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**Evelyn Goh. *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia*.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-19-959936-3 (hardback, \$49.99/£30.00).

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Introduction by Natasha Hamilton-Hart, University of Auckland

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How should we understand the changes in East Asia over the last quarter century? The region that has undergone the most extraordinarily rapid economic transformation in modern history is the subject of fierce contestation regarding the implications of the shifting material balance between East Asia and the powers that dominated in the Cold-War era. The ‘rise of China,’ as the largest and potentially most disruptive of the East Asian countries, has captured most attention in scholarly and popular commentary. In the scholarly debate, realist accounts of power transitions dominate the field, although they do not offer a unified prediction of the consequences of rising Chinese power.<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Goh’s *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* injects a welcome note of innovation into this field. *The Struggle for Order* presents a compelling challenge to accounts that view the region purely in terms of the shifting material capacities of the major powers. That it does so without ignoring power asymmetries, contests, and competing conceptions of interest distinguishes it from what Andrew Hurrell in this roundtable calls the “liberal optimism” that until now represented the major alternative to realist theorizing.

Each of the reviewers in this roundtable recognizes the major achievements of Evelyn Goh in *The Struggle for Order*. The book’s conceptual centerpiece is a nuanced and complex notion of hegemony. It is the hegemony of the United States in East Asia that defines the regional order in Goh’s account, but it is a hegemonic order that was constructed as much ‘from below’ as by the leading power itself. While hegemony necessarily involves hierarchy, Goh takes issue with models of hierarchic power distribution based purely on material capabilities. Instead, as all of the reviewers here foreground, Goh argues that power has “crucial social foundations” (4). Hegemony is sustained not just by the capacities of the leading power, but also, as Alice Ba observes, “by the “complicity” of East Asia’s subordinate powers in supporting and legitimating existing hierarchies.... Stable hierarchies are ultimately based upon consent, not just coercion.” As developed in Andrew Phillips’s review, this nuanced exploration of hegemony makes a major contribution to international-relations theorizing on hierarchy. He points to Goh’s conceptualization of hegemony as a “continuously negotiated social compact, through which actors seek to legitimize and tame inequalities of power through institutionalized cooperation” and contrasts this with models of hierarchy in international relations that privilege either coercion or consent.

Developed out of this conception of hegemony is a picture of a regional order that is enduringly hegemonic, but not static. This insight is evidenced across the book’s empirical chapters, which demonstrate the dynamic processes of renewal, adjustment, and transition in the regional order. As Phillips writes, a major innovation of Goh’s account is the privileging of “*order transition* rather than *power transition* as the central problematic driving regional politics since 1989.” This emphasis, he explains, is particularly apposite

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Kirshner, “The tragedy of offensive realism: Classical realism and the rise of China,” *European Journal of International Relations* 18:1 (2012): 53-75.

and of wide relevance “given the densely institutionalized character of the contemporary global order, and the corresponding necessity of understanding processes of institutional contestation as being central to processes of international change, rather than being merely froth on the waves of shifting material power relativities.”

*The Struggle for Order* thus foregrounds the processes of negotiation and contest in the regional sphere and presents a rich and impressive account of the ‘order transition’ in East Asia since the end of the Cold War. It is an avowedly process-based account, but it offers insights into the kind of order that has been produced. Order, writes Hurrell, “is about the creation and sustaining of rule-governed interaction amongst states that share common understandings about the nature and limits of their respective interests and values and about the means of conducting regional international affairs.” Evelyn Goh has presented abundant evidence in this book of ‘rule-governed interaction’ across a variety of issue areas in the region.

The degree to which the second part of Hurrell’s definition of order obtains in East Asia remains tantalizingly uncertain. Do states in the region “share common understandings about the nature and limits of their respective interests and values”? The question is raised by Ba, who asks “what are the shared values and meanings that substantiate U.S. hegemony in post-Cold War East Asia?” Regional institutionalization is certainly intensive. No longer could any observer describe East Asia as lacking the ‘dense alphabet soup’ created by Europe’s abundance of regional institutions and organizations.<sup>2</sup> As pointed out by Philips, *The Struggle for Order* persuasively charts the “institutionalized forms of regional cooperation” that “have thickened across a host of issue areas.” This institutionalized cooperation forms the substance of chapters two, three and four, providing ample evidence of a thick regional soup of organizations and initiatives.

What is less certain is the depth of the cooperation involved. Goh’s account is deliberately structured to emphasize the negotiation of regional rules, the agency of the region’s smaller powers, and their active attempts to ‘enmesh’ the great powers in regional institutions in order to tame and legitimize the power asymmetries that exist. But after more than two decades of such regional institution-building, the result appears to be a pretty thin gruel. This has implications not only for practical problem-solving at the regional level, but also for our understanding of why U.S. hegemony endures. As Ba notes, the book concludes that U.S. hegemony endures in large part because of “the functional shortcomings of regional alternatives.” Particularly in the security areas of territorial disputes and dealing with North Korea, Ba notes that “U.S. institutions remain paramount not only because of the preponderance of U.S. power, but also, just as important, the material and political deficiencies of regional options.”

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<sup>2</sup> Aaron Friedberg “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia,” *International Security* 18: 3 (1993-94): 5-33. In this article Friedberg contrasts the lack of regional organizations in East Asia with what Richard Ullman termed the “dense alphabet soup” of organizations in Europe.

This raises a question about how to read the accounts in chapters two to four of *The Struggle for Order*, which chart intensive regional institution-making and negotiation. The institutions of regional order so constructed have yielded remarkably little in terms of ongoing problem-solving capacity – whether understood in functional terms or in more constructivist terms as a process-based institutionalism of building trust and normative ground rules. As Hurrell notes, “the regional norms that exist are weak and limited in scope.”

The weakness of cooperation is underlined in the book’s final case study, that of the contested ‘collective memory regime’ in East Asia. In what is in many ways the stand-out chapter in terms of originality and cogency, Goh here explicitly underlines the discordant conceptions of interest, value and justice embedded in this regime. This is an important empirical reminder of the problem of sustaining a peaceful order in East Asia and a trenchant rejoinder to both optimistic liberal and constructivist accounts that also emphasize non-material motivations and processes. As Hurrell notes, “seeing power in social terms and order in terms of normative regeneration does not, as is sometimes alleged, imply a cosy or soft view of international relations.”

*The Struggle for Order* is a major contribution to both international relations theorizing and to our understanding of the dynamics of change in East Asia. As is noted by Hurrell, it is also not an easy read. Goh has explicitly eschewed theoretical parsimony in favour of fine-grained complexity. The world is not parsimonious, and there is no doubt that the processes driving change and stability in East Asia are complex. My own preference would have been for a little more guidance on how the dynamics of negotiation and contestation work to produce both hegemonic continuity and order transition. The theoretical discussion in the book is more conceptual than predictive, and the underlying assumptions about actors, their motivations and the mixture of interests, ideas and contextual dynamics that shape their preferences are put forward discursively rather than formally. Firmly in the English School tradition of Oxford Professor Hedley Bull,<sup>3</sup> the book’s evocation of the delicate balance between consent and coercion, and contest and legitimacy can appear elusively indeterminate. When the social world is complex, and the players involved have overlapping and multiple identities, which socially-constructed understandings of interest and appropriateness will prevail, and why?

The approach taken in *The Struggle for Order* is unabashedly systemic: for Goh the negotiation and contest of interest occurs at the international level, among actors that are presented, for the most part, as unified states. States, of course, are complex organizations made up of aggregations of individuals (who necessarily do the perceiving of power asymmetries, enact the negotiations, and thus embody a human element to the concept of power and hegemony as social constructions). There is thus a leap from individual perception to organizational decision-making and action that is implied but not explored in this book. There is a similar leap involved in the book’s depiction of states as international actors, which largely sidesteps the question of how the foreign policy organizations of each

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<sup>3</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

country are shaped by the domestic interests, social structures, and political institutions in which they are embedded. The same questions can of course be raised in relation to much international-relations theorizing. The neorealist can retort – as Kenneth Waltz frequently did – that these complications are all so much noise, of no real predictive relevance.<sup>4</sup> This may be acceptable if the search is for parsimony and a model that captures enough of what matters so as to make accurate, if broad, predictions (the latter being, of course, highly contested in the case of neorealism), rather than a faithful reconstruction of the actual processes of foreign policy action. In an approach that explicitly eschews parsimony and prediction, and particularly given the author’s invocation of Antonio Gramsci in the conceptualization of hegemony, I would have liked to know more about the bases on which some perceptions and interactions were selected as more worthy of attention than others.

Evelyn Goh is in good company in choosing to focus on the interactions of states at the international level. This choice has implications, however, for how the evidence presented in the book is interpreted. On some issues, the behavioural record alone is, as Goh deftly shows, simply incompatible with models of materialist balancing or band-waggoning. But the book requires some uncovering of motives and worldviews in order to make sense of state behaviour and to demonstrate the contested and negotiated nature of regional order. This involves an interpretative task, of drawing out the motivations and understandings of the actors involved. To this end, when not relying on secondary interpretations, Goh often lets East Asian actors in the foreign-policy community speak for themselves, citing their own self-understanding of motives. This fits well with a commitment to understanding the region in its own terms. We know, however, that even when there is no conscious attempt to deceive (which would in any case be a dubious assumption to make about diplomatic speech), people are often not reliable sources of information about their motivations.<sup>5</sup> Whether this matters at all for the cases presented in *The Struggle for Order* is a moot point, especially when, as Goh argues, motives are complex and in some cases involve holding a fine balance between contradictory goals.

As developed more fully in the reviews that follow, *The Struggle for Order* is a resounding accomplishment that will reward close reading. It is to the author’s great credit that the book does not shy away from difficulty and prefers to offer nuanced understanding, even if it is complicated, rather than a simplified model of East Asian order. The region, as Evelyn Goh abundantly and elegantly makes clear, is not a simple one of static motivation and uncontested aspiration.

### Participants:

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “Reflections on *Theory International Politics: A response to my critics*,” 322-345 in *Neorealism and its Critics*, edited by Robert Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> The leading scholar of perceptual biases and belief-formation in foreign policy contexts is Robert Jervis, whose work over the past four decades has explored a variety of applications. An authoritative and accessible review of the experimental research underlying applied studies is Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin Books, 2011).

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**Andrew Hurrell** is Montague Burton Professor of International Relations at Oxford University and a Fellow of Balliol College. His book, *On Global Order. Power, Values and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford University Press, 2009) was the winner of International Studies Association Prize for Best Book in the field of International Relations in 2009. Other publications include (with Ngaire Woods), *Inequality, Globalization and World Politics* (1999); and (with Louise Fawcett), *Regionalism in World Politics* (1995). His current work focuses on emerging powers and the globalization of international society and what this means for ideas and practices of global order, for IR theory, and for international normative theory.

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*The Transformation of International Orders* (Cambridge University Press: 2011) and co-author (with Jason Sharman) of *Order in Diversity – War, Trade and Rule in the Indian Ocean* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2015).



In *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy, & Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia*, Evelyn Goh has offered us a provocative assessment and theoretically sophisticated treatment of East Asia's transitioning regional order. With it, she also joins other scholars (including Natasha Hamilton-Hart, who introduces this roundtable) who pointedly probe the sources of U.S. hegemony in East Asia.<sup>1</sup> In Goh's case, she considers the significance of regional developments – including the emergence of regional frameworks and rising powers – for what has been a U.S.-dominant East Asian order. Among her primary conclusions is that the U.S.-led system, though certainly not invulnerable to resistance and challenge, has proven to be remarkably resilient in the face of regional challengers – first, Japan, and now, China.

Drawing on an English School approach that sees both power and social norms at work in the production of “international society” and “international order” she takes particular historiographical aim at power transition realist accounts for their overly materialist conceptualizations of power and order, as well as their bias for conflict. She also criticizes liberal accounts for the ease with which they expect China to embrace and subordinate itself to a U.S.-preponderant order. In Goh's analysis, both approaches fail to appreciate sufficiently the social compacts, active social negotiations, and reciprocal relationships that support hegemonic and hierarchical orders, and ultimately lend to the durability of a U.S.-hegemonic system regionally in East Asia, as well as globally. Put another way, stable hierarchical systems are possible, but they do take work.

Most central to Goh's analysis is the concept of hegemony. Once we accept the fact of U.S. hegemony in East Asia, a number of other conclusions follow: 1) East Asia's regional order is hierarchic, with the United States at the top of the ‘rank ordering’ of states; and 2) the system is sustained not just by the capacities of the ‘super-ordinate power’ to coerce, deter, and provide critical public goods, but also by the ‘complicity’ of East Asia's subordinate powers in supporting and legitimating existing hierarchies. The latter point grounds an especially large part of her discussion. Stable hierarchies are ultimately based upon consent, not just coercion. Nor is it just U.S. primacy that enjoys regional support.

Among her more notable conclusions is that East Asia's social-rank ordering places China quite clearly second, after the United States and before Japan. Moreover, as in the case of U.S. primacy, China's secondary, albeit U.S.-subordinate, position has similarly been actively supported, even promoted, by regional states. Some of her conclusions thus goes against the grain of much conventional strategic analysis in which an assumed China threat substantiates East Asian consensus about the need for U.S. primacy. To be sure, as Goh's

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<sup>1</sup> Natasha Hamilton-Hart, *Hard Interests, Soft Illusions: Southeast Asia and American Power* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University 2012). Other recent efforts to investigate the sources of American hegemony in Asia include, Yuen Foong Khong, “The American Tributary System,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6, 1 (2013): 1-47; Mark Beeson, “Hegemonic Transition in East Asia?” *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 95-112.



analysis makes clear, most East Asian states are not without some strategic concern about China as a rising power, and those concerns do help reinvigorate regional support for US hegemonic arrangements in East Asia. Rather, the point is that material power can cut different ways depending on the social relations in which they are embedded. Certainly, it can challenge existing status quo interests, but capable states can also be important providers of a range of economic and security goods. Much attention has been given to China's potential role as a leading provider in the economic realm, a subject that Goh also addresses in her book. But China's potential as provider of critical goods also extends to the security realm. Goh's chapter on authority offers a particular illustration of how China may be seen as both a potential security provider (in the case of North Korea) and security detractor (in the case of the South China Sea).

Just as important, Goh's discussion brings home the important point that relationships are rarely purely dyadic or discrete. To comprehend East Asia, we have to appreciate, then, the ways that relationships, interests, and normative commitments intersect and 'layer' to produce its regional order. East Asia's order transition is complicated by the multiple negotiations going on between different states – between the United States and East Asia's larger regional powers (China and Japan), between the United States, as global power, and East Asia's regional states (including Southeast Asian states and Korea), between China and Japan, and between China and Japan and the rest. And as Goh notes, states are negotiating far more than power; they are also negotiating authority relations, moral claims, functional roles, and mutual responsibilities.

In Goh's discussion, the key to any regional challenge to U.S. hegemony is not China, but Japan as a "vital hegemonic supporter and potential 'swing state'" in any regional-global exchange (211, 26, 70, 205). Moreover, the reasons are not material, but rather social and historical. In her discussion, Japan complicates any effort at regional resistance vis-à-vis global arrangements and in ways that tend to sustain regional support for U.S. arrangements in East Asia. For one, Japan has made a very explicit and strategic choice to subordinate itself to the imperatives of U.S. hegemony. But more important, Japan is at the center of competing, even irreconcilable, justice claims as regards Japan's "post-Meiji Restoration transformation" and resultant imperialism in East Asia (200). Contestation is "visceral", with states contesting the drivers and actors behind Japanese imperialism, its consequences for national and regional trajectories, its victims, and, most of all, the question of political responsibility (200). Specifically, Goh draws attention to the "United States-Japan-focused Pacific War memory regime" that has at once limited Japan's responsibility to a small military clique, contributed to a narrative of "Japan's rescue by the United States...and conversion into a 'pacifist' and 'democratic' nation'" in service of U.S. Cold War strategic priorities, and ultimately delayed "the mutual reckoning" between China, Japan, and Korea (169, 26-7). Here, too, however, responsibility for the unresolved historical questions that complicate regional relations (and thus, any regional challenge to US hegemony) rests not just with the United States but also with regional states. In particular, Goh notes the complicity of regional actors -- including Chinese and South Korean elites – that for a long time willingly supported (or conveniently put aside concerns about) the 'myth of Japanese militarism' that insulated regional relations from difficult questions about responsibility and history. The end of the Cold War, however, has seen

new domestic debate in China, South Korea, as well as Japan that now challenges what had been a hegemonic memory regime, forcing difficult questions to the fore.

In short, *The Struggle for Order* impressively captures the varied and layered relationships, as well as the mix of material and social dynamics, that constitute East Asia's regional order and especially its relationship with the United States. This said, there are aspects of the argument that might benefit from further discussion and expanded attention.

A key part of Goh's argument is that hierarchy is social, not just material. She rightly critiques the realist literature for its rationalist understanding of hierarchy and strategic bargains (10). As she puts it, realists give too much weight to "power over outcomes", when the more important question is how power comes to be accepted, namely, authority (75). Similarly, both realists and liberals overly privilege form and structure (be it in the form of balance of power or multilateral arrangements) over the social and reciprocating processes critical to gaining necessary social agreements that make or break those forms and structures – that is, the super-ordinate state's agreement to be 'tamed' and 'constrained' and the subordinate states' agreement to support, legitimate, and defer to the superordinate state. Thus, Goh's discussion sheds light not just on material bargains and exchanges, but also on the fact that what is being negotiated are also states' broader normative commitments to one another.

One wonders, however, if she also could not have elaborated and expanded further on the substantive dimensions of the post-Cold War U.S.-East Asia relationship. Her chapters highlight how "post-Cold War systemic disruptions" have opened the door for renegotiating new social compacts and new memory regimes that serve to drive East Asia's ongoing 'order transition' (28). States thus push China-inclusive arrangements and conceptualizations, new economic compacts, and expanded historical and causal narratives – all of which challenge the substantive justifications underlying key U.S. institutions (U.S. bilateralism, the centrality of the U.S.-Japan alliance, American neoliberalism) that form the basis of the U.S.-led Cold-War East Asian order. As Goh notes, "If the processes of hierarchical assurance and deference were to operate absolutely, there ought not to be regional contestation over rival security institutions or membership of particular groupings...." (221); nor should there be such interest in regional providers of security and economic goods beyond the United States.

In light of the above, her conclusion about the "robust[ness]" and durability of the U.S. hegemonic role in East Asia sits somewhat at odds with the above (116). In my view, her assessment at times tends to privilege her conclusions about U.S. primacy in the East Asian hierarchy to the detriment of her arguments about regional order. In this vein, the discussion tends to give prominence to the US role in providing intermediate security goods, less final security goods. Put another way, what are the shared values and meanings that substantiate U.S. hegemony in post-Cold War East Asia? Regional order, as she notes, is more than social rank; it is also about common goals and rules of the game (16).

For example, while she provides considerable evidence to conclude that there is still significant support for what are essentially U.S.-led options, her conclusion about the

durability of U.S. hegemony tends to turn on the functional shortcomings of regional alternatives. Thus, the U.S. remains needed because China-led options to address the North Korean challenge and ASEAN-led options as regards the South China Sea continue to fall short in their ability to produce stable security agreements and outcomes (96-99; 204). In both cases, the attractiveness of the U.S. option hinges on its “military preponderance” (115) and its “superior coercive authority in providing credible extended deterrence”, especially when compared to existing regional options (112). Furthermore, to the extent that there is also a regional inclination to accommodate China in the interest of a China-inclusive regional order, the persistence of these conflicts serves to justify the US position in East Asia. Similarly, the post-Cold War “instability and resistance over the collective memory regime” assure “China’s, Japan’s, and Korea’s reliance on the United States as ‘ring-holder’” (201). In this vein, even if the United States may not pursue divide-and-rule tactics as actual policy, its position at the very least benefits from the division of East Asia (116, 201). Ultimately, Goh’s analysis highlights how U.S. institutions remain paramount not only because of the preponderance of U.S. power, but also, just as important, the material and political deficiencies of regional options (e.g., the costliness of regional alternatives, limited capacities of regional powers, high global interdependence, intra-East Asian political differences) that serve to weaken both regional interest and capacity to challenge U.S. hegemonic arrangements (122-124; 156-8).

Put another way, the evidence and examples marshalled in support of her conclusion about the durability of U.S. hegemony hinge more on the absence of regional consensus about intra-East Asian relations than on the positive, substantive foundations of U.S. hegemony. Or as she puts it, “In general, regional states consent to support or tolerate US hegemony because of their belief that the distribution of benefits, while not ideal, is preferable in this pluralist order to any alternatives they can devise” (206, 226). But while such a conclusion offers strong reasons to believe that an effective regional challenge to U.S. hegemony may not be coming any time soon, neither is it a particularly ringing endorsement of U.S. arrangements. As my colleagues who study American electoral politics are always quick to remind the rest of us, one may find the incumbent problematic but he’ll still win the election in the absence of viable choices.

All this is not to say that Goh’s excellent analysis does not consider some areas of normative agreement between the U.S. as hegemonic power and East Asia’s subordinate states. My point is only to push her book further on the claims made. Make no mistake: this is a fine piece of scholarship. Few would be as able to capture the complex negotiations ongoing in East Asia as Goh does in this theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich study. Evelyn Goh has offered us an analysis that is as multilayered as the hierarchies she describes. Indeed, I suspect it will be one of those books from which one takes something a little different with each reading.

When liberal optimism recedes once again in the face of a harsher international environment, there is a natural tendency for commentators and academics to return to the well-trodden paths of power-politics and geopolitical rivalry. U.S. International Relations still finds it difficult to escape from the rigidity of the divide between realism and liberalism. And writing on the rise of China is overwhelmingly caught between the poles of ‘contain or confront’ on the one hand and ‘engage and accommodate’ on the other. The great achievement of Evelyn Goh’s study is that it develops an alternative framework for thinking about regional order in East Asia and connects it to an empirically rich account of how that regional order has evolved historically. Thus we cannot understand ‘struggle’ unless we understand that power is an inherently social phenomenon. As she demonstrates so well, clashes over historical memory and over the ‘regional memory regime’ are just as important as the deployment of new weapons systems. And we cannot understand ‘order’ if we only think in terms of unmediated clashes of material power on the one hand or formal institutions on the other. Order is about the creation and sustaining of rule-governed interaction amongst states that share common understandings about the nature and limits of their respective interests and values and about the means of conducting regional international affairs. It is not about the suppression of conflict but rather about the rules and understandings within which that conflict takes place – how conflicts such as over North Korea and the South China Sea (examined in detail in Chapter Three) are framed; whether there are agreed parameters of conduct short of outright violence, and how far cooperation in other areas may be pursued in spite of the outstanding conflict. (On this see Chapter Three, especially 72-74). Central here are what English-School writing refers to as ‘primary institutions’, especially those related to negotiation of stable Great Power rules of the game and to legitimized patterns of hierarchy and hegemony.

“[This book] ... begins with a clear recognition that power – particularly grossly unequal power wielded by the United States and potentially by China – has crucial social foundations. Great power projects are mediated through social frameworks, often normative in nature, that other states must acquiesce to. As important as their superior material resources, therefore is how other states perceive their unequal power. This leads us to questions about negotiation, consensus, and legitimacy that stem from the social nature of claims to power. In unpacking these issues, this book presents a fundamentally difference narrative about the changing international order since the end of the Cold War. It argues that the most important strategic changes have reflected not balance of power challenges to US primacy, but rather a complex process of negotiating the consensus on values, rights, and duties that underpin US hegemony vis-à-vis other states. This hegemony has been consolidated, at the expense of significant alterations to its underlying normative terms and social structure.” (4)

Goh sees her challenge as how to make sense of a region “... that seems to accommodate both the rise of China and the continuing preponderance of the United States, and to allow significant activism on the part of non-great power states” (202). There is a good deal of

attention given to this latter aspect, especially in terms of the proliferation of regional dialogues, initiatives, and institutions and the capacity of ASEAN to develop a pro-active regional role and to create what she calls “secondary safety nets”: “enmeshing China in the hopes of socializing it, cultivating regional community, inching towards moral reconciliation” (206). An equally important element in the story is her argument that far greater attention needs to be given to Japan. The negotiation of hierarchy and of a layered hierarchy emerges as central to Goh’s understanding of the region – although it is a pity that her picture of overlapping and layered hierarchies only comes fully into focus in the Conclusion.

This conception of order is rich and complex. The elements that are to be negotiated concern the normative and social structure of regional society and involve: institutional bargains, security, public goods provision, regionalism and community, and collective memory revision. The core chapters of the book consider all of these each in turn. The complexity of the framework does not always make it easy to apply. Indeed one finishes the book with a sense that it would have benefitted from one more round of conceptual pruning and simplification. The chapter on renegotiating regional and global economic order reads the most like a conventional account. By contrast, the critical issue of collective memory is very well integrated into the overall picture of regional order, as are the respective claims to justice – what Goh very usefully calls “the substantive normative content of these memory conflicts” (163).

There are two further conceptual issues that arise from Goh’s study. The first concerns the relationship between the regional and the global. This can be posed in the following way: What happens when a particular region becomes the ‘core region’ of the system? East Asia today has clearly moved a long way in this direction and this raises important questions about how we can best analyse something called regional order. Chapter Four looks explicitly at the “...policing of the boundaries between the putative regional community and the global economic order” (121). But the question might have been developed more fully across the chapters. It raises the issue, for example, of how the region itself is to be conceived and which ‘outside’ powers are to be involved in the analysis. It also means that, increasingly, strategic developments inside the region (in terms of, say, Chinese nuclear strategy and deployment) affect other parts of the system (say, the U.S.-Russian nuclear relationship) and that this then feeds back into the region. In other words, when analysing a core region it becomes more and more difficult to analyse order in purely regional terms. Or, take the issue of hegemony itself. Goh argues, persuasively, that U.S. preponderance in East Asia has increased. She sometimes seems to suggest that this has gone along with continued hegemony at the global level. But this need not necessarily be the case and the mismatch between U.S. power in the region and the limits to its power elsewhere can all too easily become a source of mutual misperception and therefore of strategic miscalculation – as, of course, has been common in previous instances of major-power rivalry.

A second conceptual issue concerns just how ‘regional’ the analysis of regional order needs to be. The conceptual framework developed in the book is generic and reflects its connections primarily to both English-School scholarship and to strands of the



constructivist analysis of power and identity. But to what extent are these shared understandings of order region-specific? (cf the claim on page 21 about “a set of core strategic understandings specific to the region”?) To what extent is there contestation between region-specific historical or cultural understandings and the so-called ‘generic’ categories that inform both western policy and western academic debate? This arises most obviously in relation to hierarchy and hegemony. Goh refers to David Kang’s work and notes that “... East Asia perhaps exhibits most vividly such layered hierarchical political relations in the historical Sino-centric order. This book’s findings suggest that this hierarchical propensity is a more general tendency amongst the states in the East Asian security complex”<sup>1</sup> (201). But is this “general tendency” general only to the region, and, if so, how does this impact on the broader theoretical account around which the book is anchored?

Power transition theory has been dominated by the possibility of war and conflict. Goh’s book reminds us that, although obviously important, this is only part of a broader question, namely how do regional (or global) orders evolve and what happens in the large space between normal day-to-day diplomacy and the imminent possibility of overt conflict. In the 1930s this was almost universally referred to as the problem of peaceful change. The book is entitled *The Struggle for Order* and clearly that struggle has intensified in the period since the book was completed. The capacity of the smaller states in the region to find space for institutional initiatives appears to be diminishing and, in any case, the regional norms that exist are weak and limited in scope (especially in terms of some of the core challenges, such as maritime disputes). Most important, the scope for serious, let alone productive negotiation between the regional great powers, China and Japan, remains extremely limited. As Goh notes: “Between China and Japan, there is no distributive settlement: the distribution of authority and mutual constraint of unequal power are unresolved, indeed unaddressed, between them” (67). Seeing power in social terms and order in terms of normative renegotiation does not, as is sometimes alleged, imply a cosy or soft view of international relations. Quite the contrary. What Goh has done in this rich and impressive study is to show why the struggle for power and the negotiation of a stable hierarchical layering are so difficult, and why, in consequence, regional order is so difficult to achieve.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, D. C. Kang, *East Asia before the West. Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). See also the general discussion in Alastair Iain Johnston, ‘What (if anything) does East Asia tell us about International Relations Theory’, *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): especially pp. 60-63.



How can we explain the durability of American hegemony in East Asia, given the tectonic shifts in regional power distributions that have marked the post-Cold War era? This is the central puzzle driving Evelyn Goh's magisterial *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia*. For the past two decades, debates on the future of East Asian regional order have revolved around a titanic clash between variants of neorealist pessimism and liberal internationalist optimism. Grounding their pessimism in stylized accounts of past power transitions in world history, pessimists such as John Mearsheimer have predicted a dire future of escalating Sino-U.S. strategic competition and the incipient breakdown of the U.S.-sponsored regional order.<sup>1</sup> Liberal internationalists, most notably John Ikenberry, have countered by appealing to the enduring integrative potential of a U.S.-sponsored constitutional order that remains "hard to overturn and easy to join."<sup>2</sup> Transcending this increasingly ossified polarity, Evelyn Goh presents here an innovative alternative theoretical framework to explain one of the world's most urgent paradoxes – the simultaneous resurgence of U.S. hegemony in East Asia alongside a rising China.

This review first summarizes Goh's characterization of the evolving East Asian regional order, before identifying some key ways in which her approach aids our comprehension of the dynamics of international order constitution and transition in global politics. I then turn to some of the larger questions *The Struggle for Order* opens up, focusing on the prospective durability of U.S. hegemony in East Asia, and on the potential translatability of Goh's framework to other post-Cold war regional orders, most notably the Indian Ocean region.

Goh's analysis of evolving power dynamics in East Asia begins by noting that the regional order has since 1989 accommodated two seemingly disparate trends. First, American hegemony has persisted, even as a rising China has profoundly re-shaped the region's material power relativities (5). Second, institutionalized forms of regional cooperation have meanwhile thickened across a host of issue areas (including security cooperation and financial regulation) since the Cold War's end. The region's small and middle powers have spearheaded this latter trend, concertedly working to enmesh the United States, China and other Great Powers within a hierarchical regional order presided over by a U.S. hegemon, but grounded in a larger social compact in which subordinate states exchange deference for a host of security and economic public goods provided by the hegemon (21).

The parallel rise of U.S. and Chinese power, alongside the increasingly dense institutional practices of order-building that have characterized East Asia since the end of the Cold War,

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<sup>1</sup> See for example John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3:4 (2010): 381-396.

<sup>2</sup> G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" *Foreign Affairs* 87:1 (2008): 24.

motivate Goh to privilege *order transition* rather than *power transition* as the central problematic driving regional politics since 1989. Following a brief period of uncertainty regarding Washington's commitment to the region in the early 1990s, local powers have worked actively with the U.S. to adjust the purposes and practices of U.S. hegemony to uphold regional order in a more dynamic and unpredictable post-Cold War strategic milieu (21).

Hegemony and hierarchy are central to Goh's conceptual framework. Adopting a largely English School theoretical outlook, in which hegemony is regarded as one of international society's fundamental institutions, Goh convincingly argues against conceptions of hegemony that exclusively privilege its consensual or coercive aspects. Instead, hegemony is a continuously negotiated social compact, through which actors seek to legitimize and tame inequalities of power through institutionalized practices of cooperation (32). Hegemonic orders require but are not reducible to the hegemon's superior material power, and are continuously re-formed through processes of negotiation, contestation and resistance among the order's constituent polities.

Abjuring the traditional 'hub and spokes' model of a U.S.-dominated 'imperial' order in East Asia, Goh therefore presents the reader with a more nuanced vision in which local actors are not merely 'price takers,' but themselves actively drive processes of order transition within the broad parameters of an established but elastic U.S. hegemony. At the same time, Goh explicitly argues that the resulting regional order remains resolutely hierarchical in its overall form, with the U.S. at its apex, followed by the Great Powers China and Japan, who in turn remain distinct from lesser powers, including the Republic of Korea and the ASEAN states (212).

Goh provides an exceptionally sophisticated theoretical framework for understanding contemporary dynamics of order transition in East Asia, supported through rich empirical studies of regional institution-building, public goods and collective security provision, financial and trade cooperation, and the negotiation and contestation of regional collective memory regimes. *The Struggle for Order* brims with important insights regarding the nature, constitution, and history of international orders. Three merit particular attention here.

First, Goh's reframing of the dynamics of change in world politics – from power transition to order transition – appears particularly apposite given the densely institutionalized character of the contemporary global order, and the corresponding necessity of understanding processes of institutional contestation as being central to processes of international change, rather than merely froth on the waves of shifting material power relativities. Even many of the most sophisticated analyses of the ongoing 'power shift' in Asia remain wedded to a profoundly materialist ontology, which reduces questions of order maintenance to accommodating the rise and fall of Great Powers.<sup>3</sup> This 'hydraulic'

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<sup>3</sup> For a sophisticated example of this mode of theorizing, see Hugh White, *The China Choice – Why America Should Share Power* (Black Inc: Melbourne, 2012).

conception of international change sits at odds with the densely institutionalized milieu in which power is constituted, channeled, and contested within today's global order. Goh's re-focusing of the puzzle – from one of power transition to one of order transition –avoids this pitfall, and warrants emulation from all scholars concerned with comprehending the nature and dynamics of international change in an era defined by pervasive and densely institutionalized interdependence.

Second, Goh's analysis of East Asia's layered hierarchical order will benefit scholars more broadly interested in the emergence and constitution of hierarchies in global politics. Traditionally preoccupied with understanding order within an international system defined by anarchy, International Relations (IR) theorists have only recently recognized hierarchy's importance as an enduring feature of international life.<sup>4</sup> In foregrounding the importance of subordinate actors' complicity and resistance in shaping American hegemony in East Asia, Goh corrects conceptions of hierarchy that reduce it to a mere byproduct of asymmetries of material power. At the same time, Goh's recognition that American hegemony rests on coercion as well as consent qualifies prominent rationalist accounts of hierarchy, which with their stress on relational contracting risk overstating hierarchy's consensual foundations.<sup>5</sup> Neither top-down imposition nor bottom-up bargaining adequately capture the complex tug-of-war between the U.S. hegemon, aspiring Great Powers, and middle and small powers that has shaped East Asia's layered hierarchy. In emphasizing the agency of subordinate actors – in alternatively designing, negotiating, affirming, and resisting American hegemony – Goh restores a much needed emphasis to the role both aspiring peer competitors and regional Lilliputians have played in shaping the hegemonic order over which the American Gulliver presides.

Third, in restoring creative Asian agency to analyses of U.S. hegemony in post-Cold War East Asia, Goh reaffirms and extends recent studies that have highlighted non-Western actors' profound influence in shaping today's global order. In contrast to the classic English School narrative of international society's expansion, which privileged Westerners as the global order's chief architects and vanguard agents, new research has re-integrated non-Western agents as key actors at all stages of the modern international system's evolution.<sup>6</sup> Within East Asia, for example, the international order that prevailed following the Second

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Jack Donnelly "Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society," *European Journal of International Relations* 12: 2 (2006): 139-70; John M. Hobson and J. C. Sharman, "The Enduring Place of Hierarchy in World Politics: Tracing the Social Logics of Hierarchy and Political Change," *European Journal of International Relations* 11: 1 (2005): 63-98; and David A. Lake, "Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics," *International Security* 32: 1 (2007): 47-79.

<sup>5</sup> For a classic statement of the relational contracting approach to studying hierarchy in international politics, see David A. Lake, "Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations," *International Organization* 50: 1 (1996): 1-33.

<sup>6</sup> A particularly outstanding and comprehensive example of this research is Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk (eds.), *International Orders and the Early Modern World: Before the Rise of the West* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Opium War relied heavily on a 'synarchy' jointly maintained by British interlopers, Manchu courtiers, and Qing Dynasty Confucian scholar-bureaucrats.<sup>7</sup> After World War II, Chiang Kai-Shek's China likewise played an important albeit abruptly terminated role in helping to design the United Nations collective security architecture.<sup>8</sup> Further afield, the regional heavyweights India and Indonesia each later sponsored norms of decolonization and non-alignment that profoundly reshaped regional and global power structures and security practices.<sup>9</sup> These and other studies substantially complicate contemporary world order debates that are grounded in narratives of Western decline and imminent transformation occasioned by a coming 'Asian Century.' Goh's analysis of local agents' critical role in re-defining American hegemony after 1989 corroborates this historical revisionism and brings the story right up to the present. Alongside her pioneering theoretical insights, then, this empirical and historiographical contribution is also worth celebrating.

Like all great books, *The Struggle for Order* provokes as many questions as it answers. Of these, the most urgent is American hegemony's prospective long-term durability in East Asia. Goh portrays a hegemonic order that has proved resilient and adaptive following the Cold War's end. But as Goh herself shows, this order will be strained by intra-regional moral and geopolitical contests for the foreseeable future. In particular, Goh notes that U.S. hegemony rests on Japan's nineteenth-century 'divorce' from the China-dominated Sinosphere, an estrangement cemented by the subsequent traumas of Sino-Japanese conflicts and contests over collective memory regimes relating to these wars (207). The recent escalation in Sino-Japanese hostility suggests that near-term prospects for Sino-Japanese reconciliation remain remote. Indeed, the spike in tensions surrounding the Senkaku/Diaoyu island dispute, tensions over China's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), and perennial controversies surrounding Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine are now cumulatively exerting centrifugal influences that powerfully threaten the present order's conflict-management capacities. As China and Japan both engage in perilous and potentially polarizing programs of economic reform, the temptation for both to invoke the other as 'useful adversaries' to shore up domestic support for these reforms remains dangerously high.<sup>10</sup> A widening tension might thus yet emerge between domestic Chinese and Japanese order-building imperatives on the one hand, and the preservation of regional order on the other. This could in turn threaten the social basis of support for East Asia's current hierarchy, irrespective of Beijing and Tokyo's desire to preserve the balance of benefits that American hegemony presently guarantees.

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Phillips, *War, Religion and Empire – The Transformation of International Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 194.

<sup>8</sup> Beverley Loke, "Conceptualising the Role and Responsibility of Great Power: China's Participation in Negotiations toward a Post-Second World War Order," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 24:2 (2013): 209-226.

<sup>9</sup> Amitav Acharya, "Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World," *International Studies Quarterly* 2013 55:1 (2011): 95-123.

<sup>10</sup> C.f. Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries – Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Besides the corrosive potential of Sino-Japanese rivalry at a time of domestic as well as regional order transition, the East Asian regional order also faces a more insidious threat – namely, a loss of coherence. Goh characterizes the present order as a layered hierarchy, in which Asian states have constructed a series of “secondary safety nets” on top of an order that remains fundamentally reliant on U.S. preponderance (206). The safety-nets metaphor evokes a sense of nested and mutually reinforcing institutional structures that complement rather than complicate the project of regional order maintenance. While persuasive for the post-1989 period, this portrayal nevertheless begs questions as to how contingent this pattern of institutional complementarity has been in the post-Cold War decades, and how durable it is likely to prove in the longer term. Thus far, institutionalization has worked to reconcile and harmonize different states’ order-building projects. Whether or not this will continue to be the case – or whether new initiatives such as the Trans Pacific Partnership might undermine this existing coherence – might prove a fruitful line of inquiry for those seeking to extrapolate from the dynamically stable order Goh anatomizes here.

Finally, while Goh confines her analysis to East Asia, her framework ingeniously builds upon insights from Ian Clark and Andrew Hurrell, who have explored questions of hegemony and order transition from a more global perspective.<sup>11</sup> This raises the intriguing possibility of exploring how Goh’s model might be applied to understand order transitions in other regional contexts. In particular, a comparison of order transitions in East Asia and the Indian Ocean region would be especially valuable for students of Asian international relations. Notwithstanding their growing interconnectedness, the two regions have been shaped by starkly different historical trajectories.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to East Asia, efforts to institutionalize multilateral cooperation within the Indian Ocean region remain embryonic. The U.S. presence there is more recent, shallower, and less institutionalized. The region lacks an institutional trellis comparable to the East Asian ‘hub and spokes’ alliance system around which a stable hierarchical order might gel. And Indo-Pakistani contestation over collective memory regimes is as fierce as comparable East Asian struggles, while being further inflamed by the added dangers of state fragility and nuclear rivalry. Alongside its other virtues, then, *The Struggle for Power* provides a compelling framework for comparatively exploring order transitions in a manner that remains sensitive to regionally specific historical legacies, while recognizing the common challenges global leaders face in an era of incipient multi-polarity and pervasive interdependence. At a time when scholars and statesmen grapple with the implications of resurgent Asian power, Goh’s work provides an especially innovative means of clarifying the complexity of this order transition, while simultaneously delivering insights on the nature and dynamics of

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<sup>11</sup> Ian Clark, *Hegemony in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> My co-author Nick Bisley and I expand on the contrasts between East Asian and the Indian Ocean regional historical trajectories in more detail in Nick Bisley and Andrew Phillips, “Rebalance to Where? US Strategic Geography in Asia,” *Survival*. 55:5 (2013): 105-107.

international orders' constitution and change that will be of interest to all serious students of global politics.



Author's Response by Evelyn Goh, Australian National University

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I am extremely grateful to Alice Ba, Andrew Hurrell, and Andrew Phillips for their knowledgeable and generous responses to my book, and Natasha Hamilton-Hart for her very helpful introduction. Collectively, they also lend momentum to a set of further research questions that I had hoped this book would stimulate. The reviewers honed in on the three key contributions I wanted to make towards conceptually broadening, empirically deepening, and generally rendering more interesting the debate about contemporary East Asian international relations. First, the book's key aim was to cut through the "increasingly ossified polarity" (Phillips) of many existing debates about East Asian security and U.S. foreign policy, be they the theoretical extremes of realism versus liberalism; the policy options of containing or accommodating (Hurrell); or stark claims that China is either a security provider or security detractor (Ba).

Second, I felt it necessary to emphasize the agency of regional states, if only to balance out the dominance of studies that often treat contemporary East Asia as little more than a backdrop for China's global ascendance or worse, as an arena for the 'struggle for mastery' between the U.S. and China.<sup>1</sup> But East Asia itself is worth examining because of at least two peculiarities. First, order creation and maintenance are subcontracted on the one hand upwards – to the United States and its security alliances, guarantees and mediation – and on the other hand downwards – to the small Southeast Asian states that create supplementary regional norms and institutions for confidence-building and cooperation in softer security fields. But the latter actually also supports the former, as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) efforts are often aimed at justifying continued U.S. involvement in the region. Neither ASEAN, South Korea, nor Japan have been "price takers" (Phillips) in the post-Cold War re-negotiations of regional order: my analysis in the realms of alliance politics, regional institution-building, financial governance, conflict management, and memory politics all demonstrate resistance as well as active complicity stemming from regional actors. The second peculiarity about East Asia is the gaping hole where 'indigenous' great power management ought to be functioning. As the reviewers appreciated, my analysis spotlights the centrality of Japan and China's mutual alienation in explaining significant developments as well as impediments in how regional order has been renegotiated since the Cold War ended. I am pleased that all the reviewers found notable the chapter on collective memory regimes, in which I tried to draw out the domestic and regional patterns of resistance and complicity that have shaped the seemingly intractable 'history problem' between Japan and China (and also Korea).

As Hurrell rightly observes though, there are potential problems with taking such a starkly 'regional' approach in East Asia, which is now the 'core region' of the international system. Order cannot easily be squeezed into a 'purely regional' box when East Asian strategic relationships and developments have wider systemic impacts, particularly via China and

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<sup>1</sup> See my review of some of this literature in Evelyn Goh, "The United States in Asia: Reflections on Deterrence, Alliances, and Balance of Power," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 12 (2012): 511-22.

the United States.<sup>2</sup> But I chose in this book to focus on unpacking this regional order because there are very few *regional* specialists among international-relations (IR) or security-studies scholars who study East Asia: most are experts in single countries, particular dyadic relationships, specific conflicts, or they focus on either Northeast or Southeast Asia. Yet as Ba notes, “relationships are rarely purely dyadic or discrete”; the regional whole is more than the simple sum of its parts if we take time to trace the key ways in which “relationships, interests, and normative commitments intersect and ‘layer’ to produce... regional order.” My book consciously pulls together the two parts of East Asia that have been treated as separate security complexes for too long, while acknowledging the extraordinary involvement of the United States in creating this regional order. My approach is indeed – as much of the English School has been – “unabashedly systemic” (Hamilton-Hart). But this reflects more the urgent lack of systemic regional studies of East Asia than it does any sense on my part that the regional-global or domestic-international nexuses are unimportant.

My third goal was to offer a convincing interpretation of what more than two decades worth of this “creative Asian agency” (Phillips) has amounted to. The brief answer is: East Asia has negotiated a transition in the social and normative regional order, which has preserved the material distribution of power insofar as retaining U.S. preponderance, but has also reflected regional preferences to incorporate rising China, thus in effect creating a layered hierarchy with China, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN states lining up beneath the overarching layer of U.S. hegemony. In presenting this argument, I chose to run two risks. First, I refused to present the hierarchical order framework as a ‘model’ that the book would set out to ‘prove;’ instead, it is advanced at the end of the book as an interpretation of the interim results of an on-going process of transition that the foregoing analysis analyses in detail. I also detail the abstract social dynamics of such hierarchical orders to help advance the more general interest in hierarchies that has developed within recent international-relations scholarship, and to aid its potential application to other case studies. The second risk I ran was in reverting to classical usage of key terms like ‘hegemony,’ ‘hierarchy,’ and ‘social compact,’ while placing the often-confused term ‘order’ at the front and centre of my analysis. This group of English School and constructivist reviewers who have employed such concepts in their own path-breaking work reinforce my belief that those of us working within the belated ‘social turn’ in IR must rescue such key concepts from the fog of confusion thrown up by rough usage.

Nevertheless, one term from the analysis appears to have caused confusion among some of the commentators: institutions. Phillips reads my focus on order as stemming from the need to understand “institutional contestation as being central to processes of international change, rather than merely froth on the waves of shifting material power relativities;” while Hamilton-Hart sees three of my four empirical chapters as being centred

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<sup>2</sup> I discuss the way in which the U.S. role particularly acts as the vital ‘hinge’ that connects the regional and global orders in Evelyn Goh, “East Asia as Regional International Society: The Problem of Great Power Management,” in Barry Buzan and Yongjin Zhang, eds., *International Society and East Asia: English School Theory at the Regional Level* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming October 2014).

on the “thick regional soup of organizations and initiatives” for inter-state cooperation. The notion of international order is often conflated with the phenomenon of institutionalization associated with the proliferation of inter-governmental organizations.<sup>3</sup> And it is true that post-Cold War East Asia has spawned a remarkable array of regimes and institutions for economic and security governance, as any analysis based on the empirical evidence will inevitably reflect.

Yet, the sword that I chose to cut through the realist-liberal IR Gordian Knot was forged from the intellectual steel of the English School, for whom order rests on the rule-governed interaction between states. And, as Hurrell correctly reads from my framework, I stick fairly closely to the English School understanding that these ‘rules’ reside not in secondary inter-governmental organizations, but rather in the “share[d] common understandings about the nature and limits of [states’] respective interests and values and about the means of conducting regional international affairs... how conflicts... are framed; whether there are agreed parameters of conduct short of outright violence, and how far cooperation in other areas may be pursued in spite of the outstanding conflict.” Indeed, the key challenge for English-School scholars lies in how to operationalize these ‘primary institutions’ of international society, which are shared practices manifested in a range of norms, rules, and principles that may or may not be captured within inter-governmental organizations.<sup>4</sup>

Other English-School scholars have analysed and debated the particular regional manifestations of primary institutions such as sovereignty, nationalism, great power management, and economic development in East Asia that include a statist ‘developmental state’ ideology, and unique interdependence arising from regional production networks.<sup>5</sup> But I sidestepped this debate in choosing to focus on contestation and negotiations over what I call the region’s ‘normative structure,’ interpreted as a set of core shared strategic understandings specific to the region (as opposed to a set of generic norms, rules, or values, which would be the constructivist approach). My choice of four such core strategic themes – institutional bargains, public goods provision, regionalism and community, and collective memory – was my attempt to group and conceptualize what I had observed as the core *systemic* concerns of post-Cold War East Asia, as manifested in regional strategic discourse, interaction, and planning.

The book’s substantive empirical analysis thus does not turn on inter-state organizations. For example, even in Chapter 2, which most explicitly analyses the evolution of regional security and economic institutions, I was interested in neither “questions of institutional choice, design, or efficacy, nor [in] the stale debate about whether it is norms or power that

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<sup>3</sup> Mainly because within mainstream U.S. IR particularly, it is liberal institutionalists who have employed the term order as an alternative to the realist ‘system’.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> See Barry Buzan and Yongjin Zhang, eds., *International Society and East Asia: English School Theory at the Regional Level* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming October 2014).

explain regional cooperation” (28); rather, mine was the social contractual lens of ‘institutional bargains’ – negotiations about how great powers would be constrained by various institutional arrangements: what duties and assurances they would have to extend in return for other states’ deference, the terms of these reciprocal rights and duties, and the norms that would regulate the bargain. Similarly, Chapter 3 is about two key regional conflicts, but my analytical focus is not on the Six-Party Talks or ASEAN per se, but rather on what the contestations and compromises over conflict management mechanisms tell us about regional negotiations about security public goods provision as a key marker of great power authority. Chapter 4 is not a simple description of East Asian regionalism via inter-governmental organizations and visions; rather, it is an evaluation of the most promising arena of potential regional resistance to global hegemonic norms and institutions. And Chapter 5 approaches the controversies over World War II history not just as a nationalistic problem between China and Japan, but unravels the multiple contestations against the post-1945 collective memory regime that prevailed in a region initially more preoccupied by concerns over order than justice.

Analysing the regional contests and renegotiations within each of these major strategic themes also shed crucial light on how the terms of the social compact underpinning U.S. hegemony in the region have been revised – skeins that, as it turns out, have been deeply woven into the fabric of the East Asian order transition. This brings me to Ba’s important question: what does the heavy lifting in perpetuating U.S. hegemony in East Asia? Her careful reading of my explanations is correct – regional complicity is sustained largely by the potent mix of the United States’ preponderant power and the deficiencies of regional options. I have peddled this book to a good range of policy and academic audiences across East Asia over the last twelve months, and these two key claims have been universally endorsed: (1) “regional states consent to support or tolerate US hegemony because of their belief that the distribution of benefits, while not ideal, is preferable in this pluralist order to any alternatives they can devise” (206); and (2) “U.S hegemony has been established in post-Cold War East Asia not in spite of, but partly because of, China’s resurgence” (13). As I made clear at the start of the book, instrumental and normative motivations are closely intertwined in East Asian order (5, 6, 12, 24). Such is the price of taking seriously regional agency: the motivations, even of supporter states, may not accord with our expectations. Rather than a Pareto-optimum<sup>6</sup> answer of ‘power’ or ‘values’, the result more usually approximates to the type of ‘satisficing’ models that behavioural economists employ. Yet, such reasoning does not necessarily render U.S. hegemony somehow more precarious than if my subjects had professed or manifested more enthusiastic ideological affinity with the U.S.

At the same time, Ba perhaps under-rates the “positive, substantive foundations of U.S. hegemony” that are revealed in the course of my analysis. The book does conduct “the legwork to demonstrate for this vital region the liberal claim that U.S. hegemony is resilient because it is open to negotiation and consent” (13). My substantive analysis fleshes out

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<sup>6</sup> A foundational concept in Microeconomics referring to the optimum efficient allocation of resources such that no individual can be made better off without causing another to be worse off.

how: (1) the East Asian states have managed to negotiate with the U.S. key means of committing and channelling U.S. power in reciprocal institutional bargains, not just within regional multilateral institutions, but also in revising the terms of bilateral alliances; (2) the U.S. has been responsive to allied and broader regional demands for its political, economic and military interventions in response to tensions in regional flashpoints and systemic economic crises; (3) U.S.-led global financial institutions have been adaptive and responsive to backlashes and criticisms after the Asian financial crisis; and (4) the U.S. has so far facilitated East Asia's incorporation of China into the regional order.

As I detail in the Conclusion, all this has allowed regional states to accord the U.S. a "position of special privilege and authority within this crowded strategic region. In spite of various types of resistance and contestation, these dynamics take place within the boundaries of a near-consensus about the critical deterrence that U.S. military power provides in the region, and its vital position as ring-holder between Japan and its neighbours. Northeast Asian, especially Japanese and South Korean, security strategies continue to be constituted mainly by their alliances with the U.S., while American authority as regional conflict manager traverses both the Northeast and Southeast Asian theatres" (206). The key 'value' part of my story lies in understanding the position of the United States as one of *hegemony*, "because U.S. leadership extends beyond preponderance and is characterised by consensual normative structures and a more accessible process of negotiation involving other great powers and smaller states in regional society" (206). Thus, regional states, with the partial exception of China, buy into the 'guarantor' understanding of the U.S. and treat it as security provider and lender of first resort because they still trust in its benignity and openness to be persuaded to commit to their strategic imperatives.<sup>7</sup>

However, this is not the same as saying that U.S. hegemony is secure. Rather, "recognising the painful normative re-negotiations that have led to this interim social structure highlights the constant struggle of legitimising and taming this extreme preponderance of power", and whether this hegemony can be sustained will depend on U.S. ability to "cultivate complicity and manage resistance" (223). If I were to paint a picture of sustainable U.S. hegemony, it would be based on the encouraging record of the last two decades I detail in the book. It would also be informed significantly by the reality that U.S. hegemony critically constitutes East Asia's core social structure and main regional conflicts, and is indelibly embedded within their trajectories. The alienation between China and Japan is still insulated to an extent by the U.S. playing the part of ring-holder; the U.S. prevails in its framing of the Korean peninsula and regional maritime conflicts; and the baselines of the region's war memory contests were created and are still policed by U.S.

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<sup>7</sup> The complex domestic and intra-regional processes that have been involved in creating and sustaining these beliefs are the subject of excellent analyses in Alice Ba, *[Re]Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Region, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Natasha Hamilton-Hart, *Hard Interests, Soft Illusions: Southeast Asia and American Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).



intervention. Regional challenges and attempts at re-negotiating each of these arenas have prodded, but not significantly shifted, the parameters of how the U.S. constituted them.

Finally, I turn to Hurrell's twin questions about the wider implications of my findings and claims. If U.S. hegemony has been established in post-Cold War East Asia, is this also broadly true at the global level? There is a large existing literature debating this point,<sup>8</sup> and my analysis was deliberately circumscribed when touching upon the global dimensions of U.S. authority and power. The book engages with the latter mainly in the chapter on financial regionalism, which explicitly analyses regional governance efforts as putative challenges to global hegemonic institutions. While I show that the main international financial institutions have broadly thus far remained hegemonic after repeated crises – in part due to complicity from key East Asian economies – I am reluctant to equate them with the United States. U.S. global hegemony ought to be assessed on the strength of a complex composite of its authority across a range of regions, issue-areas, and governance structures – a challenge that cannot be met in this book.

And to what extent is what I see as the propensity for hierarchical inter-state political relationships in East Asia at odds with the “so-called ‘generic’ categories that inform both western policy and western academic debate”? The analysis in this book only allows me to make claims about post-Cold War East Asia, but other recent scholarship suggests that hierarchical international relationships are also significant in other regions, historical periods, and at the global level. In particular, Ian Clark's radical work on evolving forms of legitimacy-based hegemony in historical international society, and David Kang's work on the historical East Asian context together suggest that hierarchy is a recurring social structure in the international system.<sup>9</sup> There remains much exciting ground to cover in other potential empirical cases – such as South Asia, which Phillips suggests – and my layered hierarchy framework will be helpful in these enterprises. In the meantime, I believe *The Struggle for Order* stands alongside good company in revealing that “concentrated power is not ‘unnatural’”<sup>10</sup> in international life; and in demonstrating that beyond simply contributing additional cases for testing existing IR theories<sup>11</sup>, East Asian experiences may provide the material for new theorizing altogether.

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<sup>8</sup> Among the more interesting examples are Andrew Hurrell, “Pax Americana or the Empire of Insecurity?” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 5:2, (2005): 153-76; and Yuen Foong Khong, “The American Tributary System,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6:1, (Spring 2013): 1-47.

<sup>9</sup> Ian Clark, *Hegemony in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); David Kang, *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> David Kang, “International Relations Theory and East Asian History,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13:3, (May-August 2013): 181-205, at p. 200.

<sup>11</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, “What (If Anything) Does East Asia Tell Us About International Relations?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 15, (2012): 53-78.