

The use of consilience, hypothesis prediction and falsifiability are just three of the many tools that can be deployed to make full use of these sources. Thanks to those unnamed brave individuals who risk their lives to bring forth the truth, North Korea analysts are able to sink their teeth into new, illuminating data sets, and as a result, North Korean society is becoming increasingly less enigmatic.

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A WORLD POLITICS THEORY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: CAN DICTATORS BE CIRCUMSCRIBED OF THEIR POWER?

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de Mesquita, Bruce Bueno; Alastair Smith. *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics*. New York: Perseus Books Group, 2011. 325 pages. Kindle Edition. eISBN : 978-1-610-39045-3

The structural realist view on the world system provided by Kenneth Waltz is acclaimed for its brilliant parsimony.¹ Although it is the very attribute that becomes a target of criticism, this nevertheless counts to be a merit igniting further discussions. By the same token, the biggest merit of this book by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith is the simplicity of their theory on world politics. Based on the presumption that leaders want to obtain and maintain power: “politicians are all the same,” the authors focus on key domestic maneuvers of leaders to meet these ends (p. 20). The book, page after page, is filled with ample evidence, which the authors acknowledge was accumulated through nearly two decades of research (p. 283). The accumulated case studies of countries from all over the world that the authors present as sources of evidence are another strong point of this book in providing empirical support to their theory.

This book provides insights into today's world, in which civil violence in countries such as Syria, Libya, Iran and North Korea poses as one of the major threats to the security of world community. Contemporary global community (represented by the UN, for example) has evolved to develop the notion of security—which was narrowly used for indicating the absence of military

¹ Kenneth Waltz brings forth the world system model based on anarchy and states relying on self-help for aggregating power and eventually, their own survival.

conflict—to encompass conditions under which the most basic human rights and needs are protected. Under these conditions, any human discrimination based on social, political and economic status should be mitigated. These types of human discrimination still take place in many countries; even worse, there are many countries that leave their citizens in starvation. Although the authors emphasize in the beginning of the book their effort to keep normative approach to a minimum: “we would focus on what is rather than what ought to be” (p. 252), the last chapter clearly expresses the authors’ aspiration of giving solutions for ameliorating human security problems based on their findings.

As a way to improve human security, the authors point to enlarging the size of the groups that are involved in different stages of choosing leaders. This is applicable not only to countries in deep erosion by corrupted dictators but also to democratized countries such as the US and even to big private corporations such as Hewlett-Packard because “just about all of political life revolves around the size of [them]” (p. 281). Such structural set-up would constrain the few—that have access to their country’s or company’s revenue—from engaging in corruptive exploitation for their own private benefits. The fairest way of democratization² is necessary, as the authors argue, to achieve good governance aimed at the best distribution of public goods—be it an access to clean water or protection of the full-respected human rights—to largest possible number of citizens.³

While the authors give more practicable and less abstract explanations of political groups that are more prone to corruption, there still remain some questions. How should citizens incorporate such anti-corruptive structure into their states’ existing system? What would be the best way to mitigate the costs and casualties when such changes occur? Even after the change, would the citizens be able to sustain the new political system? Although the authors came up with one overall diagnosis for political ill occurring throughout the world, it may be impossible to find one treatment that can cure them all. For example, the democratization of Afghanistan is taking a different course from that of Egypt, which is different from Mozambique’s. A question of long standing is to

find out ways for various states to achieve successful transition of their political systems.

This book brings forth a world politics theory in the twenty-first century based on leaders’ aspiration of obtaining and prolonging power in their ruling spheres. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of inter-state conflicts has been in decline. Moreover, in today’s world, sovereignty within states is universally accepted as an international norm and intervention in other states’ internal affairs, especially by the use of military means, is prohibited by international rule of law. While these norms relieve the leaders’ anxiety of defending their states’ territory from turf wars, it made them susceptible to accumulating its own wealth and power at the expense of public resources, citizens’ labor or at times, even their lives.

As the book illustrates, it is apparent that there are large numbers of people suffering from bad governance by their own leaders in many countries. Based on the authors’ extensive research, the book provides explanations of the ways in which those leaders keep their power. Built on this study, it is left for further contemplation how to build the political structure that can inhibit power-hungry leaders from abusing their sovereign power against their citizens. **PEAR**

2 The definition of democratization, in regard to the book can be read as the following: a change to the political structure that ensures maximum inclusion of public in choosing its leaders.

3 Author’s argument of achieving good governance through democratization applies to private firms as well; lessening the illustrated corruptive behavior by corporate executives would help their firms to maintain strong standing, which in turn would benefit by and large, the shareholders and the employers.