

Sharing Agenda-Setting Power

An Alternative Approach to Comparative Political Theory

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Abstract

Although comparative political theory (CPT) has successfully amplified non-Western voices, its mainstream approach remains inadequate to deparochialize political theory. Aiming to produce cross-cultural dialogues but at the same time treating non-Western political thought as the main, if not sole, research material, this approach unavoidably takes up Western topics and perspectives and hence keeps the power to set CPT research agenda from the non-Western world despite scholars' contrary intent. To address this inadequacy, I propose a supplementary alternative approach, which focuses on interrogating Western political thought by means of non-Western topics and perspectives. This approach increases CPT's inclusiveness by enabling the non-Western world to share research agenda-setting power with the West. It also has the long-term potential to "creolize" political theory and dissolve the convenient but dichotomizing West/non-West distinction. To justify this approach, I elaborate on antecedents to it, propose possible research topics that exemplify it, and tackle several potential counterarguments.

About the Speaker

Antong Liu is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Singapore Management University. As a normative political theorist, he studies and teaches ethical implications of motivations for political action. His research on both European and East Asian political thinkers, such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, and Han Feizi, has appeared in *American Political Science Review*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *The Review of Politics*, and *History of European Ideas*. His book project, entitled *The Sense of Honor: Political Resistance and Early Modern Political Theory*, systemically studies the sense of honor in early modern Western political thought from Machiavelli to Kant.



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