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Book Reviews

Jetschke, Anja (2010), *Human Rights and State Security: Indonesia and the Philippines*

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, ISBN: 978-0-8122-4301-7, 368 pages

Anja Jetschke's *Human Rights and State Security: Indonesia and the Philippines* is a welcome addition to the emerging political science scholarship dealing with questions about the conditions under which states do not conform to human rights norms. Essentially, Jetschke makes three quintessential claims in the book: First, international human rights organizations play a crucial role in state's human rights practices. Particularly, these non-state organizations shape international public opinion about the human rights practices of certain states and pressure powerful states so that they can influence other states with problematic human rights practices. Second, governments can undermine the work of international human rights advocacy groups when the former invoke "state security" as a more important policy goal, at least temporarily, than the protection of human rights norms. Third, the variations in states' human rights practices can be explained by the strength of competing discourses of state security vis-à-vis human rights values.

Moreover, Jetschke develops her arguments by mapping and analysing the "influence and dynamics of human rights pressures in case studies that have different outcomes in terms of human rights change" (p. 14). In so doing, she examined various case studies of mobilization and coalition-building for the protection of human rights norms in the Philippines and Indonesia between 1975 and 2008. The underlying rationale for her case studies is based on a nuanced understanding of the state and its "public rule-making through discourse, in which justifications and excuses, as well as confirmatory events, play a key role" (p. 13). Particularly, it is through these discursive tools that states attempt to subvert the influence of transnational advocacy networks to effect domestic political change.

First, she examined the role and impact of transnational human rights advocacy in Indonesia and the Philippines in the 1970s, when both countries were under non-democratic rule. Notwithstanding the variations in the results of transnational human rights advocacy work during that period, her research demonstrates that transnational human rights advocacy did initially impact states' human rights practices. Yet, when "justifications" emphasizing "state security" were invoked by these states, the potential effect of transnational advocacy networks could be gravely undermined, and, thereby states' non-compliance with human rights norms could persist. This was

especially the case in Indonesia, where the Suharto regime contended that radical Islamic groups were detrimental to the security of the secular Indonesian state. In this scenario, this justification was convincing to the international public to the point that it led to the weakening of international human rights pressures on Indonesia. On the contrary, international pressures against the Marcos government in the Philippines were sustained, which led to the eventual downfall of the authoritarian regime during the 1986 People Power Revolution.

Second, states can undermine the potential impact of transnational human rights advocacy through the invocation of what Jetschke calls “excuses”. This term refers to a discursive strategy by which a government dodges its responsibility by arguing that those groups or actors who violate human rights norms are not under its formal jurisdiction. To demonstrate this strategy, the author includes several chapters with analyses of paramilitary groups in the post-1986 Philippines under the Aquino government and paramilitary actions in Timor-Leste. In both cases, the government conceded that the violations were deplorable, yet claimed that the situation was beyond its control, thereby attempting to excuse itself from any claim of institutional responsibility.

In view of all these arguments and theoretical claims, Jetschke’s work should be warmly received into the emerging literature that examines the transnational and domestic factors that influence states’ compliance with human rights norms. Since the 1978 publication of Peter Gourevitch’s seminal article, entitled “The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics”, it appears that the majority of scholars examining domestic political change have yet to appreciate how transnational and domestic factors can interact with one another to effect local political change. However, in the field of human rights compliance research, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Political Change* (Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink) inspired human rights scholarship to move forward from a methodological-nationalist tone and the sole focus on domestic factors to a more well-grounded and realistic analysis of human rights compliance. Undoubtedly, Jetschke’s *Human Rights and State Security* is a remarkable follow-up to these two crucial and promising developments in contemporary political science research. That is to say, this book vigorously responded both to Gourevitch’s exhortation against problematic methodological-nationalist analyses in the social sciences and to the landmark work in human rights scholarship carried out by Thomas Risse and his collaborators.

Human Rights and State Security’s contribution can be summarized in two important points: First, it provides us a convincing empirical analysis that argues that discourses do matter in the debate. The publication of this book

is timely because it appears that there is still a lack of theoretically informed yet empirically grounded works that are inspired by constructivist thinking. Particularly, Jetschke has successfully shown that the influence of the transnational human rights movement is primarily determined by the acceptance of states' practices by the international and domestic public. Second, the overarching causal story that Jetschke provides in this book is important not only to those interested in Southeast Asian politics, but also to a broader audience, primarily because of its valuable theoretical insights into the conditions of human rights compliance. More particularly, it lays out specific hypothesized conditions under which transnational advocacy networks could succeed in pressuring states to comply with human rights norms. Whether or not her framework will hold true in other, similar cases elsewhere in the world is a challenge that other scholars can take up in future studies.

In closing, *Human Rights and State Security* is an impressive scholarly work which shows that transnational human rights advocacy is not at all an omnipotent force that can automatically push states to comply with human rights norms. Instead, it proposes several highly viable domestic and transnational conditions under which these human rights movements can succeed in ensuring state compliance. Those who are keenly interested in social movements, human rights and Southeast Asian politics should consider this book a highly insightful, carefully researched and significant work in political science. I suspect that this will be an influential work not only in Southeast Asian Studies, but also in the social scientific study of human rights compliance.

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