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Can the Study of Global Order be De-centred?

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Can the Study of Global Order be De-centred?

One of the most important and innovative aspects of PRIMO¹ is that it represents a multi-partner and global initiative to study regional and emerging powers. It is also, perhaps above all, a training programme in which young researchers are brought together to think both about the substantive questions posed by regional and emerging powers but also about how these same powers may be changing the way in which International Relations is studied. Across the developing and emerging world the study of International Relations is expanding and questions are being raised as to how far theories and approaches that were developed within the West and the Anglo-phone World are adequate for understanding global politics today.

It is obvious that globalization brings together states, communities and individuals with distinctive and often sharply conflicting ways of viewing the world. It is also clear that a great deal of the western post-Cold War writing on global order and global governance was all too little aware of the deeply western-centric character of its assumed historical narratives, its allegedly universal theoretical categories, and its political preoccupations. Mainstream research on global governance was interest-based, functionalist, and often narrowly economic. The central difficulty with this view, however, is that global governance cannot be reduced to the provision of international public goods or the resolution of well-understood collective action problems. Although analytically beguiling,

¹ PRIMO (Power and Region in a Multipolar Order) is a Marie Curie Initial Training Network funded by the European Commission within the 7th Framework Programme. The network consists of 11 partner institutions and 3 associated partners from the academic, business and think tank world. PRIMO includes 12 PhD and 2 Post-Doc-Projects. More information can be found online: www.primo-itn.eu

this strand of writing tended to skirt far too easily over the problem of managing power, especially unequal power, and the difficulties of mediating between conflicting values. Governance focused on the identification of collective action problems and the on the question of how global public goods are to be provided. The alternative perspective was sidelined, namely seeing governance as fundamentally concerned with the ordering and preservation of power and with answers to the question of who exercises power. Equally, liberal interest-driven accounts of the problems of global governance all too often disguised or evaded the deep conflict over values, underlying purposes and contending ways of seeing the world. Normatively, debates on governance were often dominated by issues of efficiency and effectiveness, and even the writing on global ethics worked within a rather narrow range of justice issues and with rather little attention to the voices and values of non-western world.

However, as the discourse of global governance has become more embedded, so the criticisms and critiques have multiplied. For the critics, 'liberal' global governance has not ushered in a new world of justice-based law and institutions but has rather introduced new forms of hierarchy in which cosmopolitan values are a thin veneer for the self-interest of western states. Detailed and wide-ranging critiques of many aspects of global governance have appeared – from the pathologies of liberal state building to the power-enhancing implications of legal fragmentation and increased regime complexity. An increasing body of literature has criticised the western-centric character of global governance and has sought connections with the expanding body of work on non-western international relations and non-western IR theory. In the first part of this working paper, I will sketch out some of the principal features of mainstream western theorizing on global governance and identify some of the main lines of critique.

But, if the goal is to continue to probe the western-centric character of writing on global governance and to give a fuller account regional and non-western paradigms and understandings, then we next need to ask why this already quite extensive list of critiques

is not adequate. Acknowledging the value of much existing critical work, the second section of this paper will suggest various areas of weakness: the importance of looking beyond the world of IR theory and the power embodied in patterns of knowledge production; the need to re-think what critical scholarship involves within different contexts; the need to pay close attention to the way in which shifting patterns of power affect our view of who or what needs to be 'de-centered'; and lastly, the enormous challenge of acknowledging the power of the global and the ways in which the dominant and institutionally embedded languages of global order and global governance constrain what can be argued politically and contain powerful explanatory and normative ideas. The final section looks at how the agenda might move forward, building on the unavoidable imperative to incorporate the power of the global whilst being sensitive to differently situated regional, historical and cultural contexts.

I

In the 1990s global governance was widely understood through the lens of liberal internationalism or liberal solidarism.² Globalization was rendering obsolete the old Westphalian world of Great Power rivalries, balance of power politics and an old-fashioned international law built around state sovereignty and strict rules of non-intervention. Bumpy as it might be the road seemed to be leading away from Westphalia – with an expanded role for formal and informal multilateral institutions; a huge increase in the scope, density and intrusiveness of rules and norms made at the international level but affecting how domestic societies are organized; the ever-greater involvement of new actors in global governance; the moves towards the coercive enforcement of global rules; and a fundamental changes in political, legal and moral understandings of state sovereignty and of the relationship between the state, the citizen and the international community.

² I examine these trends in more detail in Hurrell (2007), especially Chapter Three.

In addition to an expansion of inter-state modes of governance, increased attention was being paid to the world of complex governance beyond the state. Such governance was characterized by the complexity of global rule making; the role of private market actors and civil society groups in articulating values which are then assimilated in inter-state institutions; and the increased range of informal, yet norm-governed, governance mechanisms often built around complex networks, both transnational and trans-governmental, and the inter-penetration of international and municipal law and of national administrative systems. From this perspective the state was losing its place as the privileged sovereign institution and instead becomes one of many actors and one participant in a broader and more complex social and legal process.

These developments were central both to the evolving practice of international law and to those who sought to chart and map its changing character – as, for example, Joseph Weiler’s geological metaphor of four different layers of law and of law-making – from predominantly bi-lateral, contractual treaties, to a much greater emphasis on multilateral agreements, to important constitutional treaties (such as the UN Charter), to an ever-thickening layer of administrative and regulatory rules. (Weiler 2004) They also posed great analytical and practical challenges for both international relations accounts of institutionalization and for international law. A vast amount of normatively-framed regulatory practice and global administration was emerging that did not at all easily fit within the standard model of law between states. Such rule-making and regulatory practice is hard to square with traditional doctrinal ideas of sources, of state voluntarism, of even delegated consent. The optimists did not seem to worry overmuch: they saw great potential in the disaggregated state, in fluid and flexible networks of experts, and in the claims that dynamic experimental rule making can be both efficient and deliberatively inclusive. (Slaughter 2004; Sabel and Zeitlin 2010) Skeptics worried about precisely these same features – the dangers posed by the often hidden rule by experts and embedded orthodoxy, the marginalization of meaningful politics, and the perils of de-formalization and of the deepening fragmentation of the legal ‘system’. (Koskenniemi 2009)

Many innovations in governance and many developments in international law and global governance shifted or eroded our understandings of public and private and of the boundaries between them. From this it followed that finding adequate regulative principles must involve broadening our understandings about what constitutes public power at the international or global level; that we can no longer see states as the only subjects of political legitimacy; and that we should instead concern ourselves with all those forms of power that constrain the autonomy or welfare of those subject to them. Others sought to use notions of publicness and principles derived from public law as a basis for understanding legal normativity within global administrative spaces that have become such an important element of global governance and for preserving the distinctively legal character of law in the face of rampant instrumentalism. (Kingsburry 2009) Much of the debate on the character of the legal order has been framed in terms of a set of choices: reassert the old doctrinal practices and boundaries; move forward to some variety of global constitutionalism; or try to navigate the messy byways of the new legal pluralism. (Krisch 2010)

And, of course, lurking behind many of the individual aspects of change, there lay a fundamental normative shift in the idea of the state as the principal agent of world order. Within the old pluralist world states could be understood as 'agents' simply in the sense of those acting or exerting power and of doing so for themselves. But the expanding normative agenda of liberal global governance opened up a second and different meaning of agency -- the idea of an agent as someone who acts for, or on behalf of, another. Within the liberal order states were no longer to act for themselves as sovereigns; but rather, first, as agents for the individuals, groups and national communities that they are supposed to represent; and second as agents or interpreters of some notion of an international public good and some set of core norms against which state behaviour should be judged and evaluated.

How to explain what was going on? Academics, especially in Europe and the United States, told three kinds of liberal stories. Some stressed institutions and the cooperative logic of

institutions. Institutions are needed to deal with the ever more complex dilemmas of collective action that emerge in a globalized world. The complexity of the governance challenges meant that international law and international regimes would necessarily increase in number, scope and variety. It also meant that as large states, including large developing states expanded their range of interests and integrated more fully into the global economy and world society –as they ‘joined the world’ in the idiom of the 1990s -- they would be naturally drawn by the functional benefits provided by institutions and pressed towards more cooperative and ‘responsible’ patterns of behaviour. The process would not necessarily be easy nor automatic; but, on this view, the broad direction of travel is clear.

Others stressed the Kantian idea of the gradual but progressive diffusion of liberal values, partly as a result of liberal economics and increased economic interdependence, partly as a liberal legal order comes to sustain the autonomy of a global civil society, and partly as a result of the successful example set by the multifaceted liberal capitalist system of states. A third group told a more US-centred story. The US was indeed the centre of a unipolar world. But, true both to its own values but also to its rational self-interest, Washington had a continued incentive to bind itself within the institutions that it had created in the Cold War era in order to reassure smaller states and to prevent balancing against US power. A rational hegemon in an age of globalization would understand the importance and utility of soft power. In return for this self-binding and the procedural legitimacy it would create, and in return for US-supplied global public goods and the output legitimacy that they would create, other states would acquiesce and accept the role of the United States as the owner and operator of the system.³

The challenge of the Second World had been seen off. Through a mix of these three processes those states of the old Third World that had previously challenged the western order would now become increasingly enmeshed, socialized and integrated. In addition, the

³For the elaboration of this logic see Ikenberry (2001).

nature and dynamics of power was changing. Soft power would outstrip hard coercive power in importance and concentrations of liberal power would attract rather than repel or threaten. Just as the example of a liberal and successful EU had created powerful incentives on the part of weaker and neighbouring states towards emulation and a desire for membership, so, on a larger scale and over a longer period, a similar pattern would be observed in the case of the liberal, developed world as a whole. A new *raison de système* would emerge that would alter and ultimately displace old-fashioned notions of *raison d'état*. And behind these contemporary changes lay the long-term power of western liberal modernity whose global character was ever harder to escape from and whose essential character made it far easier to join and far harder to dislodge than any previous form of global order. The post-Cold War period was therefore marked by a clear sense of the liberal ascendancy; a clear assumption that the US had the right and power to decide what the 'liberal global order' was all about; and a clear belief that the western order worked and that it had the answers. Yes, of course there would be isolated rogues and radical rejectionists. But they were on the 'wrong side of history' as President Clinton confidently proclaimed.

Now one practical difficulty is that the western global governance industry has manifestly failed to predict many of the negative trends that have emerged over the past decade: the return of geopolitics, rampant nationalism in all of the major states of the system, the centrality of balance of power politics, the dire state of many global governance institutions, and the challenges to linear notions of modernization. But the important issue is not having a debate on where we stand in terms of the balance between optimism and pessimism. It is rather that mainstream global governance writing has not given us the analytical or theoretical tools to make sense of the problem. And it is those problems that open up the crucial space for understanding the western-centric character of global governance, both in theory and in practice, and for paying far more attention to the question: where and what is the 'global' in global governance? If institutionalization, constitutionalization, and governance are all much less firmly established than many

dominant liberal perspectives would like to suggest, then how can we study global governance in a more de-centered way?

The western literatures on IR, Economics and Law literatures have made great strides in understanding the conditions under which governance and institutions are created and may prove effective. And, yet, academic debates on global order were dominated by a dual liberal hegemony: a historicist hegemony that has too easily assumed that history is moving down a one-way street; and an analytical liberal hegemony that has 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.

Moving down this road quickly led critics to a rather different view of what 'liberal' global governance looked like from 'below' and from 'outside'. Jean Cohen characterizes this sort of position as follows:

From this optic, the discourses and practices of humanitarian or democratic intervention, transformative occupations, targeted sanctions, terrorist blacklists and so forth (much of which was driven by the US since 1989) are mechanisms to foster the de-formalization of existing international law, so as to enable the very powerful (the US or the 'West') and/or those states aspiring to become twenty-first century great powers (Russia, China) to create self-serving global rules instead of being ways to limit power by law... Global governance and global law serve to authorize new hierarchies and gradations of sovereignty, to legitimate depredations of political autonomy and self-determination in new ways which are disturbingly reminiscent of the heyday of nineteenth-century imperialism. (Cohen 2014, 126)

The critics have come from a wide variety of theoretical and disciplinary positions, including critical theory, post-colonialism, historical sociology, and some versions of constructivism. This has led to a deluge of critical writing in global governance: on southern resistance to global neo-liberalism and alternative understandings of

globalization and governance, especially in social movements such as the World Social Forum; on the views, policies and values of a wide range of emerging and regional powers, including the Chinese or Indian or Brazilian theories of international relations that may stand behind them; and on the pathologies of liberal intervention and state-making in making parts of the Global South. From this perspective western global governance writing appears as a deeply political analysis of how 'we' can order and 'govern' globalization in a way that preserves western primacy? How can 'we' find a neutral language of governance (centred on such apparently neutral ideas as global public goods) that disguises issues of power and value?

These kinds of criticisms fit closely with the broader range of writing that emphasizes the close links between western power and dominant approaches to the academic study of International Relations. Much critical attention has been devoted to the claim that 'IR' must be understood from different perspectives, especially from below and from the standpoint of the subaltern and the marginalized. We now have a sophisticated and still developing body of knowledge that insists that mainstream western IR is sorely inadequate for understanding the problems and the dynamics of the Global South. It is these authors and analysts (collected together by people like Arlene Tickner, Ole Weaver and Amitav Acharya, but drawing on many others working in different parts of the South) who have been most critical of the western-centric character of IR and who have stressed the elitist and exclusionary patterns of knowledge production in the western academy. (Tickner and Waever 2009; Acharya and Buzan 2010; Shilliam 2010) There has been a significant increase in work that is concerned precisely with IR and the non-western world and with the need to de-centre the study of 'International Relations'. In many parts of the world the starting point for a discussion of this subject is the degree to which International Relations has developed overwhelmingly as an American social science at precisely the time when the United States was uniquely powerful. The US-centred nature of much International Relations and the perceived link between IR theory and western or US practice constitute major subjects of debate and contestation. How might we best engage with US theory

despite its normative blindspots and its particularist concerns? Here debates about theory, about the nature of explanation, and about normative evaluation often merge with the question of how to define the agenda of what matters, and how to present an identity or a vision that reflects local traditions, local values and local circumstances.

This body of work has made many very important arguments. A very incomplete list might include the following: first, that we must devote far more attention to IR as it is understood and experienced 'from below'; second, that we need to understand much more about the agency of the apparently 'powerless'; third, that common concepts such as 'security' have a very different meaning and content when seen from below; and fourth, that the 'international' itself is a malleable and unobvious category. In fragile states and penetrated systems, the division between the 'international' and the 'domestic' appears very differently compared to those living with a world whose dominant intellectual framing is that of the Weberian state. Many of the critiques of global governance fit neatly within this broader pattern.

In addition, critical and post-colonial scholarship has opened up a very different historical account of the 'rise of the West' and has challenged both the easy dichotomy between the 'West' and the 'Non-West' and also the confident and complacent, image of a global international society created via the universalisation of essentially European institutions for the maintenance of order and the pursuit of justice. This kind of critical project is also important, and, again, there have been many important contributions – the deconstruction of the categories of developed/underdeveloped or first world/third world? (Doty 1996) or the role of imperialism in the development of international law (Anghie 2005); or the role of race and racialized identities in western international relations. (Vucetic 2011) If the racial and civilizational underpinnings of ideas of global order are well known, the religious remain far less explored – although there are very obvious to many who approach the history of western thinking from outside. Charles Taylor, for example, brings out the extent to which the taken-for-granted quality of what he calls the 'immanent order' is only

explicable against a very particular process of western secularization. (Taylor 2007) We now have a far more nuanced understanding of the ways in which western ideas about political and social order were deeply and inextricably bound up the international, the global and the non-western. Thus we can see, for example, the way in which early modern western constructions of notions of property and sovereignty were closely connected with empire and with the process of extra-European conquest and colonialism. (see Tuck 1999) And we can understand the close historical relationship between European cosmopolitan ideas and the spread of empire – and, as we move forward, with contemporary understanding of global governance. (Pagden 2000)

II

All this has been extremely important. But is it adequate for our present task? There are five reasons why not.

In the first place, and especially within post-colonial IR writing, there has sometimes been an excessively Foucauldian concern with knowledge-production, and with the politics of representation and discourse. This view correctly stresses the extent to which non-mainstream and alternative understandings of identity, subjectivity and difference have been written out of the western IR script. It also highlights the degree to which the very categories used by academics clearly reflect and reinforce structures of productive and discursive power. Remember that both the Third World and the BRICS were western constructions. And yet, at least within IR writing on global order this has often translated into a rather internalist concern with theory and with what might constitute ‘non-western theory’. On the other hand, whilst western dominance of knowledge-production in IR remains clearly important, it should not obscure the shifting patterns of power, hierarchy and inequality that are at work in the world. Now one response is to say that, as far as IR theory is concerned, nothing is really changing. It is still a neo-imperialist field of enquiry

and control over the intellectual means of knowledge production has hardly shifted. This is all that really matters. But it is a post-modern conceit to give so much weight to representations. At the minimum we need to try to separate out -- in a way that much post-colonial analysis of course rejects -- the differences between power within the IR academy and power in the world. In a somewhat related vein, the post-modern fascination with difference – especially in this context between the ‘West’ and the ‘non-West’ can lead to an extreme stress on otherness that is extraordinarily unhelpful – analytically and normatively. The political and normative problems are highlighted by Rowan Williams: ‘By absolutizing *the* other, otherness becomes un-thinkable; the laborious process of evolving a practice in which my desire, my project, redefines or rethinks itself in symbiosis with others, a practice in which the presence of scarcity ceases to be simply the occasion of ‘war’, is avoided.’⁴

Second, in going down the critical road, it is often rather easy to be trapped by accounts that stress the foreign policy ideas and foreign policy orientations of particular countries. The constructivist emphasis on norms and identity can often end up uncomfortably close to the official positions of governments and of writers and academics close to governments. For all its pretensions to critical distance, the discursive strands of critical theory and of constructivism can easily be trapped by the discourse that they are attempting to deconstruct – not least because the target of much critical scholarship has been a rather one-dimensional view of the US or the West. This is very much the case for many of those studying emerging powers, especially given the extent to which the promotion of a ‘Chinese school of IR’ or a Brazilian or Indian view of International Relations is both an analytical but also a political project.

⁴ Williams (1995: 5). I have stressed the underrated importance of both agency and moral accessibility in thinking on how inevitably centred particular conceptions of global justice might be negotiated. See Hurrell (2007), chapter 12.

Third, because much critical and post-colonial writing has concentrated on the power of the West and the neo-liberal core, other important relationships and patterns of interaction have been side-lined. This is especially the case with what we would now call South-South relations. Historically, for example, Manjapra has highlighted the importance of such connections in the generation of southern cosmopolitan ideas, especially during the anti-colonial struggle. (Manjapra 2010) Indeed re-reading the story of decolonization opens up much closer connections between nationalism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism, thereby putting into question the dominant western view that the Third World was always concerned with national sovereignty. And, of course, it is the growth of South-South economic and political connections and relationships that are central to the claims that the emerging world is re-configuring the geometry of international relations, as the former foreign minister of Brazil once put it.

A fourth difficulty comes from the extent to which so much critical and post-colonial work often appears committed to a rather static view of power, hegemony and hierarchy. Post-colonial work, in particular, seems to build on an all-encompassing view of western power, US hegemony, and neo-liberal globalization. It also seems, implicitly at least, to accept the old categories of North and South and of Third World at a time when these spatial categories and taken-for-granted historical geographies are eroding and unravelling. One need not be committed to any particular set of claims about power diffusion or the degree to which power has in fact shift away from the western core. But the point is simply that something is changing. 'Global' is assuming a new character: not just increasing connectivity and integration as for the theorists of globalization; not just a global space in which the major powers play out their competition. But rather a greater drive and capacity from an increasing numbers of places to contest the terms and nature of what the global order both is and might be about.

If power is shifting, where exactly is it shifting to? One view is that power is simply shifting to major 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 Moment’; and about the rise of the BRICs or the BASICs. We can debate exactly who these new actors are, how they have behaved in the past, and what they might want in the future. But the issues have fundamentally to do with what ‘they’ will do with ‘their’ power – a limited number of important new actors acquiring substantial amounts of new power. An alternative view, however, is that we are witnessing a much more general diffusion of power, often linked to technological changes, to changes in the global economy and to new forms of social and political mobilization. Thus if rising China is one central part of contemporary global politics, the Arab Spring is another.

The idea of shifting power and the changing context cannot be reduced to indices of material power. The ‘power structure’ is changing partly because of shifting power in the narrow sense, but also because of changing notions of legitimacy (how can 15% of the world claim to speak for the ‘international community?’); the centrality of emerging states and societies for shared problems; and because of the huge impact that social upheaval in these societies will have – whether feeding back negatively into inter-state relations, especially via nationalism; or in terms of preventing coordinated and effective international action on shared problems; or because finding stable and renewed domestic bargains to social justice or stable capitalism cannot be done on a single-country basis. So the renewed centrality of major power politics do not depend simply on a ‘who’s up and who’s down’ calculus.

This leads to the final limitation, or perhaps better, the final challenge, facing all attempts to de-center the study of global governance: how to explore the regional and the local without neglecting the continued, and perhaps increasing, power of the global. Why should this be such a problem? In part because of the centrality of global dynamics and logics: of traditional geopolitical competition and of new security threats; of global capitalism and both the power and fragility of globalized markets; of social change and the shifting capacity for political mobilization and societal awareness; and of technological change. But

in part, and probably more important, because of the degree to which, unlike many others areas of social science and political practice, there is only one global order There is no outside. The languages of international law and society and the newer languages of global governance are the unavoidable languages of global political life, both for the academic and the practitioner. The natural response of those who seek to critique dominant western understandings of global governance is to 'de-centre global governance' – to unpack all of the assumptions that are embedded in the idea of governance as well as to ask the equally important question: where is the global in global governance? This has naturally come to involve the investigation of different national, regional, cultural 'perspectives' on global governance. But, given the power of the global, there are no longer (if there ever were) any non-western country, regional or cultural perspectives that can gathered together in any straightforward or unproblematic manner. The sheer power of the global means that attempts to identify a 'Chinese' or an 'Indian' perspective on global governance will face severe methodological difficulties.

There are broadly, two ways in which a global order might come into being. One is via the coming together on more or less equal terms of a series of regionally-based systems, whether made up of states, empires or other political groupings. The other is by the global dominance of what was an originally regional system. And it is this model that stands behind global order of the 20th century with expansion of an originally European international society on to a global scale -- first, through the globalizing force of capitalism and the immense transformative impact that it has on the regions and societies which were drawn into a deepening system of exchange and production relations; second, through the emergence of an often highly conflictual international political system which, as Mackinder argued, came to see the entire Earth as the single stage for promotion of the interests of the core powers of the system;⁵ and, third, through the development of a global international

⁵ Mackinder stressed the closing of the frontier and the notion of the international system as 'a closed political space'. 'Every explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space

society whose institutional forms (the nation-state, Great Powers, international law, spheres of influence) were globalized from their originally European context in the course of European expansion and the subsequent process of decolonization.

Not only do these originally western global logics that developed in the 19th century remain enormously powerful but they also continue to inform many of the western ideas of global order at work today. In terms of their understanding of the global, these rely heavily on 19th century European thought, falling under the signs of Mill, Mackinder and Marx; and, in terms of their broader philosophical commitments, as Sanjay Seth suggests, under the signs of Kant and Hegel. (Seth 2002)

If this is the case, then why do we need to de-centre at all? Take, for example, the question of how best to analyse the foreign policy of emerging powers in the Global South. To the mainstream IR theorist, much here seems all too familiar. In contrast to so much of the vacuous rhetoric of globalization, the foreign policies of the emerging world seem to involve a clear reassertion of many aspects of a 'return to Westphalia'. The state and state-based projects of national power and national assertion appear to be central to most of what is going on inside many emerging and regional powers. From this perspective it is simply erroneous to suggest that the state is not central to the IR of the Global South. Of course we need to understand variations in the kinds of state and to note 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. But seemingly universal processes of state-building and nation-building are taking place, and are connected to patterns of IR with which mainstream theory seems rather comfortable. Hence we might look to the established western toolkit of ideas about the power of global capitalism; about the power-political behaviour of emerging powers; and about the changing character of

and barbarian chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and economic organism of the world will be shattered in consequence'. See Mackinder (1904: 422).

international legal order. Of course, on this view, we will pay particular attention to resistance and rejection, and also to the complexity of processes of socialization, diffusion and localization. But none of that should distract us from the basic fact of the power of the global and the centrality of an originally western but now widespread set of understandings about how that global is operationalized within International Relations.

Hence, when faced with, say, Indian government rhetoric about Southern solidarity or the need for new global norms, the realist will always be tempted to ask: so what's new? Rising powers have always sought to mobilize the dominant norms of the system to their own advantage – think of Germany in the inter-war period. Rising regional powers have always sought to find a legitimating regional discourse to engender followership on the part of weaker states. To stress these trends does not commit one to a crude neo-realist account of the inevitability of major power conflict. The sorts of changes sketched above bring back into focus the need for more power-centred accounts of order and governance. This perspective is stressed both by classical realists but, especially, by international society writers who see Great Powers and Great Power concerts as fundamental to the ordering of international society. Within the contemporary system, one natural response to shifting power is to return to a far more Great Power-centred order – both to avoid tensions and potential conflict amongst the existing and rising powers but also to achieve the consensus needed to tackle the new and complex challenges such as climate change, terrorism and global economic governance. This can involve the reform of formal multilateral institutions – such as bringing new members on the US Security Council. But, again, the essential toolkit was once narrowly western but is now far more truly global.

The same might also be said for critical and normative ideas of the global. Martti Koskenniemi captures very nicely the tension between the messy and power-cementing role of international law on the one hand and the importance of the practice of law and of legal argument in expressing and debating collective projects on the other.

Statehood, self-determination, sovereignty, minority rights, secession, non-use of force – there are many well-founded critiques of all that. But they are part of the institutional vocabularies that make it possible to express the character of collective life as a *project* – and our institutions and practices as platforms on which the point of that project is constantly imagined, debated, criticized and reformed, over and over again. ... International law invites everyone to participate in the imagining of humankind's collective *telos*, not *despite* its indeterminate character but precisely by virtue of its openness. (Koskenniemi 2011, 25)

III

So the question remains: how to understand a global order in which there are complex patterns of power diffusion and even more complex patterns of social, economic and political change, in which our inherited categories of analysis are eroding, and in which new hierarchies and inequalities are becoming established? As this volume suggests, we certainly need to pluralize, to relativize, and to historicize. And, for all the reasons given above, we need to recognize the continued power of Chakrabarty's claim that western analytical and theoretical categories remain indispensable but inadequate. (Chakrabarty 2000) We cannot escape from the disciplinary and theoretical western mainstream but dominant concepts and ideas never travel unproblematically. But we would surely also want work that de-centres other regional or cultural perspectives and that problematizes unreflective 'non-western' theories. A major goal must surely be to avoid a narrowly 'critical' or 'Southern' view, rather getting differently situated scholars to theorize about their own experience, whether empirically or normatively; and whether this means connecting with western social science or mounting a challenge to it.

In the first place, we need to take the power of the global very seriously but at the same time to recognize that neither capitalist globalization (for the liberal and Marxist) nor global power competition (for the neo-realist) produces homogenization; and that each demands a deep understanding of how the global plays out in particular contexts. The global and the general are so important and so powerful that they must be placed centre

stage in our analysis. The option of not confronting what is happening at the global level out of a deep suspicion of grand narratives and big historiographical stories is not sufficient. It is for this reason that the recurrent binary thinking that has underpinned so much liberal writing on global governance has been so unhelpful: a consolidated peaceful liberal core vs failed states and ungoverned spaces; responsible liberal democracies vs irresponsible nationalism and authoritarianism. Rather, the need is to understand the relation between the outside and the inside and to track the processes by which western ideas of international order and capitalist modernity have been transposed into different national and regional contexts and to the mutual constitution of ideas and understandings that resulted from that interaction.

In some cases, perhaps most plausibly China, on-going integration may well involve a questioning or re-casting of the fundamental social categories of western social thought – state, market, civil society. In other cases we need to be constantly alert to what Cardoso once labelled the ‘originality of the copy’. (Hurrell 2010) And in many places, relations of space and time and belonging have shifted so that ‘North’ and ‘South’ co-exist simultaneously within the same geographical space.⁶ The mixed and hybrid character of the global order means that we need to be especially alert to the recombination of old and new not just at the level of global order but also at the level of the state and of state-society relations domestically. And here one might focus less on groups such as the Brics; and more on the intellectual and policy ‘bricolage’ – to use Mary Douglas’s term – that has been taking place within each of the emerging states and through which old and new ideas and policies are melded together in ways that are working against these states becoming simply absorbable within some expanded version of a liberal Greater West. (Douglas 1986) Instead of continuing to work around a tradition/modernity dichotomy, the need is to re-focus attention on the multiple structural transformations *within* modernity.

⁶ On this theme see, in particular, Harvey (2009), especially chapters 7 and 8.

The importance of thinking in this way is reinforced by the degree to which the western historical teleologies underpinning so much writing on global governance have frayed or eroded. Take the case of democratization. Western thinking had moved by the mid-1980s away from stressing the limits of democratic change in the developing and emerging world to stressing 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 have had ever greater difficulty in understanding the succession of surprises and disappointments, despite a generally favourable external and global environment. Many democracies, old as well as new, have failed to meet the demands and expectations for more responsive political systems. Interventionist democracy promotion has failed from Iraq to Libya to Afghanistan. And non-democracies have more confidently asserted policies of active resistance to preferred Western models. Whilst the social drive for accountability and responsive 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 cross-cutting trajectories. Democratization is therefore an increasingly uncertain foundation stone or modernizing story that can reinforce the sort of legitimating values (democracy, human rights, and the rule of law) that many have taken as central to their preferred model of global governance.

Few are likely to dispute the proposition that contemporary global governance is being challenged and shaped by the revival of geopolitical rivalries. Many might also accept that some of the most convincing accounts of new patterns of realist-inspired power competition rely on a far more social view of the system, and a much more constructivist account of the identities of states and actors. But the crucial point is surely that stressed by Rogers Smith: as students of politics, we must be especially attentive to the **politics** of identity: explicitly politicizing identity claims; de-naturalizing identity claims, historicizing identity claims. His own work is all about the politics of multiple and contested stories of peoplehood and deeply contested traditions. (Smith 2004) As scholars of global

governance we constantly need to be suspicious of culturalist accounts, not because culture does not matter but because it is with the politics of culture that we need to be concerned.

It is also surely the case that, as Marx predicted, global capitalism transforms the societies with which it comes into contact. Yet, at the same time the cultural and historical traditions of those societies shape the manner in which 'capitalism' takes on a specific social and political meaning and manifestation. As Wolfgang Streeck puts it:

While recent analyses of institutional change had made progress in classifying certain formal properties of the processes found to be at work in the real world of contemporary capitalism in general terms, they were unable to speak to the underlying causes of such processes. They also remained unconnected to the growing literature that had become dissatisfied with universalistic representations of 'the economy' as nature, or as a black box, returning for remedy to the concept of capitalism as a historically specific socio-economic order.⁷

A second important goal is to develop concepts and conceptual frameworks out of varied regions and contexts but to seek their more general application and relevance. Of course understanding difference is crucial, both the apparently radically different and the apparently similar. Even if the language is shared, the real meaning may be very different. Policy-makers may talk a language of powers and the balance of power, but the precise meaning and implications of these concepts may well differ considerably from their western ideal-typical meaning. Rather than concentrate on the 'radically different', it is the 'nearly the same' that is often of greater importance in the analysis of non-Western International Relations. But the really crucial point – in challenging the western mainstream -- is the one stressed by Iain Johnston. (Johnston 2012) Area Studies is not about the exotic and the esoteric; it is part of how we can do good social science. Hence his important work arguing that mainstream analysis of East Asia and of mainstream IR concerns (major power politics/rise of China etc.) is weakened by a lack of understanding of the region – in terms of mistaken coding and data collection; in terms of omitted variable

⁷ Streeck (2010). I owe this reference to Julian Gruin. See also Agnew (2010).

bias; and, most important, in terms of conceptual impoverishment. Yes, we are interested in hierarchy and hegemony. So why would we ignore or downplay the understandings and rich conceptualizations of hierarchy in Asia – not just because we want to understand Asia but precisely in order to generate better general categories of analysis – for understanding global order *generally*. This is certainly about understanding what is distinctive and different – why Putin’s world is so radically different from those who write about the EU as a normative power. But, crucially, it is about how differently-situated ideas and practices may come to have more general relevance for current and future policy challenges. Why not draw out of non-western practices, ideal-types that open up a far richer and wider range of the foreign policy options of second-tier states? The question, above all, is what the non-western world do for political science more generally. (Tsai 2013) In some cases this may well have to do with concept development. In others it might be more about opening up the range of comparative research. Western social science remains a prisoner of particular patterns of comparative work that grew out of the way in which disciplines developed and regional and area studies were formed. So ‘who compares what with what and why?’ needs to be part of the de-centred study of global governance. Equally, whilst comparative research reigns methodologically supreme, we spend much less time thinking about connectivity and about how comparison and connectivity relate to each other.

A third important issue concerns the study of the normative and the global study of political ideas. The normative analysis of global governance is perhaps the most western-centric of all. Cosmopolitan liberal global governance was clearly about achieving justice for individuals; it was about what ‘we’ in the rich world owed distant strangers. Here, of course, we find the enormous growth of work on distributive justice, especially on the part of those who sought to deploy Rawlsian approaches to the global level. At the same time, it is important to note that most of this work saw the post-Cold War dominance of the US and the West not as a problem but as an opportunity to be exploited. If this involved interventionism, paternalism, even renewed empire on the part of the rich and powerful

then so be it -- so long as social justice was being promoted. Very little of this work made reference to the self-understandings of the 'objects' of justice in the non-western world.

One part of the challenge is political: listening and noting the views and values that are expressed and argued in different parts of the non-western world. Even at the level of government policy the problem often seems to be more one of 'Do the dominant listen?' rather than 'Can the subaltern speak?' Another part of the problem is methodological. The study of western political theory has advanced hugely in methodological terms: contextualism, conceptual history, reception theory, theories of ideology etc. But the study of global political theory remains in its infancy. (Goto-Jones 2010; Godrej 2011; Rao 2010; Jenco 2007) A still other element involves looking beyond understanding and engagement. Much of the critical engagement with non-western normative political theory has been driven by the goal of interpretation, of provincializing the categories of western theory, of promoting dialogue, and of seeking greater reflexivity. But, as with explanatory theory, the goal must be to avoid ghettoizing the contributions of the 'non-west', to escape from unhelpful macro units of analysis ('Islamic' ideas, 'Chinese' values), and to explore how ideas that emerge from different historical, developmental and cultural contexts can have more general, even global relevance and application.

A final area for exploration concerns contending global narratives. I suggested earlier in this paper that an enormous amount of work within western thinking on global order and governance has depended on a set of mostly 19th century narratives about history and time, space and modernity. Particularly in their liberal incarnation it is these that often produce the greatest incredulity when viewed from outside. The critique comes in different forms but the core point is clear: 'Thus complex social formations – up to and including whole world orders – can be described as liberal, while simultaneous practices demonstrably integral to those formations, such as racism or colonial and imperial violence, are asserted not to be liberal ... liberal order secures its status as essentially peaceful by denying a set of articulations and relations – especially across the liberal/non-liberal divide – that have

repeatedly and routinely been linked with it.' (Laffey and Nadarajah 2012, 404) It is perhaps around the study of different narratives of the global and their contestation that the re-articulation of the study of global order might begin.

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