

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02135-8 - Special Responsibilities: Global Problems and American Power

Mlada Bukovansky, Ian Clark, Robyn Eckersley, Richard Price, Christian Reus-Smit and

Nicholas J. Wheeler

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Special Responsibilities

The language of special responsibilities is ubiquitous in world politics, with policy-makers and commentators alike speaking and acting as though particular states have, or ought to have, unique obligations in managing global problems. Surprisingly, scholars are yet to provide any in-depth analysis of this fascinating aspect of world politics. This path-breaking study examines the nature of special responsibilities, the complex politics that surround them and how they condition international social power. The argument is illustrated with detailed case studies of nuclear proliferation, climate change and global finance. All three problems have been addressed by an allocation of special responsibilities, but while this has structured politics in these areas, it has also been the subject of ongoing contestation. With a focus on the United States, this book argues that power must be understood as a social phenomenon, and that American power varies significantly across security, economic and environmental domains.

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Preface

Some members of this team of authors have occasionally collaborated together over the years and decades. Collectively, we all came together for the first time in 2004, as part of a larger group working on a project on ‘Resolving International Crises of Legitimacy’, funded by the British Academy. That project was born of our shared interest in issues of international legitimacy, and how this interacted with ‘power’ in world politics. The specific legacy of that undertaking was a special issue of the journal *International Politics*, 44 (2/3) 2007. The broader legacy was the immense intellectual stimulus of working together as a group, and when the opportunity arose to resume this collaboration, it was immediately seized. This opportunity was created in 2007 by a funding award from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) that included a collaborative dimension, and we all gratefully acknowledge this generous support. Given that throughout we have been variously based in Australia, Canada, Italy, the UK and the US, the award enabled periodic workshops that brought us together, and without which this book would not have been possible.

The award covered a generic project on the social bases of American power. In part, this represented a carry-over from the previous study: if an institution were to suffer a ‘crisis’ of legitimacy, how might this be resolved? What role should the United States specifically play in bringing about this resolution? These questions appeared to become even more pertinent with the election of the Barack Obama administration. Our initial intention was to approach this under the rubric of ‘hegemony’, as this was already the principal element of the cognate research being undertaken by Ian Clark as part of his individual role in the overall ESRC project. However, in the course of our meetings, it gradually became clear that what was routinely expected of hegemonies was that they would bear special responsibilities for contributing to the solution of global problems. Slowly, the main focus on hegemony diminished and was replaced by that on special responsibilities. We wanted to emphasise that our theory of special responsibilities was one specific way of

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elaborating our general approach to the social constitution of power. This also justified the focus on the US as it offered a useful framework for disaggregating US power in particular. This concept, of which we became increasingly confident, fully encapsulated all the important elements that we wished to discuss – power, legitimacy and the normative dimensions that fused the two. This allowed us to develop our earlier work on legitimacy, while closely scrutinising a term that has long become part of the everyday vocabulary of international politics, but which nobody has so far taken the time to explore in detail.

In bringing this study to fruition, we have incurred a substantial number of debts. Principal amongst these is to Dr Rachel Owen. Rachel served as the research assistant for the project, and in this capacity she organised our various workshops (travel, hospitality and programmes), as well as managing the informational infrastructure of our collaboration. She did this with the greatest of efficiency, and with unfailing good humour. We were all delighted to have Rachel as part of our team, and we thank her for her major contribution to the successful completion of this undertaking.

A number of institutions served as hosts for our various meetings and provided important logistical support. In particular, we wish to thank Amy Gurowitz and the Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley for hosting the first workshop of the project (29 March–1 April 2008); the European University Institute for twice hosting our meetings (30 March–1 April 2009, 12–13 May 2011); the Department of International Relations, Australian National University, for its support of our workshop (16–19 March 2010); and the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University (19–21 July 2010). At the Aberystwyth workshop, we invited a number of distinguished discussants to comment on the draft of our work. All eagerly accepted our invitation, and made heroic contributions over the three-day period. This greatly enhanced the way we approached our final draft, and so we are pleased to thank profusely the following: Campbell Craig, Tim Dunne, Kimberley Hutchings, Justin Morris, Matthew Paterson, Duncan Snidal, Andrew Walter and William Wohlforth. The book is all the better for their insights and telling reflections (but with the usual caveats).

In addition, the authors – individually or jointly – have given many presentations on the themes of the book at various institutions: Johns Hopkins University, Bologna Centre, Italy; Chuo University and Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo; School of Political Science and International Relations, University of Queensland; Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict, University of Oxford; Department

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of International Relations, London School of Economics; Department of Political Science, University of Western Washington; International Relations Colloquium, University of British Columbia; and the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. We are happy to acknowledge all the constructive feedback we received at these venues.

We also wish to express our thanks to John Haslam for his support of our project, and to the Cambridge University Press team for the book's efficient production. In the final stage, the entire script was read by a professional copy-editor to iron out stylistic inconsistencies. For agreeing to undertake this major task, we are deeply indebted to Mary-Louise Hickey of the Australian National University.

So comfortable had we become in working together as a team that we set ourselves the additional challenge of making this a jointly authored, rather than edited, volume. Although individuals were assigned 'special responsibilities' for first drafts of specific sections, the text as a whole has been worked through by the entire team, and is collectively owned.

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Abbreviations

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
APP	Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate
BASIC	Brazil, South Africa, India and China
CBDR	common but differentiated responsibilities
CDM	clean development mechanism
COP	Conferences of the Parties
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
EC	European Community
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty
FSF	Financial Stability Forum
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GHG	greenhouse gas
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
MRV	measurable, reportable and verifiable
NAMA	nationally appropriate mitigation action
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NNWS	non-nuclear weapon state
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRSRO	nationally recognized statistical ratings organization
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NWS	nuclear weapon state
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	polluter pays principle
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitations Talks

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SORT	Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WMD	weapons of mass destruction