



**Marie Curie Initial Training Network Programme:
Power and Region in a Multipolar Order (PRIMO)**

Analytical Toolkit: Key Concepts and Select Readings

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Historical Framing

Any analytical framework that seeks to examine the emerging powers and the shifts in global order must place them within a broader historical context. How might we conceptualise the emerging powers as representative of the Third World and the Global South from a historical perspective? Although the concept of the Third World emerged in the early 1950s during the Cold War and gained prominence after the 1955 Bandung Conference, we need to locate its origins in a broader historical narrative—one of colonialism, the expansion of the European international society as well as anti-colonial resistance and revolution (Bull and Watson 1984; Westad 2005). We need also to examine the various purposes for which the concept of the Third World has been employed: as a political and economic project, as a driver for mobilisation and revolution, and as a common identity based on a shared history and experience of colonialism. To be sure, dominant Western narratives have over the years been subject to much critique and there is significant work being done on how to construct a more inclusive and pluralist IR that is both of and about the international. (Acharya and Buzan 2010; Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Tickner 2011; Tickner and Wæver 2009). Some important questions emerging from this continuing debate are: How has the ‘global’ or ‘international’ been constructed and how is this evolving? How has the story about the ‘expansion’ of international society been told and how is this being revisited? What histories are we now working with, and are we simply replacing Eurocentrism and European ethnocentrism with Chinese or Indian ethnocentrism? How can we go about bringing all these together in conceiving the ‘global’? If we acknowledge the connections between power and the production of knowledge, how is the rise of the emerging powers affecting the way we think about history or about how we study IR?

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Power

How can we understand power? Power is a concept that is central to the study of Western IR, yet it is one that remains contested and controversial. In Dahl's (1957) classic formulation, power is conceived as a relation between actors, where an actor has power over another when it causes that actor to do something that it would otherwise not do. In this regard, power is about influence (Holsti 1964). In IR theory, realists understand power as resources, defined primarily in terms of material capability (Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1979). Others such as Barnett and Duvall (2005) lament the IR tendency to view power through a single, realist, conception and argue instead for a focus on the multiple conceptions of power through their taxonomy of compulsory, institutional, structural and productive power. Constructivist readings of power place strong emphasis on the importance of ideational and non-material factors. They introduce intersubjective and social content to understandings of power (Hurd 1999; Reus-Smit 2014; Wendt 1999). On the whole, the concept of power continues to be heavily debated in IR scholarship. Some of the key questions are: What is the nature, role and purpose of power? What are the different dimensions and forms of power? How useful is the concept of soft power (Nye 2004; Hall 2010)? Who possesses power and how is it exercised? How is it resisted or contested? How should we conceptualise notions of legitimacy, authority and responsibility—as separate to, or constitutive of, power?

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Global Governance

Patterns of governance and international cooperation on transnational challenges are clearly not new. Contemporary international society, however, now comprises a greater diversity of actors and greater diffusion of power. We have moved from a state-centric world to a “multi-centric” one, incorporating states and other collectivities such as multi-national corporations, non-governmental organisations and private groups (Rosenau 2005). Yet what exactly is ‘global’ about global governance (Hoffman 2005)? How have global governance structures emerged and evolved? To what extent should we view global governance as integrative, fragmented, networked or hierarchical? Who is doing the governing and what is the relationship between the governors and the governed? How can we incorporate normative aspects so that global governance is not just about what ‘is’ but what ‘ought to be’ (Weiss and Wilkinson 2014; Finnemore 2014)? Agency, effectiveness, representation, accountability, compliance and legitimacy are all important dimensions of the debate on global governance. The role of institutions is also central to the management of power and international cooperation. How can existing global governance institutions be redesigned to address increasing security, economic, environmental and technological challenges in international society? Are we moving towards the reform of formal institutions or, as Patrick (2014) argues, the continued spread of informal arrangements and piecemeal approaches to multilateralism? How can we conceptualise global governance amidst ongoing geopolitical tensions and competition in the world?

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Order

Order is another central concept in the study of Western IR. A commonly cited definition is Bull's, who defines international order as "a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society" (1977, p. 8). For Bull, these goals are the preservation of the society of states, the maintenance of the independence of states, international peace, the limitation of violence, the honouring of agreements and the stabilization of possession by rules of property (mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial jurisdiction). International order is maintained through common interests, rules and institutions. Others such as Hurrell (2007) place greater emphasis on the ethical and normative dimensions of an evolving world order. Ikenberry (2009) refers to an "authority crisis" in the US-led liberal order and outlines three different pathways for the future order: a flatter, non-hegemonic, order with greater institutionalisation; a renegotiated hegemonic order; and the rise of competitive regional and geopolitical spheres of influence resulting in the breakdown of the liberal rules-based international order. Realists, on the other hand, generally reject the idea of an institutionally binding international order (Schweller 2001). For the most part, scholars and policymakers talk about order in various manifestations: liberal, Western, Westphalian, post-Westphalian, coercive, hegemonic, balance of power, hierarchical, consensual, unipolar, multipolar, anarchic, pluralist or solidarist—to name a few. In his work, Alagappa (2003) establishes a typology of order. He distinguishes between instrumental, normative-contractual and solidarist orders, and outlines the different pathways to and instruments of order. In many ways, however, order remains an elusive concept. What are the distinctions between regional, international and global order? How can we conceptualise the relationship between order and justice? How has order been constructed and how is the current order shifting or being renegotiated? What does order mean in a globalised world?

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Civilisation

To a large extent, Huntington's article and book (1993, 1996) resurrected the concept of civilisation in world politics. His controversial work sparked numerous debates and has also been critiqued as essentialist and Eurocentric (Hall and Jackson 2007; Hobson 2007). Many have also argued for the need to conceive of civilisations as plural and pluralist, and to examine inter-civilisation encounters and engagements (Katzenstein 2010). Civilisation is undeniably a complex term with a variety of meanings. It is made even more complex when we bring in related but distinct concepts of race, culture and religion. According to Hall and Jackson, "civilizations are better understood as ongoing *processes*, and in particular, as ongoing processes through which boundaries are continually produced and reproduced. These processes, necessarily power-laden, must be analysed in their proper social contexts" (2007, p. 6). Civilisation has also been used as an ideal benchmark of progress and (a particular type of) modernity. This can be viewed in the 'standard of civilisation' discourse that established boundaries between what is civilised and barbarian, and how such discourse has evolved in contemporary international society (Buzan 2014; Bowden 2009; Gong 1984; Zhang 2014). How can we understand the concept of civilisation? To what extent can we ascribe agency to civilisations? How are discourses of civilisations being constructed and mobilised in the current global order?

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Regional Powers

The grading and geopolitical dimensions of power continue to be prevalent in IR. Nevertheless, there exist significant overlaps and ambiguity over how ‘regional powers’, ‘emerging powers’ and ‘middle powers’ are employed in the literature, as well as how such terminology may be distinct from ‘great powers’ (Nolte 2010; Bull 1977; Wight 1978). This is complicated even further by the usage of ‘regional great powers’. How can we distinguish between emerging and regional powers? What are the defining characteristics of regions and regional powers, and how can we draw on material and ideational theoretical accounts to conceptualise regional power? Some scholars focus on material attributes, regional influence and regional architectures, while others advance a regional power framework based on opportunity, willingness and status attribution (Cline et al. 2011). What, in turn, are the roles and strategies of regional powers? What is the nature of their relationship with regional institutions and what influence do extra regional great powers bring to bear? A non-exhaustive list of regional power strategies includes coercion, hierarchy, forms of hegemony and leadership (Destradi 2010; Nolte 2010; Pedersen 2002). Finally, it is especially important to investigate the regional-global nexus as “regional powers cannot be understood unless they are viewed within a global context” (Hurrell 2010).

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Emerging Powers and Global Governance

In many ways, the reconfiguration of global power is leading us to reorient our thinking about how the world has been, is and should be governed. This has important implications for notions of authority, legitimacy and effectiveness in global governance institutions. While the initial literature focused largely on how the emerging powers can be socialised into the existing international order, more recent works have ascribed greater agency to these powers and demonstrated greater awareness of the interaction between agency and structure. Previous assessments analysing whether an emerging power is a status quo or revisionist power have given way to a much broader range of analysis. Socialisation is analysed as a two-way process, where the emerging powers are shaped by, but are also shaping, existing and new norms (Pu 2012). Many questions, however, remain on the nature and impact of the emerging powers on global governance structures, and vice versa (Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Heine 2010; Brütsch and Papa 2013). If we perceive of the emerging powers as agents of change, to what extent are they supporting, resisting or establishing alternatives to the existing global governance architecture? How do they conceptualise international responsibility, what vision(s) do they promote and what do they represent—self-interested individual goals or a collective Global South? How are the traditional powers interacting with emerging powers? We talk about contestation and negotiation between the emerging powers and the established powers in the current international order, but what about contestation within and between the emerging powers, who are essentially very different actors with different identities and agendas? Are existing global governance arrangements adjusting or accommodating to better reflect these emerging powers? What about the evolving relationships between emerging powers and smaller states?

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