

Thinking About World Order, Inquiring Into Others' Conceptions of the International

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How to think about global order in a world characterized by a multiplicity of inequalities and differences?¹ In this paper, I draw upon the insights of critical and postcolonial IR to suggest that thinking about global order in a world of multiple differences entails inquiring others' conceptions of the international. By 'others', I mean those who are 'perched on the bottom rung' of world politics²—that is, those who happen not to be located on or near the top of hierarchies in world politics, enjoying unequal influence in shaping various dynamics, including their own portrayal in world politics. While our field is called International Relations, what we recognize as 'IR knowledge' has drawn on particular narratives that do not recognize the roles of 'others' who have been IR's 'constitutive outside'.³ What I mean by IR's constitutive outside is those who have also shaped world politics, but whose roles do not feature prominently (if at all) in prevalent IR narratives. The study of global order is no exception. This paper suggests that the challenge of thinking about global order in a world characterized by a multiplicity of inequalities and differences calls on us, as students of IR, to re-focus our attention on others' conceptions of the international. I lay out this challenge in section one. In section two, I sketch out my suggested answer. In a nutshell, I offer 'hierarchy in anarchical society' as a concept that captures the hierarchical as well as anarchical and societal

¹ This paper draws on Bilgin, *The International in Security*. An earlier version of this paper was presented in 'Theorizing Global Order' lecture series at Goethe University, Frankfurt in the spring of 2015. I am indebted to the members of the audience as well as Gunther Hellmann who organized the lecture series for helping me clarify the argument here.

² Enloe, *Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs*.

³ Blaney and Inayatullah, *International Relations*.

aspects of the international as conceived by ‘others’ who are IR’s constitutive outside.

The Challenge

In a globalizing world, as we encounter, more frequently than ever, those who are not immediately familiar to ‘us’, we become sorely aware of our limitations in thinking about global order in a world characterized by a multiplicity of inequalities and differences including, but not limited to, gender, class, race, ethnicity and/or religion. Inequality is constitutive of the international, but has not always been central to prevalent narratives on world politics. As R.B.J. Walker noted, IR debates build upon a conception of the international as a realm of sovereign states enjoying certain forms of equality, with often little reflection on the underlying inequalities, forms of inclusion and exclusion.⁴ At a moment in time when social theory is seeking to grapple with “multiple complex inequalities” understood as a “complicated combination of inequality and difference”⁵, our theorizing about order would benefit from re-focusing on inequalities tied up with differences. For, it is not only civilizational clash scenarios (which prevailed in the early 1990s and again in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks)⁶ that overlook the multiplicity of inequalities and differences that characterize contemporary world politics. As Cynthia Weber argued, “both IR and Huntington conclude that sameness reduces instability whereas difference perpetuates instability and that the best way to manage difference is either to assimilate it within the state or expel it from the state”⁷. A particular approach to ‘difference’ has shaped our theorizing about IR, whereby ‘inside’ the state is assumed to be characterised by sameness and security, and outside by ‘difference’ and insecurity.⁸ From a critical perspective, then, Samuel P. Huntington’s civilizational clash scenario comes across as having adopted mainstream IR’s approach to difference and taken it one

4 Walker, *International/Inequality*.

5 Walby, *Globalization and Inequalities*, 18.

6 See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*

7 Weber, *International Relations Theory*, 161.

8 Walker, *Inside/Outside*; Blaney and Inayatullah, *International Relations*.

step further by “remapping of IR into larger units of similarity and difference—civilizations”⁹.

Over the years, students of critical IR problematized such essentialised understandings of difference/s as unchanging pre-givens.¹⁰ Feminist IR in particular has inquired into our multiple and intersecting inequalities and differences.¹¹ Notwithstanding these important contributions, mainstream theorizing about IR is yet to integrate into its frameworks the study of the conceptions of the ‘international’ of those who are on the “bottom rung” of world politics¹² with access to less-than-equal influence in shaping various dynamics of world politics (including their own portrayal).

Truly, no procedure is available for entering the minds of others and understanding their insecurities. Early IR scholarship on human cognition challenged the mainstream into recognizing the psychological dimension in shaping the way policy-makers think and decide.¹³ Yet, others’ conceptions of the international cannot be reduced to individual leaders’ psychology, as if human psychology is independent of culture. Whereas political psychology research has, for some years, inquired into the influence of culture on human cognition, IR scholarship on cognition, as Janice Gross Stein highlighted, has mostly focused on individual leaders and “the impact of collective emotions on collective perceptions are not well developed”¹⁴. While important beginnings have been made in incorporating the study of culture in the study of strategy and security¹⁵, in the absence of systematic inquiry into others’ conceptions of the international, it is often essentialised understandings of others’ difference/s that have found their way into mainstream theorizing about IR.

It is important to note here that problematizing a particular understanding of difference/s as unchanging and pre-given is not to overlook how a ‘stable’ identity may offer security to individuals and social

9 Weber, *International Relations Theory*, 161.

10 Mcsweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests*; Burke, *Beyond Security, Ethics and Violence*; Jabri and O’gorman, *Women, Culture, and International Relations*; Campbell, *Writing Security*.

11 Lee-Koo, Security as Enslavement, Security as Eemancipation; Sylvester, Tensions in Feminist Security Studies; Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*; Jabri and O’gorman, *Women, Culture, and International Relations*; Agathangelou, *The Global Political Economy of Sex*.

12 Enloe, Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs.

13 Jervis, Lebow and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*.

14 Stein, Threat Perception in International Relations. No page number. Online text. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0012>.

15 Booth and Trood, *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*; Weldes, Laffey, Gusterson and Duval, *Cultures of Insecurity*; Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*.

groups. The very notion of ‘ontological security’ rests on the individuals’ need to stabilize their identity through ‘routinizing relationships with significant others’. Bringing the notion of ontological security into the study of world politics, Jennifer Mitzen suggested that states may get ‘addicted to conflict’, thereby seeking stability through leaving conflicts unresolved.¹⁶ My emphasis on the need to move beyond understanding difference/s as unchanging pre-givens does not underestimate individuals’ search for a stable identity, even as they incur the cost of sustaining conflict. Rather, I seek to stress the need for understanding the processes of historical constitution of multiple and crosscutting difference/s and the possibility of change in the future.

Students of postcolonial IR, since the early 1990s, have laid bare IR’s limitations in accounting for difference/s, maintaining that IR can no longer leave the study of concerns with ‘difference’ outside its research frameworks¹⁷ and contributed to interrogating IR’s limitations and offered contrapuntal readings of world history and politics¹⁸. However, postcolonial interventions and contributions have remained somewhat marginal to the debates on critical theorizing on IR.¹⁹

One of those interventions that remained rather marginal to mainstream IR debates is about inequality in world politics. Among others, Tarak Barkawi noted that mainstream IR overlooks hierarchy, as it focuses on the anarchical system of states. This is the case notwithstanding IR’s origins in imperial eras, as told by its own foundational stories, he wrote. Characterizing the absence from mainstream IR of elaborations on inequalities as ‘constitutive’, Barkawi argued that the “absence of empire and hierarchy is constitutive in that inquiry is oriented around sovereignty and anarchy instead”²⁰. As such, Barkawi’s point echoed Cynthia Enloe’s

16 Mitzen, *Ontological Security in World Politics*; also see, Rumelili, *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security*.

17 Chan, *Cultural and Linguistic Reductionisms*; Chan, *Towards a Multicultural Roshamon paradigm*; Inayatullah and Blaney, *Knowing Encounters*; Inayatullah and Blaney, *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*; Pasha, *Fractured Worlds*; Pasha, *Liberalism, Islam, and International Relations*.

18 Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi-sovereigns and Africans*; Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism and Anarchy*; Barkawi, *Globalization and War*; Barkawi and Laffey, *The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies*; Pasha, *Untimely Reflections*; Shilliam, *What the Haitian Revolution Might Tell us*.

19 But see, Jabri, *Michel Foucault’s Analytics of War*; Jabri, *The Postcolonial Subject*; Barkawi and Laffey, *The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies*.

20 Barkawi, *Empire and Order*, 2.

writings where she pointed to gendered inequalities and differences as constitutive of the international. While mainstream theorizing about IR continue to assume the international as a realm composed of states enjoying sovereign equality, wrote Enloe they leave “a great deal of human dignity on the cutting room floor”²¹.

Over the years, some other strands of critical IR scholarship also pointed to the ways in which inequalities tied up with gendered, classbased, racial, ethnic, religious and other differences have been constitutive of the international.²² “The international is already constituted through the legitimation of specific forms of inequality”²³, highlighted R.B.J. Walker. Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney characterized others’ experiences in terms of “international relations from below” that “locates itself both within and beyond an ‘international relations from above.’” What Inayatullah and Blaney (2008) mean by “international relations from below” is a “geopolitical space” (as with the global South and/or the Third World) and “an evaluative threshold” that evokes not only externally-imposed “standard of civilization” of the nineteenth century but also the vision and agency of “those below the vital ability of shaping the world according to their own vision”²⁴.

Let us consider two critical authors who have reflected on inequality as constitutive of the international, focusing on different aspects of inclusion and exclusion. IR scholar Mohammed Ayooob and the literary critic, Edward Said.

Mohammed Ayooob’s works focused on material inequalities in the system of states and the implications of such inequality on material power for the production of knowledge about the international.²⁵ Ayooob suggested that so long as we do not re-think IR from the perspective of those states with less material power, our knowledge about the international is bound to remain skewed. Ayooob challenged inequalities that are constitutive of the international. However he focused on inequalities in terms of material power, thereby leaving other forms of inequality, inclusion and exclusion outside his framework of analysis (even as he labeled his preferred framework as ‘subaltern realism’).

21 Enloe, *Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs*, 188.

22 Pasha and Murphy, *Knowledge/Power/Inequality*; Jabri, *The Postcolonial Subject*.

23 Walker, *International/Inequality*, 8.

24 Blaney and Inayatullah, *International Relations from Below*, 1.

25 Ayooob, *Subaltern Realism*; Ayooob, *Inequality and theorizing in international relations*.

Edward Said's analysis of the predicament of Palestinian people emphasized what is missing from Ayoob's framework.²⁶ When Said discussed inequality, he was thinking of the disparity between the 'weak' and the 'strong' in getting their story out so that they would be heard by the world. Here, Said challenged inequalities that are constitutive of the international. His focus was on inequalities in terms of material and other forms of power—what makes it difficult for the 'weak' to be listened to, to be heard. Said's approach to inequalities did not overlook material power disparities, but was conscious that it is not only inequalities in material power, but also other inequalities that remained hidden behind the assumption of equality in the system of states.

Cynthia Enloe remarked how amazing it is to observe "how far [...] authors are willing to go in *underestimating* the amounts and varieties of power it takes to sustain any given set of relationships between states"²⁷. Inequalities persist, because some underestimate them, while others are not powerful enough or feel empowered to voice them. While those who happen to be located at or near the top of hierarchies of world politics could perhaps afford to remain oblivious to their effects (declaring themselves to be blind to a myriad of differences, as with colour-blind, gender-blind, class-blind, etc.), those who happen to be perched on or near "bottom rung"²⁸ are very much aware of how portrayals of their difference/s and their insecurities are shaped by such inequalities.

Hierarchies in world politics are products of not only unequal distribution of material (military and economic) capacity (as with the US as the sole superpower, Russia as a regional great power and China as a rising power). There is also the ability of some to secure access to leadership positions of and shape the agendas of global institutions. Finally, hierarchies in world politics are also products of others' capacity to resist and reshape such portrayals.

Consider, for example, the division of labour between Europe and the United States in deciding the leadership of the World Bank and the IMF, which are viewed by the rest of the world as "two institutions of global scope and, until now, local management"²⁹. The same group of states are viewed by those who are on the 'bottom rung' as hanging on to their

26 Said, *The Question of Palestine*; Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*.

27 Enloe, *Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs*, 186.

28 *Ibid.*, *Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs*.

29 Mignolo, *The role of BRICS Countries*, 43.

historical power to define, enforce, and claim exception to international law and norms such as the norms of non-proliferation³⁰ and R2P, which was contested most recently during the Libya intervention³¹. There is also the practice of relegating one's contemporaries to the past by way of temporalizing difference and spatialising time (see below).

While it is often the material dimension of hierarchies that are considered in mainstream IR thinking, the non-material dimensions such as those identified above are not inconsequential. Relegating one's contemporaries to the past has significant implications for shaping the way they are understood, and of their own understanding of themselves.³² As Edward W. Said wrote with reference to the literature that represents the 'Orient',

"[a] book on how to handle a fierce lion might then cause a series of books to be produced on such subjects as the fierceness of lions, the origins of fierceness, and so forth. Similarly, as the focus of the text centres more narrowly on the subject—no longer lions but their fierceness—we might expect that the ways in which it is recommended that a lion's fierceness be handled will actually *increase* its fierceness, force it to be fierce since that is what it is, and that is what in essence we know or can *only* know about it."³³

Such representations are not inconsequential insofar as they may render some (military) practices toward others possible while marginalizing other (non-military) practices.³⁴

That 'we', as students of IR, pay relatively little attention to underlying inequalities and hierarchies, as we think about global order, gives away how others' conceptions of the international has been missing from theorizing about IR. Thinking about global order in a world characterized by a multiplicity of differences demands some way of accessing others' conceptions of the international. The following section sketches out one way of doing this.

30 Biswas, *Nuclear Desire*.

31 Grovogui, *Looking Beyond Spring for the Season*.

32 Fabian, *Time and the Other*.

33 Said, *Orientalism*, 94.

34 Jabri, *The Postcolonial Subject*; Bilgin, *The International in Security*; Bilgin, *Temporalizing Security*.

Inquiring into others' conceptions of the international

The international, as “a distinct location of politics”³⁵ is the subject matter of International Relations. Yet, some of its critics consider the academic field of International Relations as “an obstacle to a recognition and exploration of [the international], rather than a guide to it”³⁶. This is mainly because mainstream IR has remained oblivious to the particularity of its conception of the international as ‘anarchy’, and overlooked others’ experiences with inequalities and hierarchies, and how these experiences have shaped their conceptions of the international.

Accessing others’ conceptions of the international has turned out to be a challenging task for IR scholars. Those who looked at IR studies in other parts of the world were thwarted in their efforts when they found that others’ IR scholarship did not always seem to offer ‘different’ conceptions of the international.³⁷ Rather, IR scholarship outside North America and Western Europe seems to come across as shaped around ‘similar’ concepts and categories as the mainstream approaches.

I have suggested elsewhere that, rather than explaining away such apparent ‘similarity’ as a confirmation of mainstream IR’s assumptions of universalism, or a result of misplaced assumptions of ‘difference’, we could read others’ IR scholarship as a response to a world that is already worlded. As such, we would be engaging in ‘worlding IR’ in its twofold meaning—reflecting on the situatedness of IR scholarship (worlding-as-situatedness) *and* its constitutive effects (worlding-as-constitutive).³⁸ In offering this argument, I follow R.B.J. Walker who argued that “theories of international relations are more interesting as aspects of world politics that need to be explained than as explanations of contemporary world politics”³⁹. More specifically, I suggested that we read IR scholarship outside North America and Western Europe as an aspect of others’ insecurities experienced under conditions of inequality and hierarchy.⁴⁰

Here, I take a different tack and seek to tease out others’ conceptions of the international from their ‘discourses of danger’.⁴¹ More specifically, I

35 Jabri, *The Postcolonial Subject*, 2.

36 Seth, *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations*, 29.

37 Tickner and Wæver, *Global Scholarship in International Relations*.

38 Bilgin, *The International in Security*.

39 Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 6.

40 Bilgin, *Thinking Past ‘Western’ IR*.

41 Campbell, *Writing Security*.

suggest that we draw upon the insights of postcolonial studies toward understanding the insecurities of those who are caught up in hierarchies that were built and sustained during the age of colonialism and beyond. As such, I take as my starting point, others' 'discourses of danger'. I begin by looking at the case of India's nuclear (weapons) program. This is not only because there is a wealth of postcolonial IR research on this case⁴², but also because the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons is understood to be one of the most significant challenges to global order in its current configuration⁴³.

India and the 'atomic bomb'

In 1974 India exploded its first "peaceful" nuclear weapon. India's nuclear program had been in the making since 1948 when the Atomic Energy Act was passed. From 1974 (when the bomb was first tested) until May 1998 (when new tests were conducted) India remained a nuclear weapons-capable state that did not conduct additional tests but negotiated at various non-proliferation *fora*.⁴⁴ As students of IR we often see little to be puzzled about India's 1974 or 1998 tests. Realist IR explains away India's nuclear dynamics with reference to either 'universal' strategic reasoning; Area Studies views it as a product of 'particular' domestic dynamics. One scholar who has found India's behaviour puzzling is Itty Abraham⁴⁵, who maintained that prevalent accounts of the 'Indian atomic bomb' do not suffice, and that understanding the 1948 (when the program began), 1974 (the first test) and 1998 (multiple tests) decisions requires inquiring into the India's leadership's postcolonial anxieties.⁴⁶

42 Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*; Abraham, 'The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories'; Biswas, "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position; Krishna, *The Social Life of a Bomb*; Abraham, *South Asian cultures of the bomb*.

43 Biswas, *Nuclear Desire*.

44 Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*.

45 *Ibid.*, 17.

46 Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*; *Ibid.*, 'The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories'; *Ibid.*, *South Asian cultures of the bomb*; see also, Biswas, "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position. There is also the literature on 'norms' and 'prestige' (Sagan, *Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons*), which captures some aspects of the concerns highlighted here while overlooking the relationship between norms and security insofar as they are understood as unrelated concerns. However, as will be argued below, for

In his study on India's nuclear program entitled *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State*, Abraham studied statements by India's leaders from the 1940s onwards and pointed to their postcolonial anxieties⁴⁷, arguing that the nuclear program was associated with in/security in the minds of India's leadership not only due to (regional and global) 'power politics' concerns (I), or domestic struggles (II), but also due to their postcolonial anxieties (III). Put differently, whereas answer I ('power politics concerns') emphasizes a particular understanding of the international (which is presumed to be 'universal'), answer II ('domestic struggles') privileges the domestic (i.e. the 'particular') as if it is autonomous of the international. Answer III ('postcolonial anxieties'), in turn, focuses on the dynamic relationship between the domestic and the international in shaping one's conceptions and practices of security.

Abraham's research suggested that in the decades that immediately followed independence, India's leaders' insecurities were shaped by their remembrances of colonisation and considerations of the international society as not (yet) accepting of India's independence and/or full sovereignty.⁴⁸

It is significant to note here that what distinguished the nuclear weapons program from the rest of the "technopolitical projects" that also served "legitimation function for the postcolonial state"⁴⁹ was its relationship with 'national security' understood in state-centric and military-focused terms. In the post-World War II context of India, two key concepts, 'national security' and 'development' "came to set the conceptual limits to national 'pathways to progress'" understood as becoming 'modern'⁵⁰.

As such, the securityness of the atomic bomb for Nehru was not isolated to its use as a military instrument to deter (potential or actual) military threats. It was also not only about proving to the world that India was capable of building its own nuclear weapons program. It was also about portraying India as having 'arrived' at the 'modern' world stage. India's leaders felt confident, Abraham noted, that India could no longer

those who are located on the 'bottom rung' of world hierarchies, the relationship between norms, prestige and in/security is difficult to overlook.

47 Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*; Ibid., *The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories*.

48 Also see, Muppidi, *Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity*.

49 Abraham, *The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories*, 63.

50 Ibid., *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*, 13.

be categorized as a 'backward' country that was not fit for self-governance. Having built its own nuclear (weapons) program to entrench its 'national security' just as the other nuclear powers did, India's leadership thought, India had to be viewed as a 'modern' 'nation-state', and treated accordingly.⁵¹

There is yet another puzzle in India's nuclear behaviour. By not testing the bomb for more than two decades after 1974, thereby maintaining an ambiguity about the so-called 'peaceful' bomb, India cultivated a "nuclear ambivalence"⁵² (Abraham, 2006) about its stance vis-à-vis the practices of 'atomic diplomacy'⁵³ by some other nuclear powers. That it was not practicing 'atomic diplomacy' could be understood as part of India's leaders' efforts to fashion a distinct 'postcolonial' identity for India, suggested Abraham:

"Producing the postcolonial as an instance of, but distinct from, modernity-as-a-Western-thing, is the product of the third world nationalist desire to produce space marked by a specific set of signs, unambiguously signifying the indigenous-authentic, scientific, and up-to-date."⁵⁴

However, from 1974 to 1998, the reasons used when justifying India's nuclear behaviour changed. By 1998, India's leaders no longer seemed interested in portraying India as a postcolonial state that was 'modern' enough to build its own nuclear weapon, and yet postcolonial enough to portray its program as 'peaceful'. Carrying out the 1998 tests was presented as a part of acting like a 'typical' nuclear power practicing 'atomic diplomacy', seeking a place at the same table as the other nuclear weapons states.⁵⁵ Abraham maintained that

"framing the decision behind the May 1998 tests was the desire to reduce the multiple meanings of a "peaceful" nuclear program, to force nuclear ambivalence into a more familiar register. [...] Each nuclear explosion sought to reduce further the range of meanings of the Indian nuclear program, bringing it closer into line with received interpretations of what a "typical" nuclear program does."⁵⁶

51 Ibid., *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*.

52 Ibid., *The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories*.

53 Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*.

54 Abraham, *Landscape and Postcolonial Science*, 165.

55 Biswas, "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position.

56 Abraham, *The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories*, 54f.

Still, the eventuality that India's leaders sought to erase India's 'nuclear ambivalence' (which had been cultivated since the 1940s but especially 1974), and act begin to like a 'typical' nuclear power, need understanding postcolonially insofar as

"this event mimicked the simultaneous transformation of India's unique state-led economic development model into a more familiar path, the now orthodox global model of neoliberal, private sector-led economic growth."⁵⁷

Shampa Biswas underscored yet another concern of the Indian leadership that was expressed postcolonially.⁵⁸ India's leadership framed the international society's objections to India's post-1998 status as a 'typical nuclear power' as "nuclear apartheid", pointing to (what they considered to be) "racial exclusions" at the heart of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. That India's leadership at the time deployed "race as a postcolonial resource" to make a point in the global arena, while masking other "racial exclusions" that allowed re-constructing the Indian nation, argued Biswas⁵⁹, pointed to the dual role served by nuclear weapons in the India context.

To recapitulate, India's nuclear (weapons) program could be considered as a component of a security policy of locating oneself in the 'modern' world so as to remove the grounds for less-than-equal treatment by the international society. India's leaders viewed the latter as less-than-accepting of India as an equal member of the international society with access to equal rights.⁶⁰ What we learn from Abraham's account of the Indian atomic bomb, then, is how India's leaders viewed this particular military instrument as a tool for producing non-military security in a way that was not anticipated by the inventors of the bomb or appreciated by the students of IR.⁶¹ Given the prevalence, in the immediate post-WWII era, of the discourses of modernity and development, and the claims of some members of the international society of the right to shape world politics on grounds of being 'modern' and 'developed', as opposed to the 'traditional' ways of the new members, becoming a 'modern' 'nation-state' emerged as one way of managing such encounters. The point being that new members'

57 Ibid., *The Ambivalence of Nuclear Histories*, 55; also see, Muppidi, *Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity*; Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities*.

58 Biswas, "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position.

59 Ibid., 486.

60 Muppidi, *Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity*.

61 Bilgin, *Temporalizing Security*.

conception of the international was one of a not-so-level playing field. Even after joining the international society as members, leaders of the new members were concerned about their treatment as less-than-equal, and sought to remove the ground for such unequal treatment. In India's case, such concerns shaped both domestic policies such as 'nation-state' building⁶² and development⁶³ (Abraham 1998), and relations with the super-powers⁶⁴.

Drawing on the example of India's nuclear program, I have suggested that the leaders of India viewed the international society not as benevolent (as presumed by the English School) but ambivalent about their 'difference' (if not 'Janus-faced', see Suzuki, Japan's Socialization), and conceptualized the international in 'hierarchical' terms. In the remainder of this section, I focus on the dynamics of the encounters between the new members and the international society. Where the English School scholars considered this relationship, they understood it in terms of socialization with a hint of 'teleological Westernization'. What is missing from such accounts is how 'others' understood their predicament in view of their experiences with the multiple inequalities and hierarchies of world politics.

Encounters between new members and the international society

Throughout the colonial era (which lasted well into the mid-20th century for some), those who were excluded from the international society had to contend with not only its military forces, but also the culture of imperialism. The latter allowed the former to occur, argued Edward W. Said in *Culture and Imperialism*⁶⁵. The culture of imperialism, argued Said, provided the grounds for some to claim the 'right' to 'better' rule, which crystallized in the practices of 'standard of civilisation'. He wrote:

"Most historians of empire speak of the 'age of empire' as formally beginning around 1878, with the 'scramble for Africa'. A closer look at the cultural actuality reveals a much earlier, more deeply and stubbornly held view about overseas European hegemony. [...] There is first the authority of the European observer—traveller, merchant, scholar, historian, novelist. Then there is the hierarchy of

62 Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities*.

63 Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*.

64 Muppidi, Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity.

65 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.

spaces by which the metropolitan economy are seen as dependent upon an overseas system of territorial control, economic exploitation, and a socio-cultural vision; without these stability and prosperity as home [...] would not be possible.”⁶⁶

The discursive economy described by Said was produced through the twin processes of temporalisation of difference and spatialisation of time.

Temporalisation of difference refers to the ‘temporal ordering of humanity’ in the minds of the colonisers. Barry Hindess traced to classical antiquity the ideas and categories behind the establishment of such “temporal ordering of humanity”⁶⁷, underscoring the role played by categories and modes of thought already available to European thinkers of the time, namely ideas received from classical antiquity. Hindess wrote:

“if the peoples of the New World and of the Old came to be located at different points within the one history, an important part of the reason must surely lie in the interpretative resources provided by the classical tradition. In addition to what appeared to be descriptive accounts of tribal peoples provided by Herodotus, Caesar, and Tacitus, the classics provided early European commentators on the Americas with a variety of broad interpretative schema.”⁶⁸

This interpretative schema had two main aspects. One aspect was about viewing difference to be “increasing roughly with distance” and another aspect was “inversion, in which case others are seen as being what one is not”⁶⁹. It was through making use of such an interpretative schema that was inherited from classical antiquity, argued Hindess, that ‘America’ and ‘the Americas’ were relegated to the past of ‘Europe’ and ‘Europeans’. While ‘the Americas’ were labelled as the ‘New World’ in contrast to Europe’s ‘Old World’, in ‘European’ thinking it was the ‘New World’ that was considered as belonging to the past. In time, ‘non-Europeans’ of the ‘Old World’ also found themselves relegated to the past.⁷⁰

Temporalising difference went hand in hand with a moralising attitude toward the past thereby resulting in what Hindess referred to as the emergence of “derogatory temporalising difference”⁷¹. Warranting such a moralising attitude toward ‘others’ was a linkage established between

66 Ibid., *Secular Interpretation*, 36.

67 Hindess, *The Past is Another Culture*, 328.

68 Ibid., 333.

69 Ibid., 333. See also, Davison, *Border Thinking on the Edges of the West*.

70 Hindess, *The Past is Another Culture*, 333.

71 Ibid., *The Past is Another Culture*.

peoples' institutional development on the one hand and moral and intellectual development on the other: "peoples who are some way behind the West in their institutional development will also be behind its inhabitants in their moral and intellectual capacities"⁷². The culture of imperialism in general and the 'standard of civilisation' in particular were produced through this discursive economy.

Not-yet members' reactions to their portrayal as not deserving to rule (by virtue of not being 'civilised') and the interlinked claim made by the international society to 'better' rule took various forms. Some sought to remove the grounds for claiming such superiority by seeking membership through becoming 'similar'. As seen in the case of the Ottoman and Japanese empires, adopting the 'standard of civilisation' was viewed by the leadership as one way of resisting their portrayal by the members of the international society as 'less-than-civilised', and unequal forms of treatment that were warranted by such portrayal. The point being that becoming 'similar' (i.e. 'civilised') emerged as a non-military and non-specific response to the insecurities experienced by the others.⁷³ Others' efforts to become 'similar' were understood as rooted in their policies of survival, shaped in response to a conception of the international as hierarchical, and the international society as ambivalent (if not 'Janus-faced') toward the new members.

What is significant to note here is that pointing to others' practices of searching for apparent 'similarity' as a non-specific and non-military security response does not overlook the multiple beginnings of modernity in different parts of the world.⁷⁴ Nor does it underestimate the agency of the postcolonial.⁷⁵ Rather, understanding the search for apparent 'similarity' as a non-specific and non-military security response allows pointing to dynamics of in/security between the existing and new members of the international society. Inquiring into dynamics of in/security as such would allow students of IR to move beyond assumptions of 'teleological Westernization' (as productive of 'sameness') or assumptions of 'autonomous development' (as productive of 'difference') and inquire into the ways in which 'others' are 'differently different'.⁷⁶

72 Hindess, *Neo-liberal Citizenship*, 335.

73 Bilgin, *Globalization and In/Security*.

74 Bhabra, *Multiple Modernities or Global Interconnections*.

75 Jabri, *Disarming Norms*.

76 Bilgin, *Security in the Arab World and Turkey*.

In offering this argument, I draw upon the notions of non-military and non-specific in/security as developed in critical approaches to security. In the case of Indian nuclear program, as with 'nation-state' building efforts around the world, we observe an attempt by a new member to follow what was viewed as the 'European' example of 'being a state' in the attempt to pass as 'similar', thereby avoiding being labelled as 'less-than-civilised' and/or deserving less-than-equal treatment. The broader point being, new members' adoption of models of 'adequate' statehood should not be understood outside of the context of anti-colonial struggle for some, and struggle for 'full sovereignty' by the others.⁷⁷

That said, what postcolonial studies has to offer to students of IR is not limited to accounting for the dynamics of the encounters between the coloniser and the colonised. While students of postcolonial studies have insisted on broader definitions of postcoloniality, reminding that the 'post' in postcoloniality does not invoke temporality for a particular group of 'colonised' states⁷⁸, most of the scholarship has thus far focused on the predicament of the formerly colonised. What is more, drawing on the insights of postcolonial studies when studying those who have not gone through the colonial experience is received sceptically by some. This is surprising, for, postcolonial scholarship offers insight into all new members' encounters with the international society, including those who were not colonised. More specifically, drawing on postcolonial IR scholarship allows students of IR to study the transformation the new members went through as they struggled to meet the 'standard of civilisation' (read: notions of 'modern' and 'adequate' statehood for the post-WWII era) as laid out by the international society.

Others' insecurities as encounters with 'hierarchy in anarchical society'

Here I offer 'hierarchy in anarchical society' as a concept that captures the hierarchical, as well as the anarchical and societal aspects of others' conception of the international. The discussion begins with the English School account of inter-state relations, which emphasizes the societal aspects of anarchy while overlooking the hierarchical. I then contrast the English School's self-understanding of the international society as 'benevolent',

⁷⁷ Ibid., Security in the Arab World and Turkey.

⁷⁸ Hall, When was 'the Post-Colonial?'; Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.

with the new members' experiences of the international society as 'Janus-faced'.⁷⁹

In English School accounts, the 'international society' refers to institutionalised practices of European states and empires, and the emergence of understandings between the members that rendered 'societal' the relations of states under anarchy. Hedley Bull termed this an 'anarchical society', underscoring the relevance, for understanding the international, of both the 'anarchical' (the absence of a world government) and the 'societal'.⁸⁰ From an English School perspective, the institutionalised practices of the members of the international society are considered as responses to a history of unruly relations between multiple actors in 'Europe'. 'Societal' understandings and practices were developed in time to regulate affairs among Christian actors in Europe so as to minimize violence. In time, as Christianity faded (as the source of understandings regulating inter-state behaviour among members of the European international society) it was replaced by 'civilisation'.⁸¹

In contrast to some other theories of IR that overlook those 'others' who also helped constitute the international, the students of English School of IR have studied the process of the 'expansion' of international society⁸², thereby incorporating 'others' into their accounts of world politics⁸³. That said, English School scholarship on the 'expansion' of international society does not inquire into the so-called 'socialisation' process as viewed from the perspective of 'others'.⁸⁴ Rather, English School accounts are shaped by existing members' self-understandings of the international society as 'benevolent'⁸⁵ and assumptions regarding others' interest in being socialized into the international society. In contrast, incorporating the understandings of the new members helps to paint a more complex picture about the expansion of international society and the

79 Suzuki, Japan's Socialization.

80 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*; Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*; Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*; Dunne, *Inventing International Society*; Buzan, 'The English School'.

81 Bowden, 'In the Name of Progress and Peace'.

82 Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*.

83 Jabri, 'Disarming Norms'.

84 But see, Neumann, *Uses of the Other*; *Ibid.*, 'Entry Into International Society Reconceptualised'.

85 Suzuki, Japan's Socialization.

insecurities that the ‘others’ experienced in their encounters. A key aspect that shaped those relations was the ‘standard of civilisation’.

In English School terms, the ‘standard of civilisation’ refers to “the assumptions, tacit and explicit, used to distinguish those that belong to a particular society (by definition the ‘civilised’)”⁸⁶. They were created in regulating relations with not-yet members.⁸⁷ In Gerrit Gong’s words:

“In the nineteenth century, practices generally accepted by ‘civilised’ European countries, and therefore by the international system centred in Europe, took an increasingly global and explicitly juridical character as that international system developed. The standard of ‘civilisation’ that defined nineteenth-century international society provided a purportedly legal way both to demarcate the boundaries of ‘civilised’ society and to differentiate among ‘civilised’, ‘barbarous’, and ‘savage’ countries internationally.”⁸⁸

There was a need for such a formulation, noted Hedley Bull in his preface to Gong’s critical analysis of the ‘standard of civilisation’, for in the European experience, ‘non-Europeans’ were not always tolerant towards ‘European’ ‘difference’ or accepting of them as their equals.⁸⁹ As such, Bull suggested that ‘European’ members of the international society had initially adopted the ‘standard of civilisation’ to maintain their own citizens’ security vis-à-vis the not-yet members. The implication being that if the ‘standard of civilisation’ was later utilised by some members to justify colonialism, direct and indirect rule, this was not the intended purpose but an unintended consequence. As such, Bull’s portrayal of the emergence of the ‘standard of civilisation’ sustains the English School self-understanding about an international society that was ‘benevolent’ toward not-yet members as well as new entrants.

The English School’s self-understanding of the international society and its relations with not-yet members has since been challenged by critical scholarship that pointed to how it was experienced as ‘Janus-faced’ by those who were not (yet) members. This is because,

“Many non-European states which were incorporated into European International Society in the course of European imperialism did not only witness the norms of

86 Gong, *The Standard of “Civilization”*, 3.

87 Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*; Gong, *China’s Entry into International Society*; Gong, *The standard of “civilization”*.

88 Gong, *Standards of Civilization Today*, 78f.

89 Bull, Foreword to Gong, G. W. (1984). *The Standard of “Civilization” in International Society*.

‘toleration’ and ‘coexistence’. They also witnessed the European International Society which often aggressively intervened in their land in order to bring them closer to ‘civilisation’.⁹⁰

Introducing a 2014 study on non-Western polities’ approaches to international order, Suzuki and his co-editors Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk suggested that this view of the international society as ‘Janus-faced’ was not isolated to Japan’s leaders, but was shared by many other new members of the international society:

“While it is argued that non-Western polities’ acceptance of the sovereign state system constitutes empirical evidence of the internationalisation and global diffusion of European-originated norms in international politics, it is important to acknowledge that many non-European states accepted these ‘rules of the game’ at gunpoint, and could not exercise much choice over this matter.”⁹¹

Needless to say, underscoring new entrants’ experiences with hierarchy is not meant to overlook their agency vis-à-vis the international society, but to highlight the limits of the agency they exercised against the background of their conception of the international as ‘hierarchy in anarchical society’.

For example, consider the ‘extraterritoriality treaties’ that Bull was referring to in tracing the ‘benevolent’ origin of the ‘standard of civilisation’. Notwithstanding their origin in concerns with facilitating trade, by the 19th century, treaties governing extraterritoriality came to be justified through resort to a hierarchical division of world’s peoples as measured by the ‘standard of civilisation’. In time, extraterritoriality treaties further reinforced the hierarchies reproduced by the ‘standard’. Citizens of the members of the international society claimed the right to be governed by a different set of rights and obligations than the peoples of the not-yet member countries they were living in. They justified these claims with reference to not-yet members’ failings in terms of the ‘standard of civilisation’.⁹² Such claims, in turn, allowed for direct and indirect intervention into the affairs of not-yet members. By the late 19th century,

“China, Japan and the Ottoman Empire were recognized as sovereign states but not full members of international society. Their authority over their own people was acknowledged, and generally respected. But Westerners, in those countries,

90 Suzuki, *Japan’s Socialization*, 147.

91 Suzuki, Zhang and Quirk, *Introduction*, 8.

92 As with the ‘absence’ of citizenship regimes, see Bilgin and Ince, *Security and Citizenship*.

refusing to submit themselves to ‘Asiatic barbarism’, were placed under the extra-territorial jurisdiction of their own consuls.”⁹³

Even after the abolishment of unequal treaties governing extraterritoriality, the ‘standard of civilisation’ remained in place.⁹⁴ Students of postcolonial studies have provided ample analyses of the ways in which the ‘standard of civilisation’ was utilised by some of the existing members to allow for and justify less-than-equal treatment of not-yet members.⁹⁵ Following World War II and the wave of de-colonisation, newly founded states, while recognised as equal members of the international society, soon found that they were “yet to be admitted to its more exclusive inner circles and, as a result, [were] subject to updated versions of the European ‘standard of civilisation’”⁹⁶.

Such updated versions of the ‘standard of civilisation’ were sustained by a culture of imperialism. In *Culture and Imperialism* Edward W. Said argued that the culture of imperialism provided the grounds for some to claim the ‘right’ to ‘better’ rule, which crystallized in practices shaped by the ‘standard of civilisation’.⁹⁷ To quote Said:

“Most historians of empire speak of the ‘age of empire’ as formally beginning around 1878, with the ‘scramble for Africa’. A closer look at the cultural actuality reveals a much earlier, more deeply and stubbornly held view about overseas European hegemony...There is first the authority of the European observer—traveller, merchant, scholar, historian, novelist. Then there is the hierarchy of spaces by which the metropolitan economy are seen as dependent upon an overseas system of territorial control, economic exploitation, and a socio-cultural vision; without these stability and prosperity as home [...] would not be possible.”⁹⁸

The discursive economy described by Said was produced through the twin processes of temporalisation of difference and spatialisation of time (see above).

93 Donnelly, *Human Rights*, 4.

94 Schwarzenberger, *The Standard of Civilisation in International Law*.

95 Anghie, *Finding the Peripheries*; Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law*; also see, Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; Mamdani, *Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities*; Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi-sovereigns and Africans*; Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism and Anarchy*.

96 Hindess, *Neo-liberal Citizenship*, 133.

97 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.

98 Said, *Secular Interpretation*, 36.

Before concluding this section, two caveats are in order: First, the argument here is not to downplay the significance of postcolonial studies scholars' interrogation of the 'relevance' of stories about what once happened in Europe to our considerations regarding what should happen elsewhere.⁹⁹ That assumptions about the relevance of such stories need deconstructing is a point made forcefully by Sankaran Krishna, and I follow. Nor is it my aim to underplay the need for interrogating the 'accuracy' (for want of a better word) of our stories about what once happened in Europe. As Sandra Halperin reminded, those stories constitute misleading foundations for understanding the study of International Relations.¹⁰⁰ More recently, Barry Buzan and George Lawson argued for the need for adopting a 'composite approach' to studying international history so as to be able to lay better foundations for the study of IR.¹⁰¹ Questioning the 'relevance' and 'accuracy' of stories about what once happened in 'Europe' (and elsewhere) is an essential component of addressing the limits of IR in thinking about order in a world characterised by a multiplicity of inequalities and differences.

Second, addressing the limitations of IR is not about integrating "non-European' perspectives"¹⁰² into our narratives. Rather, it is about integrating new members' conceptions of the international (be it 'European' or 'non-European') into our frameworks of analysis. My point about the English School theorizing on the international society lacking insight into others' conceptions of the international is in agreement with Neumann, who identified the limitations of the English School not in terms of Eurocentrism, but in the way English School research agendas were set from the perspective of the existing members to the neglect of new members. He wrote: "A focus on the expansion of international society occludes the experience of being expanded upon—the focus directs attention only to one side of the social relation in question"¹⁰³. Accordingly, Neumann suggested that the expansion of the international society be reconceptualised from "from being a question of expansion to being a relational question of the entrant going from one system to another"¹⁰⁴.

99 Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities*.

100 Halperin, *In the Mirror of the Third World*; Halperin, *International Relations Theory*.

101 Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation*.

102 Suzuki, *Japan's Socialization*, 138.

103 Neumann, *Entry into International Society Reconceptualised*, 467.

104 *Ibid.*, 483.

That said, so far, there is little agreement as to how to access others' perspectives. For, IR's limitations cannot be addressed merely by 'adding on' others' perspectives as if the ideas and institutions of humankind in X or Y parts of the world have evolved autonomously. They are the 'constitutive outside' of IR. They are 'outside' of prevalent narratives on world politics which overlook the roles they also played in constituting world politics.¹⁰⁵ The new members' conceptions of the international and their practices of diplomacy were shaped by, even as they responded to, their multiple interactions with international society.¹⁰⁶ Capturing others' conceptions of the international requires students of IR to be open to recognising how new members of the international society may have become "differently different"¹⁰⁷ even as they sought to become 'similar'.

Conclusion

I offered 'hierarchy in anarchical society' as a concept that captures the hierarchical as well as the anarchical and societal aspects of others' conception of the international as reflected in their 'discourses of danger'. As we saw in section two, the hierarchical character of the society of states is experienced most acutely by those who are 'perched on the bottom rung' of world politics.¹⁰⁸ In offering this concept, I pay heed to John Hobson and Robert Vitalis' caution that mainstream IR, for all its stress on the anarchical character of the international, rests on a pre-existing hierarchy which goes unacknowledged.¹⁰⁹ While there have been attempts to render visible the 'hierarchy in anarchy'¹¹⁰ or 'hierarchy under anarchy'¹¹¹ in recognition of 'inequalities' between states, their focus has thus far been on material (or military) inequalities and/or institutionalised relationships of

105 Bilgin, *The International in Security*.

106 Jabri, *Disarming Norms*.

107 Bilgin, *Security in the Arab World and Turkey*.

108 Enloe, *Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs*.

109 Hobson, *The Twin Self-Delusions of IR*; Vitalis, *Birth of a Discipline*.

110 Donnelly, *Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy*.

111 Wendt and Friedheim, *Hierarchy Under Anarchy*.

dependency, to the neglect of inequalities that follow relegating one's contemporaries to the past by temporalising difference and spatialising time.¹¹²

While Jack Donnelly's¹¹³ analysis does capture the 'standard of civilisation' as an aspect of 'hierarchy in anarchy', his analysis of contemporary world politics does not look at what he regards as 'inequalities without contemporary analogues'. Be that as it may, world politics is shaped by multiple inequalities conditioned by the twin processes of temporalising difference and spatialising time, which shape the way we 'see' the world while rendering less 'visible' their institutionalized effects. A case at hand is how the new and non-nuclear powers understand the way nuclear proliferation is managed by the great powers: as a 'nuclearapartheid'. As Shampa Biswas argued, their understanding of the non-proliferation regime points to the 'undemocratic character of international relations' as regards the governance of nuclear weapons.¹¹⁴ Such a 'racially institutionalized global hierarchy', as viewed by the new or on-nuclear powers, cannot be captured through analyses that focus on inequalities in material power alone but calls for inquiring into the discursive economy that 'determines' who can and cannot 'have' nuclear weapons. The NPT regime, Biswas wrote, crystallizes the hierarchies at play in ordering world politics in a particular manner:

"the [NPT] treaty and its institutional apparatus reflect and produce a hierarchical global order in which certain states are forever consigned to the 'waiting room of history' branded as pariahs if they choose to pursue the same nuclear weapons that the 'nuclear five', whose possession of nuclear weapons is both recognised and legitimized by the treaty, consider it essential to their security."¹¹⁵

The particularity of this way of ordering world politics has consequences for not only those who are seeking to become nuclear powers but all inhabitants of the globe. This is because 'we' inhabit a world ordered by NPT where 'prestige' is tied up with nuclear status, and otherwise these deadly weapons (deadly in their use *and* non-use) are presumed to produce security for 'us' all. This particular way of ordering the world serves to reproduce both existing hierarchies of world politics (by seeking to limit

112 Fabian, *Time and the Other*; Hindess, *The Past is Another Culture*; Jabri, *The Postcolonial Subject*; Bilgin, *Temporalizing Security*.

113 Donnelly, *Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy*; also see, Donnelly, *Human Rights*.

114 Biswas, "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position; Biswas, *Nuclear Desire*.

115 *Ibid.*, 177.

horizontal proliferation while doing next to nothing about vertical proliferation)¹¹⁶ and the discursive economy that gives meaning to security under the shadow of nuclear weapons¹¹⁷.

Hence the concept I offer for thinking about global order: ‘hierarchy in anarchical society’—a concept that captures those inequalities and hierarchies that were once codified into the ‘standard of civilisation’ but persisted even after the end of colonialism, without losing sight of the anarchical and societal aspects of the international that ‘we’ inhabit.

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116 Biswas, *Nuclear Desire*.

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