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# Debating international relations and its relevance to the third world

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In 1935, Sir Alfred Zimmern described IR not as a single field or discipline, but a “bundle of sub-jects...viewed from a common angle” drawn toward questions of international and global continuity and change. However, since its emergence as a “formal separate discipline” of study IR manifests a very little emphasis from the point of view of the Global South realities. Generally, the study of IR has largely neglected the epistemological position of the Global South, its intellectuals and their roles in the continuity and change in the discipline. This paper draws a postcolonial approach to critique, the Eurocentric nature and character of IR discipline and its exclusive emphasis on what happens or happened in the West. The claim is made on how IR as a discipline privileges the Eurocentric world views as an integral to the ordering and functioning of the discipline.

**Key words:** International relations, euro-centrism, postcolonialism, Global South.

## INTRODUCTION

International Relations (IR) can be described as the ways that countries of the world, group of people and even individuals within those countries interact with and affect one another (Snow and Brown, 2000). This interaction includes *inter-alia*, the world's governments; non-state actors (such as international organizations, multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals); social structures (including economics, culture, and domestic politics); and geographical and his-torical influences (Goldstein, 2002). As a distinct field of political science, IR draws on political theory, political economy, feminism, and international law to provide its own theoretical perspectives in explaining conflicts and co-operations between states and non-state actors in the modern world. In 1935, Sir Alfred Zimmern described IR not as a single field or discipline, but a “bundle of sub-jects...viewed from a common angle” (Zimmern quoted by Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001) drawn toward ques-tions of international and global continuity and change. Goldstein (2002) emphasizes that the IR field is interdis-ciplinary, relating international politics to economics, history, sociology, and other disciplines.

This is evidenced by the fact that IR is typically divided into other subfields such as international relations theory, international secu-rity, international law and organization, and international political economy.

However, since its emergence as a “formal separate discipline” (Burchill et al., 2005) of study in 1919 at the University of Wales in the United Kingdom (UK), IR is manifesting a very little emphasis from the point of view of the Global South realities. Generally, the study of IR has largely neglected the epistemological position of the Third World (“Third World” is a commonly used term to refer to the economically underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, considered as an entity with common characteristics, such as poverty, high birthrates, and economic dependence on the advanced countries (Mazrui, 1977). While Chandra Tal-pade Mohanty's definition of the Third World incorporates so called people of colour in North America (Mohanty, 1991), the authors of this paper use the term ‘Third World’ based both on the intellectual and geographical position. This includes from its scope most of those scho-lars inhabit or hail from postcolonial societies wherever they are in the world. For the purpose of this paper, the term Third World will be used interchangeably with the ‘Non-west’, the ‘Global South’, ‘Developing Countries’, ‘Least Developed Countries (LDCs)’ or the ‘Underdeveloped’) and its intellectuals and their

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roles in the continuity and change in the discipline. Barkawi and Laffey (2006) argue that, the history of IR is conceived primarily in terms of successive struggles between “Great Powers” and the rise and fall of “powerful states”. Hence, focusing exclusively on great powers implies that peripheries (Third World) are simply unimportant, indeed invisible despite the fact that 98 per cent of all armed conflicts between 1945 and 1998 took place in the countries of the Global South (Holsti, 1996). The discipline has always privileged aspects of ‘high politics’ or centre at the expense of Third World or peripheries. This is also reflected in the academia. As Buzan and Little (2000) noted “there is no doubt that IR has been studied from a very Eurocentric perspective...” This has no exception to the critical IR which interrogates many of the assumptions of conventional IR, but still fails with some exceptions to address the exclusions or remoteness of the Third World in the discipline. This paper draws a postcolonial approach to critique the Eurocentric nature and character of IR discipline and its exclusive emphasis on what happens or happened in the West. The claim is made on how IR as a discipline privileges the Eurocentric world views as an integral to the ordering and functioning of the discipline. To push on this claim, the paper discusses and investigates different IR debates and theories to reveal their Eurocentric nature. It is argued in this paper that IR scholars should not be seeking an exclusive knowledge, but rather explaining the world in its inclusive nature and character.

The analysis of the ‘historical geography’ of IR, specifically with: “whose interest is protected and whose is ignored by the dominant political and economic structures?” is deeply Eurocentric. This leads us to rethink more on whether IR as a discipline of study accurately describes, explains or predicts the behaviour of Third World (Recall to the simple fact that in 1994 in Rwanda where there was no strategic value or resources for intervention when it was clear that genocide was in the works) states in international affairs. Since “the ‘who’ of IR studies continues to be a select number of academics hailing primarily from the countries of the core” (Tickner, 2003), it is suggested in this paper that IR as a discipline should exit that discriminatory behaviour to maintain “its claim of universal (The word “universalism” refers to a common term of a whole system of beliefs (e.g. gender, development, social capital etc.) that exist within many settings, and many universalists practice in a ‘variety’ of traditions or truths, drawing upon the same universal concepts but ‘customizing’ the practice to suit their audience or local conditions. For instance, there may be universal beliefs about ‘gender’, but there can neither be universal truths nor single path to attaining the truth about what gender constitutes) relevance” (Neuman, 1998). Similarly to Wright, this paper argues that IR discipline might best be understood if approached through basic intellectual perspectives on the ‘whole’ social reality. This ‘global encompassing approach’ would acknowledge, confront

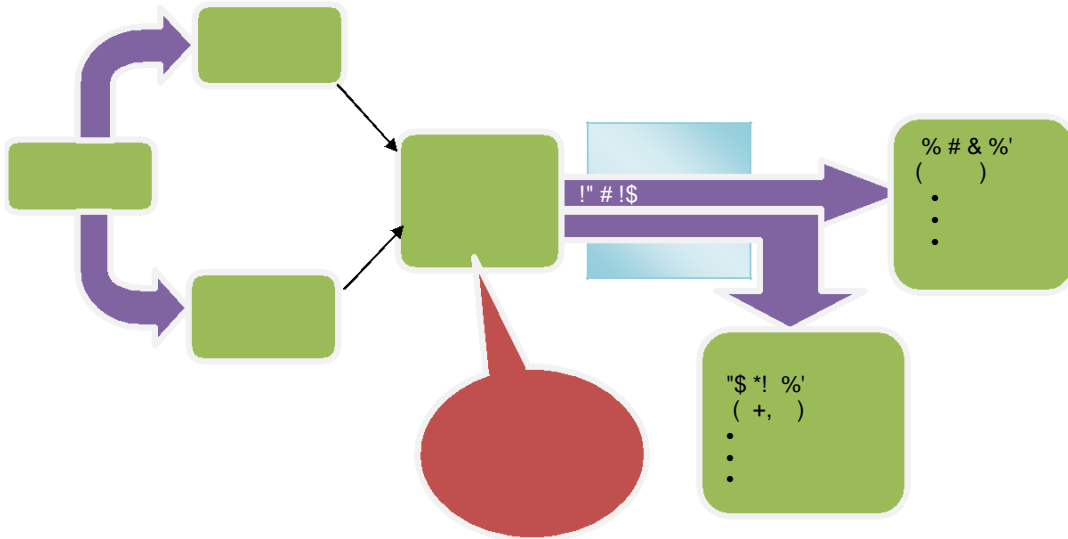
front and explore the “difference” in dealing with the world political, social and economic system, something which IR has completely ignored in favor of an “empire of uniformity” (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004:2). It is hoped that, this paper will further the lines of inquiry and arguments about what remains ‘remote’ so far in the field of IR and social science at large. In the next section, this work provides a conceptual framework that explains the route taken in this paper. The third part addresses debates, theories and sub-fields posed by euro-centrism. Finally, the paper concludes by offering some comments on the wider implication of this paper’s central argument. Since it is not possible to cover everything about IR in this paper, the choice and speciality had to be made.

### **Conceptual framework**

It is explicit in this model that, both as a discipline and practice, IR is constitutive of a body of knowledge and ideas. However, this body of knowledge and ideas (whether mainstream or critical) originate almost exclusively from the West, and rely much on the western scholars and thinkers who tend to misinterpret or ignore the (aspect) perspectives of the Global South. Hence, knowledge produced in IR is a predominantly Eurocentric worldview which mystifies the ways in which states and international systems are anchored in political, social and economic relations. In fact, this worldview remains too parochial to accurately describe, explain and/or predict the behaviour of the world in its ‘inclusive’ manner. Although critical IR interrogates many of the assumptions of conventional IR, it nevertheless fails to address the Eurocentric nature of the knowledge production in IR.

### **Euro-centrism**

In this paper, the author uses the term “Euro-centrism” interchangeably with “Western-centrism” which basically refers to the practice of viewing the world from a Western perspective, with an implied belief, either consciously or subconsciously, in the pre-eminence of Western culture, knowledge, concerns and values at the expense of non-Westerns. Western scholars tend to dominate most of the scholarly works and the world politics and over-generalize their findings and usage to the rest of the world without considering local circumstances. This perspective presumes a higher status for Western’s modes of thought, its methods, and pragmatism as opposed to the non-Western. As Inayatullah and Blaney (2004) argue, IR as a discipline does not assess the quality of cultural interactions and differences that shape and are shaped by the changing structures and processes of the international system. We agree with Inayatullah and Blaney that the reason for IR’s failure to address all forms of colonial legacies is because, it is by itself a legacy of colonialism (Refer to the history of IR as successive struggles between Great Powers and the rise and fall of powerful



Source: Authors' Construct

states).

### Postcolonialism

The underlying postcolonial assumption is that, the world today is the world of inequality where much of the difference falls across the broad division between people of the west and those of the non-west. Hence, postcolonial theories come in as intervention mechanisms from the non-western scholars. Post-colonialism argues that, "the right of all people on this earth to the same material and cultural well-being" (Young, 2003). The pioneers of postcolonialism (Examples of postcolonial scholars and their works in brackets are Edward Said (Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism); Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Weep not Child, The River Between, Decolonizing the Mind-urging African writers to write in their native languages rather than European languages in order to renounce colonial ties); Kwame Nkuruma (Unites States of Africa), Julius Nyerere (The Challenge to the South), Chinua Achebe (Things Fall Apart); Ali Mazrui (Re-traditionalizing Africa and Africa's IR); Frantz Fanon (Black Skin, White Musks); Homi Bhabha (Problems of treating postcolonial countries as homogenous block); Samir Amin (critiques of the Western Imperialism); Oginga Odinga (Not yet *Uhuru*); Robert Young (linking a genealogy of postcolonialism to the contemporary activism of the New social movements in non-west); Spivak (Can the Subaltern Speak?); Judith Butler (Gender Troubles); Valentine Mudimbe (Reinvesting Africa); Ozay Mehmet (Westernizing the Third World: Eurocentrism of Economic development) concerned themselves with the political, social and cultural effects of colonization on the colonized. According to Franz Fanon (1952), postcolonialism is a way of thinking about knowl-

edge production, and how certain kinds of knowledge about other people can act as a prop to economic or military or physical domination. Postcolonial scholars regard the way in which the west paved its passage to the orient and the rest of the world as based on mystified truths. In particular, Edward Said's critique of Western representations of the non-western culture in his 1978 book, *Orientalism*, is an influential text for postcolonial studies and has produced a range of theories on the subject. Said provides useful conceptual tool for understanding western political discourses of 'self' and 'others' (Said, 1978). Moreover, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* represents discourse analysis and postcolonial theory as tools for rethinking forms of knowledge and the social identities of postcolonial systems (Said, 1993). An important feature of postcolonial thought is its claim that modernism and modernity are both part of the colonial project of domination. Thus, the ambition of postcolonial scholarship is to undo the legacies of all forms of European or Western imperialism and colonialism in order to transform the international order and associated notions of community, society, and morality. Nevertheless, debates about postcolonialism are yet to be resolved. Major issues raised by Said and other postcolonial scholars against the Western descriptions of Non-Euro-American Others, suggest that colonialism as a discourse is based on the ability of Westerners to examine other societies in order to produce knowledge and use it as a form of power deployed against the very subjects of inquiry. As should be readily apparent, the issues of postcolonialism are uncomfortably relevant to contemporary Western scholars. In most of the Western Universities, postcolonialism, unlike other theories or approaches, is not given a due importance in IR's syllabi. This paper joins hand with other postcolonial scholars to contest the views of

western universalists that their modes of signification (or ways of making sense of the world) are superior and that the West possesses the finer forms of reasons, morals and law (Siba Grovogui, 2006).

### Images shaping the IR discipline

The discipline of IR, alongside other disciplines in social sciences, has been deeply divided on many issues in question throughout its history (Dunne et al., 2007). Ever since its inception in the aftermath of the First World War, the question of its subject matter (what should the discipline aim to study); the appropriate methodologies (how the international phenomena be studied); and epistemological questions (how knowledge is generated) is highly contested (Burchill et al., 2005). Many of these questions are discussed within the episodes of the great debates, theories and sub-fields as a convention of telling the history of IR (Neumann and Wæver, 1997).

More specifically, IR theories focus on the study of the indispensable nature of the international system, the type of units that occupy that system, and the dynamics that tell the interaction between the various components of that system, as well as the possibility of moral or institutional progress. Generally, theories in IR help the observer to think critically, logically and coherently. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff explain these theories as systematic reflections on phenomena, designed to explain them and to show how they are related to each other in a meaningful, intelligent pattern, rather than being simply random items in an incoherent universe (2001).

### Realism

Realism is the oldest and most frequently adopted theory of IR. Thucydides (Thucydides' book *The History of the Peloponnesian War* is widely considered classic and one of the earliest scholarly works of history. For Thucydides, "the real reason... [for the war]... was the growth of Athenian power and the fear this caused in Sparta". Thucydides has been regarded and considered as the father of the school of political realism that views the relations between nations as based on might rather than right. He is also regarded as a father of scientific history because of his strict standards of gathering evidence and his analysis in terms of cause and effect without reference to intervention by the gods), in the fifth century B.C.E. is often portrayed as the founder of the realist school. His analysis of the Peloponnesian War was an exposition of realist concepts. However, it was not until the early 1500s that Niccolò Machiavelli (For Machiavelli, there is no moral basis on which to judge the difference between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. Rather, authority and power are essentially coequal: whoever has power has the right to command; but goodness does not ensure power and the good person has no more authority by virtue of being good. His argument was that, it is

meaningless and futile to speak of any claim to authority and the right to command which is detached from the possession of superior political power), a political philosopher of the realist tradition could share the significance of Thucydides. Machiavelli's argument in his book *The Prince* is designed to demonstrate that politics can only be defined in terms of the supremacy of coercive power and thus, authority as a right to command has no independent status. Although Machiavelli was widely condemned at the time for his sceptical and amoral advice on the way government should be conducted, his writings became the essence of what we know today as 'realism'. From that time there were a number of periodic writings promoting realism.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the first great debate occurred between two early realist scholars, Edward Carr and Hans Morgenthau who challenged the 'unsystematic and value-driven idealist approach' to IR. Since the idealists were driven by a desire to develop a set of institutions, procedures, and practices that could eradicate or control war in the international system, the realists challenged the unscientific nature of their knowledge. Carr, who analyzed the philosophical differences between idealists and realists in his renowned work, *The Twenty Years of Crisis, 1919-1939*, used the term *utopians* to refer to idealists (Ibid). Both Carr and Morgenthau accused the idealists' focus on how the world 'ought' to be instead of how it objectively was. In his book, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Peace and Power*, Morgenthau (1948) argues that "international politics cannot be reduced to legal rules and institutions since it operates within the framework of such rules and through the instrumentality of such institutions". Morgenthau claimed to present realism as a "theory of international politics" which according to him brings "order and meaning" to the collection of facts.

However, each of the major twenty century's realists such as Carr, Morgenthau and Waltz offer their own definitions, but often focussing on the aspects they wish to emphasise. While divisions of opinion exist between the classical (or traditional) Realists and the structural Realists (neo-realists); within these broad categories there are further variations and shades of opinion between scholars. However, all share a large part of a common body of thought, with "a quite distinctive and recognizable flavour" (Burchill et al., 2005). While Carr considered realism to be barren and hence saw a role for the utopianists in countering realism through the establishment of international society, Morgenthau on the other hand saw realism as a product of human nature. This view is known as *classical realism*. Morgenthau believed that pride, lust, and quest for glory would cause the war of all against all to continue indefinitely (Burchill et al., 2005).

Nonetheless, since the 1970s most realists work attribute security competition and inter-state conflict to the lack of any overarching authority above states and the distribution of power in the international system (Baylis and

and Smith, 2006). Most academics refer this to 'neo-realism', largely influenced by the work of Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz emphasizes the importance of the 'structure' of the international system and its role as the key determinant of state behaviour. This author defines the structure of the international system in terms of three elements- organizing principle (anarchy and hierarchy), differentiation of units (states), and distribution of capabilities across units, which according to him is of fundamental importance to understand crucial international outcomes. Waltz (1979) argues that the units of the international system are fundamentally similar sovereign states; hence unit-level variation is irrelevant in explaining international outcomes. Thus, there is no differentiation of function between different units. This view is frequently termed as *defensive realism*. Structural realism brings the concept of balance of power as a mechanism that seeks to ensure equilibrium of power in which case no state or coalition of states is in a position to dominate all the others. However, John Mearsheimer propounds another view – *offensive realism*, which shares many of the same basic characteristics with Waltz' defensive view, but differs in the aspect of describing the behaviour of states. According to Mearsheimer (2001), the structure of the international system induces states to maximize their relative power position. He argues further that, "there is no satisfied or status quo states; rather all states are continually searching for opportunities to gain power at the expense of other states". This kind of 'Euro-discourse' reflects the real situation where Western powerful states exercise their hegemonic power at the expense of non-Western less-powerful states. Generally, the whole debate of 'Great' powers, international anarchy and sovereignty show that Eurocentrism is en suite to the way in which realism (and its modified version, neo-realism) is constructed in IR.

Although this debate gave the discipline its identity in the post-World War II, it was exclusively Eurocentric in nature. The whole issue of power presented by Morgenthau is a representative of an entire set of western ideas and assumptions with little apparent reference to the Third World's reality. Moreover, as Neuman (1998) argues, the idea of 'anarchical international system' is apparently difficult to sound to most less developed countries (LDCs) who perceive the international system to be ordered and regulated by few Great Powers (such as US and Britain) and international institutions (International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and European Union (EU)) who ignore the weak and less-powerful states of the world. Moreover, the assumed "unitary nature of international system" is questionable. Anarchical international system assumes that states have to rely on their own capabilities (sovereignty) to defend themselves from aggressive acts of other states, i.e. none can command and none must obey – balance of power. This connects our paper to Neuman's questions: Do we really have one

international system? If yes, does it include the Third World? Do weak states significantly affect the interests of strong states in the so called 'one international system'?

The empirical assumption (or rather a reality) within the Third World about the 'international system' is that; international system constitutes a few Western Great Powers accompanied by international institutions (such as IMF, World Bank and WTO) which are also the product of interstate diplomacy dominated by these powerful states. While the whole idea of anarchy might well function within Great Powers, for the Third World, it sounds like a hierarchical structure that constraints their external behaviour (Neuman, 1998). Carlos Escudé argues in Neuman's text that, for a Third World state to be really part of the international anarchy, it has to sacrifice the interests of its citizens in favour of the hierarchical character of international system led by the Great Powers and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

### English school

The English school originated in the British study of IR. It developed out of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics which first met in January 1959, but its membership expanded to include a later generation of scholars throughout the early 1980s. This school attempts to occupy middle ground between realism and idealism, with the belief that each approach contains insights about the condition of international politics. It is sometimes categorized as either a modified version of realism or a variant of liberal IR theories (Sterling-Folker, 2006). English school assumes that there is a society of states at the international level which helps states to control their level of violence and provides mechanisms to honour contracts (Linklater, 2005). Thus, the concept of an 'international society' (For the English school, "international society" is not simply another name for what the realist tradition refers to "international anarchy"- a system of states characterized by competition, conflict, and power politics- but a social order in which states as well as peoples, individuals, international organizations, and a number of other actors are engaged in habitual and regularized interaction based on shared interests and values, shared norms and rules, and shared institutions and practices (Sterling-Folker, 2006) is central to the English school perspective. According to this school, while the existence of such a society does not contradict the realist assumption that IR occurs in an anarchic environment; it is usually great powers that pose the greatest threat to the survival of international society (Sterling-Folker, 2006; Wight, 1991). However, in its focus to international law, the English school draws heavily on the philosophical work of Hugo Grotius (Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was a towering figure in philosophy, law, political theory and associated fields during the seventeenth century. He was also a leading student of theology and biblical criticism, and he wrote an authoritative account of contemporary

Dutch political affairs), in the seventeenth century who argued that when states accept international laws as binding, the establishment of an international legal order could effectively neutralize the impact of anarchy. It is not simply about whether states should conform to these laws, but the tension that arises between the need for order and the desire for justice i.e. the moral responsibility to socially construct these orders (Ibid). As Linklater pointed out, the English school remains one of the most significant approaches to international politics although its influence is probably greater in Britain than other parts of the world where IR is taught. However, given the European origins of what English schools refers to 'international society', there is a significant absence of a common underlying culture to support any global international society that might cut across all the major cultures and civilizations. Today (in the Third World) international society is usually conceived as the Euro-centric worldview avowed by the most powerful states of the present era, such as the powerful states and institutions like World Bank, IMF and WTO.

### Liberalism

Even though realism is considered to be a dominant theory of international relations, liberalism remains a powerful and influential competitor or alternative to realism. It is derived from the writings of such European enlightenment philosophers as John Locke (1632-1704), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) (Sterling-Folker, 2006) . Liberals believe that power politics itself is the product of ideas, and more importantly, ideas can change. They also believe in the human capacity to reason, and with that reason, possibility of uncovering untainted universal truth which would enable human beings to obtain better outcomes. More-over, liberal thinkers argue that the state should play a very minimal role in politics and economics.

The contemporary liberal IR theory believes on different types of collection actions, barriers, and possibilities (Sterling-Folker, 2006) . The underlying liberal assumption is that the possibilities of cooperation increases over time due to process of industrialization and modernization. For instance, Fukuyama (1992) argues that the end of Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rapid intensification of globalization confirmed that liberal capitalism was unchallenged as a model of, and end point for political and economic development. He raised the idea of 'inside-out' approach to IR, where the behaviour of states is exclusively explained by examining their endogenous arrangements.

While some of Fukuyama's arguments remain vital, we do not agree with his assumption that Western states, with liberal democratic credentials constitute an ideal which the rest of the world would emulate. Fukuyama's argument that national and cultural distinctions are no barrier to the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism

ignores the fact that, the world as a system is made up of 'different' parts which should too be treated differently. Moreover, his idea that "a world is made up of liberal democracies" with "much less incentive for war, since all nations would reciprocally recognize one another's legitimacy" (Burchill et al., 2005) does not make any sense especially in the contemporary unequal world system where American or Western imperialism jeopardizes the rights of other states.

### Marxism

Marxism is a body of thought inspired by Karl Marx. Marxist theories emphasise the dialectical unfolding of historical stages, the importance of economic and material forces and class analysis. Marx and his counterpart Friederich Engels did not consider inter-state relations as their focus of analysis, rather focused on labour and production as the key analytical notions in the study of social relations (Groom and Light, 1994). For Marxism, the contradictions inherent in each historical epoch eventually lead to the rise of a new dominant class (Viotti, and Kauppi, 1987). Marxism took the view that the triumph of capitalism would be short-lived and eventual replacement by *universal communism* (Burchill et al., 2005).

Marxism penetrated into the discipline of IR through three major theoretical contributions: the dependence/development studies' literature, the world system theory and the Gramscian insertion (Groom and Light, 1994). Dependency theories explain the world structural domination of an exploited periphery subordinated by an exploiting core. The world system as stipulated in Wallerstein's work, *The Modern World System*, is the world economic system with its social origins located in the geopolitical emergence of the Third World in the late 1960s. The world system manifests insufficiencies of modernization theory to account for what was happening in the international relations (Wallerstein, 1974). Both dependence theory and world systems approach are described as 'neo-Marxist' because of their shift from 'relations of production' to 'unequal exchange' in world markets. Moreover, they do not believe that the spread of capitalism will bring industrial development in less-developed countries (Linklater in Burchill et al., 2005). On the other hand, Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' is used to explain how major powers, particularly the United States, maintain their dominance within the international system (Ruggie, 1982; Groom and Light, 1994; Baylis and Smith, 2006). According to Cox (2004), hegemony was a condition in which the governed accepted or acquiesced in authority without the need for the application force.

Although Marxism has clearly influenced the thinking of postcolonial scholarship, Edward Said argued that Marx was justifying Western imperialism by pointing to its potentially progressive effects. The charge of Marx's Eurocentrism is often made on the basis of remarks made by Marx in articles that he wrote in the early 1850s

about the role of British imperialism in India (Bartolovich and Lazarus, 2002). Marx argued that, "England was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them", it nevertheless might have been "the unconscious tool of history in bringing about a revolution" in Indian society. However, another contending view reveals that, "it is certainly true that Marx and Engels devoted much of their attention to analyzing European history and society. But this was because Europe was the first area in the world in which capitalism emerged, not because they thought that there was anything inherently superior about European society" ([http://www.socialistworker.org/2002-1/405/405\\_08\\_MarxismRelevant.shtml](http://www.socialistworker.org/2002-1/405/405_08_MarxismRelevant.shtml)). By and large, postcolonial scholars argue that "the foundationalist and universalist assumption of Marxism need to be rejected to further a genuinely non-Eurocentric history" (Chowdhry and Nair, 2004).

## Feminism

Feminism entered the stage of IR as part of the 'third debate' between mainstream and post-positivist theorists following the end of the Cold War (West, 2004). Feminist theories intend to understand the nature of inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. It is divided into five different groups within IR, that is, liberal, socialist/Marxist, standpoint, post-modern, and post-colonial (Baylis and Smith, 2006). Much of feminist theory focuses on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues. Feminists argue that traditional IR thinking has avoided thinking of men and women in the capacity of embodied and socially constituted subject categories by subsuming them in other categories (e.g. statesmen, soldiers, refugees), too readily accepting that women are located inside the typically separate sphere of domestic life, and retreating to abstractions (that is, the state) that mask a masculine identity (Sylvester, 1994). Generally, feminism has followed the familiar path of making women visible, demonstrating the gendered nature of the established discipline, and re-writing IR from a feminist perspective (Peterson, 1998). Thus, "feminism brings to IR insights about the gendered power dynamics of both practice of IR and the discipline" (West, 2004). West noted further that, it is incorrect to make knowledge claims based on the limited experience of the particular men in the focus of mainstream IR. So, by examining women's lives we can enhance our knowledge of international politics as it applies to both men and women.

Although feminism is the 'only' area of critical international theory with a "self-consciously counter-hegemonic, progressive mission" (Hutchings 2007), its relevance and applicability to non-Western women is questionable. Many feminists who are involved in transnational activism justify intervention by Western women in the lives of non-Western women of a kind, which in turn echoes the his-

tory and ideology of Western imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. So according to postcolonial feminists (See also Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988); Hutchings (2007), this kind of ethical universalism treats all women as in some sense modelled on a Western 'norm' and therefore insensitive to different social contexts, especially in the issues that are politically significant for different women. As Marchand (1998) argues, although gender relations constitute the central concern every feminist, sharing this common interest does not mean a shared epistemological or ontological vantage point. What is strongly advocated in this paper is the need to acknowledge and embrace the 'difference', especially on socio-economic needs for women in the both developed and developing world. Today, postcolonial feminists struggle to fight gender oppression within their own cultural models of society rather than through those of the West (Mohanty, 1998).

Moreover, postcolonial feminists challenge the perceived portrayal of women of non-Western societies as passive and voiceless victims, as opposed to the portrayal of Western women as modern, educated and empowered (Mills, 1998). While challenging gender oppression within their own culture, postcolonial feminists also fight charges of being 'Western', as some within their cultures would contend.

## Critical theory

Critical theory (CT) has been an enormous influential school of thought in political science. CT is an approach which seeks to take a critical stance towards itself by recognising its own presuppositions in the world; and secondly, towards the social reality that it investigates by providing grounds for the justification and criticism of the institutions, practices and mentalities that make up that reality. A critical perspective examines how facts are constructed and whose interest they serve. It offers a broad scope of knowledge. Thus a critical approach seeks to reconstruct what Gramsci (1971, 2000) called "common sense" propositions which are product of historical processes that leave the individual in a particular relationship with social groups. For Gramsci, critical thinking should not merely oppose but become part of people's understanding of their own conditions, bringing about a new common sense. It does not only challenge knowledge and practice, but also construct new knowledge about what exists and what ought to exist on the basis of transformed relations of power.

CT was developed out of the work of the Frankfurt School in Germany in 1923 and 1930s, with its leading scholars being Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and later Jürgen Habermas. Their main attempt was to bridge the divides in social and political thought between explanation and justification, philosophical and substantive concerns, pure and applied theory, and contemporary and earlier thinking. CT as

developed by the original Frankfurt School attempted to explain why the socialist revolution prophesied by Marx in the mid-nineteenth century did not occur as expected (Agger, 1991). Frankfurt theorists believed that Marx underestimated the extent to which workers' false consciousness could be exploited to keep the social and economic system running smoothly. They also reject positivism as a worldview of adjustment, and alleged it as "the most effective new form of capitalist ideology" (Ibid).

In line with CT is postmodernism or post-structuralism (Similarly to Hutchings (2007), authors of this paper do not propose that postmodernist and post-structuralist theories are the same as version of critical theory more influenced by the philosophy of history; rather, they are clearly different in their interpretation of the possibility of progress in history. However, they bring new and distinctive theoretical and methodological expressions with a range of relevant objects of analysis and inquiry on the critical international theory). This is a more extreme branch of CT that can be identified in terms of its critical stance toward positivism, western modernity and the explicit narratives of reason, truth and progress. Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault are the major pioneers of postmodernism. Whilst the dominant narrative of modernity upholds reason as the foundation of objective truth and the source of progress, postmodern thinkers reject the aim of unified, integrated theory that are 'metanarratives' and 'depth metaphors' and emphasise the interplay of a plurality of discursive practices, ways of knowing, social and political identities as well as possible worlds. Both Foucault and Derrida reject Marxist class analysis for its simple dualities, and examine the social world from the multiple perspectives of class, race, gender and other identifying group affiliations (Agger, 1991). In general, postmodernism seeks to offend what is taken for granted and disclose how discourse imposes meaning and hence a value structure that is both socially constructed and historically arbitrary (Sterling-Folker, 2006).

Despite its commitment on debunking and challenging global hierarchies and hegemonic power, (both in theory and practice), CT has all but ignored the whole issue of the Third World and its relevance in the international politics. This can be well signified from the marginal acknowledgement of the concept of 'postcolonialism' within the whole debate of CT. As Hutchings (2007) noted, CT has engaged very little with postcolonial scholars such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and others in comparison to its engagement with, for instance Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben or Paul Virilio. This simply implies that, IR tends to ignore problems and perspectives that fail to resonate within its own worldview. Unlike the 'mainstream' CT, postcolonial theory aspires to create 'truths' based on distinct approaches of signification and forms of knowledge (or the mode of representations) that advance justice, peace, and political pluralism (Grovoqui, 2006). It

also contests the views of western rationalists and humanists that their modes of thinking and forms of reason, morals and laws are superior to the rest of the world. Thus, postcolonial theory entertains the possibility of alternative conceptions and imaginaries of society, law and morals that more specifically critique the hegemony of the West in scholarly as well as in institutional and political terms (Grovoqui 2006; Hutchings, 2007). As such, what CT needs to do is to overcome its own Eurocentrism and pursue an approach that is globally encompassing. Oliver Kozlarek (2001) challenges the Frankfurt School as being more Eurocentric in its philosophy and functionalism. He suggests that CT, especially with the awareness of our global social conditions, has to try to overcome these discursive frameworks of the European identity and assesses our contemporary modernity as a highly contingent and plural reality.

### **International political economy**

In Keohane and Nye (1989, 1997, 1998)'s argument about 'complex interdependence', realism is characterised by a false conception of the world politics. These authors emphasised the *absence of a hierarchy among issues* which means that 'military security does not consistently dominate the agenda'. Accordingly, Keohane and Nye argue that the decline of military force as a policy tool and the increase in economic and other forms of interdependence should increase the probability of cooperation among states. Keohane and Nye's work made a major contribution to broadening international theory beyond traditional Realism and a largely military-political agenda. It pushed IR towards 'political economy' and the concept of 'complex interdependence' among different actors.

Literally, political economy is the interaction between politics (power) and economy (market). It can be traced back to Adam Smith's conception of *classical political economy*, which preoccupied itself with evaluating the working properties of alternative sets of rules and institutions that guide real human behaviour in the dynamic long run (Sally, 2002). International Political Economy (IPE) has thus been a major growth area in the study of IR (Higgott in Groom and Light, 1994). IPE is a method of analysis concerning the social, political and economic arrangements affecting the global systems of production, exchange and distribution, and the mix of values reflected therein (Strange, 1988). It connotes the relationship between 'power' and 'wealth' as well as the interface between the study of IR and economics. IPE is interested not only in economic systems and transactions but also in economic life that includes human actions with socio-cultural aspects. As an analytical method, IPE is based on the assumption that what occurs in the economy reflects, and affects, social power relations.

However, Marxism challenged this liberal view of IPE that, it has divided the world in 'unequal' units of analysis:



core, semi-periphery and periphery. In a contemporary world, these units are linked together by unequal exchange and thus characterized by unequal development with the adverse effects being reflected in Third World (Ruggie, 1983). Unequal exchanges result in unbalanced outcomes and this can have serious consequences for Third World and the trading system. For the Third World, an unbalanced outcome as measured by the difference between the value of concessions given and received, has two economic costs: (a) the costs associated with degree of access to foreign markets that is lower than the one that would have resulted from balanced negotiations and, (b) the costs associated with the weakening of their bargaining power implied by "excessive concessions" given in past negotiations. For instance, by the "implementation" problems faced by Third World in several of the Uruguay Round agreements which may have not surfaced under less unequal negotiations. These implementation problems are some of the factors that soured relations among WTO members and threatened to block the launching of a new multilateral round in Doha (WTO, 2001).

Similarly, critical approach sees IPE as being taught from a restricted point of view dominated excessively by the economist starting points. They argue that, the defenders of *economism* are almost exclusively white, male with very limited understanding or experience of processes outside the core. Generally, critical approach to IPE demands the reconsideration of the relationships between different agents and institutions. The structures (that is, North-South, gender, and core-periphery) and hierarchies of the IPE are being unveiled with the critical approach. Cox (1987) argues that, it is important to notice that structures are a product of human activity though structures in many cases are prior to individuals; people learn to behave within the framework of social and political structures before they can learn to criticize or oppose or try to change them (Cox, 1987). This paper criticizes the whole debate of IPE being dominated by the Western academics with infusion by many hidden and even unconscious value-judgements and assumptions based on Western experience or on American national interests.

In the 1980s, weak states and societies were increasingly 'disciplined' to behave as if they were private markets operating in a global arena. These 'disciplinary' forces were attributed to the global capital market, transnational corporations (TNCs), and structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, which are entirely driven by neo-liberal economic ideology. However, as Mittleman (2004) argues lack of effective global institutions has led to investing greater authority in international financial institutions which many of its practical consequences can be seen as suboptimal outcomes of collective coordination problems. While expert theoretical knowledge of IMF and World Bank are important, Mittleman suggests that such understanding of globalization (as a coordination problem) ignores the

ignores the way those institutions create the potential for domination where those who are less connected to globalization (particularly the Third World) may experience the global structure as deeply constraining.

## Conclusion

As discussed in this paper, Western attempt to re-fashion the world in its own political and intellectual image impinges freedom for the Third World. As Neuman (1995) noted, the role of the Third World in international politics remains a 'theoretical' let alone 'practical' puzzle, presenting us with observable outcomes for which existing debates and theories seem insufficient or erroneous. The fact that the 'weak' play an integral part in shaping world politics too is harder to refute. It is therefore empirically questionable about the so called 'experts' in IR theory whose intellectual roots are Eurocentric to guide those from the Third World in understanding the reality of contemporary political system outside Europe/West. While a theory is "a way of making the world...more intelligible or better understood" (Sterling-Folker, 2006), IR theories had never quite been borne out by events in the Third World (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006). According to these authors, IR's exclusion of the existing Third World is improper, and in fact, disqualifies it from being called a theory. As Quincy Wright (as quoted by Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001) emphasizes "a general theory of international relations means a comprehensive, coherent and self-correcting body of knowledge contributing to the understanding, the prediction, the evaluation and the control of the relations among states and of the conditions of the world." Hence, the obviously parochial nature of the IR discipline is openly acknowledged with little to temperate its clear pretension to theoretical universalism. Failing to study the weak and strong together as jointly responsible for making history, constrains IR's ability to make sense of the world politics.

Although postcolonial scholarship has been fore-front in introducing these marginalized concerns, it remains largely ignored in IR. Contemporary IR scholars need to understand that, internationalists of whatever kind may not deliberately exclude this large part of the universe, and still claim to be universal. From this discourse, someone can draw a quick conclusion that, "IR is 'international' only in name but not in a subject matter". If IR scholars are serious about enhancing our knowledge of global politics, as well as building a more inclusive discipline, we would urge them to listen more closely to Third World interpretation of the subject matter and embrace the 'difference' that are visible for continuity and change in the discipline. In our view, the current state of IR as a discipline of study remains too *parochial* to accurately describe, explain and/or predict the behaviour of the Third World in international affairs. In other words, what the West claims as universally applicable categories are in reality regional ideas of Europe/West which try to acquire the status of universal truths because of Western

economic and military power. It should be understood to Western scholars that, if truth does not represent a reality outside of discourse; if it does not acknowledge and embrace the 'difference' emanating from the reality; or if backed by power (whether economic, military, or intellectual), then it has no universal relevance, hence, parochial in its descriptions of the real world. A universal discourse becomes possible only when the real world is adequately and inclusively represented in the discipline and where there is equal respect for the contributions of both non-West and West.

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