**Ofer Israeli, *Complex Effects of International Relations: Intended and Unintended Consequences of Human Actions in Middle East Conflict* (New York: SUNY Press, 2021), 310 pages.**

Ofer Israeli lectures at the Interdisciplinary Center at Herzliya in Israel on International Relations. He is a prolific scholar that in recent years published two other books on International Relations (IR) and theory of war. His new book on ‘complex effects’ of international politics uses six case studies from the Middle East during the Cold War in order to develop IR theory on complex effects. His work undermines the dominant literature on decision making which is based on linear paradigm of cause and effect.

Therefore, this book calls mainly to IR scholars who are also interested in past Middle East political crises to demonstrate how new complex theory can add to our understanding of past events. For the historians who are well read with the cases it is mainly helpful in sharpening the power of explanation and challenges common explanations to events in the Middle East. Traditional historians who work with specific archives would probably be dubbed by the author as trapped in Newtonian linear mode of thinking. He would call them to look to his theory in order to provide alternative explanations to past events. However, this is also a point of weakness in the main argument of the book which will be addressed below.

The heart and best parts of the study are in chapters 2 and 3. In these parts Israeli show his strength as an IR scholar and develop further the theory of ‘complex effects’ or ‘Complexity theory’. He identifies two families of nonlinear dynamic. The first family are unintended consequences – rebound results and derivative products (can sprung due to the anarchical state of the international system). The second family are circuitous but intended consequences. This is also about inevitable but foreseeable effects.

Israeli rightly argue that ‘the traditional focus of political science has been on the intended consequences of state actions’ (p.18). This chapter is full with dozens of examples to prove this theoretical argument. It encourages the reader to open the mind in future analysis when analyzing consequences. Rebound results are explained as ‘human actions that turn to be detrimental or costly in a manner unanticipated by the policy actor’ (p.18) for example the case of Herz theory on security dilemma of states. The second consequences are Derivative products that are outcomes which can be defined also as ‘simply of the track’ of the original plan. As such they can be positive, neutral or negative. This can also be explained as indirect consequences. The balance of Power as produced by international anarchy is an example (pp. 24-25).

Complexity of intended results which are circuitous is important notice by the author. It shows that looking for one particular result as a linear process narrow our thinking. In practice ‘foreign policy manipulation is the effort of a group…to structure a situation in a manner that maximizes the chances of a favorable outcome.’ (p. 31).

Chapter 3 develop the theory even further writing on complex-causality of International Relations and may be of value to future writers on topics of foreign policy, international politics and security in their analysis. These characteristics includes that the world affairs, the power of ideas, emotions, the mechanisms that nourish the system such as ripeness for change as a result of an event, the feedback to the system and finally the different outcomes (in plural) that can emerge from a single action. Taken together, chapter 2 and 3 produces a conceptual framework for complex effects analysis rather than linear effects.

The book has six case studies (chapters 4 to 9) all from the Middle East during the Cold War. Two cases are provided for each theoretical argument. Ch. 4 and 5 are on unintended consequences and ‘rebound results’. Chapter six and seven are on unintended consequences and ‘derivative products’, chapters eight and nine are on intended consequences. Methodologically, this work is based mainly on secondary published sources on the selected case studies. Therefore, the careful reader will find that it lacks in both the analysis of what actually the decision makers/agencies expected and how they posteriori assessed the consequences of their actions.

The first two Cases include the rebound result of the Six-day war of 1967 explained as the 1973 war and Israel’s Nuclear *Amimut* (ambiguity) that encouraged the prevention of an arms race. The second group of cases are unintended derivative products such as the linkage between the 1973 war and the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement and the Abadan/AJAX-Suez hidden linkage. The last two cases on intended consequences are on ‘the Circuitous Relationships between Military Results and Political outcome of the 1973 Yom Kippur War’. In this case the author focuses on the correlation of the initiation of the war and the outcome of renewal of negotiation between the Egyptians and the Israelis with the involvement of the two Superpowers. In the second case, ‘the Circuitous Nature of Operation AJAX’, the author show how the British manipulated the Americans to do their ‘dirty’ work of overthrowing Mossadegh in order to maintain their interests in Iran.

A close examination of chapter 4 on the ‘rebound result’ of the Six Days War in 1967 is one case that shows that the author theory is hard to implement. He rightly admit that the rebound of 1973 war was such from ‘Israeli perspective’ (p.76). This is not developed in his theory of how interactions between actors should be evaluated in term of rebound. Does rebound is a subjective term depended on the agency? Moreover, the analysis of the road to 1973 explain how Egypt humiliation during the war of 1967 was not counter balanced by successful peace initiatives. The author does justice in pointing that the refusal of Israel to the UN Jarring mission (1968-71) and the Rogers’s plan (1969-1971) may have given Sadat the positive feedback to increase his war plans but is this sufficient to explain the decision to go to war and its objectives? The author ignores the Soviet massive armament of the Egyptians and Syrians as well as the planning stages by these two Arab countries during preliminary years to the war. The successful War of Attrition from 1967 to 1970 that helped to build Arab national pride as well as strategic cooperation and planning do not receive enough attention.

In the conclusion Israeli claim that students of IR can ‘potentially discover the hidden side of policy choices, decision making, and policy implications’ (p.163). Adopting the book mode of analysis will provide that ‘actions will result in several outcomes’ (p.167). This is an important contribution of the book to IR scholarship. It will force future writers to be more careful and to adopt rigorous theories while working on causalities to international politics decisions and events.

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