

# Review of: "Geopolitical constructs of international politics - their cultural & ideological roots"

Daniel Añorve Añorve<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universidad de Guanajuato

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The manuscript "Geopolitical constructs of international politics -their cultural & ideological roots" reflects on a much necessary topic, i.e., the Euro-centric, westernized vision of the IR field which has served for the 100 plus years of the existence of the discipline as the mainstream of IR thought. The manuscript rightly questions the validity and/or desirability of having the pillars of modern IR, the sovereign state, the territoriality of the sovereign state, as the chief assumptions of the way the international society functions.

The manuscript invites the reader (at least the abstracts suggest this) to take under consideration the traditions and events that took place in other regions/current countries way before the Westphalian world (using The Mesopotamian world, Egypt, China, and India as examples).

Despite the thematic value of questioning the universality/validity of the mainstream structure of the Westphalian interstate order which has been dominant during nearly four centuries, the manuscript presents several flaws, both in the structure, writing, as well as in the content. I will start reflecting on the structure of the manuscript (which is a short research article that reads more like an essay). I will identify the comments about the structure as S1, S2, S3; as for the writing, they will read W1, W2, W3; finally, for content they will read C1, C2, C3, and so on.

## Structure

**S1.** The manuscript lacks an introduction, as it jumps right into the topic.

**S2.** The manuscript lacks all of the following: a tempo-space delimitation, research questions, hypothesis/research assumptions, clearly stated goals.

**S3.** The manuscript has way too many sections (headings). 13 sections in less than 10 pages is too much. Most sections are one or two paragraphs. This is hardly the structure of an ordinary paper.

**S4.** Usually the keywords range from 4 to 6. This manuscript presents 12 keywords. I recommend shortening the keywords to no more than 7.

**S5.** As far as I know, the references section tends to be alphabetically ordered. In this manuscript the references start with letter W (wikipedia), Fukuyama is written before Dugard. Feng is the last reference (after Feng). I have never read an article with this lack of order. Also, related to the reference list there is an odd format, using \* instead of " ".

## Writing

First of all, I would like to comment that the role of a reviewer is not/shall not be the role of a proof-reader. Of course, if reviewers find some isolated typos or would like to recommend some grammar, linguistic improvements that is fine, but authors should not feel that our role is to serve as the writers of the paper itself.

**W1.** I would like to be respectful and constructive, but also crystal clear: the writing of this manuscript is a real mess.

**W2.** Too often paragraphs start with imprecise language such as “These are based...”, “These models of IR”, “This has resulted”. While perhaps the content is clear for the writer it is not necessarily the case for the reader.

**W3.** My experience in the academic world suggests that there are clear rules for the use of bold text, italics, and underline. The use of them shall not be arbitrary. The text is plagued with the arbitrary, inconsistent, and excessive use of bold, italics, and underline. This is not proper for academic articles and/or essays.

**W4.** There are too many typos and/or forgotten spaces between words.

## Content

This should (ideally) be the center of the review. However, the content is hard to read and comment on as the writing is so poor that it distracts the reviewer from focusing on content.

**C1.** There are some dates that simply do not match and/or which are used inconsistently. According to the manuscript the Westphalian world happens sometimes around the XIII, sometimes around the XIV, sometimes in the XVI Century. If the so-called Westphalian Treaty is the departure point, I cannot understand why the 1200's or the 1300's are signaled as the Westphalian world.

**C2.** If the idea is indeed to do away with the Euro-centric, Westphalian interstate system, why are the pre-colonial African systems or the Meso-American (pre-Columbian systems of intertribal, interkinships, interstate, intercities, interempires systems left out). Why does the writing only take under consideration Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and India? Isn't this as exclusionary as the Euro-centric world?

**C3.** The manuscript talks dearly about the Euro-centric constructs, but it is not clear how many and which are those constructs.

**C4.** What does IT scholars mean? Do you mean IR scholars? Is this a typo or a discipline? If it is a discipline, what does IT stand for?

**C5.** On 2.2, I agree with the statement: “For millennia, civilizations and “states” coexisted and developed economic, political, and cultural relations among themselves”. While this is true, perhaps providing a map of the different regional interstate, interkin, intercities, interempire relations could be helpful.

**C6.** Barry Buzan and Acharya wrote an excellent book on the topic of this manuscript. The name of it is Why is no non-

Western IR Theory? The book is so important that it must be included in this manuscript.

**C7.** Karen Migst could be used to understand the logic and functioning of the Westphalian system.

**C8.** I think it is an exaggeration, a distortion to state that there was a collapse of the Catholic Church. Its power diminished, but it did not collapse.

**C9.** I do not agree with the idea in 3.2 that extreme nationalism is a European thing. I mean, there are so many states elsewhere which privilege *ius sanguis* over *ius solis*.

**C10.** It is hard to understand the linking of colonization to the Westphalian order as this colonization took place some 120 years before it. Also, why does colonization specify South America and not Central America and North America. It is a mistake to pack into South America countries such as Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the major Antilles.

**C11.** Is the Monroe Doctrine a US constitutional content? The Doctrine was expressed no less than 30 years after the ratification of the US Constitution.

**C12.** Being consistent with the critique of Euro-centrism, I cannot understand why the author buys into the idea of WW1 and WW2 when both wars were to a great extent inter-European imperial wars rather than truly world or universal/global wars. I would recommend reading Eric Hobsbawm to better understand these two “world” wars.

**C13.** In 3.4 I would strongly recommend to include some comments on the current composition of the United Nations Security Council to challenge its current composition.

**C14.** The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 not in 1989/1990.

**C15.** The manuscript calls for alternatives to the Westphalian order. I would strongly recommend including authors, visions, and concrete alternatives, proposals that challenge or compete against the Western, mainstream visions.

**C16.** Please provide examples of existing or proposed organizations/institutions that reject the existing power-sharing agreements.

**C17.** Please define in 4 what does it mean a “peace template”.

**C18.** In the abstract you talk about nuclear powers, but your content does not touch on this nuclear world again, why is this?

**C19.** Which are/how would the non-Western, non-Westphalian organizations, structures, practices, concepts, and solutions look like in the foreseeable future?

**C20.** Not only the US rejects international law. Please read Daniel Añorve's chapter on UNCLOS in the book, Global Perspectives of US Foreign Policy: From the Outside In. What does the record of ratification regarding UNCLOS, the ICC, Kyoto suggest? Is it only the USA, China, Russia the rejectors of international law?

**C21.** Realpolitik and neorealism, as well as Hedley Bull are key for understanding why the enforceable system of international law is so hard to implement. Waltz, Mearsheimer, Bull are ALL key to understanding the dynamics and realities of anarchy as the structuring principle of the Westphalian interstate system.

I truly hope that the author finds these 30 specific commentaries useful, as the idea is not to reject but to enrich the manuscript.