

# International Relations studies in Asia: distinctive trajectories

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## Abstract

This article investigates and explains the development of International Relations studies (IRS) in China, Japan, and India. Beginning in early 1980s IRS experienced exponential growth in China and is becoming a separate discipline in that country. Despite early starts, IRS in Japan and India is still an appendage in other disciplinary departments, programs, and centers although growing interest is discernible in both countries. Continued rise of Asian powers along with their growing roles and responsibilities in constructing and managing regional and global orders is likely sustain and increase interest in IRS in these countries and more generally in Asia. Distinctive trajectories have characterized the development of IRS in China, Japan, and India. Distinctiveness is evident in master narratives and intellectual predispositions that have shaped research and teaching of IR in all three countries. The distinct IRS trajectories are explained by the national and international context of these countries as well as the extensiveness of state domination of their public spheres. Alterations in national circumstances and objectives along with changes in the international position explain the master narratives that have focused the efforts of IR research communities. Extensiveness of state domination and government support, respectively, explain intellectual predispositions and institutional opportunities for the development of IRS. IRS in Asia has had a

predominantly practical orientation with emphasis on understanding and interpreting the world to forge suitable national responses. That orientation contributed to a strong emphasis on normative–ethical dimensions, as well as empirically grounded historical, area, and policy studies. For a number of reasons including intellectual predispositions and constraints, knowledge production in the positivist tradition has not been a priority. However, IR theorizing defined broadly is beginning to attract greater attention among Asian IR scholars. Initial interest in Western IR theory was largely a function of exposure of Asian scholars to Western (primarily American) scholarship that has been in the forefront in the development of IR concepts, theories, and paradigms. Emulation has traveled from copying to application and is now generating interest in developing indigenous ideas and perspectives based on national histories, experiences, and traditions. Although positivism may gain ground it is not deeply embedded in the intellectual traditions of Asian countries. Furthermore, theorizing in the positivist tradition has not made significant progress in the West where it is also encountering sharp criticism and alternative theories. Asian IR scholarship would continue to emphasize normative–ethical concerns. And historical, area, and policy studies would continue to be important in their own right, not simply as evidentiary basis for development of law-like propositions. It also appears likely that Asian IR scholarship would increasingly focus on recovery of indigenous ideas and traditions and their adaptation to contemporary circumstances. The net effect of these trends would be to diversify and enrich existing concepts, theories, methods, and perspectives, and possibly provide fresh ones as well. The flourishing of IRS in Asia would make the IR discipline more international.

The study of International Relations (IR), including theorizing international interaction, has been essentially a Western enterprise grounded almost exclusively in the histories, experiences, and intellectual traditions of the United States and Europe. Asia mattered on the margins primarily as an extension of Western interests in a subordinate region. The rise of Asian countries and the emergence of Asia as a core world region with potential to become the central world region have altered this situation. IR of key Asian countries and the international politics and economics of the dynamic Asian region are commanding increased attention (Alagappa, 2008; Tow, 2009). In addition to stimulating interest in Asia

and broadening the empirical base of IR scholarship in the West, the rise of Asia has generated considerable interest in the study of IR in Asia itself. IR studies (IRS) grounded in national circumstances, experiences, traditions, and aspirations has experienced dramatic growth in several Asian countries and is fast becoming an important field of study. There is also growing interest among Asian scholars in IR theory including the development of indigenous ideas, concepts, and perspectives. As it flourishes, Asian scholarship has the potential to enrich, pluralize, and make IR a more international discipline.

However, except for a few country-specific studies, there has been little effort to systematically investigate the development of IRS in Asia. This article is a preliminary effort in that direction. It explores the development of IRS since 1945 in three Asian countries: China, Japan, and India. Although all three countries have long histories, their emergence as modern states is relatively recent. The contemporary Chinese state came into being in 1949 following the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the Kuomintang. From 1911 to 1949 the Chinese state was in the midst of a civil war and also engaged in a war against Japanese imperialism. India became an independent state in 1947 after almost 300 years of colonial rule. Japan's emergence as a modern state can be traced to the Meiji Restoration era. It was an imperial power in the late nineteenth century and the interwar period. However, Japan emerged from World War II as an occupied state regaining independent status in 1952.

## 1 Purpose and propositions

This article investigates and explains the trajectories of IRS in China, India, and Japan with particular focus on developments since the upsurge of interest in IR in the 1980s and 1990s. The study advances four propositions:

- (i) *Distinctive trajectories.* The originating circumstances of IRS in Asia were fundamentally different from that in the West. The new field of IR that developed in the West in the aftermath of World War I reflected the strong desire and goal of the Western international community to prevent international wars like the First World War through international law, diplomacy, and organization. The inception of IRS in Asia was linked to the 'birth' circumstances

of Asian countries as sovereign entities, their concerns with national and regime survival, and their relationship to a highly polarized and confrontational world still dominated by Western powers. From very different starting points, IRS in each of the three countries investigated in the study has followed distinctive trajectories reflecting specific national circumstances, concerns, and demands. Distinctiveness is evident in master research narratives, intellectual predispositions, and institutional opportunities, which taken together have shaped the development of IR as a field and discipline of study.

- (ii) *Change in national and international context, objectives, and priorities along with extensiveness of state domination of public spheres explain the distinctive trajectories that have characterized the development of IRS in China, India, and Japan.* It is tempting to explain the trajectory of IR studies in Asia in terms of the changing international positions of Asian states. Such an explanation is simple and attractive. Though a useful entry point, it provides only a partial explanation. A full explanation of the development of IRS in any country should explain changes in master narratives, intellectual predispositions, and institutional opportunities. This essay argues that alterations in international context and position explain content of master narratives while change in the extensiveness of state domination of public sphere and funding support explain intellectual predispositions and institutional opportunities for growth of IR as a field of study.
- (iii) *IRS in Asia has had a predominantly practical orientation with emphasis on understanding and interpreting the external world to develop suitable policy responses. Knowledge production through development of a hierarchy of law-like propositions has not been a priority.* Strong practical orientation contributed to emphasis on historical, area, and policy studies. Practical orientation, however, does not imply the absence of IR theory: only the absence of a certain kind of theory (positivism) that was in vogue in the West. Nevertheless IR theorizing defined broadly to include knowledge production is gaining traction among Asian scholars. The scientific method and more generally positivism may gain ground, but it is not deeply embedded in Asian intellectual traditions and unlikely to become the primary theoretical perspective for IR scholarship in

Asia. Asian scholarship appears likely to continue the emphasis on constitutive-normative theory along with historical, area, and policy studies. It also appears likely to interrogate indigenous traditions with a view to adapting them to contemporary circumstances.

- (iv) *Continued rise of Asian powers is likely to sustain and further energize interest in IRS in Asia and the West.* The net effect of this trend would be to enrich existing concepts, theories, and paradigms, provide fresh perspectives and new impetus for the study of IR, and diversify sources of growth making the discipline more international.

Before elaborating on these propositions, the next two sections outline the development of IR as a field of study as well as the meaning and development of IR theory in the West. This is important from a comparative perspective.

## 2 IR becomes a discipline

The conventional understanding is that IR emerged as a distinctive field of inquiry in the aftermath of World War I. Prior to that, scholars from several disciplines including philosophy, politics, political theory, history, ethics, economics, and law studied issues and practices in IR. At inception the field's primary focus was on the regulation of interstate interaction to prevent occurrence of wars like the First World War (Olson, 1972). With a strong normative orientation, the focus was on international organizations and non-coercive instruments of statecraft (like law and diplomacy) to prevent war. There was little interest in understanding or explaining patterns in international politics. The practical and normative orientation of the field was reflected in course offerings that emphasized international organizations, public international law, instruments and techniques of statecraft, country and regional studies, the nature of international interaction, and the possibility of transforming them (idealism and realism). Knowledge production (creation, validation, and accumulation) received little attention. Private think tanks and quasi-academic institutions in the United States, England, and Europe, alongside universities played a crucial role in the inception and early development of the field.

Over time, especially after World War II, theories and methods became ascendant. That ascendance has been attributed in part to the nesting of

IR in political science departments in American universities and the effort to make politics a social science in the United States. With theory and method increasingly defining the discipline, description and explanation of its development emphasized the so-called great theoretical debates – realism–idealism, behavioralism–traditionalism, interdependence–power politics, and reflectivism–rationalism (Lapid, 1989; Waever, 1997). A hierarchy that privileges theory and method, and values historical, area, and empirical studies primarily in evidentiary terms now characterize the discipline especially in the United States. Specialization, theoretical contribution, and publication in select professional journals are the key criteria for IR faculty recruitment, retention, and advancement in American universities. Strong gate-keeping practices perpetuate the existing hierarchy.

Though acknowledged as a distinct field, IR was initially not readily accepted as a separate, self-contained discipline. Transition from a field of study to a discipline was linked to the coherence and unity of the subject matter of IR (Ransom, 1968). IR's interdisciplinary nature was seen as antithetical to disciplinary status (Wright, 1955; Olson, 1972; Schmidt, 1998). Questions continued to be raised as to whether IR was a separate discipline with a distinct subject matter, if it had specialized concepts, theories, and methods to guide inquiry, and an accepted means of validating knowledge (Olson and Onuf, 1985; Kaplan, 1961). Over time international politics came to be accepted as the subject matter of IR. IR developed a distinct discourse and professional identity that paved the way for acceptance as a separate discipline or sub-discipline in the 1960s and 1970s.

Although its early roots may be traced to England and Europe, it was in the United States that IR became a social science discipline (Hoffman, 1977, p. 43).<sup>1</sup> Positing Hans Morgenthau as the founding father of the discipline, Stanley Hoffman wrote that Morgenthau's effort to create a field of scientific endeavor separate from history or law found fertile ground in the United States. According to Hoffman, the development of IR as a discipline in the United States is linked to the rise of that country as a world power and convergence of three factors: intellectual predispositions (applied enlightenment, belief that the benefits of exact science can be transferred to the social sciences, and the role of European émigré scholars) that led to an explosion in the social sciences

1 International Relations chairs were established at Aberystwyth in 1919, London in 1923, and Oxford in 1930.

in post-World War II America; political circumstances (America's growing role in world affairs and a belief that scholars can aid policy); and institutional factors (scholar-policy maker nexus, network of foundations that supported IR research, flexible universities, and a system of mass education that supported large departments of political science in which IR was nested). The receptive political, intellectual, and institutional environment in the United States and the hegemonic position of that country in world affairs shaped development of the discipline as well as American domination of it. Dominance of rationalism and the scientific method in American approaches to the study of IR spawned intra- and inter-paradigmatic debates in the United States and abroad invigorating alternative perspectives and theories. It also created an Atlantic divide of sorts with some arguing that American dominance has tended to narrow the study of IR, preventing the development of a genuinely international discipline (Smith, 2002; Waever and Tickner, 2009).

Competing explanations have been advanced to explain the growth of the discipline. A prominent explanation links the emergence and development of IR as a field of study to developments in international politics. Developments like World War I and the Versailles Treaty, the breakdown of the idealist vision and institutions during the interwar period, World War II and its conclusion, the Cold War, termination of the Cold War, the emergence of the United States as the sole super power, and so forth are cited as key turning points by those advocating a contextual explanation (Olson, 1972; Olson and Onuf, 1985; Smith, 1987; Olson and Groom, 1991). The contextual explanation connects with a second explanation that emphasizes evolution and knowledge production through theoretical debates in explaining growth of the discipline. Frequently cited debates include the interwar debate over the possibility of transforming relations among sovereign states (realism versus idealism), the debate in the 1960s over the relevance and role of scientific method in the study of international politics (behavioralism versus traditionalism), debates in the 1970s and 1980s over the nature of international politics and the possibility of cooperation (interdependence versus power politics and security; neoliberalism versus neorealism), and the ongoing debate since the 1990s over the proper perspective for understanding and explaining international politics (reflectivism versus rationalism). The debates narration oversimplifies and does not do justice to the complex history or the contemporary diverse landscape of the field (Kurki and

Wight, 2007; Smith, 2007). Further, the so-called great debates were not the only debates in the field. Other debates include generalization versus specialization (regional and country studies), universal versus regional organizations, and the agent-structure controversy linked to the level of analysis problem (Olson and Onuf, 1985). The third explanation contests the contextual and development by debates explanations. It highlights the shortcomings of these approaches ('participation in the presentist agenda of legitimation and critique'), time lag, and inability to explain the diversity and change in concepts, methodology, and theory (Schmidt, 1998, p. 33, 37; Holmes, 2011). Labeled 'critical internal discursive history', that explanation argues that 'developments in the field of IR' in the United States have been informed 'more by disciplinary trends in political science and by the character of the American university than by external events taking place in international politics' (Schmidt, 1998, p. 38). In the vein of critical theory, adherents of this explanation also argue that borrowing and re-representation of core ideas and concepts both from within the discipline and from other disciplines have characterized the development of IR theory (Holmes, 2011).

The competing explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive or new. In some ways they are reminiscent of the debates between the salience of structure and agency and of material and ideational factors in explaining state behavior and international outcomes like war, peace, conflict, and cooperation. No one explanation may fully explain the development of IR. In this article I argue that change in national and international context, positions, and worldviews defined master narratives while change in the extensiveness of state domination of the public sphere along with resource availability defined intellectual predispositions and institutional opportunities for the development of IRS in the three countries investigated in the study. Further, the IR discipline like others has not grown in a unilinear fashion through great debates. There have been many 'points of growth'. As discussion in the next section will show the discipline is now characterized by much diversity in approaches, theories, and methods.

### 3 IR theory: pluralism, fragmentation, and diverse landscape

IR theories seek to problematize, conceptualize, or constitute the world to help understand, explain, or alter how it works. They make explicit,



systematic statements on international interactions and arrangements on the basis of which outcomes like war, peace, conflict, cooperation, and community building can be understood, explained, predicted, fostered, or overcome. Theories define how knowledge may be generated, validated, and accumulated. They may also prescribe policy. Normative theories seek to correct injustice or avoid undesirable outcomes to make the world a better place. There is a wide spectrum of IR theories. The key divide is between theories that emphasize explanation on the basis of rational interests using a scientific method (labeled henceforth as ‘rationalism’ and ‘positivism’) and those that emphasize social existence and interaction (Kurki and Wight, 2007). The latter are less concerned (not unconcerned) with epistemology and methodology. In broad terms rationalist cum positivist approaches seek to explain a world external to the observer whereas reflectivist cum post-positivist approaches seek to help understand the world by immersing the observer in the situation and drawing on the ideas, beliefs, and practices of participants.

Despite shortcomings and challenges from contending theoretical perspectives, rationalism and positivism continue to dominate IR theory in the United States and possibly in Europe as well. The primary concern of these theories is explanation through causal analysis with emphasis on the scientific method. Their key features are abstraction of the real world to a few key, unchanging or slowly changing features that are observable and measurable, development of a few fundamental theoretical propositions (causal connections and predictions) on how the world works, derivation from them of falsifiable hypotheses, and testing them in an objective fashion employing quantitative methods or careful inferences from qualitative studies. The preference is for deductive theorizing although inductive theorizing is not excluded. To be counted as knowledge, findings should be empirically verifiable and withstand continued testing. Knowledge accumulation occurs when a theory explains a wider set of developments (Lakatos, 1978) or is built up incrementally within an accepted paradigm in Kuhnian fashion until another that can better explain a set of phenomena replaces that paradigm. Rationalist perspectives like realism, structural realism, institutional–liberalism, and a mild version of constructivism lend themselves to positivist theorizing. They privilege epistemology and methodology over ontology. Socialization, simplicity, policy relevance, and significant modifications to positivism

(in response to its shortcomings as a social science explanation), especially the adaptation of the scientific method to include inferences from qualitative methods, explain in part the continued attraction of rationalism and positivism in the United States.

Post-positivist approaches reject rationalism and the scientific method as valid explanation of international interaction. Some hold rationalism responsible for the ills of the world. In their view, understanding international existence and interaction requires investigation of the identities and beliefs of actors and the social circumstances of their interaction. Material factors derive their meaning and significance from ideational ones. Casual analysis and knowledge accumulation are not central to these approaches. A wide range of perspectives is labeled as belonging to the reflectivist cum post-positivist theorizing mode. These include constructivism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, feminism, and Green theory.

Of these, constructivism commands considerable following in the United States and Europe. Its main claim is that IR is a social construction and malleable (Wendt, 1999; Fierke, 2007). IR can vary across contexts and thus differ across regions and over time. Social dimension (norms, rules, language) and agency (more space for individuals and states) are important in explaining behavior and outcomes. Although constructivism challenges rationalism's emphasis on materiality, structure, rational choice, and universal generalizations, it does not totally reject them. Constructivism argues that material factors derive their meaning from social circumstances, and that rationality is defined by the logic of appropriateness rather than the logic of consequences. It accepts an epistemology that includes hypothesis testing, causality, and explanation. The combination of constructivist ontology and a positivist epistemology has been labeled conventional or rational constructivism and critiqued as inconsistent. This has led some to argue for consistent constructivism that emphasizes its linguistic roots (Fierke, 2007). Viewed as occupying a middle ground between rationalism and poststructuralism, rational constructivism has emerged as an important approach to the study of IR in the United States. It also commands growing attention in Asia.

Poststructuralism is a critical approach, not a theory (Campbell, 2007). It rejects an external empirical reality, causal analysis, universal generalizations, and in general the quest for objective production and

accumulation of knowledge. Sharing certain features with critical theory, postcolonial theory, and feminist theory, it emphasizes the power of discourse with focus on representation and interpretation. Representations and practices produce meanings, constitute identities, establish social relations, and make possible certain political and ethical outcomes. Following Foucault, power is deemed to have disciplinary and productive capacity, and is assigned a central place in discourse analysis. The primary purpose of poststructuralism is to 'denaturalize' existing structures and perspectives by exposing their meanings, assumptions, and limits. It seeks to do this by probing the historical production of structures, actors, identities, problems, and solutions in IR.

In sum IR theories in the West span a wide spectrum and exist in fragmented space with little interaction and integration. There is little consensus on what counts as theory. For some, all perspectives that seek to explain, understand, constitute, or alter the world irrespective of their epistemology and methodology qualify as theory. That there may not be an 'objective' basis for comparing the utility of different theories is of little concern although this does not imply anything is acceptable. For those wedded to explanation and the scientific method, post-positivist theories have yet to prove themselves through a serious and comprehensive research program (Keohane, 1989). Other approaches like scientific realism and critical realism seek new ways of integrating material and ideational influences to explain or understand international interaction (Kurki and Wight, 2007). Some scholars advocate an eclectic approach with the focus on problem solving (Katzenstein and Sil, 2004). Despite the proliferation of paradigms and theories, knowledge creation, validation, and accumulation in the form of incremental knowledge building or paradigm replacement in Kuhnian fashion has not occurred. Grand theorizing appears to have exhausted itself with emphasis possibly shifting to mid-level theorizing. The net effect has been to make the IR theoretical landscape more diverse, complex, and somewhat confusing, even for the initiated raising the question if IR is still a discipline (Waever, 2007).

American approaches and methods have made significant inroads in the United Kingdom and Europe, but they also sparked a backlash, invigorating alternative perspectives like those discussed earlier as well as the English School. In their quest to create a genuinely international discipline, some Western scholars have begun to investigate scholarship of IR

in developing regions and countries (Waeber and Tickner, 2009). Western dominance led some Asian scholars to argue the case for exceptionalism and subaltern studies resulting in modification or rejection of ‘universal’ theories produced in the West; others simply ignored it; and some borrowed heavily from the dominant Western traditions. Drawn to the idea of alternative knowledge sites, a small number have been attracted to critical approaches. There is also a nascent effort to construct indigenous approaches and theories.

## 4 IRS in Asia: distinctive trajectories

Reflecting national circumstances, concerns, and demands, the development of IRS in China, Japan, and India has followed distinctive paths. Distinctiveness is evident in master narratives, intellectual predispositions, and institutional opportunities, which taken together have framed the development of IRS as a field and discipline in these three countries.

### 4.1 *Master research narratives*

Over the last 60 years master narratives for IR studies in China, Japan, and India have undergone fundamental change. In China the master narrative was transformed from a revolutionary state seeking to overthrow the existing international order, to a normal state seeking to integrate with and benefiting from the existing order, to a rising power seeking its rightful place in the international order, and finally, to reconstructing and reordering the world from a Chinese perspective.

The primary purpose of IRS in China in the exclusively state-led phase (1949–1979) was to legitimate the CCP, serve the foreign policy of the communist state, and train its diplomats. State ideology and demands including foreign policy objectives focused IRS on promoting the superiority of socialism and the crisis of capitalism, studying international communism and the Soviet model, investigating international contradictions and revolutionary movements in the Third World, and safeguarding China’s national security (Wang, 2009). IR teaching and research centered on issues connected to national security, consolidation of the domestic and international position of the CCP, conception of the world in the context of the Soviet-American bipolar confrontation and China’s solidarity with Socialist states, interpretation of Marxist-Leninist ideology and Mao’s thoughts to develop action-oriented theory in

support of China's foreign policy objectives, and elaboration of concepts (like the Three World's theory) and national strategies (like the united front strategy, leaning to one side) articulated by leaders (Qin, 2009b).

Beginning in the late 1970s a sea change occurred in China's national objectives and international orientation in the context of a fundamental reappraisal of the international situation. China sought to become a modernized, prosperous, and powerful country. These objectives were to be achieved through a far-reaching modernization program that relied heavily on reform, opening up, and integrating the Chinese economy into the global capitalist economy. These changes along with a substantial reduction in the status and role of the communist ideology dramatically altered the purpose and scope of IRS in China. Although serving national policy as articulated by the CCP continued to be the principal purpose of IRS, space opened up for discussion and debate over how national objectives were to be achieved. The nature of the international system, what constitutes China's national interest in a changing domestic and international context, and how the international system could be harnessed to realize China's national objectives all became legitimate foci of inquiry. The IRS master narrative underwent further change with the rapid rise of China initially to regional power and subsequently to global power status.

Changes in master narratives were captured in the debates among Chinese IR scholars. According to Qin (2011) there have been three overlapping debates since the early 1980s. The first (early 1980s to mid-1990s) was between orthodox and reformist scholars over the nature of the international system (conflict and war prone, or peace and development oriented) and how China should relate to it (as a revolutionary or normal state). The second debate from about the mid-1990s between realists and liberals was over how China should seek to achieve its national objective of becoming a prosperous and powerful country: through power and competition or through cooperation and participation in international institutions. The third debate centered on the issue of whether China can rise peacefully without upsetting the international order. Realists argued that peaceful rise is a contradiction in terms and that China's rise will inevitably lead to conflict with the dominant power. Liberals argued that cooperation and participation in regional and global institutions could advance China's modernization goal and reduce the prospect of conflict and war. Constructivists argued

that the process of cooperation would bring about a change in China's identity and make it a valuable member of international society with a *status quo* orientation. This would facilitate China's peaceful rise.

Other major topics of discussion among Chinese scholars in the post-1979 period included the material structure of the international system (multipolar or hegemonic), China's relations with other major powers, especially the United States (peer competitor or strategic partner), Asian regionalism, global issues, and international governance. At the turn of the century, the IRS master narrative in China broadened further to include the production of knowledge issues with a focus not only on integrating China into the world but also on constructing the world and its governance from Chinese perspectives. This may pave the way for a new debate centered on the question of world order. Changing master narratives since 1979 broadened the purpose and scope of IRS in China increasing the space for independent scholarship and different perspectives.

As in China, Japan's IRS master narratives followed a distinct trajectory determined largely by post-war developments in and affecting Japan and that country's meteoric economic rise and subsequent stagnation. From 1952 through the early 1970s, two sets of master research questions dominated IR studies in Japan. The first emanated from Japan's devastating defeat and destruction in World War II and its emergence from that war as an occupied state. The key questions in this set were: What went wrong? What led to the Pacific War? And, why did Japan suffer defeat? The second set related to Japan's security in the context of the Cold War confrontation. The central question was: How best to secure Japan's survival and its objective of a strong economy in a highly polarized world? Both these sets of master questions focused on war and security influenced the development of IRS in Japan till the early 1970s (Inoguchi, 2007, 2009; Yamamoto, 2011). A series of domestic and international developments in the 1970s reduced the salience of these questions. Attention shifted to the political economy domain reorienting the master research questions toward the nature of the international system (power politics or international interdependence), friction in Japan's economic relations with the United States, Japan's regional economic role (leader of a flock of flying geese), and a broader definition of Japan's security (comprehensive security).

With Japan emerging as the world's second largest economy and a widespread perception in and out of Japan that it was set to become the world's premier economic power, the master narrative shifted again in the 1990s to focus on Japan's global role (global civilian power), the alliance relationship with the United States, and the search for an international status befitting its economic position. From a focus on history, war, and security, Japanese IRS in this stage expanded its scope to include international political economy, international trade, international interdependence, international institutions, transnational relations, civil society, comprehensive security, human rights, and human security. The rise of China, relative decline of the United States, and continuing economic stagnation and political instability in Japan may set in train a new master narrative that re-ignites an earlier debate on how best to ensure Japan's security and prosperity but this time in the context of rising Asian powers. Such a narrative would refocus attention on the future of the alliance with the United States, Sino-Japanese relations, East Asia community building, and Japan's regional and global position and role.

Changing master narratives were reflected in debates among Japanese scholars and public intellectuals. Yamamoto (2011) identifies three debates in Japan. The first debate during the interwar period was a critique of idealism. Unlike in the West, that critique was deployed to justify Japan's imperial quest to create a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. The second debate in the aftermath of World War II and in the context of the Cold War centered on the best way to secure Japan: through alliance with the United States or through neutrality and reliance on the universal UN security system. The third debate in the 1970s and 1980s centered on the nature of the international system (power politics or interdependence) and how best to secure Japanese interests in that system (comprehensive security). Successive transformations in master research questions have broadened the scope of IRS in Japan, which has absorbed some features from the West but fused them with indigenous ones to maintain a distinct identity (Inoguchi, 2007; Yamamoto, 2011).

Traversing three overlapping phases, the development of IRS in India has traveled an indigenous path as well.<sup>2</sup> In the first phase (from

2 Behera (2009) identifies and discuss three phases of Indian IR studies in terms of India's changing self-image: initially as a soft power, then pursuing hard security, followed by a shift to soft power but with hard power playing a more central role.



independence to the 1970s) the primary focus was on conceptualizing the post-World War II world and India's place and role in it. In the second phase (from early 1960s through early 1990s) preservation of national security in an increasingly hostile neighborhood became the primary focus. National security continues to be a key focus in the ongoing third phase that began in the early 1990s, but is defined broadly to include non-traditional dimensions as well. The contemporary master narrative also emphasizes modernization and development of India through careful participation in the global economy, and the realization of an international status and role befitting an outward oriented, rising India.

Non-alignment constituted the defining narrative in the first stage (Behera, 2009; Mallavarapu, 2010). It was an original, multifaceted idea and concept that: (i) conceptualized post-World War II international politics as power politics; (ii) sought to create political space for organization and interaction of newly independent states and construct a normative structure to support the creation of a more equitable international order; and (iii) defined the orientation of India's foreign and security policy. IRS in India in this period focused on explicating and debating the rationales and meanings of the non-alignment concept, its role in Indian foreign policy, and its adequacy in addressing India's security concerns. It also explored related issues like strengthening international organizations, decolonization, disarmament, creating a non-discriminatory non-proliferation regime, and a new international economic order. The study of Indian foreign policy was another major thrust of IRS in this era. Operationalization of this thrust in terms of relations with key countries and understanding critical regions contributed to the dramatic growth of relational and area studies in the 1960s. IR in India came to be conflated with relational and area studies under the label of International Studies (Sharma, 2010). Although science, technology, and economics were also emphasized by post-independence India, for a number of reasons these areas did not figure significantly in IRS. International political economy, for example, was considered the preserve of economists who had a privileged position in advising the Indian government (Baru, 2009).

Pursuit of security defined in traditional terms was the master narrative in the second phase (Behera, 2009). Disillusionment with the earlier



worldview and an increasingly hostile neighborhood compelled the Indian government to rethink its national security strategy and modify its foreign policy orientation. National security, defined in traditional terms, and the belief that India's security required the development of coercive power came to dominate policy. The changed narrative was reflected in the growth of national and regional security studies that emphasized 'guns and bombs'. India's nuclear posture, nuclear doctrine, nuclear cooperation, regional stability, space programs, and related global regimes (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Non-Proliferation Treaty, Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, etc.) all commanded and continue to command considerable attention.

Termination of the Cold War and the opening up of the Indian economy especially after 1991 signaled the beginning of a third phase. Along with security, India's national objective now emphasized economic growth and development, search for international status and role befitting a rising power, changing relations with the major powers (especially the United States and China), participation in regional and global organizations and forums, and non-traditional security concerns especially countering terrorism. Reflected in the changing master narrative, these concerns are expanding the scope of IR studies in India. The gradualism that has marked India's economic reform and international reorientation also characterizes change in IR master narratives. For the most part, IRS in India, like that in China, has imitated and lagged policy change. Think tankers, journalists, and quasi-academics have been in the forefront of new IRS scholarship in India (Raja, 2010).

From the forgoing discussion it is evident that IRS master narratives in China, Japan, and India have been distinct. They altered over time in line with each country's changing national and international circumstances, and with reconfiguration of national objectives that altered their international orientations. Distinctiveness is also evident in their intellectual trajectories and institutional opportunities.

#### *4.2 Intellectual trajectories*

Intellectual inclinations and frameworks for the study of IR have also followed distinctive paths in each country. In China the intellectual predisposition has traveled from a strictly state-dictated ideological framework based on Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts to a more plural

and diverse landscape that includes Western traditions of scholarship as well as efforts to construct indigenous perspectives drawing upon Chinese traditions and experiences. Within broadly defined limits, there is room now for different perspectives. Pragmatism, growing intellectual freedom, and increasing attention to the academic enterprise (as opposed to strict policy orientation) characterize the contemporary Chinese intellectual scene.

In the 1950s and 1960s Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts were the only acceptable intellectual traditions for scholarship. Class analysis and Mao's theory of contradictions were widely used in analysis of IR and prescription for Chinese foreign policy. Dissent and independent scholarship were not tolerated. Skeptical and distrustful of the 'bourgeois' social sciences, the CCP abolished the discipline of politics in Chinese universities in 1952 (Yahuda, 1987). Chinese intellectual traditions like Confucianism were disparaged.

With the launching of the modernization program and especially the rapid growth of the Chinese economy, Marxism-Leninism began to lose its predominance. Major pronouncements – that the dominant international trend is peace and development, that China is in an early stage of transition to socialism, and that capitalism with socialist or Chinese characteristics is the appropriate economic model for China – were still made by CCP leaders. However, an increasingly pragmatic Party-State was no longer the font of all knowledge. Its domination of the intellectual space began to shrink. Domestic politics remains an exception where the Party does not brook dissent and independent scholarship. Perspectives of the international domain that do not directly challenge the goals of the CCP, advance alternative ways of achieving national objectives, or which bring to the surface new or key issues that should be of concern to China have become more acceptable. As Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts gradually lost relevance in the analysis of international affairs, Confucianism and other Chinese intellectual traditions became more acceptable.

Recovery and adaptation of traditional Chinese ideas and traditions to contemporary circumstances, however, would not be immediate. Meanwhile, Chinese scholars borrowed heavily from Western traditions. Classical and structural realism, institutional-liberalism (not classical liberalism), and constructivism have become influential in IR studies in China. Feminism and post-modernism also appear to have gained a

foothold in China (Qin, 2007; Wang, 2009). Because of its historical perspective and a (mis) perception that the name implies and supports the construction of a Chinese School of IR, the English School (and the Copenhagen School) has gained a following in China as well (Zhang, 2003).

Emulation of Western theories and methods has been facilitated by the return to China of a large number of Chinese scholars trained in the West, especially the United States, and the translation of Western classical and contemporary cutting-edge IR works into Mandarin.<sup>3</sup> Borrowing from the West and a desire to make China an IR knowledge site have contributed to a growing interest among Chinese scholars in IR theory and method that is reflected in teaching, research, and publication programs (Wang, 2005; Qin, 2009a). Heavy borrowing also generated dissatisfaction and negative reactions in certain quarters, stimulating interest in developing a Chinese School of IR. It should be observed here that despite the growing interest in theory, policy orientation still dominates the study of IR in China (Song, 2001). At present three strands are discernible in the study of IR in China: straight foreign policy and area studies; adoption of Western theories to investigate China centered questions; and an effort to construct a *sui generis* Chinese school of IR.

Unlike China, pluralism characterized the study of IR in Japan from the outset. According to Inoguchi and Bacon (2001) and Inoguchi (2007) four traditions have informed the study of IR in post-World War II Japan: (i) the *Staatslehre* tradition that emphasizes law and economics (as opposed to political science and sociology), historical-institutional details, and policy relevance; (ii) Marxism that advanced narratives critical of that of the dominating state; (iii) a historicist tradition that focuses on events and personalities; and (iv) a theory tradition that emphasizes transnational relations and methodological rigor.

Historical–empirical and Marxist approaches dominated the study of IR in early post-World War II Japan. With deep roots in the country, the historical–empirical perspective was the preferred approach of scholars and public intellectuals connected to the government and engaged in policy relevant work. That approach served well the investigation of the historically oriented set of master questions that dominated IRS in the

3 On the translation of Western works into Mandarin, see Qin, 2007.

1950s and 1960s. Marxism was the second main discourse in post-war Japan. Scholars of that persuasion dominated the intellectual scene in Japanese universities till the 1960s. They saw their role primarily in providing counterpoints and counter narratives to those of the one-party dominated ‘right-wing client state of the United States.’ By the early 1970s domestic and international developments undermined the salience of the Marxist tradition, ending the dichotomy in Japanese IR scholarship.

The historical–empirical tradition continues to have a strong following. Beginning in the late 1960s, area studies, which previously had a humanities orientation, became an important approach in the study of IR in Japan. Empirical and detailed in orientation, it meshed well with the historical – empirical perspective. Increasing international exposure, strengthening of civil society in Japan, and the return of younger scholars from the United States trained in Western IR theories and methods (as a percentage of total IR scholars this group is still much smaller in Japan than in China, South Korea, or Taiwan) opened up space for a so-called ‘theory’ oriented tradition (Inoguchi, 2009). Its emphasis has been on transnational approaches to the study of IR and to increase methodological rigor. Unlike in China there is less emphasis on development of new paradigms and theories. Nevertheless, this tradition embraced by a large number of younger scholars has the potential to significantly alter the future trajectory of IR studies in Japan. At present three strands – historical–empirical, area studies, and theoretical orientation – dominate IRS in Japan. They co-exist without much interaction and integration making for a plural and diverse landscape, and a distinctly Japanese approach to IRS. In some ways Japan has already realized the Chinese aspiration to develop IR studies with indigenous characteristics (Inoguchi, 2007).

In India classical realism has been the dominant tradition in IR scholarship. Alternative perspectives, however, have challenged that tradition from the outset. Nehru’s dominating influence and his normative orientation would suggest that liberalism and institutionalism would have found deep roots in India. However, normative theories did not receive due attention in the early years and later were debunked as ‘woolly eyed idealism’ (Behera, 2009). Classical realism has and continues to be the primary tradition in Indian policy and scholarly circles. In part this can be attributed to Indian nationalism, state practices focused on consolidating the new Indian nation and state in the context of a highly

polarized international situation, and the dominance of the Indian state in the development of IR studies. Even non-alignment was conceived and practiced in *realpolitik* terms. Realism gained further ascendance as the attempt to construct a non-alignment movement and a more equitable international order based on certain principles and norms faltered and India's security became perilous.

However, Indian IR scholarship was not bereft of alternative traditions. Some scholars challenged the universal perspectives and theories produced in the West while others advanced alternative ways of understanding the world and India's relationship with it (Behera, 2009). They contested the West's claim to monopoly over the production of knowledge. Early works critical of the West's Enlightenment project by Ashis Nandy and of the Western world order projects by Rajni Kothari would now be classified as belonging to the post-positivist critical approaches. Although internationally influential, the works of Nandy, Kothari, and others were not recognized as part of mainstream Indian IR scholarship as they came from other disciplines and did not fit the dominant state-centric paradigm. Likewise, there are now alternative discourses that challenge the dominant realist tradition in Indian IR scholarship. Mostly they are grounded in alternative Western traditions. The English School, Constructivism, Neo-Marxism, Feminism, Postcolonial theory, Poststructuralism, and Postmodernism all have adherents in India (Mallavarapu, 2010). However, the number of scholars working in these traditions is still small. And, their works do not command much attention in mainstream research, teaching, and policy circles in India.

To summarize this section, intellectual trajectories in China, Japan, and India have traveled distinctive paths grounded in their respective local political and intellectual milieus. For reasons discussed later the intellectual milieus in all three countries have become more open and supportive of greater pluralism in perspectives. Western perspectives, theories, and methods have made considerable inroads and in several ways have become the benchmarks for IRS in these three countries, especially China, and more generally in Asia.

### 4.3 Institutional opportunities

Although the origins of IRS in Japan can be traced to the aftermath of World War I and international studies found fertile ground in India in

the 1950s and 1960s, the institutional settings in these two countries prevented the development of IR as a separate field of study. Likewise the early institutional context in China limited the development of IRS as a separate field. However, institutional changes since 1979 have stimulated rapid development of the field making it likely that IRS will emerge as an autonomous discipline in the foreseeable future in China.

The origins of international studies in the People's Republic of China can be traced to the 1963 government document titled 'Strengthening the research on foreign affairs in China' (Wang, 2009). International politics departments were established in Peking University (to study the Third World), Renmin University (to study the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe) and Fudan University (to study the United States and Western Europe). Research institutes were established under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and several ministries. The division of labor among them was determined by the state. Intellectual freedom and institutional opportunities for growth of IRS in China were severely limited during the 1949–1979 period.

Changing master narrative, opening up of intellectual space, and political recognition of the value of social sciences in policy-making and in developing China's soft power dramatically increased the interest in IRS. It became a 'hot' field attracting substantial government funding contributing to a dramatic increase in institutional opportunities. IR programs, departments, research institutes, publication outlets including peer-reviewed journals, and professional associations all experienced exponential growth. In one decade alone more than 60 departments of IR were established in universities (Wang, 2009). The 2006 statistics of the China National Association of International Studies indicates there were 36 schools of IR within universities, 54 bachelors and masters degree programs, and 29 doctoral programs in IR (Qin, 2007). Research institutes and think tanks have proliferated across China. Increasing intellectual freedom and dramatic growth in institutional opportunities in a rapidly expanding university and research institute systems provide Chinese IR scholars with the opportunity to broaden the purpose of IRS to include knowledge production and to focus on matters pertaining to development of a discipline including professional development. IR has clearly emerged as a distinct field of study in China. It has attained, or is on its way to securing, formal status as a discipline in the Chinese university system (Wang, 2006).

Although the origins of IRS in Japan may be traced to the aftermath of World War I, it became a recognized field only after World War II and still has not attained autonomous status. IRS continues to be lodged in departments like law and economics, and in centers that carry names such as ‘international and area studies,’ ‘international languages and cultures,’ and ‘international cooperation’ (Inoguchi, 2009). That IR has not become an autonomous field is due to a number of factors including the emphasis at the founding moment on economics and law, the diverse intellectual strands in Japanese IR scholarship, affiliation to different disciplines and departments, and the absence of political science and sociology departments in Japan. Lack of institutional opportunities, budget autonomy, and lack of striving on the part of the IR scholarly community suggest that IRS in Japan is unlikely to emerge as an autonomous field or discipline in the foreseeable future.

IRS found fertile soil in India at the time of independence. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s interest in international affairs, a strong university system with faculty educated in Western universities, and a favorable budgetary situation among others led to the creation of several institutions and programs devoted to the study of IR (Bajpai, 2010; Mattoo, 2010). The number of institutions offering programs in international studies increased substantially in the 1950s and 1960s (Sahni, 2010; Sharma, 2010). For a number of reasons – parochialism, state domination, self-imposed detachment from the West, peculiar institutional growth, intellectual shortcomings (neglect of theory and method, absence of vibrant research programs), lack of innovative teaching programs, practices, and resources, and absence of professional associations and strong peer-reviewed journals – IRS in India has not made significant headway since the 1970s (Bajpai, 2010; Basrur, 2010; Sharma, 2010).

IR in India has not developed into a separate field or an autonomous sub-discipline or discipline. It is frequently conflated with international and area studies. Much of what passes for IR is in fact descriptive area and relational studies. Theory and method courses are few and poorly conceived and taught. A limited number of IR courses are offered as part of international studies programs in the few schools of international studies and more commonly in political science departments in a relatively small number of universities spread across India. The lodging of IRS in political science departments in India may suggest a similarity with the United States. However, this is a superficial similarity. IRS in



India has not developed as an autonomous sub-discipline as it has in the United States. India-centric comparative politics scholars dominate Indian political science departments. IRS is a weak intellectual cousin. IRS in India has not developed the intellectual and institutional where-withal, including strong professional associations and journals, to become a separate field or discipline.

Stagnation in the state of Indian IRS has been the subject of self-critical appraisals conducted by Indian scholars (Rajan, 2005; Rana and Misra, 2005), in papers presented at the 2009 workshop in Singapore on the state of international studies in India, and the ensuing report titled 'Strengthening International Studies in India' (Alagappa, 2009).<sup>4</sup> Widespread recognition of shortcomings by Indian IR scholars has contributed to the initiation of several initiatives. These include institutional and programmatic reform in Indian universities, an effort to establish an Indian International Studies Association, strengthening programs, research institutes and think tanks in the areas of foreign and security policy, and increasing the international exposure of Indian IR scholars. It is likely that the Indian government's ongoing effort to reform and strengthen the higher-education system will increase institutional opportunities and resources for IRS. Combined with greater international exposure and linkage (Paul, 2010), these assets may foreshadow a dynamic era in the development of IRS in India.

#### 4.4 Explanation

Taken together master narratives, intellectual predispositions, and institutional settings have shaped the trajectories of IR studies in China, Japan, and India. This essay argues that national circumstances, world-views, objectives, and changing international position of a country define IR master narratives and changes therein. This has been adequately discussed in the section on master narratives and will not be further rehearsed. The rest of this section is devoted to discussing the second claim that the extensiveness of state domination of the public sphere along with government and foundation support determines intellectual predispositions and institutional opportunities for the development of IRS as a field and discipline.

4 The revised papers from that workshop and the report have been published in *International Studies*, 46, 1–2.



The general proposition is that extensive state domination of the public sphere restricts intellectual predispositions and institutional opportunities preventing the development of a strong field and discipline of IRS, and vice versa. In the first three to four decades of their existence as sovereign states, China, Japan, and India experienced extensive state domination in all domains of public life. Such domination left little or no space for private and civil society actors and institutions. A dominating state constricted intellectual space, skewed intellectual trajectories, limited institutional opportunities, and oriented IR master narratives in the direction of national foreign and security policy. Subsequent decline in state domination along with growing private and civil society sectors opened up intellectual and institutional space creating room for pluralism in perspectives and institutions especially in China. In Japan and India historical legacies along with problems facing university systems continue to constrict intellectual freedom and institutional opportunities for the development of IRS as a strong field and discipline.

#### *4.5 State dominance limits intellectual and institutional space*

One-party dominance characterized early political life in all three countries investigated in the study. The CCP has monopolized political power since 1949. Except for a brief interlude (1977–1980), the Indian National Congress continuously held political power from 1947 to 1989. In Japan the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) dominated political life from 1955 till 1993. Although India and Japan are democracies, extensive state domination characterized their political, economic, and civil society lives in the first few decades.

Strong, charismatic leaders (Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi) underpinned and reinforced state domination in India. Intrusion by the strong public sector crowded out private and civil society institutions and actors in India. Universities, research institutes, and think tanks were all established and controlled by the state to serve its purposes and goals. The small, inward looking private sector had little interest in international affairs. Suspicion of foreign foundations and institutions prevented the establishment of externally funded or supported institutions in India. Although Nehru's sense of history and vision for India led to the establishment of several international affairs institutes, his domination of India's international affairs stifled the development of IR

scholarship in India (Bajpai, 2005). Nehru's worldview, ideas, and intellectual leanings strongly influenced mainstream intellectual predisposition and marginalized other perspectives. His reading of the international situation, attempt to forge a new international order, and framing of India's foreign policy on the basis of non-alignment defined the master narrative for IRS in India till the early 1970s. National security became a defining narrative after India's defeat in the 1962 war with China and the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan. The changed narrative affected the content of IRS but not state control and direction that still limited intellectual space and institutional opportunities. It reinforced realism as the dominant intellectual perspective.

Likewise post-1952 Japan was dominated by the LDP-led state. Japan had a thriving economy but the Ministry of International Trade and Industry heavily regulated the Japanese private sector. Though numerous, civil society groups were mostly small, delivery-oriented organizations or professional associations with little or no advocacy role (Pekkanen, 2004). The strong state bureaucracy closely regulated them especially the delivery groups reliant on state funding. In general groups operating in the civil society space were constrained by the state. There were few private universities. The government funded most universities as well as nearly all the small number of research institutes and think tanks. It also funded large research projects in areas of its choosing. These were farmed out to government connected institutions and scholars doing historical and empirical work and who shared the state's 'ideological' leanings. As Marxists dominated the social sciences in universities, and their perspectives diverged fundamentally from that of the state, the government did not seek to develop IRS in universities. As in India, the dominant Japanese state, its purposes, and leanings limited intellectual space and institutional opportunities for IRS in Japan.

Political domination by the CCP was total. The CCP dominated all public space including intellectual space. Private sector and civil society were virtually non-existent. Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts were the only acceptable perspectives for IR scholarship. Other perspectives were banned and independent scholarship was not tolerated. The Party limited institutional opportunities as well and decided on the division of specialization among them. The small number of departments and research institutes established by the Party suffered heavily during the

Cultural Revolution that ravaged China from 1966 through 1976 and had to be rebuilt after 1979.

#### *4.6 Contraction of state, growing intellectual space, expanding institutional opportunities*

For different reasons, state domination of the public sphere contracted in all three countries. The modernization program launched by the still dominant CCP under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping had far reaching consequences for IR studies in China. Pragmatism became the reigning ideology. Except in matters relating to the CCP monopolization of political power, the communist state ceased to be the repository of all knowledge. It recognized the value of indigenous and Western intellectual traditions in making China a rich and powerful country. Such recognition along with other considerations contributed to a significant though still limited opening up of intellectual space at the individual and institutional levels permitting growth of intellectual pluralism within bounds. Recognizing the value of international studies for a rising power and the necessity of widening input for policy-making in the context of an ever-expanding agenda, the state has supported the institutional growth of international studies in an expanding university and research institutes system. Opening up of intellectual space and institutional growth has facilitated growth of the field and fostered professional development.

Unlike China where contraction in state domination of the public sphere was a consequence of deliberate change in policy, a rapidly growing economy, and a modernizing society, contraction in Japan was due to shortcomings of the state-led developmental model that had earlier catapulted Japan into the ranks of the world's leading economies. Beginning in the early 1990s, the Japanese economy suffered prolonged stagnation. The LDP (and its pork-barrel policies) lost traction and the Party splintered. All subsequent governments in Japan had to govern with the support of small but demanding coalition partners. The strong bureaucracy become tainted and lost its strong initiative and regulatory powers. The weakening state opened up space for civil society, increasing the intellectual space for alternative perspectives but IR programs and institutions have not experienced dramatic growth. In part this is due to an aging population and an immigration policy that have contributed to

declining student enrollment in universities facing severe financial constraints. Combined with historical legacies discussed earlier in this essay, a stagnating economy and an aging population have limited institutional opportunities for the development of IRS. Weak philanthropy and mostly government-funded foundations have not helped in the intellectual and institutional development of IR related research institutes in Japan.

Although it shares some similarities with Japan, explanation of the contemporary state of IRS in India is closer to that for China. As in Japan, coalition government has become the norm in India after 1988. However, this in itself did not bring about change in the scope or orientation of IRS. Fundamental change in government policy following the foreign exchange crisis in 1991 was the crucial turning point. The government led by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao embarked on reform and modernization of the Indian economy that gradually reduced the role of the state, invigorated the private sector, and opened up the economy to foreign participation. A shrinking state and invigoration of the private sector contributed to opening up of intellectual space fostering growth of alternative perspectives and institutions in a number of domains including economics, business, and environment. However, only a small number of privately funded institutions emerged in the foreign and security policy sectors. For the most part their primary purpose has been to advance the interests of their parent corporations. Philanthropy in the area of IRS continues to be weak and government policy makes international funded or supported institutions in the foreign and security policy areas virtually impossible. Intellectual space and non-government institutional growth in these areas continue to be constrained by policy and the predominance of government funding. Constraining institutional settings in universities and the absence of a vibrant professional community among others also explain the limited development of IRS as a field of study (Mattoo, 2009).

However, this situation is likely to alter. With more resources at its command and recognition of the importance of human resource development for a rising India, education has been identified a high priority by the Indian government. It is in the midst of policy review and change to reinvigorate and expand the educational system including tertiary education. Strengthening and expanding the university and research institutes system, and enabling greater domestic and foreign private sector

involvement in the development of educational institutions could benefit IRS as well.

From the forgoing discussion it is evident that extensiveness of state domination of the public sphere along with national objectives and the international position and orientation of a country are crucial factors in explaining intellectual trajectories and institutional opportunities for the development of IRS as a field of study.

## **5 Purpose: understanding, constituting, and transforming the world**

Earlier discussion of master narratives and intellectual predispositions demonstrates the strong contextual and practical orientation of IRS in all three countries. The purpose was to understand and interpret the international situation to safeguard and advance national interests through re-imagination and constitution of the international system. That orientation contributed to a strong emphasis on historical, area, and policy studies and methods. Knowledge production (generation, validation, and accumulation) through theorizing in the rationalist-positivist mode has not been a priority. Intellectual predispositions, space, and institutional settings did not support knowledge production through scientific methods. In India, for example, the disdain for formal theory is explained as a consequence of 'institutional settings that privilege policy work, a formative expectation that the role of social sciences including IR scholarship is to assist in the task of nation building, lack of familiarity, absence of a professional community of IR scholars, and the belief that theorizing is remote, irrelevant, and complicit with the imperial project' (Mallavarapu, 2010).

Strong practical orientation, however, does not imply theory has been absent from IRS in Asia. That would be the case only if theory is understood in a narrow positivist vein. If conceived broadly to include understanding, constituting, and transforming the world, then post-World War II IRS in Asia has not been bereft of theory. The three worlds' theory, leaning to one side, and united front strategy articulated during the Mao era in China, the re-reading of the international situation as one of peace and development instead of revolution and war in the Deng era, the theory and practice of non-alignment in India during the Nehru era, and the Japanese articulations of Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in

the inter-war period, interdependence and comprehensive security in the 1970s, and the idea of global civilian power were all attempts to comprehend, re-imagine, constitute, and transform the world in desired directions. With strong normative, constitutive, and prescriptive dimensions these orientations had implications for ontology and methodology. If theory is understood in broad terms then it is incorrect to raise the question: Why is there no non-Western IR theory? (Acharya and Buzan, 2007). Asian articulations may not employ similar jargons, research programs, methods, and fall short of what counts for theory in the West, but that does imply there has been no theory in Asian IRS.

With the rise of Asian powers and their growing centrality in regional and global affairs, it appears likely that Asian scholars would generate ideas, concepts, and theories based on their national histories, traditions, experiences, and imaginations of the future to constitute and manage the world. In China, for example, the ongoing effort to create a Chinese School of IR is linked to the national concern to construct a world order from Chinese perspectives. Scholars engaged in that effort are exploring ideas (like harmonious world, Tianxia or all under heaven, integration, and peace) to construct the world from Chinese perspectives (Callahan, 2001; Song, 2001; Wang, 2009). With strong normative and ethical content, the purpose of a Chinese school appears more inclined toward constituting and governing the world (like the normative variant in Western IR theory) rather than explaining a world that already exists. Normative–constitutive theoretical exploration with emphasis on historical, philosophical, empirical, and policy studies appears likely to continue in Asia.

At the same time there is growing Asian interest in Western IR theories that emphasize knowledge production. This is most visible in China where the three US mainstream theories (structural realism, liberal institutionalism, and rational constructivism) have gained strong footholds (Qin, 2011). It is evident as well in Japan where Western theory orientation is now counted as one of the main traditions of IR scholarship in that country (Inoguchi, 2009). There is also increasing interest in Western IR theories among contemporary Indian IR scholars reflected in the growing number of publications that emphasize theory. Growing emphasis on knowledge production could signal the beginning of a new phase of IRS in China that privileges theory and method as in the United States. Nevertheless serious shortcomings still exist in the

intellectual domain. Chinese scholars, for example, have yet to inaugurate strong research programs that go beyond immediate policy relevant questions to develop ‘universal’ concepts and theories. This was also the case earlier with Indian scholars working on non-alignment. The effort to develop national schools of IR (like a Chinese school) based on national experiences and traditions could become a limiting factor in the quest to produce universal knowledge. Further, despite several decades of effort IR knowledge production has not made much headway in its home base in the West where intellectual predispositions were conducive to that enterprise. The proliferation of IR theories and the diverse theoretical landscape in the West along with the absence of an indigenous intellectual tradition that supports such an effort suggest that knowledge production is unlikely to make much headway in Asia. Nevertheless growing Asian interest in Western IR theories is likely to make for greater intellectual pluralism, sensitize Asian IR scholarship to ontological, epistemological and methodological concerns, and generally make for greater rigor in IR studies, as well as foster greater interaction between IR scholarship in Asia and the West.

## **6 Relationship to the west: growing convergence but still distinctive**

The starting points for IR studies in the West and Asia were dramatically different. In the United States and Europe the stimulus came from the overarching goal of the systemic powers to prevent the occurrence of great wars through legal-institutional means. In China, Japan, and India, IR studies have their origins in birth circumstances and respective foreign and security policy objectives. These countries had to relate to an international system still dominated by Western powers to protect their new-found sovereignty and consolidate their statehood. From vastly different starting points, IR studies in Asia developed along trajectories that were only tangentially connected to the development of the field in the West. The IR debates in China and Japan, for example, were unconnected or only marginally connected to the ‘great’ disciplinary debates in the West. The timing and content of the post-1979 debates in China over the nature of the international system, how China should relate to it, and whether the rise of China can be peaceful were policy-driven debates. They were not connected to disciplinary debates in the West.



On the surface the first and third debates in Japan would appear connected to similar debates in the West but their genesis and outcomes were Japan centric (Inoguchi and Bacon, 2001; Yamamoto, 2011). Criticism of idealism in Japan during the interwar period, for example, was not a 'realist' critique of idealism but one that was deployed to define and justify Japan's imperial quest for a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Likewise the second debate in Japan over how best to secure the country's security and prosperity has its roots in Japan's national circumstances. It is possible that the 1970s debate in Japan over the nature of international politics and the subsequent emphasis on transnational relations were connected to the debate in the West between power politics and interdependence. Japanese scholars did not join the Western disciplinary debates between traditionalism and behavioralism or that between rationalism and reflexivism (Inoguchi, 2009).

Except for country specialists, Western scholars paid little or no attention to IR debates in Asia. For the most part Western scholarship ignored concepts and ideas from the non-Western world. The idea of non-alignment advanced by India and other developing countries, for example, was equated with neutralism, viewed as immoral and free riding, and not given due attention in Western scholarship (Behera, 2007). Mainstream Asian IR scholarship did not find its way into Western journals and other publications. It remained local.

Beginning in the late 1990s the trajectories of IR scholarship in Asia and the West began to converge in substance and methodology. As the power and influence of China, India and Japan increased and as they became crucial in addressing global issues and problems including global financial imbalance, global economic crisis, climate change, pandemics, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and global governance, their policy and scholarship agendas converged with those in the West. Common issues, though still from different perspectives, came to dominate national and international agendas. This is reflected in the growing international content of the IR master narratives of Asian countries. Greater pluralism in IR perspectives in Asia arising from increased intellectual space, international exposure, and more favorable institutional settings also facilitated convergence in epistemology and methodology. As observed earlier, there is now growing interest in Western IR theory in Asia. Asian scholars have borrowed ideas, concepts, theories, and emulated methods from the West. There is budding interest in the West



in Asian IR scholarship as well. Growing convergence may suggest Asia was, or is, playing catch up with the West. Convergence, however, does not negate distinctiveness. Master narratives for IR studies in Asian countries are still distinctive. Borrowing and emulation of Western ideas, theories, and methods by Asian scholars are designed to support investigation of questions and issues in national narratives. Such borrowing has also created a backlash leading to indigenization of Western ideas and concepts as well as exploration of indigenous ideas and paradigms. IR studies in Asia also continue to be more balanced, holistic, and culturally and historically sensitive. Historical, area, and policy studies continue to be valued in their own right, not viewed simply as providing evidentiary support for the development of law-like propositions.

## 7 Conclusion

Shaped by differing domestic political circumstances, national objectives, international positions, and international circumstances, IRS in China, India, and Japan have developed along trajectories that differ not only among themselves but also from trajectories in the West. Declining state domination of the public sphere in all three countries, their rising international positions, and changing international circumstances have contributed to some convergence in master narratives, epistemology, and methodological features among them and with the West. Such convergence, however, does not imply that IRS in Asian countries is simply imitating that in the West. Emulating certain Western traditions of scholarship and attempts to indigenize them will continue along with efforts to construct new ideas and indigenous paradigms (including development of national schools of IR). Borrowing and emulation are unlikely to lead to a replication of Western IRS in Asia. A more likely consequence is that some key concepts such as nation, state, sovereignty, power, and anarchy could be reworked and re-represented on the basis of Asian historical and contemporary experiences. In this connection a major effort would be required to systematically recover pre-colonial intellectual traditions of Asian countries and connect them to contemporary circumstances. In India, for example, interrogation of the political traditions inaugurated by well-known pre-colonial figures like Kautilya, Ashoka, Akbar, and Kabir as well as a respectable body of political thought of well-known anti-colonial nationalists like Gandhi, Nehru,

Tagore, Ambedkar, Aurobindo, and Radhakrishnan may enrich existing concepts and theories as well as contribute new ones (Bajpai, 2005). Some big ideas may emerge from such exercises in China, India, and Japan on how to understand, order, and analyze interaction of states. Even if no new ideas emerge, the infusion and enrichment of core concepts based on Asian traditions and experiences could lead to new insights and strengthening of existing paradigms.

IRS in Asia has become a distinct field. Growing interest in IRS, increasing interest in theory and methods, and continuing emphasis on historical, area, and policy studies are likely to lead in due course to the development of IR as an autonomous discipline or sub-discipline that has its own subject matter, concepts, theories, and methods. Like Europe, Asia could become another important site of learning and research with strong IR programs, journals, and professional associations. The flourishing of IRS in Asia is likely to lead to greater pluralism in IRS and contribute to the development of a more international discipline.

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