



Nonhegemonic International Relations: A Preliminary Conceptualization

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Abstract:

This paper offers a preliminary conceptualization of a theory of non-hegemonic international orders (NHIOs). To varying degrees, mainstream International Relations (IR) theories, including realism, liberalism and constructivism, have privileged hegemonic power and socialization in international order-building. Nonhegemonic international order theory (NHIOT) holds that international order is not simply a function of the power and preferences of hegemonic actors (or powerful states). A nonhegemonic international order may be defined as a relative stable pattern of interactions among a group of states without the individual or collective hegemony of the great powers. NHIOT makes the following assumptions: (a) the main actors/agents in international relations are states, social groups, and international organizations; (b) the international system is in anarchy, but hegemony is not a natural or inevitable solution to anarchy; resistance to hegemony may be a more a natural tendency; (c) the structure of the international system is both material and ideational and hence resistance to hegemony can be both material and ideational; (d) international cooperation is possible not only to organize resistance to, but also the socialization of, hegemony-seeking actors; and (e) nonhegemonic actors are not just passive recipients of universal ideas or collective goods, but active borrowers and exporters. The paper offers some examples of nonhegemonic international orders such as the diffusion of Indian political ideas in precolonial Asia, the Chinese tributary system, European Union's security community, and Indonesia's postcolonial role within Southeast Asia.

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Introduction

It may be timely to think of a non-hegemonic international order. American power is in decline, although the actual extent of the decline may be debated, the unipolar moment appears to be over. More important, there is no other hegemonic power that appears likely to replace the US for the foreseeable future. There is little reason to believe that we are in a transitional period between the end of American hegemony and the emergence of some other global hegemon, such as China. Although many analysts speak of a multipolar world, it may be more useful and accurate to think of the future world order as a nonhegemonic one. A multipolar world is a collective hegemony of great powers. A nonhegemonic order lacks the individual or the collective hegemony of great powers. The world still has great and regional powers, but neither can dominate the creation and application of the instruments of international order to the extent the United States has done since World War II, or Britain did before World War I.

IR theory seems ill-prepared to understand and conceptualize such a world.¹ This is because to varying degrees, international relations scholars have traditionally

¹ Several scholars have used the term “nonhegemonic” to describe patterns of interactions in trade and security. Richard Higgott employed the term to describe the political economy of Asia Pacific featuring Australia. Richard Higgott, ‘Towards a Nonhegemonic IPE: An Antipodean Perspective,’ in C. Murphy and R. Tooze (eds), *The New International Political Economy*, (Rienner: 1991). Regionalism scholars have made distinctions between “hegemonic” and “autonomous” regionalism (Amitav Acharya, “Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual and Comparative Study of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations,” *Journal of Peace Research* 29 (January 1992); Bjorn Hettne, “The New Regionalism: Implications for

privileged power in the making of international (including regional) orders.²

Nonhegemonic international order theory (NHIOT) seeks to move the study of international relations away from an exclusive or overriding concern with great power geopolitics.

A key argument of this paper is that while hegemony can produce order, it does so at the price of the dominance and marginalization of weaker actors. NHIOT argues that hegemony and dominance are not a natural tendency of states and other actors in international relations. Durable peace requires both an absence of war and an absence of hegemony.

In this paper, I offer a preliminary conceptualization of NHIOT, and then provide some historical and contemporary examples.

Development and Peace,” in Bjorn Hettne and Andras Inotai, eds., *The New Regionalism: Implications for Global Development and International Security* (UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1994) Another recent usage is “nonhegemonic unipolarity” by David Wilkinson (1999) “Unipolarity Without Hegemony,” *International Studies Review*, 1 (2), 141–172.

² Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Some elements of Buzan and Waever’s theory of “regional security complexes” are helpful in conceptualizing NHIOs. Some RSCs are nonhegemonic: for example those RSCs which are “centered” by an institution (e.g., EU-Europe), rather than by a great power (East Asia or North America). “Standard” RSCs, marked by the absence of a global level power in them, can be a NHIO, provided it does not have a regional hegemon (bear in mind that Buzan and Weaver allow such RSCs to have regional hegemons, which is contrary to the idea of NHIOs). While some such linkages and comparisons can be made and are helpful, the concept of NHIOs is an entirely distinct theoretical construct and should not be viewed as an adjunct to RSC theory. Its focus is not on how regions are organized, but on exploring and analyzing patterns of international relations which have emerged without, or by taming, any single or collective hegemony.

Defining NHIOs

I define order in the sense Bull did: “a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society.”³ The goals towards which the pattern of activity is geared were identified by Bull to include: the preservation of the state system, the maintenance the sovereignty or independence of states, the relative peace or absence of war as normal condition among states, the limitation of violence, the keeping of promises and the protection of property rights.⁴ More recently, scholars have defined regional order as “dominant patterns of security management within security complexes.”⁵ And constructivists have stressed “rule governed interaction,” “whether interstate interactions conform to accepted rules,” as an important feature of international and regional order.⁶

Nonhegemonic international order is conceived broadly as a pattern of activity such as international rule-making, institution-building and conflict management devised and carried out without the enduring leadership and controlling influence of the strongest power/s in a given international or regional system. NHIOs are not necessarily bereft of strong power/s. Disparities of power do not disappear. But the power and influence of the major actors either dissipates, or is voluntarily abandoned, neutralized or socialized with the help of norms and institutions, often through the involvement and leadership of the

3 Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 2d ed, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 8.

4 Ibid., pp. 16-19.

5 Patrick Morgan, “Regional Security Complexes and Regional Orders,” in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, “The New Regionalism in Security Affairs,” eds., *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 32.

6 Muthiah Alagappa, “The Study of International Order,” in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 39.

so-called “lesser” actors. In essence, the notion of NHIO speaks to the agency of nonhegemonic actors, including states, civil society groups and international organizations.

NHIOT thus makes the following assumptions:

- a. The main actors/agents in international relations are states, individuals, civil society groups, ethno-cultural groups and international/regional organizations.
- b. The international system is in anarchy and the distribution of power is unequal, but hegemony is not a natural or inevitable solution to either anarchy or inequality. Resistance to hegemony is a more natural tendency in world politics.
- c. The structure of the international system is both material and ideational; resistance to, and disavowing of, hegemony is often both material and ideational.
- d. International cooperation is possible and often takes place to organize resistance to, and the socialization (taming) of, hegemonic actors.
- e. Nonhegemonic or weak states are not just passive recipients of foreign ideas or collective goods, but active borrowers and modifiers. The flow of ideas, practices and material goods is a two-way street marked by processes of localization and repatriation in which local actors play a major role. The outcome is not stagnation or regression, but progress.

NHIOT stresses the possibility of everyday forms of resistance and change leading to progressive outcomes.

Nonhegemonic International Orders: A Framework of Analysis

	Hegemonic	Non-hegemonic
Main actors	Imperial powers (both classical and modern), Superpowers, Great powers, and institutions created by these actors	Middle powers, small states, civil society actors and institutions created by these actors
Instruments of influence of major powers	Colonialism, military force; Economic sanctions, “open door”	Ideas, cultural diffusion, normative suasion; socialization, collective bargaining, free trade
How ideas/norms spread	Through conquest or coercion; moral cosmopolitanism	Through “cultural match” (Checkel, 1999) and “constitutive localization” (Acharya, 2004)
Security arrangements	Collective security; Collective defence, Concert, sphere of influence, balance of power	Common and Cooperative security, zones of peace, security communities
Role of international institutions	Adjuncts to balance of power	Agents of socialization and transformation, process politics, “institutional-binding”
Attitude towards sovereignty in modern times	Selective sovereignty	Shared sovereignty; Equal sovereignty, hierarchy

Conceptual Distinctions and Characteristics

The term *nonhegemonic* is distinct from *counterhegemonic* and *posthegemonic* and may subsume them. Counterhegemonic implies conscious and active resistance to hegemonic power/s. This is quite normal in international relations. But a nonhegemonic

order may develop without being consciously anti-hegemonic. It can develop with a positive orientation, using processes of socialization and norms of inclusiveness to tame hegemonic ambitions and capabilities among states.

Posthegemonic refers to a condition “after hegemony”; i.e., there is the assumption that hegemony did exist. But a nonhegemonic international order can come into being even before or without any relation to a hegemonic order. Väyrynen conceptualizes post-hegemonic regional orders as follows:

Regionalism may also be a reaction against dominant powers which try both to co-opt local actors by granting special privileges to them and marginalize them. However, more likely than a regionalist response to gain greater political autonomy and influence is the invitation of external powers to participate in regional politics to the benefit of one local actor or another.⁷

What is the relationship of nonhegemonic international order theory (NHIOT) with other IR theories? First, let us consider its relations with realism. Unlike realism, NHIOT acknowledges that power matters, but understands that power can be tamed. There are some similarities between a balance of power system and a nonhegemonic international order. A balance of power system may be considered nonhegemonic, but there is a crucial difference. While in a balance of power no single power dominates over others, the powers as a group may collectively dominate over the weaker states, as in a concert system. Although a balance of power system may afford weaker states some room for manoeuvre to increase their autonomy, such as by shifting alliances, this is still a limited room.

⁷ Raimo Väyrynen, “Post-Hegemonic and Post-Socialist Regionalism: A Comparison of East Asia and Central Europe,” Occasional Paper #13:OP:3, August 1997, The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, Available at: http://kroc.nd.edu/ocpapers/op_13_3.shtml [accessed 15 October 2007].

NHIOT rejects hegemonic stability theory, which is the basis of much of both realist and liberal formulations of international order, as the only or main explanation for how post-war international institutions came about and the causes and consequences of their decline. While HST explains some forms of cooperation, many other forms occur without being tied to great power sponsorship. NHIOT pays attention to the constitutive role of Third World states in the making of post-war international order. Instead of viewing the Third World as a deviant category whose purpose is to act as a source of resistance to the post-war international system, NHIOT recognizes the positive contribution of Third World states to the normative and institutional evolution of international order.

NHIOT differs from Marxism in important ways. It does not regard class as the main organizing basis of conflict. It acknowledges the possibility of intra-class conflicts and inter-class cooperation. North-South relations are important, but they co-exist with other types of global and regional relationships.

Unlike Gramscian theories, NHIOT does not assume hegemony to be a natural or pervasive condition in international relations. Hegemony occurs, but it is not eternal or universal. Rather, it is historically-specific or time-bound. A major contradiction in some Gramscian perspectives is their tendency to assume that hegemony is a pervasive phenomenon (because it can come about through either coercion or consent), while at the same time suggesting that resistance to hegemony is equally natural. NHIOT stresses the latter tendency as more important in different stages of history.

NHIOT draws upon subaltern studies and postcolonialism, but does not identify with either of them. The perspective that comes closest to NHIOT is subalternism, but unlike the latter, NHIOT does not consider Western dominance (including colonialism) to be the root cause of inequality in international relations. It accepts that some liberal and ex-colonial states can identify with and contribute to anti-hegemonic projects.

Social constructivism is more relevant to conceptualizing NHIOT. But its emphasis on the role of ideas is offset by a sometimes excessive deference to the role of power in the diffusion of ideas and norms. It is often hard to get a clear sense of whether constructivists are speaking of the power of ideas or the ideas of the powerful. The agency of weaker states and groups in norm diffusion gets far less attention.

Despite disagreeing with them, NHIOT draws upon elements of realism, liberalism, critical theories and constructivism to develop a theory of resistance and change. It accepts the realist premise that a preponderance of power is morally (as well as materially) unacceptable (without necessarily accepting the balance of power as the answer). From liberalism, it incorporates the theory of institutions as a platform for organizing peaceful resistance to and socialization of hegemony. From constructivism, it draws in ideas about socialization and normative change as mechanisms for getting out of the hegemonic trap. And critical theories offer ideas and processes of resistance to power that are a crucial aspect of NHIOT.

NHIOT challenges the claim of mainstream IR theories, especially realism and liberalism, to universalism. These theories (as well as some variants of postmodernism) are based primarily around Western ideas and practices and there is a conscious tendency to exclude or marginalize non-Western experiences. NHIOT stresses the possibility of

non-Western IR theory. At the same time, NHIOs are not the exclusive preserve of weak states. Although a good deal of the dynamics that goes into NHIOs reflects the interests and identity of weak states, strong powers may also practice and build NHIOs by exercising voluntary restraint or allowing them to be bound by the norms and practices of a nonhegemonic security communities.

Scope and Type of NHIOs

NHIOs can last an historical moment or stretch to an era. It is possible to speak of a “nonhegemonic moment” in international relations, akin to the talk of a “unipolar moment” after end of the Cold War. The inter-war period marking the transition from British to U.S. hegemony (when in leadership terms Britain was willing but incapable, and the United States capable but unwilling) was a medium-term nonhegemonic phase. The Chinese Tributary system and the Indianized Southeast Asian orders were long epochs in NHIO history.

NHIOs can occur within or across regions. Just as global hegemonies are rare, global NHIOs occur less frequently than regional NHIOs. Regional power and regional orders built around them are an important aspect of NHIOT.⁸ But these regional powers would be “regional influentials” (a term used by Jimmy Carter’s National Security

⁸ On the role of power in regional orders, see David J. Myers, *Regional Hegemons: Threat Perception and Strategic Response* (1991); David R. Mares, "Middle Powers under Regional Hegemony: To Challenge or Acquiesce in Hegemonic Enforcement." *International Studies Quarterly*, 32(4), 1988, pp. 453-471; William Zimmerman, "Hierarchical Regional Systems and the Politics of System Boundaries." *International Organization*. 26(1), 1978, pp.18-36.

Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski),⁹ rather than regional hegemons. NHIOT rejects Mearsheimer's claim that rising powers have a natural and aggressive tendency to seek regional, if not global, hegemony.¹⁰ This may be true of some rising powers, such as the United States in its early years or Germany in the late 19th century, but this does not necessarily hold true for others, such as China and India today.

Regionalism offers an important site for NHIOs. Some forms of regionalism are hegemonic -- the Cold War regional alliances such as NATO and SEATO are major examples. The literature on "new regionalism" has explored the possibility of "autonomous" versus "hegemonic" regionalism. NHIOs are developed out of autonomous regionalism and the latter can become a stepping stone for a global NHIO.

Security communities are a particularly important institutionalized form of NHIO. A nonhegemonic international order does not automatically guarantee peace among its constituents. But some NHIOs can be security communities, while others are not. Conversely, some security communities are also NHIOs, such as the EU-Europe, while others are hegemonic (United States-Canada-Mexico). Sometimes, a strong power can organize a security community. NHIOs may represent a further evolution of security communities. The traditional definition of a security community is a group of states which have developed long-term expectations of peaceful change and ruled out the use of force in their mutual relations. A NHIO security community is a group of states that have developed long-term expectations of peaceful change without courting the hegemony of any single power or group of powers within or outside the grouping.

⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983).

¹⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

Why Do NHIOs Emerge?

Unlike some conceptions of the balance of power, NHIOs do not emerge as an automatic “law of nature”. They are a product of human agency and are constructed or brought about by a range of motivations. These can vary from functional motivations, i.e. the most efficient way to organize order and welfare (an example being the tributary system driven by China’s trade interests, to normative ones, such as the values of justice, equality, and expressions of local identities.

NHIOs emerge for several reasons. First, cultural flows and norms may create the basis for inter-state orders in which power is exercised by strong powers in a nonhegemonic manner. Such cultural preferences could ensure that powerful states eschew outright dominance and allow space for weaker states to take the initiative for rule-making and order-management. Functional interactions such as trade can lead to NHIOs. States lacking in physical size or material power can use trade to achieve a measure of equality and autonomy relative to stronger actors. Institutional innovation and evolution, especially the practice of “institutional-binding’ proposed by John Ikenberry (CITE?), is a third source of NHIOs. In this, powerful actors create international rules and institutions to legitimize their authority. But one can also visualize NHIOs which are developed out of institutional-binding (or “golden caging” (CITE?)) initiated by the weaker states to socialize the regional power. Finally, the spread of democracy can also create the basis for NHIOs (CITE?). A good example is security communities that exist among liberal democratic nations.

Another factor behind the emergence of NHIOs could be hegemonic decline (“after hegemony” of Robert Keohane; hence NHIOs are often posthegemonic orders).

They can also emerge after major wars (“after victory” of John Ikenberry).¹¹ The emergence and diffusion of new norms about cooperation can also facilitate the emergence of NHIOs. Examples here include the ideas of “common” and “cooperative” security associated with the end of the Cold War. NHIOs can also come about due to cooperation among weaker states in resisting the dominance of power/s within a regional or international system.¹² For example, resistance by regions to unipolar dominance could lead to “regions of resistance”, as opposed to “regions of conformity”. Finally, resistance and leadership from civil society can lead to NHIOs, as critical perspectives on globalization suggest.¹³

Historical and Modern Examples of NHIOs

NHIOs are not a modern phenomenon. Examples of NHIOs and nonhegemonic moments can be found throughout history. Neither are NHIOs region-specific. They can be found in all parts of the world. Four are briefly discussed below, two from the classical period in Asia, two modern constructs, one in Europe and the other in Asia.

The “Sanskrit Cosmopolis

Between the 4th and the 14th centuries Indian culture, religions and political ideas played a significant role in the politico-cultural landscape of Southeast Asia (including

¹¹ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹² Amitav Acharya, “The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics,” *World Politics*, 59(4), 2007, pp. 629-652.

¹³ Robert W. Cox, “Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium: Prospects for an Alternative World Order,” *Review of International Studies*, 25(1), 1999, pp. 3-28.

Funan, Champa, Pagan, Angkor, Sri Vijaya, Ayutthia, and Majapahit). Hindu and Buddhist concepts of kingship and statecraft helped to legitimize Southeast Asian local rulers and to develop their territories into stronger and larger polities. Indian cultural and political ideas interacted with Southeast Asian societies to produce what Sheldon Pollock calls a “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” of “largely hierarchized societies, administered by a corps of functionaries, scribes, tax collectors, living in grand agrarian cities geometrically planned in orientation to the cardinal points and set within imaginary geographies that ... recapitulated the geography of India”.¹⁴ Yet, the Sanskrit Cosmopolis was not the result of any Indian military conquest of Southeast Asia, with the exception of brief naval raids by the South Indian Chola rulers in the 11th century. As Pollack writes, “Constituted by no imperial power or church but in large part by a communicative system,” the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” was “characterised by a transregionally shared set of assumptions about the basics of power”.¹⁵ The so-called “Indian colonization” of Southeast Asia that some nationalist Indian historians speak about was nothing more than cultural diffusion underpinned by trade, linguistic and cultural diffusion, voluntary migration and religious propagation. Moreover, a good deal of Indian influence came through local initiatives. Southeast Asian rulers, in order to legitimize their authority through Indian political and religious ideas, “called upon” Indian priests in their courts. Indian ideas went through a process of selection and localization in order to make them conform to local beliefs and

¹⁴ Sheldon Pollock, “The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300-1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology,” in Jan.E.M. Houben, ed., *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit* (Leiden: E.J.: Brill, 1996), pp.14-5.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.14.

practices when they were introduced into Southeast Asia.¹⁶ What makes this a NHIO is the absence of conquest, imperialism, or coercion -- the peaceful transmission of ideas and the agency of local Southeast Asians in idea transmission.

The Chinese Tributary System

Given China's prolonged rule over Vietnam, there is some uncertainty as to whether the Chinese Tributary System was a NHIO. Moreover, China did exercise a form of suzerainty over its neighbours, offering "protection" in return from tribute, for example to Malacca against its powerful neighbour Siam. As Qin sums up:

The Tribute System was not a system of equal members ... China, as the most powerful state and the most advanced civilization in the region, played an overwhelming role in maintaining stability and trade, providing public goods, and governing the system. The tribute trade system saw more benefits going from China to the tribute states rather than the other way round. China also played the role of a balancer, intervening wherever in this region invasion by one vassal state against another, usually weaker, occurred.¹⁷

David Kang has called this pattern of Chinese regional dominance a "hierarchy" that ensured regional stability and order. As he puts it: "Historically, it has been Chinese weakness that has led to chaos in Asia. When China has been strong and stable, order has been preserved. East Asian regional relations have historically been hierarchic, more

¹⁶ Amitav Acharya, "How Ideas Spread, Whose Norms Matter: Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism," *International Organization*, 58, 2002, pp. 239-275,

¹⁷ Qin Yaqing, "Why is there no Chinese International Relations Theory?" in Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, eds., "Why is there no Non-Western International Relations Theory: Insights on and From Asia," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 7, 2007, pp. 313-340.

peaceful, and more stable than those in the West.”¹⁸ While he does not distinguish it from hegemony, hierarchy was marked by a great deal of bandwagoning behaviour. And although the Chinese engaged in power balancing and intervention, this was quite different from the European colonialism that was to follow.¹⁹ The most well-known Chinese naval expedition into Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, the voyages of Admiral Zheng He in the 15th century, did not produce a lasting Chinese empire, even though it led to brief military interventions in Sumatra and Sri Lanka. China was the “middle kingdom” but its power was geared to benign outcomes, especially the maintenance of trade.

The European Union

The European Union is not just a pluralistic security community (PSC), but a nonhegemonic PSC. Although ideas about European unity have been attributed to individuals from larger states, like Monnet of France, a central influence was Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg), a grouping of small states. The EU’s evolution involved the taming of German power. Although Germany is a core member and the Franco-German “duopoly” has played a key role in the making of the EU,²⁰ this non-coercive leadership is a far cry from the European Concert of the 19th century when great

¹⁸ David Kang, “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks”, *International Security*, 27(4), 2003, p. 66.

¹⁹ John Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). My view of the Chinese world order is more qualified with respect to its use of force than Kang’s, but I accept it to be nonhegemonic. Amitav Acharya, “Will Asia’s Past Be Its Future?,” *International Security*, 28(3), 2003/04, pp. 149-164.

²⁰ Charles Grant, “The Return of Franco-German Dominance,” *CER Bulletin*, Issue 28 (February-March 2003), http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/28_grant.html.

powers managed regional affairs, often at the expense of Europe's smaller and weaker states. Moreover, the crucial role of the Benelux countries in the making of the EU (which resembles strikingly the role of Asia's weaker states, ASEAN, in the making of Asian regionalism) attests to the EU as a NHIO. The EU's "middle power" members and civil society groups have found their voice in influencing the agenda of regionalism. The emergence of a supranational authority in Brussels exercising "bureaucratic hegemony" does not detract from the intra-regional dynamics in EU as a NHIO. Neither has the EU's external relations been hegemonic. Instead, the EU has come to be a "normative superpower".²¹ The post-Cold War expansion of the EU to include several post-communist states in East Europe has created greater internal inequality, but the EU is explicitly addressing this problem with economic aid and membership privileges. Persuasion and socialization has been the mode of EU's expansion, radically different from the imperial ventures of past centuries.²² The pattern of norm diffusion in the EU follows Checkel's notion of "cultural match", which allows norm-takers' role in shaping the outcome.²³ Moreover, despite a move towards majority voting, consensus decision-making will remain the norm within the EU, thereby giving weaker states influence and voice. While the EU is moving towards a common foreign policy and security role, it is unlikely to take the shape of collective security or collective defense. The role of the EU as an institution has been geared to shared sovereignty (hence different in this respect to ASEAN's "equal sovereignty" norm).

²¹ I. Manners, "Normative power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46(2), 2002, pp. 235-58.

²² "International Institutions and Socialization in Europe," edited by Jeffrey T. Checkel, *International Organization*, 59(4), 2005.

²³ Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe," *International Studies Quarterly*, 43(1), 1999,, pp. 84-114.

Indonesia in ASEAN

The role of Indonesia, the largest and most populous member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a classic case of “institutional-binding from below” (hence different from John Ikenberry’s model of “institutional-binding from above”).²⁴ ASEAN’s creation in 1967 was meant to bring to an end Indonesia’s (under President Sukarno) policy of “confrontation” towards newly formed Malaysia.²⁵ ASEAN represented an implicit regional bargain whereby Indonesia would exercise restraint towards its smaller neighbours in exchange for the latter showing “deference” towards Indonesia and acknowledging its “primus inter pares” status. This “golden caging” of Jakarta has endured for decades. There has been no Indonesian military move against an ASEAN neighbour (East Timor was not a member of ASEAN and was not an independent nation when Indonesian troops committed atrocities). Although Indonesia has led ASEAN, especially under Suharto’s presidency (1967-1989), the power configuration within ASEAN is best described as one of “balanced disparity”, to use Donald Emmerson’s term.²⁶ This has meant different ASEAN members have taken initiative on different issue areas: Singapore in trade and economic cooperation, Malaysia in East Asian regionalism, and Thailand over the reform of ASEAN’s non-intervention norm (during 1998-2000). Moreover, ASEAN has been the hub and leader of a wider Asia-Pacific regional order, based on the norm of common and cooperative security (rather than collective security or collective defense associated with hegemonic orders).

²⁴ Ikenberry. *After Victory*.

²⁵ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994). Michael Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983).

²⁶ Donald K. Emmerson, “ASEAN as an International Regime,” *Journal of International Affairs*, 41(1), 1987, pp. 1-16.

ASEAN-led institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum have the potential to diffuse the NHIO of ASEAN onto the wider regional level.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion shows three main characteristics of NHIOs: (1) the absence of imperialism and conquest; (2) the peaceful transmission of ideas; and (3) institutional-binding from above and below. These characteristics are closely related, although all of them need not be present in NHIOs to an equal degree.

The idea of an NHIO allows us to reconceptualise world politics. First, a NHIO world could well be a “world of regions”, albeit with a greater degree of regional autonomy than allowed under Katzenstein’s defining framework.²⁷ Since no single power dominates the world, there is more scope for regional devolution, or the construction of regional orders with a high degree of relative autonomy from global level interactions. Second, in a NHIO, soft power assumes increasing importance relative to hard power. Third, international institutions, including regional groups, will be guided more by “intellectual” and “entrepreneurial” leadership (to use Oran Young’s categories²⁸), than by “structural leadership”. A NHIO-driven world will be transformational.

²⁷ Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

²⁸ Oran R. Young, "Political Leadership and Regime Formation: On the Development of Institutions in International Society," *International Organization*, 45 (1991)

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