REVIEW

From Community to Science

by Clayton J. Cleveland

This is an extremely timely work stressing two alternative paradigms of how the international system works as well as a possible route to negotiate the perils of both extremes. Rather than viewing the foundation of the system as one of several competing perspectives, Amitai Etzioni stresses the nature of the value systems that international actors adhere to in their attempts to navigate the problems emerging in a post–9/11 world. The two extremes Etzioni identifies as dominant perspectives fall along traditional lines of thought in international relations theory. The extreme right views power as the key attribute of the international system to determine outcomes while the extreme left views consensus and the idealistic promotion of human capabilities as the foundation of their respective values. Etzioni attempts to chart a course between these two extremes along a third way which he calls "soft communitarianism." This perspective combines the values of the West with the foundations of non-Western ethics into a third possibility. Elements of both perspectives are incorporated into a synthesis of values that are capable of transcending the lines of division identified by many contemporary theorists.[1]

This book is organized around many of the themes that are relevant in today's international order. These themes include the tensions between international and domestic forms of organization, state and non-state[2] actors and the need to replace the current global architecture with a new form of organization capable of meeting the demands of the 21st century. The book is divided into three parts. Part one covers the development of new forms of international organization in "The Emerging Global Normative Synthesis." Part two deals with new and persisting security threats in "A New Safety Architecture." Part three looks at other issues affecting the conduct of international politics in "Beyond Global Safety."

The conception of the balance that Etzioni includes in this text may be one of the most important ideas introduced. For the conduct of politics in the world, it is a lesson that should be heeded by many of the current statesmen operating in the international arena. However, a cyclical form of the movement within societies may

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be a more persuasive model rather than a unidirectional movement of norms in today's world. For example, in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, the trend in Europe was towards conservativism with a strong dose of absolutism for the maintenance of the current social order.[3] This suggests that the phenomenon that Etzioni examines may be similar to a pendulum rather than a single direct path towards "soft communitarianism." Balance is sought but never achieved in such a situation. Extremes are pursued by those attempting to reassert balance and then others follow who attempt to reestablish a balance with opposing extremes.

At times, it seems the advocacy position contained within this work overwhelms the empirical examination of the direction of international relations. This form of directionality is identified as a serious methodological error in political science.[4] Etzioni needs to provide reasons why the communitarian ideals he advocates trump the individualism and triumphism that are seen in the West. There evidence provided of a soft movement towards communitarianism is interpreted from evidence that may indicate a different direction for future international relations.

While Etzioni provides several relevant questions about the direction of global politics, the answers to these questions will occupy theorists for some time. For example, Etzioni asks the question of "What is the difference between freestanding architecture and the global architecture?" He follows up with "Do these new institutions need to be incorporated into the global architecture?" The second question itself suggests an answer to the previous question, i.e., new institutions are necessary for the global architecture. This answer runs counter to the notion proposed by Keohane that regimes need to be adapted to changing circumstances because of the costly exercise that is necessary to create them in the first place.[5] To answer these questions, it is necessary to look at empirical evidence within recent history that may provide examples of new institutions that have been created. Some of these have been created without the support of the hegemon (the US) in the international system. This indicates that something may be operating that allows the actors within the international system to overcome collective action problems association with the construction of new institutions on the global level. At the same time, it is likely that when historians look back at this period of time and suggest that the hegemony of the US has been eclipsed and they choose a point where the US started its decline, it will be the landmines treaty that marks the end of the rise and the certainty of the eclipse. This is probably the case even though the clear dominance of US power started its decline during the 1970s.[6] It is also likely that some of the historians will argue that the mark of the decline occurred at the point in time that the majority of the international system (or international society) stood against the US on certain issues like the landmine treaty, the International Criminal Court of Justice, or the Iraqi war. They will argue that it was only the rate of increase that declined rather than the actual distribution of capabilities that the US controlled in the international arena.

Etzioni provides a view of international relations that is both timely and important for the current era of politics. The formation of new norms and principles for the

direction of the global system contained within these pages will assist students of international politics to ask the necessary questions about the future of international relations.

Notes

[1] Areas of division between peoples identified include civilizational fault line identified by Samuel P. Huntington in Samuel P. Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–50; Religion or traditional ways of life against globalization identified by Benjamin Barber. *Jihad vs. McWorld:* (New York: Ballentine Books, 2001).

[2] This term refers to actors that are not constitutes by states. A synonym for this could be sub-state rather than supra-state actors. However, one apparent feature of the new international order is actors with no form of state affiliation. Hence, the use of the term in this essay of non-state rather than sub-state actors.

[3] Frederick Artz, *Reaction and Revolution: 1814-1832* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934).

[4] Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sydney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): 107–108.

[5] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[6] W. Max Cordon, "American Decline and the End of Hegemony," *SAIS Review,* 10, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1990): 13–26.