groups and the southern Thailand conflict. Most of these ties appear to be on an interpersonal level, such as contacts with Hambali, the noted Al Qaeda and JI operations chief arrested in Ayutthaya. What is most significant is the inept performance of Thai security forces, who arrested respected members of the area for casual associations with suspected JI members who may or may not have been known to have any associations with suspect groups. Abuza argues that there is little evidence of significant collaboration between JI and the insurgency; however, he also suggests a level of interaction between local Muslims and a continual stream of cross-border JI associations that foretell possible future involvement of international terrorist groups, should a victory over the insurgents by Thai forces appear imminent.

Because the evidence is so carefully documented, it is difficult to be “critical” of this work. One error that needs to be noted is that Surin Pitsuwan, former foreign minister, is not “a Pattani Muslim” (p. 234); rather, he is from Nakorn Sri Thammarat and not a Malay speaker. This is important because many researchers assume that all Muslims, especially if they are from the South, can represent the people of the region when, in fact, they cannot. More importantly, as noted, the considerable reliance on news media (that the author acknowledges are often biased) and interviews with government officials (that he sometimes characterizes as incompetent) should be a caveat for accepting characterizations of various persons in the region as contributing to the climate of violence.

It is impossible to obtain a complete picture of the southern Thailand conflict without the contributions of this book. After all of the other explanations of the insurgency are adduced, it provides the missing piece. Abuza’s singular perspective providing details and interpretations not duplicated in other discussions is what makes this book so valuable for understanding what is taking place. In the corpus of literature on the contemporary southern Thailand insurgency, it easily ranks as one of the top two resources.


— Sheldon W. Simon, Arizona State University

The marriage of international relations (IR) theory and third world international politics has been around for well over 20 years, so efforts to inform the latter with insights of the former are hardly new. The vast majority of theory-infused studies of Asian international politics follow the two dominant IR schools: the various forms of realism and neoliberal institutionalism. The realists dominate security studies of Asian international politics. Both base their theories on rational actor premises, meaning that states make decisions on cost-benefit calculations growing out of material capabilities—military and economic. Over the past decade a new school has entered IR theory-constructivism—which emerged from the study of hermeneutics or the way language and discourse shape norms and values. Constructivism is not contradictory to the two previous schools. Rather, it supplements their analyses and provides additional insights into how and why international decisions and institutions are formed and adapt to their environments.

Amitav Acharya is among the most prominent constructivist thinkers focusing on Asian regionalism. *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* constitutes a carefully constructed historical argument about Asian regionalism that challenges the prevalent top-down constructivist view that ideational forces move exclusively from Western institutions to Asian organizations. Instead, Acharya argues that Asian values and norms embodied in their organizations—The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—are better understood as being generated within the region rather than imposed from the outside. Acharya coins the term “localization” to describe how local actors assess outside ideas to determine their suitability for local reconstitution based on prior regional norms and processes. Hence, according to Acharya, path dependency develops whereby norms evolve over time as external and local values merge in new institutions. Local actors perform an agency role by framing and grafting together a combination of new and old beliefs and practices.

Employing primary sources, including interviews with relevant officials and original documents from regional conferences, Acharya demonstrates that Asian actors modified Western ideas to conform to existing Asian concerns. A primary example of this is found in the manner in which the ARF adapted the European norm of common/cooperative security to Asian practices that essentially excluded any military component from the definition of security, and have traditionally valued sovereignty protection and non-intervention. Therefore, when common or cooperative security was grafted onto Asian institutions, cooperation was defined to exclude NATO-like collective security where nations would be required to come to another’s military assistance.

Beginning with the Bandung Conference of the mid-1950s, in an Asia just emerging from imperial control, the author demonstrates how regional actors began their discussions with a strong commitment to anti-colonialism and an aversion to great power spheres of influence. Newly independent Asian states adopted Westphalian principles to develop their foreign relations but localized them to emphasize non-intervention and the sovereign equality of states (the non-intervention norm also fit a realist concern as China seemed bent on subverting its neighbors in the 1950s and 1960s). Showing the continuity of these norms,
“the ASEAN Way,” a reference to the extension of ASEAN procedures to subsequent regional organizations such as the ARF and APEC, was based on consensus decision-making and a rejection of top-down rule making.

Acharya also accounts for the failure of Western efforts at promoting multilateral alliances in Asia, noting that the anemic 1950s Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) violated regional nonalignment and nonintervention principles, increased the risk of great power intervention, and challenged Southeast Asian preferences not to be drawn into the Cold War. However, the failure of multilateral collective security efforts in Asia did not impede America’s robust bilateral relationships with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan (until 1979), Thailand, the Philippines, and, informally, Singapore. Acharya speaks of these ties, perhaps a bit uncharitably, as free riding by the Asian partners. While a case could be made for that designation for Southeast Asian U.S. allies, it mischaracterizes Washington’s ties with Tokyo and Seoul, both of which are strong contributors to their own and, increasingly, regional defense activities.

Acharya is particularly effective in showing how Asian multilateral nonintervention principles diffused beyond the region to the broader Non-Aligned Movement, composed primarily of third world states also expressing antipathy toward great power politics and possessing anti-colonial orientations. That antipathy also translates into opposition to any large state leading Asian regional bodies. Thus, neither China, Japan, nor India would be acceptable in leading roles. A good example of the diffusion of ASEAN norms may be found in the mid-1990s creation of the ARF. Its procedures constitute a tribute to ASEAN’s importance in Asian international politics. The largest global forum for security deliberations encompassing Asia, Europe, and North America, the ARF adopted ASEAN’s Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as its normative base and the ASEAN Way as its deliberative process, emphasizing consensus and organizational minimalism. ASEAN principles and leadership have been built into the ARF. Over time, both ASEAN and the ARF developed a common security agenda. That agenda—involving great power participation—also demonstrated how Asian norms evolve as changes occur in the external environment. With the Cold War’s end, ASEAN no longer needed to exclude great powers. Therefore, ASEAN’s exclusionary Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) was replaced by the ARF; an inclusive body of great and small powers, though the new organization sustained ASEAN’s rejection of defense multilateralism and the doctrine of non-intervention. Thus, ASEAN through the ARF manages to dominate these security deliberations even though great powers are involved in the discussions.

Acharya brings the cooperative security principle up to date by showing how it has gradually and hesitantly modified Asia’s nonintervention norm with respect to Burma’s internal depredations through the development of a policy of “constructive engagement.” Constructive engagement was not designed to threaten authoritarian regimes but, rather, was activated when a regime’s actions threatened the integrity of the Asian regional body (ASEAN). The Burmese military’s brutal attacks against its own people threatened ASEAN’s international stature when the EU, Canada, and the United States all warned that they would limit their relations with the Association. Hence, persuading Burma to modify its behavior became an acceptable ASEAN practice, though, of course, no coercion was attached to the moral suasion.

Whose Ideas Matter? is an important book, the most thorough explication of how constructivist theory enhances understanding of Asian regionalism. While Acharya does not claim that constructivism replaces other IR theory explanations of Asian regionalism, it may be useful to provide some alternative realist interpretations for a few of them: (a) ASEAN’s creation in the late 1960s can also be seen as an effort by weak states to coalesce against a threatening China at a time when the UK was withdrawing from east of Suez and a future American presence in Asia after the Vietnam War was problematic; (b) similarly, ASEAN’s ZOPFAN was implicitly directed against China and North Vietnam because U.S. and UK alliances in Southeast Asia remained in force despite ZOPFAN’s activation; (c) another explanation for why no ASEAN defense pact has been considered is that the majority of the Association’s members still have territorial and other security disputes with each other.

In sum, Amitav Acharya has written not only the most thorough application of constructivist theory on Asian regionalism but he has also added a new dimension to that theory on the localization of norm diffusion. As he puts it, this raises the question of “whose ideas matter” (p. 168), a matter that should be a new source of debate among constructivists.

Migration, Homeland, and Belonging in Eurasia.

— William Fierman, Indiana University

This book is the product of two interdisciplinary workshops held at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in March 2004 and January 2005. The workshops focused on causes and consequences of migration in Eurasia, both past and present. The volume contains an introduction and conclusion by coeditors Cynthia Buckley and Blair Ruble, respectively, as well as 10 chapters by individual authors; the chapters are grouped in three “parts,” each with its own brief introduction.

The volume editors and individual authors place the discussion of migration in the USSR and post-Soviet territory

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