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Emerging Powers and Global Order: Much Ado About Nothing?

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1 Introduction

People like simple stories and clear narratives. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the narrative of ‘emerging powers’ and ‘rising powers’ seemed to provide a clear and powerful picture of how international relations and global politics were changing. Indeed, there was an upsurge of policy and academic debate about the growing importance of non-Western regions and their leading states—notably Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the so-called BRICS states or emerging powers—for international politics and the world economy. The story suggested that power was diffusing away from the United States and the West; that the emerging powers were becoming far more consequential actors, both globally and within ‘their’ regions; and that, to remain effective and legitimate, global governance institutions needed to be reformed in order to accommodate their rise.

The main elements of this ‘rise’ narrative are by now well known. One of the most visible signs of change was increased diplomatic activism by large developing countries – coalitional politics within the World Trade Organization (WTO) following the Cancun Summit in 2003; the formation of the IBSA Dialogue Forum (India, Brazil and South Africa) in June 2003; the activities of the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) countries at the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in 2009; and the formation, diplomatic consolidation and gradual institutionalization of the BRICS themselves. The emerging powers were seen to be pursuing a dual track strategy. If one side of diplomatic activism was to seek greater influence and greater voice within existing institutions (as with the desire of Brazil and India to secure permanent membership of the UN Security Council), the other concerned the creation of alternative forms of cooperation, or what can be seen as ‘exit options’, such as the BRICS New Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), or China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

On their own these events might have attracted only passing attention. To many, however, they reflected deeper structural changes that were taking place in the global economy. The BRICS were deemed important not just because of their rapid economic development but

because of the predicted structural changes that would fundamentally alter the balance of global economic power and transform the global economy (Wilson and Purushothaman 2003). The narrative, then, was centred largely on the rise of the rest and the decline of the West, characterized by an irreversible shift of power from West to East (Kupchan 2012; Serfaty 2011; Layne 2012; Barma et al 2009; Zakaria 2012).

Yet the story has not unfolded in the way many analysts expected. Over fifteen years since the BRIC label first came into being in 2001, the plotline can easily be read to suggest that the story had ended.¹ Emerging economies have witnessed slower growth or even outright recession, an intensification of capital flight, and an erosion of the export-led growth on which their emergence was seen to depend. The economic frailties and vulnerabilities have become once more evident. At the same time, social tensions and political instability have spread, often driven by corruption and by protests at corruption. The political crises in Brazil and South Africa, for example, are deep, systemic and undoubtedly the most serious since their respective democratic transitions. Expectations that the emerging powers would overhaul and reform global governance institutions have now been deemed overly optimistic. Once heralded as the engine of global growth, many analysts now highlight the vacuous hype surrounding the BRICS and refer to the 'BRICS fallacy' (Pant 2013). Rather than a single collective story about the BRICS' linear trajectory to greater growth and power, we have observed instead multiple narratives of more measured and uneven growth across the emerging world (Sharma 2012; Foroohar 2015; Nossel 2016). Optimistic and linear accounts of the 'rise of the rest' have largely fallen out of fashion.

Right through the debate, many have argued against the myth of US decline, stressing instead the continuing dominance of the US (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Cox 2012). Neo-realists emphasize the multi-dimensional nature of US military power. From their perspective, if there has been any systemic change it is a story that concerns China alone (Mearsheimer 2010; 2014). Liberals such as John Ikenberry and Joseph Nye have

¹ The BRIC label was first coined by Jim O'Neill in 2001. South Africa joined in 2010, expanding the grouping to BRICS.

continued to stress the long-run strength and attractiveness of the global liberal order and the resources of soft power that attach uniquely to Western societies and to Western global modernity, although they concede that the current Trump administration is posing a challenge to the liberal project (Ikenberry 2017; Nye 2017).

At the end of the day, then, the initial ‘rise’ story has been far more tempered and muted, with narratives about ‘the rise and fall’ of the emerging powers gaining increasing traction. Initial projections that the emerging powers were going to remake the world have regressed into ‘business as usual’. For many, the debate is over and they have concluded, quite simply, that it was all much ado about not very much.

This chapter rejects such a view. We argue that by bringing power, agency and values back into the discussion, the emerging powers are in many ways leading us to reorient our thinking about how the world has been, is, and should be governed. The aim here is not to engage in a comprehensive assessment of the emerging powers’ impact on global order—that would be well beyond the scope of a single paper—but rather to consciously reflect on current debates and to use the emerging powers as a lens to open up broader conceptual and theoretical questions surrounding power, constructions of the ‘global’, and what this means for the renegotiation of global order and the changing character of global governance.

This chapter proceeds in two parts. The first section focuses on the globalization of international society, highlighting the need to go beyond material conceptions of power and to locate the emerging powers within a broader historical timeframe. This involves moving beyond a narrative whereby the emerging powers are depicted “as helpless actors who happened to stumble into an unexpected and undeserved decade of growth” (Stuenkel 2016, 197). We thus lay out an alternative account of the diffusion in the global distribution of political agency, creating the potential for greater resistance and contestation over who defines and participates in global politics.

The second section examines the implications of this alternative account for contemporary debates about global order and global governance. It outlines how, for much of the post-Cold War period, global order was largely understood through the Western liberal frame of global governance. We identify the limitations and critiques of such framing, highlighting instead that the position and evolving role of the emerging powers must be understood in light of the on-going relationship between contrasting conceptions, theories and practices of global order. We therefore emphasize the on-going centrality of fundamental political issues concerning representation, responsibility, legitimacy and authority in an evolving global order.

2 The Globalization of International Society

In order to understand why the simple story of emerging powers is wrong, we need to challenge, in quite fundamental ways, the terms of the debate. Framing it in classical IR terms as a question of the distribution of material power, of ‘who is up, and who is down’, ignores the historicity of the very different ways in which social power is constituted and in which systemic change occurs. Any analysis that seeks to examine the emerging powers within a shifting global order must thus place them within a broader historical context and move beyond material conceptions of power. Indeed, analyses that focus primarily on material power “fail to take into account the social, nonmaterial dynamics of international relations through which states negotiate their relative status and ascribe legitimacy to order” (Miskimmon and O’Loughlin 2017, 281). Discussions of power and influence must therefore also emphasize the importance of ideational factors, introducing normative and social content to understandings of power, and—most fundamentally—an understanding that power is nested and embedded in social structures (Barnett and Duvall 2005; Bull 1977; Hurd 1999; Wendt 1999). This also includes a reconsideration of history and viewing all patterns of global order as essentially historically constructed. A central part of the problem of global order in the 20th century, after all, was the struggle of the Third World or later the Global South against what was widely understood as the on-going legacy of the

Western-dominated international society and global order that rose to power in the 19th century. It is a recognition that the empowerment and social and political mobilization of the previously subordinate has been one of the great drivers of historic change, indeed perhaps the most important of all; and that, as a consequence, the global order in which we live is now far more strongly global.

A different understanding of how international society has become far more strongly global emphasizes five elements. At its core this is a story of power diffusion. The claim is that the historically unprecedented Western dominance created in the 19th century has indeed been challenged—although not in a linear process and with many remaining elements of hierarchy, stratification and inequality. But the claim is also that this process is fundamentally about the diffusion of political agency and involves many varied forms of power.

First, it begins with the notion of the globalization of international society itself. Although globalization is usually seen in contradistinction to the state and as a phenomenon that poses a fundamental challenge to the state, the most ignored—or taken for granted—aspect of globalization has been the globalization of the nation-state. For the first time in human history there is a single global political system with a set of legal and political institutions, diplomatic practices, and accompanying ideologies that developed in Europe and which, in the traditional parlance, ‘expanded’ to form a global international society (Bull and Watson 1984).

To be sure, a significant amount of attention has been devoted to the fate of the state in the developing world, to ‘failed states’ and ‘ungoverned spaces’, and to the extent to which the Weberian ideal-type of the ‘nation-state’ provides a very uncertain guide to the non-Western world. Yet despite all these qualifications, it is the globalization of an international political society that has provided the most important framework for socio-political agency and for the organization of economic development, whether that development has been statist and developmentalist, or market-liberal. The state and state-based projects of

national power and national assertion continue to be central to most of what is going on inside many large developing states and societies. From this perspective it is simply erroneous to suggest that the state is not central to the IR of the Global South, as much critical writing suggests. Undoubtedly, we need to recognize that there are many varieties of state and nation-building which, even if they share an elective affinity with the European 'original', are distinctive and different. Nevertheless, broadly based processes of state-building and nation-building have taken place, which, for all the fragilities and failures, underpin the globality of the international political system.

Second, if we think historically, we are quickly forced to look beyond the immediate post-Cold War period. The focus on the post-Cold War period and on the apparent naturalness of a Western-dominated, self-described 'liberal' order has led to a bizarre foreshortening, indeed distortion, of history. There was never a liberal global order during the Cold War as the US was clearly not hegemonic globally. Geopolitically, there was a balance of power, albeit shifting and asymmetrical. Ideologically, the Cold War involved a clash of rival visions of Western modernity, particularly as it was played out across the post-colonial world. Equally, the US and the West were challenged both in power terms and in ideological terms by the Third World (Bull and Watson 1984; Westad 2005). From this perspective, contemporary challenges to the Western-led global order are not new but rather represent a continuation of an older pattern that was interrupted but not fundamentally dislodged by the brief and fleeting period of US unipolarity. So, far from being some kind of normal state, the period from 1990 to the early 2000s is the historical anomaly, not the norm.

This history also helps us to understand the reasons and motivations for challenge, above all to claim recognition and respect. In some cases, we need to enquire into on-going perceptions of second-class treatment, subalterneity, marginalization, and of subordinate status within an unequal and exploitative global political and economic system. In other cases, we need to explore the culturally or civilizationaly distinctive character of particular

emerging states and societies. Hence what mattered about the rise of Japan in the first half of the 20th century was not simply its military or economic power, but rather its role as the first Asian great power to assert the norm of racial equality and to use pan-Asianism as a vehicle to remove the influence of Western powers. A central theme of many contemporary Chinese or Indian views of a more just global order is therefore the need for civilizational pluralism and a greater understanding and tolerance of different cultural traditions.

Third, the power involved in this process has seldom been about the straightforward possession of material resources. There have certainly been major examples of material shifts, such as the aforementioned rise of Japan in the first half of the 20th century. The agency of the non-Western world has nevertheless taken many different forms: civil resistance that played such an important role in many phases of the unwinding of imperial projects, such as the British in India; and armed resistance in which the power of the apparently powerless raised the costs of fighting and undermined any easy link between military ‘victory’ and political ‘success’—from Algeria, to Vietnam, to Iraq and Syria. Much of this agency has revolved around legitimacy claims that challenge the prerogatives of individual states and empires to have a natural right to rule (based, for example, on superior knowledge or civilizational status), or the claims of the jointly powerful to exercise a special role in the global order (as with concerts of major powers). These forms of agency were fundamental in many of the great normative changes of the 20th century, such as racial equality and self-determination, that resulted in revolution and the end of formal empire.

Such agency remains central, particularly in claims for representation and the legitimacy of global order in the 21st century. Whatever the short-term fixes, such as revising the voting structure of the Bretton Woods institutions or reforming membership of the UN Security Council, the deeper and more fundamental issue concerns the meaning of global democracy in the 21st century. It has become ever harder to avoid discussion of the proper scope of democratic ideas beyond the state and how the values of democracy should be applied to

global governance and to the global social choices that will inevitably shape individuals, communities and states in the 21st century. This involves recognizing that there are different forms of power diffusion. One view is that power is shifting to major regional and emerging states as part of the on-going dynamic of the rise and fall of Great Powers. This is the whole point of stories about 'Superpower China', 'India Rising' or 'Brazil's Big Moment'—a limited number of important new actors acquiring substantial amounts of power (Bergsten et al 2006; Mathur et al 2005; De Onis 2008). This narrative also captures new institutional groups and clubs of power such as the BRICS or the G20 as evidence of the dramatically increased role of new players in global politics.

An alternative view, however, is that we are witnessing a much more general diffusion of power, often linked to technological transformations, changes in the global economy and new patterns of connectivity. Parag Khanna (2009), for instance, lays primary emphasis on structural economic changes and the ways in which flows of people, energy, and economics are shifting the map of global politics. On this account the international system is increasingly characterized by a diffusion of power to many private actors and transnational groups, by a diffusion of preferences with more voices demanding to be heard both globally and within states, and by a diffusion of ideas and values, with a reopening of the big questions of social, economic and political organization that were supposedly brought to an end with the post-Cold War liberal ascendancy. Much of this account focuses on new forms of technologically enabled social and political mobilization with the power to disrupt, veto, and deny legitimacy to established institutions and political practices. Pressed by emerging powers and new social forces, the notion that the current distribution of decision-making power can be defended in democratic terms is therefore likely to come under increasing attack. Indeed, such arguments may well come to play the sort of critical role in the 21st century that the idea of national self-determination played in the 20th century.

Fourth, we need to revisit the liberal modernist accounts of why the developing and emerging world mattered and matters. Take the case of democracy and democratization. By the mid-1980s, Western thinking had moved from stressing the limits of democratic change in the developing world to emphasizing the breadth and depth of demands for more inclusive, responsive and accountable systems of government, as well as the potential for productive democracy promotion. As the 1990s progressed, however, democratization theorists had ever-greater difficulty in understanding the succession of surprises and disappointments in terms of actual democratic outcomes, despite a generally favourable external and global environment. Many democracies, old and new, have failed to meet the demands and expectations for more responsive political systems. Interventionist democracy promotion has failed from Iraq, to Libya and to Afghanistan. Non-democracies have in fact more confidently asserted policies of active resistance to preferred Western models. Whilst the social drive for accountability and responsiveness show little sign of abating, there appears to be neither any clear universal model nor an easily identifiable pathway to greater democratization, but rather a multiplicity of complex and crosscutting trajectories. The shared background assumptions of how modernizing change will underpin the socialization of the non-Western world have eroded and come under severe strain, as we will discuss in the next section. It is in this sense that Kissinger (2014, 364-365) speaks not so much of a multipolarity of power “but a world of increasingly contradictory realities.” It is increasingly hard to ignore the intense contestation surrounding notions of a global liberal order, and the extent to which this contestation is not just about power and interests but reflects sharply contested narratives of the global—nationalist, religious, cultural and historical.

The fifth and final element has to do with global capitalism and domestic instabilities. Undeniably, the developing world is far more densely integrated than before. South-South trade and connectivity are very different today—regardless of whether these have been driven by market-capitalist dynamics, mercantilist resource-driven imperatives or by state-directed initiatives (as with the BRI). It is also the case that the economic dominance of the

US and its allies continues in steady decline: the share of high-income countries will fall from 64% of global output in 1990 (measured at purchasing power) to 39% in 2020, and the US share from 22% to 15%.

Yet it is worth noting that economic successes and failures are not straightforwardly related to political importance. The great 20th century conflicts were not the result of inter-state anarchy alone, but were rather the result of the instability of Western capitalist modernity, in which inter-state anarchy, structural economic inequality and instability, as well as national and social conflict interacted in deeply dangerous ways. Although much attention is given (quite correctly) to the extremes of inequality, it is the particular political distribution of gains and losses that is most important—the losers in the developed world but also the winners and the misleadingly entitled new-middle class in the emerging world, both of whom are clearly the locus of a great deal of populist nationalism. Economic success, as well as failure, in the emerging world can create the basis for political turbulence, especially if legitimacy based on economic success is weakened by slowing growth, rising inequality, and vulnerability to the vicissitudes of the market. In the case of today's emerging powers, then, the links between domestic economic and political instability and foreign policy action are complex. Political and economic crises may spell an end to coherent foreign policy and an inability to engage in negotiations over global order. They can also engender nationalist assertion, identity politics, and the use of foreign policy precisely as a response to domestic difficulties and threats to government or regime survival.

3 Whither Global Order?

If this analysis is correct, what then follows for our thinking about global order and global governance? Patterns of governance and questions about how the world should be ordered are clearly not new (Rosenau 2005; Weiss 2009; and Hurrell 2007). As we have highlighted earlier, however, what constitutes or counts as the 'global' in global governance has

changed fundamentally. Whilst the 'global' has traditionally been defined by a select few, shifts in the global distribution of power have meant greater diffusion and disaggregation through a wider set of global actors and the construction of multiple governance sites. We have evolved from a European international society to a global one, with non-Western regional and emerging powers assuming important roles in a shifting geopolitical and economic landscape. This has resulted in the potential for greater resistance and contestation over who participates as authoritative and legitimate actors to define which norms and values ought to matter in global governance. At the same time, there is the need to establish greater clarity over what exactly is being challenged, contested and renegotiated. Through our continued focus on power, agency and values, we examine three interrelated conceptual clusters that the debate on emerging powers highlight: the politics of socialization and responsibility in a complex global order; status quo and revisionism in an evolving global order; and the normative aspects of institutional redesign for the future of global governance.

The Politics of Socialization and Responsibility in a Complex Global Order

In the first place, the critique of Western liberal global governance has come into sharper focus. The starting point for much of mainstream IR has been an unquestioned assumption that globalization is the dominant global reality, with institutions needed to deal with the ever more complex dilemmas of collective action that emerge in a globalized world. The complexity of governance challenges meant that international law and international regimes would necessarily increase in number, scope and variety. As institutionalization deepened and the discourse of governance spread to countries that had previously been resistant (China most obviously), it became increasingly common to suggest that the global governance frame implied a broader and far-reaching change in the character of international politics: that the global governance optic was replacing anarchy as the most important way of thinking about the subject.

To that end, much of the discourse pertaining to the emerging powers revolved around ‘socialization’ and ‘responsibility’, with ‘the West’ socializing ‘the rest’ into more responsible patterns of behaviour. Initially oriented towards urging a rising China to become a ‘responsible stakeholder’ and be more heavily invested in sustaining the system from which it has benefited, the language of responsibility expanded to encompass the other emerging powers (Zoellick 2005; Narlikar 2013; Dormandy 2007; Brimmer 2014). It is premised on the US strategy—what some have labelled ‘the responsibility doctrine’—that the emerging powers should assume a greater share of responsibility and contribute to global governance under American-led collective action (Hachigan and Shorr 2013). Emerging powers should act as responsible stewards, providing global public goods and contributing to the maintenance of a Western-dominated international order.

The historical preconditions for these assumptions were nevertheless largely marginalized or rarely investigated, driven by the apparent stability of a Western and US-dominated geopolitical order and the belief in long-run modernizing dynamics that would counter the types of ideological or cultural divergences that had all too often stood in the way of effective governance in the past. From this perspective, mainstream Western writing on governance and institutions all too easily slips into an analysis of how ‘we’ can ‘order’ and ‘govern’ globalization in a way that preserves Western primacy and reflects ‘our’ own values and interests. These types of debates on global order were therefore dominated by a dual liberal hegemony: a historicist hegemony that too easily assumed that history is moving down a one-way street; and an analytical liberal hegemony that tended to work with a narrow notion of agency, with too little room for the historical analysis of the structures within which supposedly ahistorical logics of rational choice and collective action play out, and still less room for understanding their temporal and geographical rootedness.

Over the years, however, discourses surrounding the emerging powers have made it clear that such Western liberal narratives represent only one part of the picture. They revealed

that liberal writing on global order and global governance tended to skirt far too easily over the problem of managing power, especially unequal power, and the difficulties of mediating between conflicting values. The focus on collective action problems and the provision of global public goods glossed over concerns with the ordering and preservation of power, as well as tensions between the governors and the governed, with rather little attention to the voices and values of the non-Western world. Indeed, from the perspective of the Global South, existing global governance structures institutionalize hierarchies that perpetuate Western hegemony and ideas (Vieira 2012, 313).

Much of the academic analysis since then has taken the form of critique—demonstrating the ways in which privileging the European experience has denied the non-West of their own history, contesting various assumptions and linear trajectories of the ‘liberal’ order, and giving far greater weight to inequality, hierarchy and coercion (Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Dunne 2010; Bukovansky 2016). Simple socialization models are deemed problematic because they assume a one-directional process, denying agency to the emerging powers, to their normative preferences, and to the evolving character of global order (Epstein 2012). More recent works have conceptualized socialization as a two-way process, where the emerging powers are shaped by, but are also shaping, existing and new norms (Pu 2012; Terhalle 2011; Yang 2017). This ascribes greater agency to the emerging powers, allowing us to examine their role in supporting, resisting and reshaping aspects of the global order. This in turn raises the importance of examining contested narratives of the global, as well as individual historical memories. It also allows us to frame the discussion not simply in terms of whether and how ideas matter, but whose ideas matter (Acharya 2014).

A similar analytical shift may be said of the political construction of ideas about ‘responsible behaviour’ and the discourse of ‘responsible stakeholders’. What has emerged out of the debate on the responsibility of emerging powers has been an increasingly critical awareness that ascribing responsibility is a highly political act that is embedded in the role

and function of power. It brings to the forefront discerning questions about which actors have the legitimacy and authority to assign responsibility and define the standards of what is appropriate. Many emerging powers are in fact increasingly disgruntled at being lectured accorded to Western-established criteria and themselves want to have some sense of ownership in global governance structures. As Wolfgang Reinicke and Thorsten Benner (2013, 110) elucidate, “[i]t is high time to question this narrative about the automatic, adaptive expansion of global governance and the Western-built global order. It is far from clear whether newly powerful countries such as Brazil, India and China will gladly take their pre-assigned seats as ‘responsible stakeholders’ in a Western-built global order.” The politics of responsibility thus needs to be examined in the context of a far more fluid and complex international society, with greater emphasis placed on the struggles and contestation over the location, object, nature and rationale of responsibility (Loke 2016). Indeed, as we shall discuss in the next section, responsible stakeholdership in an evolving global order, particularly under the new Trump administration, has become an increasingly complex issue.

It is therefore far more accurate to recognize the complex, hybrid and contested character of global order—an order that faces a range of classical Westphalian challenges (especially with respect to geopolitics and power transitions) but one that faces these challenges in a context marked by strong post-Westphalian characteristics (in terms of interdependence, globalization and the changed character of legitimacy). In reality, there is no single liberal international order but rather myriad dimensions and layers of order comprising various rules, norms and institutions that are often in inherent tension, or contradiction, with one another (Fontaine and Rapp-Hooper 2016). International order, in that regard, is “endemically contested normative space” (Zhang 2016, 798). It is this layered, hybrid and contested character that is central to the way in which we might best think about the emerging powers and a changing global order.

Status Quo and Revisionism in an Evolving Global Order

A global order characterized by contestation and complexity, in turn, compels us to examine the politically charged questions of status quo and revisionism in a very different light. Certainly, much of the debate has been oriented towards investigating whether the emerging powers are status quo or revisionist powers. Unlike status quo powers that are content with the existing ordering principles of the international system and thus seek self-preservation of their positions in that system, revisionist states “value what they covet more than what they currently possess...[and] will employ military force to change the status quo and to extend their values” (Schweller 1994, 105). The prevailing order is viewed as unjust and illegitimate, and their primary revisionist goals are to destabilize the system and advance their prestige.

Underlying this debate has been the common assumption that the dominant state or group of states are associated with the status quo, and that it is the emerging powers that seek to challenge the ‘basic norms of the system’ or to revise its ‘foundational principles’ (Chan 2004). This is nevertheless an assumption that requires a degree of unpacking. The US, for instance, has rarely been a status quo power and, as its power has grown so too has the revisionist character of its foreign policy. Since the end of the Cold War it has been in many ways a strongly revisionist power, sometimes a revolutionary power: in the 1990s in terms of pressing for new norms on intervention, the opening of markets and the embedding of particular sets of liberal values within international institutions; in the early 2000s in its attempt to recast norms on regime change, the use of force and the conditionality of sovereignty more generally; and under the current Trump administration challenging the core principles and values underpinning liberal democracy (Ikenberry 2017).²

² This brief summary should not imply that the sources of US revisionism run as a continuous thread through the post-Cold War period. Whilst there are important continuities both before and after the second Bush administration, there are major differences. In particular, the neo-conservative self-description of themselves as ‘hard Wilsonians’ should not disguise the extent to which the Bush administration was, in Jean-Francois Drolet’s words, “ferociously predatory on liberal values” (2010, 91).

The emerging powers have thus not faced the US and the West within a stable, static or unchanging notion of a 'Westphalian order'. Quite the contrary. Just as countries such as China had come to accept and to stress many of the key principles of the old pluralist system such as non-intervention and state sovereignty, the dominant Western states were insisting that many of the most important norms of the system ought to change, above all in ways that threatened greater interventionism and sought to mould the ways in which societies were to be ordered domestically. Nor is this simply a story of a traditional sovereignty-obsessed Global South seeking to remain in its comfort zone. In the case of climate change, it has been the South that has sought to protect the globalist commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement against the revisionism of the US (Nanda and Pande 2017). Most fundamentally, asking whether the emerging powers are status quo or revisionist powers requires unpacking what we mean by 'status quo' and 'revisionism'. In many cases, such juxtaposition may often be too binary and it is more apt instead to understand the different ways in which the emerging powers—and indeed established powers—are supporters, challengers and shirkers in different issue areas (Schweller and Pu 2011).

Revisionism has historically been far more frequently the result of particular sets of foreign policy ideas within rising states that explain why the existing status quo is unacceptable or even intolerable. This has often been closely associated with struggles against humiliation and discrimination, and a desire for equality, recognition and respect. Such status aspirations and a desire for recognition may lead states to cultivate a particular international standing and adopt various strategies to attain their goals. Such strategies could include mimicking existing norms to achieve in-group status, seeking to replace the dominant powers or the construction of a parallel order through which the emerging powers would be able to obtain a more favourable position—what Larson and Shevchenko (2010) have respectively termed social mobility, social competition and social creativity. At the core of these status aspirations, however, lie important points pertaining to audience and followership. This is fundamentally so because recognition is a communicative "inter-subjective process through which agents are constituted as respected and esteemed

members of a society, in this case the society of states, and is thus a co-determinate of their identity” (Nel 2010, 953). Material understandings of power thus provide an insufficient basis for understanding the reasons for challenge and the crucial importance of status and recognition as key drivers of the emerging powers’ foreign policy behaviour.

Global Governance Moving Forward: The Normative Aspects of Institutional Redesign

If governance in international society revolves around the management of unequal power, the institutionalization of common interest and the mediation of differences in values (Hurrell 2005, 35), then what do shifts in global power mean for the institutional future of global governance? To be sure, many questions remain on the nature and impact of emerging states on global governance structures, and vice versa (Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Chin 2015; Gaskarth 2015); Kahler 2013; Vezirgiannidou 2013; and Krickovic 2015). With the establishment of these new power geometries, global governance arrangements are to an extent now accommodating a realignment of power to include the non-West. Informal institutions such as the G20, for instance, are perceived as having made a better effort in terms of representation and hence legitimacy, breaking down the barriers between the traditional ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ with key members of the Global South assuming full membership in the club—even as they continue to reproduce certain aspects of the existing order (Cooper and Pouliot 2015; Heine 2010). In addition to seeking greater representation in existing global governance institutions, the emerging powers have also created new rule-making fora to enhance their international status, elevate their negotiating power and advance their interests and values (Stuenkel 2014; Paradise 2016). Informal caucuses such as the BRICS, BRICSAM (the BRICS and Mexico) and IBSA provide greater regional, cultural and historical representation for a Global South seeking to address perceived imbalances and pursue distributive justice in the global governance architecture (Heine 2010; Vieira 2012).

Debates surrounding the emerging powers thus open up questions concerning the composition, legitimacy and effectiveness of global governance institutions in the face of

rising transnational challenges and geopolitical shifts in power (Zürn and Stephen 2010). Many of these developments can be viewed as part of a normative project to ensure that global governance is not just about what 'is', but what 'ought to be' (Weiss and Wilkinson 2014; Finnemore 2014). As Alexander Wendt informs, "institutional design creates and reproduces political *power*." Designers of institutions make normative choices about which values institutions should pursue, thus empowering some actors and not others (2001, 1035, emphasis in original). In that regard, the emerging powers undoubtedly have a greater capacity to reorganize global governance structures by reshaping existing institutions and creating new ones. They possess increasing agency to influence what counts as appropriate behaviour, determine which values governance arrangements should pursue and reconceptualize authority in international society. It is logical, then, to examine the emerging powers' historically grounded values and normative commitments, to investigate how traditional patterns of order and governance are being reconstituted and explore whether we are observing a new politics of inclusion and exclusion.

Recognizing the shifting contours of global governance nevertheless requires greater clarity on what exactly is being challenged. Are the emerging powers resisting a liberal global order, or simply one that is Western-led? Are we likely to move towards what Kupchan (2012) has referred to as 'no one's world', characterized by multiple modernities, diversity and competing visions of order? To be sure, many highlight the explicit challenge to the existing order's key liberal features and principles such as democratic governance and individual rights (Barma et al. 2009). Others highlight how the liberal order is being redefined, drawing attention to the different varieties of liberalism and liberal norms that the established and emerging powers prioritize (Kahler 2016; Stephen 2014). Yet others underscore the creation of a parallel order that challenges Western hegemony but not its existing liberal structures. From this perspective, the creation of supplementary or parallel institutions demonstrates a systematic realignment and reshaping of global order beyond American or Western claims to leadership (Stuenkel 2016; Heilmann et al. 2014). Indeed, as the AIIB demonstrates, the issue may have less to do with a potential challenge to the

'liberal' order—because arguably on many accounts the newly established organization embodies a liberal framework: working within a liberal capitalist system with a 'flatter' governance structure and greater inclusivity when compared to many other existing liberal institutions—and more to do with the fact that it reflects the emergence of an institutional order that is not 'US-led' (Bukovansky 2016, 94). It is these shifting contours that present the most interesting questions moving forward.

At the same time, this all needs to be located within an awareness that the categories of 'emerging powers' and the 'Global South', along with their various institutional manifestations (BRICS, BRICSAM and others), can be inherently problematic. Differing agendas on the part of the individual powers, inter-club competition and differences in political systems have led many to argue that until and unless member states can collectively develop clearer common objectives and adopt a coherent international strategy, any aspirational goals of the emerging powers as a coalition or community of collective leadership are tentative at best (Brütsch and Papa 2013; Degaut 2015). Different clubs of power also often advance varying normative, economic and institutional priorities. Such factors add to the necessary complexity when examining the emerging powers' impact on the changing character of global governance.

The bottom line is nevertheless clear: reforming global order and global governance involves rediscovering power and the management of power (Paris 2015). It needs to evolve around a renegotiated order that accommodates both the established and emerging powers, with both sets of powers drawing on "some common store of ideas in articulating status and leadership claims, and negotiating changes in the structure of authority" (Bukovansky 2016, 106). Most fundamentally, this will involve institutional adaptation and accommodation: re-arranging the seats around the table, and in some cases expanding the size of the table, to include those with the power and relevant interests. This will mean a good deal of 'global à la cartism', and it makes sense to think about order not in terms of grand architectural designs but rather in terms of a mosaic of different groupings and a

great deal of what Richard Haas (2010) has called ‘messy multilateralism’. A pragmatic reading of the future, in this regard, “will see not the renovation or construction of a glistening new international architecture but rather the continued spread of an unattractive but adaptable multilateral sprawl that delivers a partial measure of international cooperation through a welter of informal arrangements and piecemeal approaches” (Patrick 2014, 59). The key challenge will be in ensuring that such arrangements are complementary and cooperative, rather than inherently conflictual. On the one hand, collaboration amongst the major established and emerging powers would help to mitigate the widely-discussed dangers of power transitions and increased multipolarity; and on the other, such collaboration would provide a framework for the kind of stable understandings amongst the key powers without which more elaborate forms of multilateralism and global governance are unable to function.

4 Conclusion

Debates on the emerging powers have not stood still and there is no reason to expect that they will. However, it is not helpful to focus too narrowly or obsessively on the world of op-ed commentary or on the feelings of a particular moment. We have suggested instead that there has been a long-term erosion of the Western dominance of international society. International society today is far more strongly global—not just in terms of economic globalization but in terms of the capacity of a much wider range of states and societies to mobilize, express their values and interests, and contest the policies of the Western-dominated and US-led order. The most crucial dimension of the ‘global’ therefore lies in the increased capacity of a far wider range of states and the social forces that they reflect to become active subjects and agents in the politics of global ordering. This means that we cannot avoid investigating the historical self-understandings of a much wider and culturally diverse range of players as central to global governance research. Different conceptions of global order thus need to be unpacked and carefully analyzed. We need to trace the changes in the range of systemic factors and incentives that shape the interests

and identity of emerging powers and help explain their international behaviour. This is important because today's emerging states and societies are crucial, not just because of what they are able to do individually, but rather because of the way in which their collective and cumulative choices have the potential to feed back into the balance between different elements of international order.

We have also argued that we need to look well beyond a story of material power shifting in a world of states. Power hierarchies are not simply about material power and the 'power' of today's rising powers is not just a matter of the power resources that they possess. It derives from the role that they are playing within functional institutions created to deal with ever more pressing sets of challenges (such as the management of the global economy, climate change and nuclear proliferation) and from their equally necessary role in the creation of legitimate institutions and representative structures of global governance. The stability of power transitions will therefore be crucially affected by the accommodation of rising powers and the re-allocation of seats around the top table of international politics (Paul 2016).

The challenge now is how we can go about negotiating new effective arrangements between the emerging powers and the established powers. As we have highlighted above, the emerging powers have opened up important debates concerning the politics of representation, legitimacy and responsibility in an evolving global order. Binary depictions seeking to examine whether the emerging powers are status quo or revisionist powers, and of investigating socialization as a one-way linear process fail to capture the far more complex, contested and layered dimensions of an evolving global order. Moving forward, this means that we will need to pay greater attention to the normative drivers of global governance structures, both new and existing. On the whole, then, the fundamental issues raised by the 'emerging powers and global order' debate remain all too evident and politically and normatively vital. By bringing power, agency and values back into the renegotiation of order, the emerging powers have in many ways reoriented our thinking

about how to construct a more inclusive and pluralist International Relations that is both *of* and *about* the international.

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