in IR; they developed a liberal tradition in IR thinking, which was later identified as the liberal theory in international relations. The post Second World War liberalism and neo-liberal versions are slightly different, although the basic context (individual liberty and freedom) remained the same. Without delving deep into the historical evolution of liberalism, I would focus on some important features of liberalism in different periods, and try to assess how much liberal theory can help to analyze the GS today.

Some basic assumptions of early liberal theory in IR (1920 – late 1930s) are: (i) nation-states are the main actors in IR; (ii) cooperation among nation-states is essential for a peaceful world order; (iii) nation-states that valued individual liberty and freedom in their domestic political systems can best ensure international peace; and (iv) friendly relations among nations would help avoid war and establish peace in the world. Early liberal theorist in IR, who had witnessed the tragedy of the First World War, were concerned more with a peaceful international order based on cooperation among nation-states. This peaceful world order could only be ensured by peaceful, liberal-democratic nation-states which valued individual freedom and liberty, and promoted competitive economy. With the emergence of Nazi and fascist forces, and the failure of the League of Nations, early (also known as idealist) liberalism lost grounds to neo-realist theory which began to emerge from the late 1930s. However, liberalism in

international relations was revived with renewed vigour after the Second World War, as it generated newer ideas and thinking which enriched the study of the discipline. Post-Second World War liberalism in IR developed into a multi-faceted doctrine with four main branches: sociological liberalism, interdependence liberalism, institutional liberalism and republican liberalism. Some basic tenets of Post-Second World War Liberalism could be identified as follows: (1) nation-states are not the only actors in IR; individuals, groups, societal organizations are also important actors in IR. (2) Technological advancement and economic interests bind the states in a complex web of interdependence. This interdependence promotes a cooperative international order. (3) International institutions like the UNO, WTO, NATO and EU help to promote international cooperation and strengthen efforts for peace. (4) Democracy and competitive economy can ensure international peace. (5) Democratic states seek peaceful resolution of conflicts, and do not fight with each other. (6) Competitive market economy keeps away security fears of nation-states, because commercial interests become the primary concern of states.

With the onset of globalization and free trade in the late 1970s, a group of liberal thinkers argued that this new economic trend would have enormous impact on the nation-state and the international order. This group, known as neo-liberal thinkers in IR, emerged after the triumph of the 'New Right' in Britain and the US during the late 1970s and 1980s. In an era of globalization, neo-liberal theorists in IR favoured a free play of economic forces, and a minimal role for the state in economic life. They argued that the former theory of *laissez faire* in trade could not remove the control of the state over economic life without hindrance. With the concept of the 'welfare state' gaining popularity after the Second World War, the state came to exercise a constant dominance in socio-economic life. The neo-liberals argued that the triumph of globalization renders the notion of state sovereignty vulnerable as 'free trade' introduced the idea of trade without national borders (Ohmae, 1995; Friedman, 2000; Weiss, 1998). They believed that globalization can help achieve true internationalism and a peaceful world order about which post-Second World War liberals remained so passionate and optimistic. They wanted a 'rollback' of the welfare state and protectionism in economic life, because these practices ultimately kill the enterprise and talent of the individual, and make the society incapable of achieving better results. So, a minimal state is required for economic liberalism, which in turn can pave the way for a cooperative international order based on peace, harmony and safeguard of human rights.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the 'Socialist Bloc', the neo-liberal philosophy claimed to have gained more strength. They refer to the Soviet model of state intervention and protectionism in economic life to vindicate their arguments. According to the neo-liberals, state protectionism in economic matters not only affects human enterprise, they bring corruption, nepotism and inefficiency in socio-political life which may prove to be very detrimental to the state and the society. Conversely, economic liberalism of the 'minimal state' helps national and world trade to prosper with benefits reaching the grassroot level. Organizations like the WTO, APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Community), NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), IMF (International Monetary Fund), and the World Bank, which help to promote free trade among nations, also promote world peace and security by enhancing the economic prosperity of the nation-states and the world. Globalization, represented by free market economy in the domestic sphere linked to international trade, has helped many underdeveloped states to achieve sufficient economic development, which in turn would positively affect socio-political development in these countries, think the neo-liberals. They believe that sufficient cooperation and interdependence among nation-states are possible through globalization. In the twenty-first century, it is not possible, and hence desirable, for any nation to isolate itself from world trade, and fully control its internal economic life.

Basic features of neo-liberalism could be summarized as follows: (1) economic liberalism marked by free trade and globalization. (2) Minimum state intervention in economic life, — discarding of the Keynesian model. (3) Failure of *Laissez faire* theory to remove state control on economic life. (4) Rollback of the 'welfare' and 'protectionist' state as it breeds inefficiency and corruption. (5) Free trade

can ensure domestic and international peace and security because states are engaged in the economic development process, and shy away from war. (6) Free trade can best thrive in a democratic political system as it secures human rights and basic freedoms of people. (7) Disintegration of Soviet Union and the 'socialist bloc' marked the triumph of free market economy. (8) In the twenty-first century, cooperation and interdependence of states are possible through globalization.

With these fundamental ideas about liberal theory in IR, I now proceed to examine the obvious question: can liberal theory in IR, with all its variants, analyze the problems of the GS adequately? As far as the issue of conflict resolution is concerned, liberal theory has several possible solutions: economic cooperation among nations-states; encouraging free trade in tune with the spirit of globalization; promoting democracy because democracies seldom fight wars; binding nation-states in a web of interdependence, from regional economic cooperation to global economic engagements, to technological interdependence etc. The onset of globalization and economic interdependence however could not do away with the dangers of conflict in many parts of the GS. South Asia may be cited as an example here. Growing economic cooperation between the two principal states of South Asia, India and Pakistan, could not obliterate the dangers of war between these two states. Both India and Pakistan have liberalized their national economies in the 1990s keeping in touch with globalization. Since then, economic cooperation between these two states has grown significantly, but the dangers of conflict have not come down. Statistics from recent bilateral trade show that Indo-Pak trade has grown significantly. In 2005-06, the total volume of bilateral trade was U.S. \$ 868.79 million. In 2010-11 fiscal year, total volume of India-Pakistan bilateral trade reached U.S. \$ 2666.13 million, up by more than 300 per cent (Dept. of Commerce, GOI). Although it is true that Pakistan accounts for less than 1 per cent of India's trade, and India accounts for a little over 1 per cent of Pakistan's trade in 2010, but it is also true that their trade volume is growing in recent years. According to one study, the potential of formal trade between India and Pakistan is roughly 20 times greater than the current recorded trade. This means that at 2010-11 trade levels, total trade between India and Pakistan could expand from its current level of U.S. \$ 2.66 billion to U.S. \$ 53.2 billion (M. S. Khan). My question is: would this growing economic cooperation reduce chances of conflict between these two traditional adversaries, now or in the future? My answer would be a pessimistic 'no', considering the historical rivalry between India and Pakistan. Despite liberal optimism, and growing economic engagements, India and Pakistan may be involved in future conflicts. The two nations fought a large-scale undeclared war only recently, in 1999 in Kargil, when both were ruled by democratically elected governments, headed by A.B. Vajpayee (India) and Nawaz Sharief (Pakistan). It is true that the military calls shots in Pakistani politics but Pakistan's experiments with democracy did not reduce conflicts with India, and promote peace in the region.

Globalization, free trade, and regional economic interdependence through institutional mechanisms like the SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area) could not do away with poverty in the South Asian region. Although there are official claims about reduction in poverty, high level of income disparity among people in almost all South Asian states have led to social unrests, and problems of governance. Globalization and free trade could not provide right tracks for all-round economic development in South Asian countries. For example, in India, despite noticeable GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rate, rampant poverty still exists. And GDP growth, according to many economists, is not the only indicator for the measurement of economic development. While referring to China's GDP growth, one leading economist remarked, "In the case of China, if you take into account the environmental degradation and resource depletion, growth is much less than what it seems" (Joseph Stiglitz, 2012). About India's GDP growth, and looming poverty, the economist opined, "Your GDP is going up, you have per capita highest number of billionaires but at the same time you have many people in poverty. So the GDP per capita does not capture what is happening. In India, the progress in the middle and at the bottom has been less than what GDP in itself would like you to believe" (Stiglitz, 2012). Widespread debates about the fruits of globalization and its trickle-down effects to the grass root level has been taking place in almost all countries of the GS, because globalization and free trade with lesser state interference, have not shown

expected results in many countries. The South East Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s was a stark reminder that liberal market economy was not the panacea to all problems of the south, especially poverty reduction and all-round economic development. The inadequacy of liberal theory in IR to analyze the GS properly, leads us to the Marxist theory of IR (and its variants) for answers to the contemporary concerns of states in the GS. The following section would examine the Marxist theory of IR and its contributions to the understanding of the GS.

Marxist Theory of IR and the Global South

The Marxist critique of the capitalist system holds relevance in international relations with the onset of globalization, which is viewed as a global movement of capital, goods and labour. It is possible for the rich capitalist states to control this global movement, and dominate in international politics. The liberal and neo-realist critics of Marxism wanted to prove that Marxism had made no contribution to the study of IR, because in the Marxist philosophy state, nationalism and cooperation or conflict among states had little relevance. If IR is primarily concerned with interactions among nation-states, the Marxist philosophy does not fit into it because it does not have any interest in nation-states, their struggle for supremacy, national interests, and politics for power among states. But this criticism is not valid because classical and neo-Marxist thinkers proved quite relevant for the study of international relations. Classical Marxist thinkers like Lenin and Bukharin developed the theory of imperialism, which they considered as an advanced stage of capitalism. At this stage of development of capitalism, new mercantilist states emerged. These states were willing to use force to achieve their economic and political goals, resulting in further crises in capitalism and estrangement of the proletariat from the capitalist system. Lenin and Bukharin argued that the First World War was the product of a desperate need for new markets for the surplus capital accumulated by the dominant mercantilist states (V.I. Lenin, 1999; N. Bukharin, 1972). The tendency of the mercantilist state to find new outlets for its accumulated surplus capital led to a severe struggle among mercantilist states that shattered the promise of a peaceful international order, advanced by the liberals.

Contemporary Marxists have largely drawn from their classical comrades to build their ideas on development and underdevelopment. But they have also made some significant departures from the classical Marxists who believed in the progressive side of capitalism that would facilitate industrial development for all peoples. Dependency theorists, for instance, argued that 'peripheral' societies failed to achieve industrial development because of the dominant class interests of the capitalists in the 'core' and the 'periphery'. Underdeveloped peripheral societies must detach themselves from the world capitalist economy to achieve autonomous industrial development (A.G. Frank, 1967). This view is linked to the process of globalization as well, which the liberal thinkers claim would help in achieving unprecedented economic growth. The dependency theorists believe that due to the shared class interests of the capitalists in all parts of the world, globalization would not be able to bring about equal development for all people, and end exploitative tendencies of the 'core' over the 'periphery'. World System theorists like Wallerstein also disagreed with the classical Marxist view in the progressive role of capitalism to bring about industrial development in all parts of the world (I. Wallerstein, 1979). But classical- and neo-Marxists share the view that class interests of the capitalists know no boundaries, and these are exploitative and dominant in all parts of the world. These exploitative class interests of the capitalists would create unbridgeable gap between the rich and the poor peoples of the world. The proletariat must rise above national interests to introduce change in this international order, and aim for a class-less society to achieve international relations based on equitable relations among people. Present international relations are dominated by the interests of the capitalists. This could be ascertained from the fact that capitalists of 'core' and 'peripheral' societies join hands to exploit the poor people, and to justify the existing international order. Only through the establishment of socialist class-less societies across the world, the present exploitative nature of international relations could be changed. For that end, the

proletariat of the world, cutting across national boundaries and national interests, would have to unite and struggle for change of the existing international order.

At hindsight Marxist theory of IR appears to be more relevant to the understanding of the GS. Some contemporary, Western experts of IR, —Andrew Linklater for example, —believe that Marxism has not lost its relevance after the end of the Soviet Union, and the onset of globalization. Linklater identified four major contributions of Marxism to the study of IR. First, the materialist interpretation of history and ideas of production, property relations and class, are immensely strong to oppose the realist views which hold that power and national interests constitute the core in international politics. Second, Marxism was concerned with international inequality generated by capitalist globalization. Third, the global spread of capitalist modernity helps in the development process of modern societies and the conduct of their international relations. Fourth, analyses of international relations and globalization get a critical outlook from the Marxists. Globalization and international political economy (IPE) are analyzed much objectively by the neo-Marxists, who believe that these are not ubiquitously beneficial for people. These views, in effect, strengthen the discussions on globalization and IPE (A. Linklater, 2001).

The Marxist theory with its economic overtone (ideas of production, property relations, class et.al.), appears to be more applicable to the GS, which is primarily an economic connotation, with emphasis on issues like underdevelopment. But the class-based approach of the Marxist theory is not properly equipped to analyze economic inequalities in many societies of the GS. For instance, in the caste-ridden society of India, inequalities existed and created major divisions in the society much before the emergence of classes based on economic positions. Castes were not only associated with social positions and status, they also created property relations in India, because the upper and middle castes cornered landed properties in almost all parts of India. In one of my studies conducted in the province of Bihar in eastern India, I have shown how middle castes appropriated land in Bihar and gradually became exploiters. Traditionally, these middle castes did not garner higher social status like the upper castes, and they wanted to desperately achieve social status by forcibly occupying land. This led to a violent civil war like situation in Bihar between the upper / middle and the lower castes spanning over three decades (A. Chatterjee, 2003). Now, theoretically, it is possible to club the landed castes into the owning class, and the landless castes into the non-owning class, and analyze class division in the Marxist sense. But that theorization would cause a lot of problem, because a landless upper caste person would continue to garner social prestige, and would not be able to become, psychologically and socially, a part of the landless non-owning class. The non-owning class (proletariat, in Marxist terminology) would also hesitate to accommodate that person of the upper caste into the proletariat class. The non-owning upper castes in the Indian subcontinent would not be a part of the international proletariat, nor the owning middle castes, conversely, become part of the world capitalists. Castes are still very relevant in India in the age of globalization, and obliterate any simple class division based on property relations. Castes play an important role in Indian politics as well. The increasing politicization of the lower castes has encouraged them to join the race for state power, alongside the upper castes. Many western scholars like Linklater fail to grasp this division of society into castes in the Indian subcontinent, where the relevance of the Marxist theory is limited. One of the reasons for the failure to achieve equitable development in the Indian subcontinent has been the continued dominance of castes and caste-based politics. Therefore, globalization and the ‘core-periphery’ (which is also not beyond criticism) syndromes are not only to blame for the underdevelopment of this vast region within the GS.

Realism and the Global South

The Realist theory of IR, like any other theory in social sciences, has many exponents and branches. Realism could be broadly divided into three parts: classical realism, neo-classical realism, and neo-realism (or structural realism). Classical realists like Thucydides, Hobbes and Machiavelli were of the opinion that people lived in a condition of total insecurity and lawlessness. This situation was altered

by a powerful sovereign state with a strong government (Thucydides, 1972; Hobbes, 1946; Machiavelli, 1961). However, in domestic politics as well as in international affairs, the problem of conflicts could not be solved permanently. Realists viewed conflicts and violence as integral parts of domestic and world politics. The ruler needs to be powerful to resolve conflicts in politics. The classical realists emphasized the primary value of power in statecraft. The concern for power of the ruler characterized classical realism. This belief in power was again reflected and reinforced in the writings of neo-classical realists such as E. H. Carr and Hans J. Morgenthau.

E. H. Carr provided a scathing criticism of the liberal kind of 'utopian' politics. Carr denounced the liberal idea of abolishing war in international politics. According to him, conflicts between states were inevitable in international politics, because there was no international regulatory authority to curb conflicts and wars. We may wish to abolish wars between states, but wars will continue to take place due to opposing interests of states, and the absence of any regulatory authority in the international system. Carr believed that 'power', not 'morality' would be the guiding force in international politics (E.H. Carr, 1939). Morgenthau's realist theory, best illustrated through his 'six principles of political realism', rests upon the assumption that people are by nature self-interested and power-hungry. Morgenthau believed that humans by nature were political animals and they enjoyed power. The element of power can secure an individual's position in the society, and can place him in an advantageous position in comparison to others. Like the classical realists, Morgenthau also believed that 'politics is a struggle for power'. As political groups compete with one another to enjoy the fruits of power in domestic politics, similarly in international politics, states compete and fight for power. In international politics, the state must pursue power, because it is the only means for the furtherance of national interest (H. J. Morgenthau, 1948).

The impact of behaviouralism and positivist philosophy in social sciences resulted in the emergence of a new line of realist thought during the 1960s and 1970s. Thomas Schelling, for example, came up with a newer version of realism, later identified as strategic realism. It wanted to analyze international politics from an empirical point of view, making a departure from the normative tone of classical and neo-classical realism. To the classical and neo-classical realists, interest and power became 'norms' in both domestic and international politics. They believed that by analyzing these concepts, all aspects of domestic and international politics could be studied adequately. Keeping the normative aspects of earlier forms of realism to the background, strategic realism tends to emphasize on empirical analytical tools for strategic thoughts. For instance, a good strategy suggests that a state uses power intelligently, and not blatantly, while formulating a foreign policy, to avoid any catastrophe (T. Schelling, 1960). Schelling is not bothered with the questions 'what is good?' or 'what is right?' He is concerned more with the elements required for the success of a foreign policy. The crucial instrument for the success of a foreign policy is the military. It is a coercive apparatus that can scare an adversary. Coercion can force an adversary into bargaining. For Schelling, diplomacy is all about bargaining. War no longer remains a contest of strength in today's world of nuclear arsenals. Currently the 'threat' of war is more fearsome than actual war. Therefore, the 'threat' perspective is more important to him than the real war; and intelligent strategies require very calculative use of this threat perspective in foreign policy.

Among contemporary neo-realist thinkers, Kenneth Waltz argued that to study international relations one should begin with the system—the state or other political system—and ultimately come down to the individual actors. This is in opposition to the traditional realists' approach, whose basic premise was the individual human nature. For the neo-realists, the structure of the system and its relative distribution of power are the focal points of analysis. For instance, Waltz places great importance on the structure of the system, on its interacting units, and on the changes occurring within the system. He sees the system and its structures as more important than individuals (K.N. Waltz, 1990). According to Waltz, all states are similar in their functional aspects, as all perform similar tasks such as promoting citizens' welfare, collecting taxes, formulating foreign policies, and maintaining internal peace. What makes a state strikingly different from others is not its culture or constitution or ideology; it is rather the varying

capabilities of the states that make them different from each other. Therefore, those states which are more 'capable' than others would control international politics. What naturally follows is that the great powers are the determining factors in the international political system. After the Second World War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, two big and powerful nations, controlled international politics. The bipolarity that developed after the war was more stable than the multi-polar nature of world politics that existed before it. During the bipolar period, the two superpowers were very keen on maintaining the system, because the system provided them with more advantages. According to neo-realists, leaders cannot act independent of the structures of the state. Conducting of foreign policy becomes essentially a mechanical and obvious task for leaders. They are compelled to operate within the confinements of the structures of the political system. While the focal point of strategic realism is the art of diplomacy and prudent strategies, neo-realism is more concerned with structure that dictates and determines policies. However, Waltz also stressed upon the notions of state sovereignty and national interest. But unlike neo-classical realists, Waltz does not see national interest as the core issue in international politics; for him, it acts as a guide to tell the statesman when and where to proceed. In other words, a statesman would have to depend on the structures of the state to formulate foreign policies; but in the making of foreign policy, national interest would guide him how to proceed (Waltz, 1990). Therefore, according to neo-realism, there is no room for wisdom, intelligence, experience or astuteness of the decision-maker. What determines the behaviour of the state is the structure as a whole.

How Realism would explain the disadvantaged position of nations of the GS in international politics in the post-colonial period? Failure to garner 'power' by the states of the GS in support of their national interests? Or, failure to develop adequate strategies, or both? Would the history of colonial economic drainage not be considered for their relative disadvantages? Power, national interest and good strategies are not adequate to examine the relative disadvantaged position of nations of the GS in the post-colonial phase. Economic history of colonial exploitation in many states of the GS; religious, ethnic and cultural differences among people that disrupted the process of nation-building proved disadvantageous for the countries of the GS during this period. Admittedly, a Realist is not concerned with these questions; to him a state (or states) with maximum power would be able to serve its interests, and control international politics. But National Power is the end product consisting of many ingredients. A Realist must not be concerned only with the end, ignoring the means. In the 'power struggle' of international politics, economy, technology, history and culture act as back up forces. The Realist tendency to ignore these forces made it somewhat irrelevant for the study of international politics in general and the GS in particular.

The notion of 'threat perspective' as advocated by Schelling suffers from confusion. A good strategy, argues Schelling, would use threat perception in foreign policy in a calculative manner. Schelling saw the relevance of threats more in the age of nuclear weapons. It is still true that nuclear weapons are more seen as deterrents in the contemporary world, and nuclear capable states may be in a position to use this threat perception. But how long this mock fight is going to stay? Can't threats be converted into actual wars in the future? Is it possible for economically poor but nuclear capable states to use this threat perspective continuously in their foreign policy? The word 'continuously' is important here, because to stay afloat in the power struggle a nation may have to use threat perspective in its diplomacy continuously. The question is, can a nuclear Pakistan, North Korea or for that matter India use it in calculative ways in their foreign policy continuously? This may lead to another, altogether different proposition: through a calculative use of threat perception, an economically poor, nuclear capable nation of the GS may remain an active player in the power struggle of international politics. Is this proposition sustainable in international relations today?

Waltz's structural realism also proved inadequate to examine the security dilemma of the countries of the GS. Structural realism is more concerned with the system and its impact on the units. For the neo-realists, the structure of the system and its relative distribution of power are the focal points of

analysis. For instance, Waltz places great importance on the structure of the system, on its interacting units, and on the changes occurring within the system. He sees the system and its structures as more important than the units. The key variable at the systems level, namely distribution of capabilities, determine the nature of response of the units. However, put to the South Asian security system, structural realism appears less effective. As one author puts it, “almost all the major competing paradigms of South Asian security are regional in nature, although differing widely in their paradigmatic characterizations and choice of determinants...What then holds them together, is the belief that external powers are *drawn* in by the regional system of states rather than the other way round. The outside powers...neither *constitute* the major conflicts nor *determine* their dynamics. Even qualitative transformation in the nature of the international system, from Cold War bipolarity to post-Cold War multipolarity, did not alter this pattern” (S. Chatterjee, 2011). The nuclearization of India and Pakistan, according to this author, provides an example of how units ignore the impact of the system for the sake of national interests. For instance, “Pakistan risked its most credible security guarantee (its friendship with the US) in staying firm on nuclearization. This shows that where vital national interests are involved, structural constraints of a systematic nature can have little impact on the units” (S. Chatterjee, 2011). The author also examined the inadequacy of neo-realism in explaining the India-Bangladesh security scenario and concluded that constructivism was more suitable to analyze the security system in South Asia (S. Chatterjee, 2011).

The question as to whether distribution of power in the system, capability of states, and national interests are sufficient variables to examine the security dilemma of nations of the GS, or ideational attributes can best analyze conflicts, bring us to the discussion of the Constructivist theory in IR. I take up constructivism for analysis in the next section.

Constructivism and the Global South

After the end of the Cold War, constructivism has been presented in a new light by a group of Western thinkers like Alexander Wendt, Nicholas Onuf, Peter Katzenstein, Friedrich Kratochwil and many others. Constructivism believes that our social world is not made essentially by material forces, external to human ideas and control; our world is made of human thoughts, beliefs and innovative ideas. Proponents of this theory contradict the material, scientific theories of the world, commonly known as the positivist approach in international relations, and prefer instead an ideational view of our world. Every material manifestation in international affairs—cooperation, conflict, allies, enemies, interests, power—bears meaning given to it by humans. Nothing in international relations is natural, created without human agency; everything is a product of conscious construction by human beings. Social structures, according to Alexander Wendt, are created through human ideas. There can be different, sometimes opposing, social structures in IR, but they are all dependent on human ideas (A. Wendt, 1995). For instance, a ‘security community’—for example, the NATO—is a social structure created by men; as also the ‘security dilemma’ of states, where one country views the other as its opponent or enemy.

Constructivism focuses on inter-subjective beliefs—such as ideas, assumptions or views—that are widely shared by people. These inter-subjective beliefs shape ways in which people build relations with others and conceive of themselves in society. For instance, the collective assumption of people of country A that country B is not friendly towards them may lead to an adverse relationship between states A and B. Constructivists also try to explore how these relations are formed and expressed. Constructivists like Finnemore and Sikkink have referred to state sovereignty as an expression of inter-subjective belief. According to them, state sovereignty has no definite material reality, but it exists only because people collectively believe in its existence, and act accordingly (Finnemore, M and K. Sikkink, 2001).

Human relations based on inter-subjective beliefs can be both cooperative and conflicting. There can be agreements or disagreements among people that may lead to cooperation and conflict.

Constructivism tries to find out the causes behind such cooperation and conflict. But in its research, the constructivist approach differs from the positivist ‘scientific’ approach. The emphasis of constructivism in this case would be more on human ideas and beliefs, rather than on the so-called ‘material’ causes and events, normally advanced by positivists. For a constructivist, cooperation happens because people want to achieve it. In other words, a constructivist may see cooperation as agreements or adjustments of two minds or mindsets. For a positivist, on the contrary, cooperation may take place due to material advantages, such as economic benefits. For a constructivist, idea precedes matter; for the positivist, such as neo-realists, matter precedes ideas. A neo-realist, therefore, would establish anarchy as the reality in international politics; a constructivist, on the other hand, would search the roots of anarchy in human minds.

The rise of constructivism has inspired many theoretical debates within the field of International Relations. Till the mid-1990s, the main theoretical debate within the discipline, — it is still present, — was between the neo-liberals and the neo-realists. In this debate, the major issues were cooperation, peace and interdependence among states, as opposed to conflict among, anarchy in, and security of the states. With the emergence of constructivism, new debates arose between rationalists and constructivists; and between critical theorists—influenced by Marxism, liberalism and the Frankfurt School—and constructivists. The core debates in the discipline of International Relations today revolve around normative issues—put forward by constructivists—versus material forces—highlighted by rationalists and critical theorists; as also, differences over the nature of social structures, and continuity and transformation in international politics.

As observed earlier, constructivism has become the new favourite among many scholars dealing with IR theories. It has been hailed as an appropriate theory to examine conflicts and security dilemma in many areas of the GS (S. Chatterjee, 2005; A. Shafique 2011). Security systems in South Asia, India-Pakistan conflicts, Bangladesh’s security dilemma vis-vis India and ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka have been analyzed with the help of constructivism. Conflicts and cooperation were not due to structures, power or capabilities of nation-states, they occurred due to ideational attributes of the political elite. At hindsight again, this may appear as adequate, but a deeper analysis would reveal hollowness of the constructivist theory. As far as India-Pakistan conflicts were concerned, many of these took place due to the Kashmir problem. Was the Kashmir problem shaped through ideas, or events that unfolded suddenly after the partition of India in 1947. Kashmir was a princely state within India, ruled by a Hindu king at the time of partition. After partition, the king decided to join Kashmir with India, which was resisted by Pakistan. Now the King’s actions could be easily identified through ideational factors. But the events that unfolded thereafter, was neither conceived by the King or a newly independent state in India. Pakistan attacked Kashmir, and occupied a sizeable portion of Kashmir, which it claimed as legitimately its own, due to its Muslim majority population. Did India foresee the attack on Kashmir? Then why it could not save a portion from going to Pakistan? After six decades of bargaining and diplomacy, Kashmir is still divided between India and Pakistan. Now, what is the actual inter-subjective belief regarding Kashmir? Officially, Pakistan holds that Kashmir belongs to Pakistan, as India claims that Kashmir belongs to India. But the third important stakeholder to the Kashmir issue, the Kashmiri political groups, thinks differently. They want an independent Kashmir, free from the dominance of India and Pakistan. This shows weakness of the attribute called ‘inter-subjective belief’. Is it really shared by a wide section of people? What are the criteria for measurement of inter-subjective beliefs? These questions lead to other intriguing issues, like pursuing empirical research on the basis of ideas, thoughts and conceptions, termed as inter-subjective beliefs by the constructivists, is extremely difficult and prone to errors. Observation and analysis of these psychological traits are not easy, and may not be conducive to empirical research. Inter-subjective beliefs are uncertain because these may change from time to time. But everything in international relations is not frequently changeable.

Alexander Wendt analyzed social structures with reference to human ideas and thoughts. But material needs may also propel the ruling elite to form social structures. Was SAFTA (an economic community in South Asia) formed due to the convergence of ideas of ruling elites, or was it formed due to the prevailing economic (and, national) interests of participating states? It is not easy to answer this question. The same question may be raised with regard to the formation of the African Union (AU). Did ideas precede the material need of an economic community in the case of SAFTA; or ideas generated because of economic needs? If the former is correct, then there would be another related question: is it possible to form ideas before every event in international politics? The answer probably would be negative. However, if the latter is true with respect to the formation of the SAFTA or AU, then material events in international relations score over human thoughts and beliefs, a view which the constructivists would like to dislike. Moreover, today's international politics is mostly based on interactions among sovereign states. Is state sovereignty all about ideas, as proclaimed by the constructivists? State sovereignty does have material expressions in the form of legal sanctions, diplomacy or foreign policy. Therefore, constructivism is not adequately sufficient to examine all issues in IR today, including the theorization of the GS.

Conclusion: Pluralism of Ideas Required

Mainstream IR theories are alleged to be suffering from American-centrism and Eurocentric biases according to several leading scholars of the discipline like Amitav Acharya, Qin Yaqing, Kevin Dunn, to name a few. For Acharya, "IR theory as it stands now marginalizes the histories, voices and experiences of the non-Western world". Acharya talks of four major biases in contemporary IR theories. The first bias is ethnocentrism. This is the tendency to theorize about key principles or mechanisms of international order from mainly a Western perspective, using Western ideas, culture, politics, historical experiences and contemporary practice. The second bias is the false universalism in IR theory. There is a tendency to view Western practices as a universal standard while non-Western practices are viewed as particularisms or aberrations or something that is in some way inferior. Much of what happens in IR theory today is an extension of European diplomatic history and contemporary American foreign policy. These are considered to be the universal standard that everyone should try to emulate. Third, there is a disjuncture between various elements of IR theory (derived from the Western experience) and what actually happens in the non-Western world. According to Acharya, a key example of disjuncture is seen in the concept of 'national security', which framed security studies for much of the Cold War. The concept placed a strong emphasis on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state from external military threats. This concept therefore had very little to say about the key security dilemmas of most developing countries which arise primarily from their domestic sphere. Thus there was a significant disjuncture between the main security discourse in West during the Cold War and the experiences of the Third World. The fourth bias relates to agency denial as a strong current that runs through mainstream IR Theory. This involves denying the agency of non-Western societies in international relations. Thus, principles and mechanisms of international order building— e.g. democracy, state sovereignty, human rights - are seen as fundamentally Western contributions. The role or agency of non-Western countries or societies is seen as marginal or inconsequential. For instance Acharya believes that the idea of sovereignty and the related norm of non-intervention are generally identified as being directly linked to Westphalia. What is missing from the picture is the way these norms were regionalized and adapted in Asia or Latin America or Africa giving rise to different types of regional orders.

According to Acharya, IR scholars cannot really understand the implications of the rise of China and India by pulling out categories and concepts from the European past and the rise of Germany. To make sense of what is happening in China and India today one needs to understand the local context, the local culture, the local history – and although comparative insights are helpful, the primary point of reference has to be local. Among realists, there is a tendency to view the rise of China by comparing it to

the rise of Germany, thinks Acharya. But the conditions between these two periods are very different. Many of the European rivalries in the late 19th century and early 20th century were spurred by a competition for overseas colonies; this is not the case today.

Acharya's idea of 'subaltern universalism' may be helpful in identifying a non-western view of IR. According to him, what has been happening in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East does attest to the universality of the desire for freedom. But he raises the question, what kind of universalism or whose universalism is it? He says, "In the United States, some George W. Bush era neo-cons are celebrating that this is a vindication of their democracy promotion agenda of the kind that gave us the war in Iraq. Others see the uprisings confirming Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis. Both claims are ridiculous and if this is the kind of universalism we are talking about we are really doomed. One of the things about the Arab Spring was that it was a bottom up process; it was sought by the people of those states and societies. Its origins were local. They were not the outcome of the end of the Cold War or any other major global shock". They were the voices of subaltern universalism (A. Acharya, 2011).

Qin Yaqing, the noted Chinese scholar also believes that there is a Western domination in contemporary IR theories and he wants to pursue a pluralistic view of IR in which oriental ideas can contribute. For instance, Chinese ideas, Chinese cultures, and Chinese narratives can make contributions to the knowledge edifice of IR and the social sciences, believes Qin. That does not mean that they will replace others, they simply add something new, something non-Western, so that the whole knowledge of IR and the social sciences can be enriched. According to him, the Western dominant theories and paradigms—especially the three paradigms realism, liberalism, and constructivism do not discuss relations, they mainly thrive on rationality. Rationality, to Qin, is an important concept, but this approach does not apply equally everywhere. One can divide societies into two different types: there are more individual societies and more relational societies. So while rationality is a very interesting and important concept for all societies, it is particularly so for Western society, which seems to Qin as more individualistically oriented. As for Oriental societies, like Confucian societies, it's more about relations, So Qin would like to use the concept of relationality at an ontological level. We can see governance more in relational terms, rather than in purely rule terms, believes Qin. A more practical way to talk about local governance is the synthetic model of both rules and relations. We cannot avoid using rules, but at the same time, in any culture and in any society, relations are pivotal, too. The difference is that in Oriental societies maybe this is more conspicuous, or more accepted (Q. Yaqing, 2011). China has practiced what Qin terms as 'partnership diplomacy,' which can be traced back to an underlying cultural emphasis on relations.

Kevin Dunn believes that "the majority of 'authoritative' IR theory has largely been produced by white males from North America and Western Europe who have written about world politics from their own unexamined subject positions". Dunn believes that Western-centric IR theory has created a system of dispositions that posits western historical experiences and cultural values are the norm for the international community. Because most IR theory begins with ingrained assumptions about world politics based on Western experiences, thoughts, and desires, non-Western examples appear to be abnormal or aberrant and in need of explaining and, more often, fixing. In his acclaimed work, *Africa's Challenge to IR Theory* Kevin Dunn wanted to place Africa and African experiences as the starting point for analysis and theorizing. He wanted to offer a corrective to much of IR that either developed theories devoid of reality or uncritically generalizes out from Western historical experiences and cultural practices. He wrote about the African state in relationship to the vast scholarly literature on "state failure." As he says, "taking an idealized North American/West European state as the norm, many scholars engage in fanciful conversations about how and why many non-white experiences with the state are aberrant. Rarely does this literature engage in critical self-reflection, exploring how the assumed norm

is the product of subjective experiences, values, and imaginations”. As he writes in that volume, the African state is not “failing” as much as is our understanding of the state.

Dunn also believes that the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and other states going through a comparable growth, is very important in the context of contemporary IR theory. He believes that these states have the ability to change the structure of world economics completely. Already, the current crisis in world food prices can be traced back in part to the growth of demand which is pushed by these countries, and in part to the fear of the unknown consequences of this rise. “Observers tend to express themselves in terms of just the economical or ecological consequences of this challenge”, says Dunn, “but such a change in the international balance of power does not have such a simple foreseeable impact: apart from world economics, their rise will change the nature of the global civil society and international capital flows, both in the North and in the South. The key lies in the direction these rising powers will look: will they stay ‘south’, do they want to become part of the ‘north’, or do they aspire to a little of both. That is not something economical, but rather cultural and, if you will, political”. Dunn cites an example of why this is very important. China has let over half a million of its inhabitants migrate to Africa, and is on its way to becoming one of the biggest trade partners of the continent, forcing Europe to rethink its ‘good governance’ idea in trade with Africa. This shows how fundamental it is to understand how the BRICs look at Africa; not only – but especially – for Africa: if they all adopt the vision China currently holds, Africa might not overcome its resource curse. Luckily, says Dunn, “Brazil and India are different than China and Russia, in the sense that in those first two, civil societies actually play a role; if these countries show some kind of south-south solidarity (and I think they will), Africa’s future might well be a lot brighter”. Dunn’s New Regionalism Approach (NRA) parts from the observation that regions other than Europe, can and should be studied in a different ways in order to be able to say anything about their meaningful ‘region-ness’ (K. Dunn, 2008).

My earlier analysis (in this paper) of the inadequacy of four leading contemporary IR theories to examine the GS comes closer to the views expressed by the scholars noted above. Indeed contemporary IR theory is not yet ready to explore and answer the heterogeneous socio-political character of the GS. Every area of the GS has ‘local’ as well as ‘global’ features in its politics, economy and society. It is extremely difficult for any single theory or a group of theories to analyze this dichotomy in a proper and satisfactory way. It is not desirable either. In that sense I am not in favour of any grand narrative of IR dealing with all major issues and events in the contemporary world, because the issues and events are vastly different in character. For instance, issues like conflict resolution, security dilemma and economic development (or underdevelopment) taken up by me in this paper in the context of GS, do not refer to the same thing for all areas of the GS. Security dilemma in South Asia may be different from Latin America or Africa, and political economy of development may demand separate analysis for separate areas or countries. Therefore, I would prefer pluralistic ideas as far as IR theory is concerned, not only western-centric theories. It is good to note that these pluralistic ideas are now coming from the scholars dealing with the GS. I am not averse to ‘relational partnership democracy’ of Qin, ‘region-ness’ of Dunn or ‘subaltern universalism’ of Acharya. The more such ideas develop in the discipline it would make IR more interesting and theoretically engrossing. The discipline of IR and narratives of international politics need to be more diverse and heterogeneous to be meaningful.

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