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Global Governance in a Multiplex World

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The overarching questions informing this research is whether, first, the borderland policies of the EU, described by some as a neo-medieval empire, is a functional consequence of the specific integration model pursued inside the EU, a matter of foreign policy choice or a local manifestation of a broader global phenomenon. Second, the project addresses the political and socio-economic implications of these processes for the ‘borderlands’, along with the questions of power dynamics and complex interdependence in EU-MENA relations.

Funded by the European Research Council (ERC) within the 7th Framework Programme, the BORDERLANDS project is hosted at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, and directed by Professor Raffaella A. Del Sarto.

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Abstract

Despite paying attention to a growing number of actors and agents, the literature on global governance remain remarkably traditional and Western-centric. Much of it still revolves around the existing multilateral system created under U.S. hegemony after World War II. In this paper, I propose a new understanding of studying global governance that reflects recent and ongoing global economic and political shifts. To this end, in the place of the traditional conception of a liberal world order within which the mainstream literature on global governance has been anchored, this paper employs the idea of a “Multiplex World”. Unlike the former, the idea of a Multiplex World envisions a more pluralistic and diversified architecture of global governance shaped by a proliferation of transnational challenges, diffusion of new ideas, and expansion of actors and processes that lie at the center of global governance. A Multiplex World better captures the ongoing fragmentation of global governance, which in turn reflects a growing demand for new principles and approaches that cannot be accommodated by a simple extension of the existing but fading international order dominated by the US or the multilateral institutions it created. The concept of global governance, argues this paper, must come to terms with an emerging realities of the Multiplex World.

Keywords

Global Governance, Multiplex World, World Order, Multilateralism, Regional Worlds, Civil Society

Global Governance and Multilateralism: The Post-War Liberal Order*

Global governance is widely understood in its most basic sense as governance without government, or as James Rosenau put it “the regulation of interdependent relations in the absence of an overarching political authority, such as in the international system.”¹Elaborating, he added that global governance refers to “systems of rule at all levels of human activity – from the family to international organization – in which the pursuit of goals through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions.” Weiss and Thakur argue that global governance is “collective efforts to identify, understand or address worldwide problems that go beyond the capacity of individual States to solve.”²Most analysts agree on the increasing complexity of global governance, which includes “formal and informal institutions, mechanisms, relationships, and processes between and among states, markets, citizens and organizations, both inter- and non-governmental, through which collective interests on the global plane are articulated, rights and obligations are established, and differences are mediated.”³

Despite acknowledging a multiplicity of actors and agents, and to regional bodies, most definitions and conceptualizations of global governance are remarkably western centric and limited. They assume the continued dominance of the West and exclude or marginalize regional actors (with the possible exception of the EU). While the role of civil society, or a global civil society in global governance has received plenty of attention, the role of the non-Western states (barring BRICS and emerging powers) and regional institutions has received far less attention.

In this paper, I propose a new understanding of studying changes in global governance, which may be called pluralistic global governance. Its conceptual underpinnings and principal catalysts are discussed below.

Without much exaggeration, multilateralism is *the primary* mechanism of global governance. Hence, a crucial point of entry for realizing an alternative conception of global governance is multilateralism. I call this post-hegemonic multilateralism. John Ruggie’s influential 1993 edited volume, *Multilateralism Matters*, embodies the dominant or hegemonic concept of multilateralism, which obtained during the Cold War and in the immediate post-Cold War period. While multilateralism was not necessarily a post-war American invention, “Looking more closely at the post-World War II situation...it was less the fact of American *hegemony* that accounts for the explosion of multilateral arrangements than of *American hegemony*.”⁴ The close association between multilateralism and American hegemony remained less challenged, even by those who questioned the statist concept of multilateralism and proposed civil society multilateralism as a “counterhegemonic”

* A previous version of this paper was presented at the high-level workshop on “The Object and Methodology of Global Governance”, held at the European University Institute, Florence, in the framework of the Global Governance Programme, on January 24-26, 2013. The paper draws from Amitav Acharya, “Post-Hegemonic Multilateralism”, in Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkinson, eds. *International Organization and Global Governance* (Routledge 2013) and Amitav Acharya, “The Future of Global Governance: Fragmentation May Be Inevitable and Creative,” *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (October-December 2016): 453-460. This paper benefitted from the support of the research project ‘BORDERLANDS: Boundaries, Governance and Power in the European Union’s Relations with North Africa and the Middle East’, funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under Grant Agreement Number 263277. The project, which ended in March 2017, was hosted at the European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, and directed by Raffaella A. Del Sarto.

¹ James Rosenau, "Toward an Ontology for Global Governance," in Martin Hewson and Timothy J. Sinclair (eds.), *Approaches to Global Governance Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1999).

² Thomas G. Weiss and Ramesh Thakur, *The UN and Global Governance: An Idea and Its Prospects*, Indiana University Press, 2006.

³ James Rosenau, “Governance in the 21st century,” *Global Governance*, 1, No. 1, Winter 1995. p.15.

⁴ John G. Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” in Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 8. emphasis original

solution. Could multilateralism be conceivable and viable without American sponsorship and leadership?

In *After Victory*, John Ikenberry offered a powerful supplement to the idea of hegemonic multilateralism embedded. While he agreed that multilateralism went hand-in-hand with American hegemony, which described how the United States had pursued multilateralism as the new global hegemon, Ikenberry explained why it pursued multilateralism. Through multilateral institutions a hegemon can exercise strategic self-restraint by institutionally self-binding itself in return for the loyalty and compliance from weaker and subordinate actors. Multilateralism is thus the key to the hegemon's ability to gain trust, respect and legitimacy for its preponderant power. Despite this concession to legitimation, *After Victory's* focus was still overwhelmingly on hegemonic power and initiative. It is the victorious hegemon that crafts the institutional framework and bargaining process through which it can self-bind. The weaker states merely "accept the deal,"⁵ mainly to mitigate their fear of domination or abandonment.⁶ They do receive credible commitments from the hegemon to refrain from exploitation and domination,⁷ but does the shadow of coercion disappear in the event of non-compliance with the hegemon's wishes?

While these conceptions of hegemonic multilateralism emerged at the height of US global primacy, how should we consider the future of multilateralism in the post-unipolar era? As in the past, liberals contest the extent and implications of the changes occurring today. Some dismiss the view that the United States is a declining power and argue, as Keohane does, "Among democracies in the world today, only the United States has the material capacity and political unity to exercise consistent global leadership."⁸ Yet what may be declining is not necessarily US power but its status, legitimacy, and influence, which were also ingredients of hegemonic multilateralism. These are much more difficult to monopolize in a world of growing diversity of regions, non-state actors, and emerging powers. Others argue that the waning of US hegemony, if true at all, is not the end of the existing multilateral order because the rules and institutions established have staying power, and even the capacity to coopt the emerging powers.⁹ Thus, Ikenberry in his subsequent book, *The Liberal Leviathan*, argues that the "liberal hegemonic order" (which he also calls by other names including "liberal hegemonic order," "American-led liberal world order," and "American-led liberal hegemony"¹⁰, but which I would call American World Order) was built with "the acquiescence and support of other states"¹¹ but is now facing a "crisis of authority." But it will endure because no alternatives – or serious prospect for transformation – have emerged. On the contrary, "the rise of non-Western powers and the growth of economic and security interdependence are creating new constituencies and pressures for liberal international order."¹²

This selective but hopeful account of the American World Order sidesteps major controversies that predate the challenges acknowledged by Ikenberry, including the unipolar moment.¹³ The claim that

⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁷ Ibid., 53.

⁸ Robert O. Keohane, "Hegemony and After," (Review Essay) *Foreign Affairs* (July-August 2012): 5.

⁹ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, xi, xii, 224.

¹¹ Ibid., 224.

¹² Ibid., 6.

¹³ Ibid., xiii.

“The British and American-led liberal orders have been built in critical respects around consent,”¹⁴ vastly underplays the ever present hand of violence and coercion in both the hegemonies, including colonialism and Cold War era interventions by the US.. The controversies are not just recent but have routinely been present, from within and outside that order, especially in the global North-South divide during the Cold War. Moreover, there are more challenges than the three that Ikenberry identifies. For example, the shifting sources of violence—the privatization of war and the rise of informal violence (i.e.,the war on terror) were preceded by other redefinitions of security, including the call for human security, not a US invention that frontally challenges the “national security” paradigm developed under US hegemony.¹⁵

Hence, other possibilities for multilateralism in the post-hegemonic era suggest themselves. One such form is “extrication” as opposed to Ikenberry’s “binding.” Weaker states may develop institutions to keep out all great powers, including the hegemon whose power and purpose, even offer of self-binding multilateralism, they normatively reject. Another possibility is that multilateralism might emerge not “after victory” but also “after decline.” Declining material capabilities may compromise the credibility of the hegemon’s strategic commitment. Such situations may provide opportunities and incentives for institution-building, especially for local actors. A regional grouping of small and weak states, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), did this after the Vietnam War, although it was also inspired by the normative quest for regional autonomy.

What might be a general framework for analyzing the altered possibilities of multilateralism and thus global governance? There is little question that the traditional conceptualization of multilateralism was too beholden to the state, American power, Western leadership, and the global level of interactions. What is coming in their place is as yet indeterminate, but I propose one possible direction, post-hegemonic multilateralism.

I have used the term “post-hegemonic multilateralism” to refer broadly to formal and informal interactions among states and other actors, at global and regional levels, on the basis of common principles and institutions that are not dominated by a single power or group of powers. Instead, leadership is diffuse and shared among actors that are not bound into a hierarchical relationship linked to differential material capabilities. This concept not only differs from the classic hegemonic stability theory, but also its more refined siblings including: the notion of multilateralism as a unique product of post-war American hegemony: the neo-liberal institutionalist claim that institutions originally created by the hegemon would continue after hegemony; and the idea of a constitutional order under which a hegemon creates and controls legally-defined hierarchical institutions to trade its benevolent self-restraint for the deference and compliance of the lesser actors.

The concept also takes us beyond the past debate between liberals and critical theorists on the future of multilateralism. Liberals, led by Robert Keohane believed that multilateral regimes created by the United States as hegemonic power could survive its decline on the strength of common interests and such continuing benefits as providing information, lowering transactions costs, preventing cheating, and reducing overall uncertainty.¹⁶ The critical perspectives group led by Robert Cox argued that institutions that promote the values and purpose of the capitalist world order could be seriously challenged for their deeply anti-egalitarian, coercive, and exploitative roles, whether the hegemon itself declines or not.

In some respects, post-hegemonic multilateralism is similar to Cox’s notion of a “counterhegemonic” bloc, which is “anchored in a broader diffusion of power, in which a large

¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵ Amitav Acharya, “Human Security: East Versus West”, *International Journal* LVI, no. 3 (2001): 442-460.

¹⁶ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

number of collective forces, including states, achieve some agreement upon universal principles of an alternative order without dominance.”¹⁷ But unlike Cox, who uses “post-hegemonic” and “counterhegemonic” interchangeably, I define the former as a distinctive and broader category. The idea of a counterhegemonic bloc stresses resistance from social movements. Despite admitting a role for states, Cox nonetheless argued that a “reinvigorated civil society” could genuinely reconstruct a world order because “very little can be accomplished towards fundamental change through the state system as it now exists.”¹⁸ But resistance to hegemony and its key organizing principles can also come from other states (especially emerging powers and regions) and non-state actors— including extremist groups.¹⁹

While agreeing that one should not underestimate the continued authority and adaptability of existing state-led institutions to changing circumstances that call for a more socially inclusive and democratic multilateralism,²⁰ multilateralism could be more fundamentally challenged and reinvented “after hegemony” and “without victory” if weaker or newly-empowered actors disagree with the supposed material and normative benefits of an existing framework relative to the costs imposed and the vulnerabilities induced. Even the “stickiness” of institutions due to their socializing functions, stressed by constructivists, may not spare them from a fundamental restructuring over the long-term if these new forces challenge old norms and socialization frameworks associated with hegemonic multilateralism.

What are the catalysts of post-hegemonic multilateralism? To a large extent, post-hegemonic multilateralism has emerged through three principal challenges to hegemonic multilateralism. Most analysts would quickly point to the rise of transnational movements, which is also known more controversially as the “global civil society”. Another catalyst is changes to the international distribution of power, as found in the discourse on “rising” or “emerging” powers. Yet another one, as already hinted, albeit in a broad sense, is regionalism. None of these are unproblematic or sufficient in themselves to counter traditional hegemonic multilateralism, but together they do present a powerful alternative to it.

Catalysts of Change

Civil Society and Transnational Movements

The first catalyst of change in traditional multilateralism has been the expanding role of civil society and transnational movements. The role of civil society in global governance has already been extensively discussed under the rubric of the “new multilateralism” approach since the 1990s.²¹ The “new multilateralism” concept made a number of claims. First, it is a bottom-up phenomenon, rather than state-centric, the role of states has to be seen in conjunction with that of social forces, especially civil society groups. The second (which was called “post-hegemonic organizing”) “acknowledges the differences in assumptions about the social world and attempts to find common ground for cooperation. In the place of universalistic principles of neoclassical economics, one is aware of alternative methods

¹⁷ Robert W. Cox, “Multilateralism and World Order,” *Review of International Studies* 18, no. 2 (April 1992):180.

¹⁸ Robert W. Cox., “Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium: Prospects for an Alternative World Order,” *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (1999): 27-28.

¹⁹ Amitav Acharya, “State Sovereignty after 9/11: Disorganised Hypocrisy?” *Political Studies* 55, no.2 (2007): 274-296; Acharya, “The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics,” *World Politics* 59, no. 4 (2007): 629-652.

²⁰ Ikenberry, *After Victory*; Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*.

²¹ Cox, “Multilateralism and World Order”; Cox, ed., *The New Realism: Perspectives on Multilateralism and World Order* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Michael G. Schechter, ed., *Future Multilateralism: The Political and Social Framework* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

of social organizing and cultural diversity.”²² But “new multilateralism” did suffer from its own uncertainties and controversies, some of which are associated with the concept of a global civil society,²³ the main platform for resistance to the hegemonic world order. Given the diversity of its constituents in terms of locations, issues, strategies of mobilization, and normative orientations, it is difficult to convince skeptics why global civil society is any more coherent and meaningful than such terms as “international system” or “International community” that underpin traditional multilateralism. Transnational civil society, which suggests civil society activism across borders but not necessarily on a global scale, may be apter. But even here controversies persist over “who elected the NGOs” or the legitimacy of social movements “to substitute for the state.”²⁴ Moreover, given that its leadership and discursive agenda was centered in the West, new multilateralism was especially susceptible to a “moral cosmopolitanism” bias, which privileged the role of Western transnational moral agents at the expense of non-Western regional or local actors. For example, the dominant explanation of transnational human rights advocacy, the “boomerang” model, privileged the role of transnational actors and “paid far less attention to the local embodiments of human rights norms in the developing world.”²⁵ Although in it local groups initiate “the process, their location, obscure language, and marginality have limited scholarly inquiry.”²⁶ Yet the agency of local civil society groups is critical: “Transnational NGOs and networks can monitor, inform, and advocate all they want, but without serious investments of time and effort by local human rights champions, nothing much will change on the ground.”²⁷

Emerging Powers

The second catalyst of change is multilateralism concerns the role of emerging powers. The concept of emerging powers gained currency following the BRICS (including South Africa since 2010), the G-20 and other clubs such as IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), BRICSAM (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Mexico).. But there is little question that the emerging powers and their clubs constitute the second major challenge to hegemonic multilateralism and necessitate a re-conceptualization of multilateralism generally. Here, the task is to figure out who count as the principal actors in global multilateralism and also about what to consider as issue areas. But this task is far from complete or uncontroversial. The term “emerging powers” is hardly coherent or uncontested. The G-20 has emerged as the key site for attempts to redefine and re-legitimize multilateralism today with a focus on economics and finance. But questions cloud the legitimacy of the G-20 itself. Its membership criteria remain shrouded in controversy, including the overrepresentation of Europe and absence of such important players in the developing world as Egypt and Nigeria. This is especially important if the G-20 is to go beyond its initial role in stabilizing the world financial system, where it has proven its worth, and take on a political and security role, as some proponents advocate.

A novelty of the G-20 is that its membership is supposed to bridge the traditional North-South divide. Yet is the G-20 itself representative of the developing world or reflective of a new faultline between the “poor South” and the “power South”? Unless and until these issues are addressed, the

²² Robert O'Brien, et al., *Contesting Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²³ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, “Power, Politics and the Global Civil Society,” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 747-769.

²⁴ O'Brien, et al. *Contesting Global Governance*.

²⁵ James Ron, “Legitimate or Alien? Human Rights Organizations in the Developing World,” Paper circulated at the Workshops on Religion and Human Rights Pragmatism: Promoting Rights across Cultures, Columbia University New York, 24 September 2011.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

potential of the emerging powers in general and the G-20 in particular as the catalyst for a post-hegemonic multilateralism will remain unfulfilled. Yet, while the influence of the emerging powers may have been exaggerated, they do challenge the existing multilateral framework that has underpinned the post-war order. It is inconceivable that their demands would not lead to some institutional reform and leadership change in existing multilateralism. The early literature on multilateralism paid more attention to the role of institutions as the arbiter legitimacy of state action than to the legitimacy of the institutions themselves. The debate over the Iraq war was not about the legitimacy of existing multilateralism but of action by the United States without multilateralism – the UN failed to authorize the use of force.²⁸ But the emerging powers discourse highlights the issue of the legitimacy within the existing multilateral structure. Here, the issue hinges on improving the representation and decision-making authority of the emerging powers through reform of the Security Council or additional changes to the voting structures of the Washington-based financial institutions. As such, the emerging powers phenomenon challenges not only American but Western dominance over the traditional post-War multilateralism.

Regional-Worlds

A third catalyst is regionalism and regional worlds. The substance of the idea of regional worlds builds upon my earlier work on norm diffusion and regional orders, especially its inside-out framework and emphasis of local agency,²⁹ and takes its name from a now concluded area studies project at the University of Chicago. I do not claim that the world is being divided into regions or that regions and regionalism are becoming the sole driving forces and operating sites of global order. While regions and regionalism are important themes of this book, I use the term regional-worlds as a metaphor to capture the multiple, diverse but cross-cutting foundations and drivers of global order. Instead of a singular, traditional notion of universality, regional-world speaks to a pluralist conception of global order. We still think of the modern international order as having been constituted by the universalization of the principles and institutions of the European international society, albeit modified and managed by the power and purpose of the United States. Yet, while these claims were less true in the past than widely believed, especially in terms of their assumption of an undifferentiated and uncontested reality, they are becoming progressively unsustainable now.

The idea of regional-worlds implies a world of overlapping diversity where local and regional constructions of concepts and approaches to order assume greater significance than what much of the traditional international relations assigns them. This perspective rests on the assumptions of “all global politics is but local” and “unity in diversity”. I borrow but redefine and broaden the term from the now defunct Regional World project at the University of Chicago. The goal of that project was to offer new “conceptual, strategic and practical...approach to area studies.” The project sought to move area studies from an approach “driven by conceptions of geographical, civilizational and cultural coherence”, or “trait geographies”, towards “process geographies” that take a more dynamic and interactive view. Regions or areas are not “objective clusters of cartographic, material or cultural facts”. The “process geography” perspective would imply “new ways to approach both space and time

²⁸ Acharya, “State sovereignty after 9/11”.

²⁹ Amitav Acharya, “Regional Worlds in a Post-Hegemonic Era,” Keynote Speaker at the GARNET Annual Conference on ‘Mapping Integration and Regionalism in a Global World’ in Bordeaux on 17-18 September, 2008, http://www.spirit.sciencespobordeaux.fr/Cahiers%20de%20SPIRIT/Cahiers%20de%20SPIRIT_1_Acharya.pdf; Acharya, “How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism”, *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No.2 (Spring 2004), 239-275; Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Acharya, “Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism and Rule Making in the Third World,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 55 (2011), 95–123.

in relation to 'areas' with space becoming more flexible and porous and time less sequential and cumulative.³⁰

This new view of regions in the area studies community coincided with and echoed the changing view of regions and regionalism that was running in parallel in the discipline of international relations. For over two decades, I have been actively involved in articulating and encouraging this new perspective through my work on Asian and comparative regionalism.³¹ This view takes regions not as fixed geographic and cultural entities, but as dynamic and socially constructed ones that can take on the quality of imagined communities. More important, this view accords regions much more autonomy and agency in building order than the prevailing literature on regionalism allowed. Regions are constructed mainly "from within" and "from below", rather than "from outside" and "from above". They enjoy considerable autonomy from outside influences and can even resist and reshape them. Moreover, this view sees regions in much more ideational and normative terms than ever before. One of the most theoretically-important works on regionalism to emerge in the post-Cold War period was "new" regionalism. The difference between "old" and "new" regionalism lies in three areas: the multipolar context of the latter (as opposed to the bipolar context of old regionalism); the dominant role of hegemonic actors (or "hegemonic regionalism" created from "outside" and "above") in the creation of old regionalism as opposed to the "autonomous" nature of new regionalism (from "within" and "below"), and the comprehensiveness and multidimensional nature of new regionalism as opposed to the narrow and specific focus of the old.³²

It is worth repeating that the literature on regions and regionalism that I have been involved in developing, as well as the "new regionalism" and the "regional worlds" perspectives are not just about the internal dynamics of regions, but also about how regions relate to the constitution and management

³⁰ "About the Program," <http://regionalworlds.uchicago.edu/about.html>, date accessed 27 December 2012; "Area Studies, Regional Worlds: A White Paper for the Ford Foundation," The Globalization Project, University of Chicago, p. 23. Available at <http://regionalworlds.uchicago.edu/areastudiesregworlds.pdf>, date accessed 27 December 2012.

³¹ Acharya, "Regionalism and Regime Security in the Third World: Comparing the Origins of the ASEAN and the GCC" in Brian L. Job, ed., *The (In)security Dilemma: National Security of Third World States* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1991), 143-164; Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 29, No. 1. (1992), 7-21. Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London: Routledge, 2001, 2009); Acharya, "Regionalism: The Meso Public Domain in Latin America and South-East Asia", in Daniel Drache, ed., *The Market or the Public Domain: Global Governance and the Asymmetry of Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 296-318; Acharya, "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order: Norms, Power, and Prospects for Peaceful Change", in Muthaah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp.210-240; Acharya, "Regionalism and the Emerging World Order: Sovereignty, Autonomy, Identity", in Shaun Breslin, Christopher W. Hughes, Nicola Phillips and Ben Rosamond, eds., *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 20-32; Acharya, "How Ideas Spread"; Acharya, "Europe and Asia: Reflections on a Tale of Two Regionalisms," in Bertrand Fort and Douglas Webber, ed., *Regional integration in East Asia and Europe: Convergence or Divergence?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Acharya, "The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics: A Review Essay," *World Politics*, Vol.59, No.4 (July 2007), 629-652; Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter?*; Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston, ed., *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009). Acharya, "Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders"; Acharya, *The Making of Southeast Asia: International Relations of a Region* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

³² Bjorn Hettne and Andras Inotai, *The New Regionalism: Implications for Global Development and International Security* (Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1994). In this report, which is the foundational document of the new regionalism approach, the distinction between "hegemonic" and "autonomous" regionalism, a crucial aspect of new regionalism, was taken from this author's earlier work: Acharya, "Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World". For subsequent development of new regionalism approach, see Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel, *Globalism and the New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 1999). See also: Mario Telò, *European Union and New Regionalism: Regional Actors and Global Governance in a Post-Hegemonic Era* (London: Ashgate, 2007).

of global order. Moreover, their insights into how regions are organized and managed within and between themselves can be extrapolated into the analysis of global level interactions, just as international relations scholars routinely apply insights from domestic politics to international relations (although the latter has been much more commonplace than the former).

Building on and extending the insights of these bodies of work to the analysis of global order (here my own work can be seen as a synthesis between the “regional worlds” perspective on area studies and the “new regionalism” perspective on international relations), I define regional-worlds (with the addition of a hyphen) with reference to three key elements. First and more important, regional-worlds are not hegemonic constructions.³³ Instead, they refer to principles and institutions of organizing the world and modes of managing stability that are not dominated by a single power or a concert of powers. Instead, the sources and agency of ideas and approaches to order are diffuse and shared among actors that are not inextricably bound into a hierarchical global relationship linked to differential material capabilities. This concept not only differs from the classic hegemonic stability theory, but also its more refined siblings including: the notion of multilateral interactions as a unique product of post-war American hegemony.

Some regional orders³⁴ may reflect hegemonic power and purpose, but my idea of regional-worlds challenges the top-down view of power-constructed regions commonplace in the IR literature. Regional-worlds may emerge without hegemonic organization or even in resistance to it. In any case, any hegemonic construction of regional-worlds is challenged by countervailing material and ideational forces. In regional-worlds, “Power matters, but local responses to power may matter even more in the construction of regional orders.”³⁵

Second and closely related to the above, regional worlds offer sites for ideational and normative contestations and compromises whose repercussions transcend regional boundaries and overlap with other regional and global spaces. In this sense, regional-worlds are neither wholly self-contained entities, nor purely extensions of global dynamics. In the Chicago project, “Multiple regions overlap and contradict one another to form complex webs of power, interaction and imagination that are constantly in motion.”³⁶ In my formulation, regions also become sites of contesting global level actors and ideas. They not only challenge the material power-driven conceptions of order of the great powers, but also the ideas proposed by transnational norm entrepreneurs at the global level without regard for regional/local contexts or preexisting beliefs and practices that may enjoy a robust legitimacy.

Third, and this is the main insight of the Chicago project that I draw upon, regional-worlds only self-organize their economic, political and cultural interactions and identity, but also produce their

³³ This aspect was not integral to the University of Chicago project, but builds upon my earlier work on “hegemonic” and “autonomous” regionalism. Here, I use the term “regional worlds” in a contrasting sense to Peter Katzenstein’s concept of a “world of regions”. While Katzenstein’s work on norms and regionalisms has been rich and inspiring to me, the “world of regions” denoted a regionalized architecture of world politics under American hegemony (or “imperium”) in which Germany and Japan acted as two “core” states serving US power and purpose and helping organize Europe and Asia into distinctive regions. While a “world of regions” is made by America, my regional worlds are made from *within*. Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). From my earlier critique of this important work, see: Amitav Acharya, “The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics: A Review Essay,” *World Politics*, Vol.59, No.4 (July 2007), 629-652; Amitav Acharya, “Made in America? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism,” in Roundtable: Peter J. Katzenstein’s Contributions to the Study of East Asian Regionalism,” *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 7 (2007), 359–412.

³⁴ In this respect, “regional-world” is different from “regional order”. The latter is closely associated with the interplays of power, and subsumes any significant resistance to the power-centric form, while the former is an interplay of material power and significant ideational forces, and resists power-driven homogenization to produce and retain diversity.

³⁵ Amitav Acharya, “The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics” (Review Essay), *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (July 2007), 630.

³⁶ Sita Ranchod-Nilsson, “Regional Worlds: Transforming Pedagogy in Area Studies and International Studies,” p. 8. <http://regionalworlds.uchicago.edu/transformingpedagogy.pdf>, date accessed 26 December 2012.

own mental image of other regions and the global space in general. To borrow the words of Arjun Appadurai, areas “are not just places, but are also locations for the production of other world-pictures, which also need to be part of our sense of these other worlds.”³⁷ Here, the regional-world perspective conforms well to the realities of how international affairs is studied and analyzed. Whether consciously or subconsciously, deliberately or instinctively, scholars and analysts of international affairs often start their investigation into a particular world problem from their own local, regional vantage-points, or use a regional context as a backdrop or source of explanations (i.e. causes of war) and remedies (i.e. approach to stability and order). Such transcendental localisms (in the sense of surpassing) are of course familiar to any scholar of IR, which is essentially a set of generalizations from European regional affairs and its wider, more global implications. As David Kang puts it, “For too long, international relations scholars have derived theoretical propositions from the European experience and then treated them as deductive and universal”.³⁸ My idea of regional-worlds undercuts the hitherto Eurocentrism of this outer projection and broadens it to all regions of the world, not just Europe or North America. In other words, the regional-worlds perspective is an inside-out, as opposed to an outside-in view of world politics.

The Limits and Decline of the Liberal Order

How do these above-mentioned changes to multilateralism affect the future of global governance? Far reaching changes to the architecture of global governance, especially the emergence of new actors, agents and forms of governance, make this question moot and timely. The big multilateral institutions around which the post-war system of global governance was initially anchored are no longer the only game or actors in global governance. The “fragmentation” of global governance entails the emergence of “a patchwork of international institutions that are different in their character (organizations, regimes, and implicit norms), their constituencies, (public and private), their spatial scope (from bilateral to global), and their subject matter (from specific policy fields to universal concerns).”³⁹ There has been a proliferation of regional and plurilateral arrangements, initiatives led by the private sector and transnational social movements, and various forms of partnership involving government, private and civil society actors. Their effects are especially felt on the prominence, authority and legitimacy of the global multilateral institutions that have been the bedrock of the post-war global governance system. This has produced confusion, uncertainty and anxiety over the future of global governance among its traditional advocates.

At the most optimistic end, some see this fragmentation as producing a suboptimal or “good enough” global governance.⁴⁰ Others view it in starkly negative terms. Daniel Plesch and Thomas Weiss lament “the global sprawl of networks and informal institutions” as a serious challenge to the post-war big multilaterals, especially the UN, that need strengthening. They warn of the dangers of “a misplaced enthusiasm for ad hoc and informal pluralism rather than for more formal and systematic multilateralism,” without which “states and their citizens will not reap the benefits of trade and

³⁷ Arjun Appadurai, in “The Future of Asian Studies”, *Viewpoints* (Association of Asian Studies. 1997), p.6

³⁸ David C. Kang, “Stability and Hierarchy in East Asian International Relations, 1300 to 1900,” in Stuart J. Kaufman, Richard Little, and William Wohlforth, eds. *The balance of power in world history*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 199. Also interesting is the work of Stephen Walt, who in justifying his selection of Middle East case studies to develop a theory about the origin of alliances, noted: “international relations scholars have long relied on historical cases and quantitative data drawn from European diplomatic history without being accused of a narrow geographic, temporal, or cultural focus.” (Stephen M. Walt, *Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 14-15.

³⁹ Frank Biermann, Philipp Pattberg, Harro van Asselt, and Fariborz Zelli, “The Fragmentation of Global Governance Architectures: A Framework for Analysis,” *Global Environmental Politics*, Vol.9, No. 4 (November 2009), p.16

⁴⁰ Stewart Patrick, “The Unruled World: The Case for Good Enough Global Governance,” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no.1 (January/February 2014), 58-73.

globalization, discover nonviolent ways to meet security challenges, or address environmental degradation.”⁴¹

Such debate is healthy. But dominated as it is by scholars and policymakers from the West, it also masks a quintessential Western anxiety about the future of the liberal international order. After all, the traditional system of global governance led by the big Western powers and the big multilaterals suited the power and purpose of the US and the West. A fragmented system of global governance means more pluralization and the erosion of the dominance of US and Western governments of that order.

I argue that fragmentation is inevitable and may even be creative because it reflects broader forces of change in world politics.

To elaborate, the world today is *culturally and politically diverse, yet more interconnected and interdependent. Its main players – both the makers and breakers of order - are not just states and the great powers, but also international and regional bodies, non-state groups, corporations, and people’s movements and networks. Challenges to security and well-being of states and societies defy national boundaries.*

These changes not only challenge the era of big multilaterals it also does not fit the traditional description of a “multipolar” world. The notion of multipolarity is outdated. It was basically derived from pre-World War II Europe, and connoted the geopolitical centrality of the Western great powers. Today, the actors in world politics are much more varied. Moreover, the nature of interdependence is more broad-based. Interdependence during the pre-War European multipolar system was largely trade-based and Eurocentric. The rest of the world was actually in a relationship of dependence with Europe. Today, interdependence is global, complex and broad-based, comprising not only trade, but also finance and production networks.

Furthermore, interdependence today is not just an economic phenomenon. The various issue areas that are central to global governance today, such as climate change, refugee flows, pandemics, human rights abuses, etc. are precisely what add scope, depth, and complexity to the nature of global interdependence.

Such a world is best described as a multiplex world⁴², whose distinctive feature is a proliferation of transnational challenges, a diffusion of ideas, actors and processes of global governance. The fragmentation of global governance reflects a growing demand for new principles and approaches that cannot be accommodated by a simple extension of the old international order dominated by the US or the multilateral institutions it created, even though the latter will have their place and role. The concept of global governance must come to terms with an emerging multiplex world.

A Multiplex World has *five main features*:

- *Absence of global hegemony (like the US until now or Britain in the late 19th century until World War I), although power inequalities & hierarchies remain;*
- *Proliferation of major actors. These are not just the great powers, as in a multipolar system, but also international and regional bodies, non-state groups, corporations, and people’s networks;*
- *Complex global and regional interdependence, covering not just trade, but also economic and ecological linkages, and transnational challenges;*
- *Multi-level governance architecture comprising global, regional and national and sub-national (e.g. cities), each with formal and informal institutions, networks, and hybrid structures;*

⁴¹ Dan Plesch and Thomas G. Weiss (2015) 1945's Lesson: “Good Enough” Global Governance Ain't Good Enough. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*: April-June 2015, Vol. 21, No. 2, p.203.

⁴² Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (Cambridge, UK: Polity 2014).

- *Multiple modernities, rather than a singular liberal modernity. A world of cultural, ideological and political diversity, including alternative ideas pathways to stability, peace and prosperity.*

This brings us to the forms and implications of global governance's fragmentation. Here, it is crucial to keep in mind that fragmentation is neither linear nor uniform across issue areas. A good deal of the debate over the future of global governance is either carried at the conceptual or macro-level, or draws upon trends in a single or a limited number of issue areas, especially trade and environment. There has been little assessment of global governance comparatively across a range of issue areas. Yet without such assessment, it is difficult to have any definitive sense of the future of global governance. A comparative analysis of nine issue areas, human rights, atrocity crimes, security, trade, finance, refugees, health, climate change and cyberspace, shows that:

1. The demand for global governance is not linear and varies widely across issue areas. Demand may be strengthening in human rights, security governance (conflict prevention, management, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, etc.), atrocities and cyberspace, but weakening in health and trade, and static after having risen in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 financial turmoil. In trade, finance and health, demand is crisis-driven.
2. Fragmentation is not a new phenomenon. Some forms, such as regionalization, have been going on since the inception of and in tandem with the post-war multilateral system.
3. Fragmentation comes in many forms and varieties and differs depending on issue area. Regionalism and plurilateralism are especially strong in trade. Multistakeholderism is most evident in security, cyberspace, refugees and climate change, whereas trade and finance remain largely intergovernmental affairs. A private entity, the Gates Foundation, has made a major difference to health governance.
4. It's multi-causal. The key factors are strategic, functional and normative. Strategic factors include the global power shift, and the rise of new powers demanding more say in global institutions and, failing that, going for alternative or parallel mechanisms. It is also due to moves by the US to sidestep those institutions [especially the World Trade Organization (WTO)] where their influence is waning relative to the emerging powers. Fragmentation is also caused by doubts about the efficacy of the big multilaterals, and the demand for more justice and equity from the developing countries and creating more democratic space in global governance through civil society participation.
5. Fragmentation is challenging but not displacing the existing international institutions and can be complementary to them. This is clearly evident in finance, health, security and refugees. Trade at present is one area where the opposite seems to be the case.

The issue of human rights offers an example of where fragmentation is having positive effects. Human rights laws are no longer protected only in international courts, but also through criminal prosecutions in domestic courts using both international law and domestic criminal law. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has been joined by more than two dozen international enforcement courts in the world enforcing human rights law.

Security governance has benefitted from the multi-stakeholder, multi-dimensional, peacekeeping missions that begun from the 1990s. While the messy combination of international agencies, regional organizations, contact groups, donor states, NGOs and other actors seems anarchic, it has also contributed to an overall long-term decline in armed conflicts. These dropped from 51 in 1991, the peak year for armed conflicts in post-Cold war era, to 31 in 2010, the lowest point of such conflicts in the post-Cold War era, but rising to 40 in 2014.⁴³

⁴³ *Therése Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed conflicts, 1946–2014", Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 52, No.4 (2015): 536.*

In trade, the proliferation of bilateral, regional and plurilateral trade arrangements certainly challenges the WTO's primacy. But they also have positive sides. Fragmentation has meant *increased participation*; the number of countries active in trade negotiations around the globe has increased and so have the issues up for negotiations. Regional and plurilateral agreements might create much stricter standards for intellectual property protection and tougher enforcement penalties for intellectual property infringement than existing Trade-Related Aspects on Intellectual Property (TRIPs) measures. They lead the way in producing agreements over issues, such as services, environmental standards, and investment and competition policies that have eluded the WTO and thus set precedents for future WTO agreements. More importantly, there is as yet little sign that fragmentation has led to greater protectionism (like in the 1930s) but to more freeing of trade in more corners of the world.

In finance, the emergence of a regional financial arrangement (with bilateral and multilateral components), called the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI) since the 1990s is on balance complementary to the IMF. The Eurozone crisis has seen the IMF and European regional bodies (such as the European Monetary Authority) working together. Compared to trade and the WTO, the relationship of plurilateral and regional initiatives with the IMF is much more cooperative and synergetic.

Domestic and regional initiatives on climate change have led to fears about the weakening, if not replacement, of global level efforts within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). But regional efforts can be useful in dealing with issues such as deforestation, pollution and short-term climate impacts, thereby complementing the global efforts directed at building a regime. Such efforts do not threaten global negotiations, as the Paris Agreement on climate change in December 2015 showed.

The global refugee governance regime is also witnessing some fragmentation and decentralization. In the past, regional fragmentation did not necessarily challenge, but complemented, the global regime by increasing demand for the latter by sensitizing domestic and regional pro-rights advocacy groups. UN mandated and sponsored activities, in partnership with a regional organization, were successful in addressing the regional refugee crises in Southeast Asia and Central Latin America. But the recent European refugee crisis might pose a test of the global regime, as national responses are challenging both the global regimes and the European Union's regional immigration and refugee norms and rules.

Global health governance has shifted from being World Health Organization (WHO)-centric to a much more complex system with other international organizations such as the World Bank and various regional bodies, NGOs and private sector actors such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The WHO now relies heavily on contributions from wealthy nation and private donors, whose total voluntary contributions to WHO are 75% higher than the organization's own core budget. The Gates Foundation and the US government account for 23% of the WHO's core and voluntary budget of an estimated US \$4.4 billion in 2016 and 2017.⁴⁴ While this raises concerns about the US and the Gates Foundation acquiring too much influence on global health governance, it also supports efforts to strengthen the WHO's capacity to provide effective responses to global health emergencies.

Internet and cyberspace governance constitutes a new frontier of global governance. Here the costs of fragmentation (as in other issue areas) may be having too many meetings, which would undermine democratic participation ((due to increasing costs of attending them). This in turn could affect the legitimacy of these processes by privileging the well-resourced actors over smaller participants' ability to influence the regime.

Yet, cyberspace governance, along with several other areas such as trade show why in dealing with fragmentation, it is important not to downplay the normative purpose of global governance in favor of strategic and functional ones. In cyberspace governance, the existing regime based on the Internet

⁴⁴ Laurie Garrett, "WHO's Fairy Dust Financing," *Foreign Policy*, 27 May 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/27/whos-fairy-dust-financing-world-health-organization-zika-budget/>

Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has been undermined by the Edward Snowden revelations, and led to demands for a less US-centric multistakeholder system.

A key factor driving fragmentation is the outdated system of privilege enjoyed by the Western countries, and their abuse of existing rules and norms and resistance to the lack of reform of multilateral institutions. Thus, the creation of new financial institutions by the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), such as the New Development Bank (NDB) or the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) and the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) cannot be explained simply in terms of the emerging powers' thirst for power or strategic advantage (although this cannot be dismissed) but also to their dissatisfaction with the slow pace of reform of existing institutions.⁴⁵

It is important to keep in mind that fragmentation does not necessarily mean a decline in the overall demand for global governance. Demand for global governance is driven by multiplex factors, including strategic concerns of the great powers, the nature of issue areas that cannot be simply resolved by unilateral action even by the most powerful states, domestic politics and normative pressures, especially from civil society and transnational social movements.⁴⁶ The entry of new actors and issues can broaden and increase the demand for global governance. This is especially evident in areas such as human rights, security, atrocity crimes, and cyberspace. Relatedly, fragmentation does not lead to the reduced efficacy of global governance. In security and human rights, for example, global governance has actually been strengthened by multistakeholderism. The outcome of fragmentation depends on its type and issue areas, but it can be negative, positive or uncertain. The consequences of fragmentation should be judged not only in terms of efficacy but also legitimacy. Since there are different types of fragmentation, it is wrong to assume that the overall outcome of fragmentation would be detrimental for global governance. Some areas of fragmentation offer major benefits, and can be positive or creative.

The idea of “good enough” global governance is certainly better than global un-governance. But it raises the question: good enough for whom? Good enough perhaps for the US and other Western liberal states? But from the perspective of the emerging powers and the Global South, “good enough” should be more than a justification for inaction, or the lack of reform of global institutions on the part of the Western powers so as to thus preserve the status quo.

Some liberal scholars and pundits have been optimistic that American-led liberal international order and hence the system of global governance that was embedded within it, would not only survive but also coopt the emerging powers who have unquestionably benefitted much from that order. The most optimistic take is that the emerging powers may even become defenders of the liberal order. Less so is the view that the liberal international order can survive by accepting greater political diversity, especially the domestic systems and political regimes of the emerging powers like China that are distinctly illiberal. The result would be lesser quality global governance, but keep it going.

But can one separate the domestic and international prescriptions of the liberal international order this way? While the developmental states and the rising powers may accept certain aspects of the existing liberal order, such as free trade, there would still be a significant variance between the liberal order and the domestic imperatives and social purposes (including those that sustain regime security) of these powers, especially among the state-led capitalism in the developmental states of East Asia.

⁴⁵ See Gregory T. Chin, “Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank: Governance Innovation and Prospects,” *Global Governance* 22, no. 1 (2016), 11–25.

⁴⁶ Amitav Acharya, ed., *Why Govern? Rethinking Demand and Progress in Global Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

One reason why the emerging powers may still distrust the old order is that its past claims of openness and accommodation are exaggerated. During the Cold War, the liberal order excluded key non-Western nations, such as China and India, and it functioned mostly as a provider of “club goods” to America’s allies and partners.⁴⁷ It expanded in the post-Cold War era, but the legitimacy and the future of that order is not just a matter of the material benefits it confers on the rising powers; but also of ideational and identity considerations, including the resentment among the rising powers who associate the liberal order, its ideology and institutions, with Western dominance and exploitation and those who want to pursue and promote their own ideas and approaches.

Hence, the managers of the old order cannot co-opt the rising powers, but have to negotiate with them, and not just in terms set by the Western countries. The resulting system of governance would retain some of the main elements of the old. But it would also exhibit enough political, economic and strategic diversity that can scarcely fit into the traditional institutional paradigm or agency claims of the old liberal order. It needs to be less US-centric and more in tune with the global power and idea shifts associated with a multiplex world.

Studying and assessing how pressures for change that appear as fragmentation might affect global governance, emerges as a key area of global governance research. Comparing outcomes in the older and newer modes of governance in specific issue areas is an especially important and challenging research task.

For example, the Paris Agreement on climate change might have dispelled some of the pessimism about the future of climate change governance. But as Ann Marie Slaughter argues, the Agreement is by no means a return to old fashioned multilateralism. It recognizes the role of a diversity of actors: including civil society groups, business groups, and experts in managing the climate challenge. It represents a new form of global governance that is based not on the formalism of a conventional treaty with fixed rules and binding commitments, but offers a more flexible approach relying more on largely voluntary “non-adversarial and non-punitive” compliance mechanisms.⁴⁸ In other words, it is sort of a global version of the “ASEAN Way”, known for its inclusivity, informality, pragmatism, expediency, consensus-building, and non-confrontational bargaining as contrasted with “the adversarial posturing and legalistic decision-making procedures in Western multilateral negotiations.”⁴⁹

It is also useful to remind ourselves that the Paris Agreement was possible not only because of the work of transnational advocacy groups, but also due to consent of the emerging powers, especially China. Welcome to the brave new world of global governance in a multiplex world.

Global governance is not the same as global order. But it can affect, reshape and reconstitute the latter. One way of looking at how the changing nature of global governance can lead to a different understanding of global order is through the alternative frameworks of Liberal order and the Multiplex World (Figures 1 and 2). Unlike the former, a Multiplex World recognizes diversity in actors and agency.

⁴⁷ Joseph S. Nye, “Review of *The End of American World Order*, by Amitav Acharya,” *International Affairs* 90, no. 5 (2014), 1246-47.

⁴⁸ Anne-Marie Slaughter, “The Paris Approach to Global Governance”. Project Syndicate, December 28, 2015. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/paris-agreement-model-for-global-governance-by-anne-marie-slaughter-2015-12>

⁴⁹ Amitav Acharya, “Ideas, Identity and Institution-Building: From the ‘ASEAN Way’ to the ‘Asia Pacific Way’,” *The Pacific Review*, vol.10, no.3 (1997): 329

Figure 1: The Liberal Order W: The West

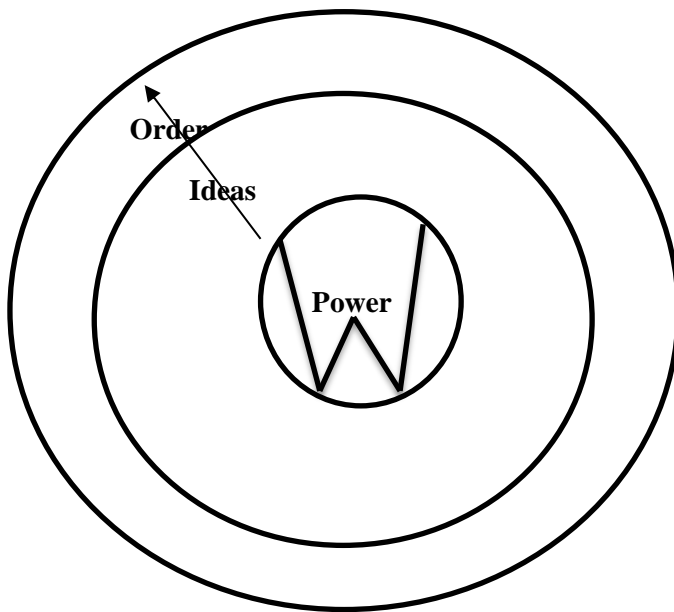
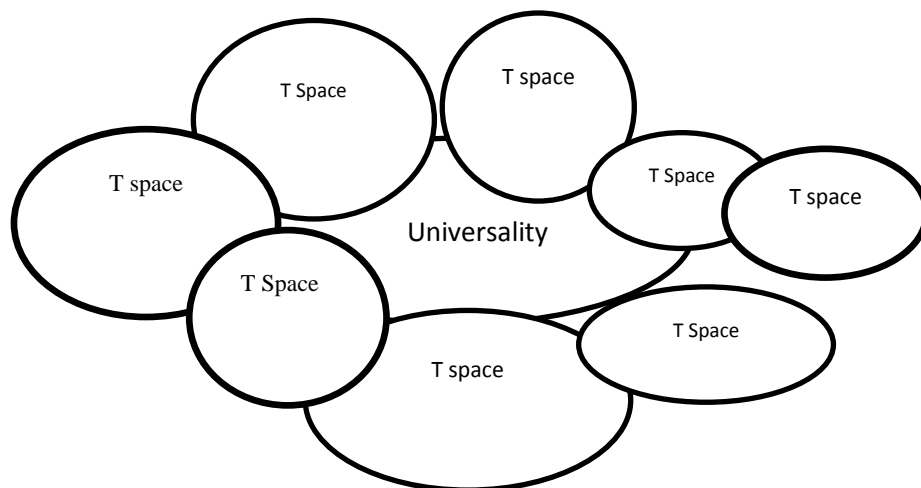


Figure 2: The Multiplex World

T Space: Transnational space of interaction among states, social movements, and international institutions, including those in regional worlds



The election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States has led many to question the future of the liberal international order, including some of its ardent proponents.⁵⁰ This adds to the uncertainty about the existing system of global governance that is nested within the post-war liberal

⁵⁰ “Out of Order? The Future of the International System,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 96, no.1 (January/February 2017); See also, Anne-Marie Slaughter, “The Return of Anarchy?”, *Journal of International Affairs*, March 15, 2017. <https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/return-anarchy>

order. Many of Trump's stated policy platforms suggest a nationalist, inward-looking US foreign policy. The Trump administration is cutting US funding for the UN and affiliated multilateral institutions. Trump has pledged to adopt an "America First" policy and pursue bilateral deals based on a stricter and direct reciprocity than multilateralism. His policies on trade and security could further undermine global institutions, such as the WTO and UN and disrupt climate change negotiations. This is giving more space to China and other emerging powers to assume a greater role which could make the overall system of global governance less US- and Western-centric.

But as noted, the post-War architecture of global governance was already moving in that direction, predating Trump. Trump's policies might accelerate the shift towards a more diversified system of global governance by weakening existing multilateral institutions. Compared to the past, In a Multiplex World, global governance will be less dominated by formal inter-governmental organizations, especially the big multilaterals, it has to accommodate hybrid mechanisms with a growing role of private bodies (corporations, foundations), civil society groups, regional arrangements. The emerging powers will continue to demand a greater voice and leadership in existing institutions and create new or "parallel" ones. While demand for global governance will remain, the architecture will continue to fragment and decenter, confirming the onset of a Multiplex World.

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