1 Introduction: Rethinking Agency and Change in Global Order

What is order in world politics? Who are the makers and managers of that order? Which means do they employ to realize their goals? These questions are of course hardly new. Indeed, they have preoccupied international relations scholars for a long time. But answers to them have remained contested and unsettled.

In this book, I address these questions. And in so doing, I focus on the issue of agency in world politics. This book argues that the nature and scope of agency need to be further recast, redefined, and broadened. While some of this broadening has already taken place, recent theoretical work in international relations, especially concerning norm diffusion, and developments in world politics, such as the global power shift, require us to take a fresh look at agency in global order. The main arguments of the book are:

1. The existing global order is traditionally conceptualized, first, as an extension of the European state system, and subsequently, as the by-product of an American-led liberal hegemonic order. Yet, such characterizations obscure the role of other actors, including non-Western states and societies in the building of global order.

2. Many governing ideas and institutions of the post-war global order, despite originating from specific European and American milieux, are assumed to have a universal quality, in the sense of applying to all. Yet, in reality, they have been and continue to be contested. This is especially the case with sovereignty and security, the two core themes of this book. For example, while sovereignty at its origin was a European (Westphalian) construct, security, especially the prevailing idea of national security, is American in origin. IR scholars and policymakers take them to be universal, but the meaning and practice of both have been marked by significant variations around the world.

3. These contestations open the space for other actors, including non-Western actors, to put forward alternative, sometimes localized, ideas and institutions that also support order-building. To understand

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and analyze these multiple and diverse foundations of contemporary global order, we need a broader conception of agency.

4. Agency can be material as well as ideational or normative. When it comes to normative agency, the role of non-Western actors is not simply a matter of passive acceptance of Western principles and approaches to sovereignty and security. For example, the global sovereignty regime, the foundation of the modern world polity, came about not just through the passive inheritance of Westphalian principles by newly decolonized states. The latter also actively constructed these principles and translated the abstract notion of sovereignty into rules of conduct. The process was marked by local initiative and adaptations in various parts of the world. The same can be said about the idea of security, the meaning of which has changed through distinctive constructions in non-Western contexts that have wider global relevance and applicability.

5. Such contestations, variations, and constructions of order-building ideas and institutions are often overlooked by mainstream IR theories. But they are among the fundamental mechanisms and building blocks of global order today. They produce a diversity that challenges the orthodox conceptions of a universal order of humankind. Universality, the sense of one set of standards or principles "applying to all," is neither possible nor in many cases desirable. True universality lies in recognizing the essential diversity of states, societies, and regions, and finding common ground among them.

6. Hence, we do not live in a world of seamless globality that simply erases or subsumes the local. Despite some homogenization through international institutions and norms, local or regionally specific understandings and approaches to international order remain a vital aspect of global order-building. Regional institutions offer crucial sites for the creation and diffusion of these understandings and approaches, and variations in regionalisms are a major factor shaping global order. At the same time, the world is not being divided into regions and neither are regions and regionalism becoming the sole driving forces of global order. Rather, what we see is a world of growing complexity and overlapping diversity where local and regional constructions of concepts and approaches to order assume greater significance than they are assigned by much of traditional international relations.

7. This diversity may actually be a necessary and critical factor in managing world politics as the hitherto Western-dominated order fades and gives way to a more pluralistic or "Multiplex" World. The emerging

global order will not be a hegemonic construction, in the sense of being constituted by the principles, institutions, and modes of managing stability that are dominated by a single power or a concert of powers. Instead, it will be constructed through the broader and more diffuse forms of agency and leadership that are outlined in the book.

These arguments are developed in this book in seven chapters. Chapter 1 examines the varied conceptions of order in world politics, differentiating between situational and normative conceptions of global order. It then reviews the meaning of agency in building global order, taking stock of attempts to expand its meaning, and offers a further redefinition and broadening of the concept. Chapter 2 discusses the interplay between power, interest, and ideas in order-building, and specifies different forms of normative agency employed by actors in building order in world politics. Overall, Chapter 2 highlights the normative behaviors and agency of non-Western countries, a neglected aspect of the literature on norm dynamics, in the construction of regional and global order.

Chapter 3 examines the agency in the contestations about, and reinterpretations and extensions of, Westphalian sovereignty, especially the norm of non-intervention, in different regions in the early post-war world. Chapter 4 brings the discussion of redefining sovereignty to the more contemporary period, especially locating agency in the transformation of humanitarian intervention to Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

Chapter 5 shifts the focus of the book to the concept of security, tracing agency in the changing understanding of security from national security to human security. Chapter 6 looks at regionalism, a major site of agency in world politics, in redefining sovereignty and security. A major theme of this chapter is to analyze the shift from a Eurocentric conception of regionalism to a more inclusive and pluralistic notion that captures diverse patterns of regional interactions around the world.

Chapter 7, the conclusion, not only sums up the main findings of the previous chapters, but also looks ahead by outlining the shift from a Western-dominated hegemonic or quasi-hegemonic order to a more complex, diverse, and decentered (post-hegemonic) world politics. The pluralization of agency outlined conceptually in Chapters 1 and 2, and illustrated through the discussions of sovereignty and security in the subsequent chapters, has driven and will continue to drive the transformation of global order. It is opening the door to a multi-agentic, pluralistic or Multiplex World, which also portends the narrowing, if not the end, of the West–Rest divide and makes it feasible to imagine the possibility of a truly global order.

4   Rethinking Agency and Change in Global Order

This introductory chapter has three objectives. The first is to exam-
ine the concept of world or global order in its multiple meanings,[1] but
especially highlighting the conflation and tension between its descriptive
and normative aspects. The second is to analyze the concept of agency,
including the actors and the forms of action that constitute agency in
global order-building. Here, key is the outline of a broader conception
of agency that goes beyond the rationalist-materialist conception that
has dominated the traditional literature of international relations. Third,
the chapter presents the outline of an emerging global order that, while
retaining some key features of the Western- and American-dominated
world order of the present, would be more diverse and pluralistic: a
Multiplex World.

Defining Order

The meaning of order in world politics is a matter of much contention.
As Alagappa notes, order is a "slippery" concept in international rela-
tions, and can be used in "multiple ways."[2] Some definitions of order
are situational or descriptive, while others are normative, although it
is commonplace to see a conflation of the two.[3] The *Macmillan English*

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[1] The terms "international order," "world order," and "global order" are often conflated.
Bull made a distinction between "international order" and "world order." While the
former applies mainly to the relationships between states, the latter applies to "social
life among mankind as a whole." Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 3rd edition
(Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), 19. In this book, I use "world order" and "global order"
interchangeably, but am mindful that global order is a more recent and expansive notion
associated with growing interdependence and globalization. I accept Bull's view that
world order (in my case, global order) involves all humankind. But while Bull may have
considered the position of non-Western countries in world order, I do not think he gave
due recognition to their positive contribution, or agency, in building that order. Hurrell
defines "global political order" as a "world made up of separate, sovereign states which
are, in turn, linked through various kinds of political practices and institutionalized struc-
tures." Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International
Society* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 3. While I accept Hurrell's association of global
order with linkages forged through political practices and institutions, this book gives
more play to ideas and norms that shape those practices and institutions. But above all,
this book develops and employs a broader notion of the agency through which global
order is produced and managed, comprising both Western and non-Western actors, than
is available from any previous work on the subject.

[2] Muthiah Alagappa, "The Study of International Order," in *Asian Security Order:
Instrumental and Normative Features*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford University Press,
2003), 34.

[3] For example, Stanley Hoffmann summarized Raymond Aron's five meanings of world
order with the following words:

order as an arrangement of reality,
order as the relations between parts,

Dictionary offers a purely descriptive notion of world order as "the polit-ical, economic, or social situation in the world at a particular time and the effect that this has on relationships between different countries."[4] Order in this sense is "a description of a particular status quo."[5] This can imply an existing distribution of power or an institutional arrange-ment, irrespective of its consequences for peace or conflict. Weston and Falk also define world order in situational terms. It "refers to the aggregation of norms, procedures and institutions that give shape and structure to international society at any given time."[6] Using the same definition, Falk elsewhere argues that the concept of world order does not necessarily mean a condition that "prohibits the recourse to war, or is successful as a peace system, although it may accomplish either of these things."[7]

A normative conception of order stresses some desirable objectives, such as increased stability, predictability, if not peace per se, in interna-tional relations. In the literature on international relations, the normative conceptions of order have varied widely. Some are mainly goal-oriented to a minimalist conception of stability, while others are more expansively tied to upholding morality, justice, and "good-life." The *Oxford Living Dictionary* defines world order as "a system controlling events in the world, especially a set of arrangements established intentionally for pre-serving global political stability."[8] In a particularly influential formulation, Bull defines international order as "a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international soci-ety."[9] He identifies several such goals: preservation of the state system, maintaining the sovereignty or independence of states, relative peace or absence of war as normal condition among states, limitation of violence,

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order as the minimum condition for existence,
order as the minimum condition for co-existence,
order as the condition for the good life.

According to Hoffman, the first two of the above are purely descriptive, the next two are partly descriptive and partly normative, and the last one is purely normative. Cited by Richard A. Falk, "Contending Approaches to World Order," in *Peace and World Order Studies: A Curriculum Guide*, ed. Barbara J. Wien, 3rd edition (New York: Institute for World Order, 1981), 30.

[4] *Macmillan English Dictionary*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2010).
[5] Mohammed Ayoob, "Regional Security and the Third World", in *Regional Security in the Third World*, ed. Mohammed Ayoob (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 4.
[6] Burns H. Weston, "Peace and World Order Education: An Optimal Design," in *Peace and World Order Studies*, ed. Wien, 59.
[7] Richard A. Falk, *A Global Approach to National Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 198.
[8] *Oxford Living Dictionary*, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/world_order.
[9] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 8.

keeping of promises, and protection of property rights.[10] Hurrell follows Bull in associating global political order with relative peace and stability. Hence his notion of "global political order" is to be understood in terms of the extent to which the political practices of and institutional linkages among states "have reduced conflict and facilitated some degree of cooperation and stability."[11]

Although Bull's definition goes beyond a purely descriptive or situational understanding of order, it has been accused of not being normative enough, and of giving priority to stability over equity and justice. Falk sees in it a "hostility towards 'normative' conceptions of world order that stress the pursuit of valued goals as the object of inquiry."[12] Hence, at its most extreme normative end, world order involves considerations of morality, inclusiveness, and justice, which seek "to replace the system of states with a universal community of mankind."[13]

In international relations theory, a normative understanding of order has been popular with constructivists.[14] For realists generally speaking, order involves a balance of power produced and managed through military and economic capabilities. Liberals stress economic interdependence

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[10] Ibid., 16–19.

[11] Hurrell, *On Global Order*, 3. Deutsch and Singer define stability, a key element of order for Bull and Hurrell, in terms of the absence of system-destroying conflict, or "war of survival," rather than absence of competition and conflict among nations per se. As they put it, stability for individual nations refers to "the probability that the system retains all of its essential characteristics; that no single nation becomes dominant; that most of its members continue to survive; and that large-scale war does not occur. And from the more limited perspective of the individual nations, stability would refer to the probability of their continued political independence and territorial integrity without any significant probability of becoming engaged in a 'war for survival.'" Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer, "Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (1964), 390–391.

[12] Falk, "Contending Approaches to World Order," 31.

[13] Alagappa, "The Study of International Order," 36. Here, Alagappa argues that while Bull's conception of order conflates international order with "international society," which assumes the existence of common interests and values, rather than a Hobbesian world, it excludes the Kantian conception of a universal community.

[14] Sorensen distinguishes between four understandings of order: "(a) the realist concern of the politico-military balance of power; (b) the liberal concern of the make-up of international institutions and the emergence of global governance; (c) the constructivist concern of the realm of ideas and ideology, with a focus on the existence or not of common values on a global scale; and (d) the IPE (International Political Economy) concern of the economic realm of production, finance, and distribution." Georg Sorensen, "What Kind of World Order? The International System in the New Millennium," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Hilton Chicago and the Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL, September 2, 2004, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p59921_index.html.

and multilateral institutions. But constructivist scholarship gives a frontal place to ideas, norms, and legitimacy in conceptualizing order.[15]

There is of course abundant tension between the descriptive and normative elements of order. Since the former implies a given situation, or status quo, what if that status quo is not acceptable to everyone who is supposed to live within it and expected to support and sustain it? Here, a key question about the normative understanding of order is whether achieving it might require changing an existing or dominant situation of configuration of power, institutions, and norms in world politics. But who are the agents of that change? Traditional international relations literature often credits powerful actors, especially the established great powers, with order-creation, maintenance, and change. But as Barnett puts it, "World orders are created and sustained not only by great power preferences but also by changing understandings of what constitutes a legitimate international order."[16]

Hence the key to any normative understanding of order is its legitimacy. For this book, the legitimacy of international or global order depends on representation and participation,[17] or the extent to which an order represents the wider segment of the international system, and whether it enjoys the support and participation not just of the established powers, but also of other actors, including the weaker ones, newcomers, and the emerging regional and global players, who may have a different understanding of what constitutes a legitimate and effective world order. In fact, it is the latter who are likely to drive the impetus for change, and constructing a global order means accommodating their initiative, support, and commitment.

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[15] Constructivism is not the only theoretical position to consider the ideational dimensions of order. Cox, a Gramscian Marxist, argues that "material relations and ideas are inextricably intertwined to co-produce world orders." "Robert Cox on World Orders, Historical Change, and the Purpose of Theory in International Relations," Robert Cox, "Theory Talk," 37, accessed December 25, 2012, www.theory-talks.org/2010/03/theory-talk-37.html; Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Orders," in Cox with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Yet with transnational production conditioning political, ideological, and military relations, it is difficult to discern how much autonomy ideational forces might enjoy in the Coxian formulation.

[16] Michael Barnett, "Social Constructivism," in *The Globalisation of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, 4th edition (Oxford University Press, 2008), 168.

[17] Abram Chayes and Antonia Chayes point out that legitimacy depends on "the degree of international consensus" and "participation." Chayes and Chayes, *The New Sovereignty: Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 41, 128. Chapter 2 provides further discussion of legitimacy through representation and participation, which are key to building the subsidiary norms of world order.

This is especially challenging because the key rules, institutions, and context of the post-World War II international order were based on the European state system, albeit modified if not fundamentally transformed by the power and purpose of the United States. For example, the idea and rules of Westphalian sovereignty were European in origin, while the dominant post-war idea of security, "national security," was a distinctively American contribution. But turning an *international* order based on these ideas, despite their utility and resilience, into a true *global* order could not be possible, or would remain incomplete, without the consent and participation of actors other than the core group of Western nations, especially the postcolonial states. And securing their support means accommodating their challenges and proposed changes to the status quo of the distribution of power, institutional arrangement, and normative structure of world politics, and developing more inclusive ideas and interactions. This process is crucial to the transformation of the Europe-derived international order into a global order, although it remains a work-in-progress. It is the theme of this book, and informs its reconceptualization and broadening of what constitutes agency in world politics.

A few clarifications about this book's conceptual approach are necessary. First, it is both analytical and normative. While analyzing what world order is or has been, I also pay attention to what should have been and ought to be. I realize that the line between the two can be blurred; this is not uncommon in any work inspired by constructivism. To the extent that this book offers a critique of the existing world order, and the orthodox view of agency that underpins the analysis of that order, it is bound to take on a normative tone. But at the same time, a great deal of the criticism of the order in the book concerns the demonstrated practical limitations of that order. In this book, I look at non-intervention, humanitarian intervention, human security, and regionalism in both analytical and normative terms. My analysis in each of these areas is analytical in the sense that it captures the limitations and failures of the existing notions of sovereignty and security in ensuring global order. At the same time, I take a normative position by siding with the demands for redefinition and broadening of sovereignty and security that I consider to be more progressive and emancipatory. I hope this is a defensible approach. As Jack Snyder has argued,

the relationship between normative and empirical arguments is considerably more complex than the usual view taken by most empirical social scientists, who stick strictly to the "is" and leave the "ought" to political theorists, op-ed writers, and non-governmental organization (NGO) activists … this division is unhealthy and unnecessary. Empirical social science has a great deal to contribute to

contemporary debates on multiculturalism, human rights and virtually every other normative question of international relations.[18]

In this book, I extend the blended analytical/empirical and normative approach to investigate the changing norms of sovereignty, intervention, security, and regionalism in the making of global order.

Second, world or global order does not necessarily exclude the consideration of regional orders. Indeed, ideas about world order often have their origin within a specific region or civilization. Here, Kissinger's definition of world order is especially relevant:

World order describes the concept held by a region or civilization about the nature of just arrangements and the distribution of power thought to be applicable to the entire world. An international order is the practical application of these concepts to a substantial part of the globe – large enough to affect the global balance of power. Regional orders involve the same principles applied to a defined geographical area.[19]

One merit of Kissinger's definition is that it stresses the importance of regions and regionally held and applied conceptions of order. In other words, it brings regions into the discussion of global order. Hence, "No truly global 'world order' has ever existed."[20] A global or world order may emerge through the application of concepts and approaches initially held regionally or even nationally but which its proponents see relevant for, and seek to apply to, the whole world, or at least "to a substantial part of the globe." I agree with Kissinger that different regions or civilizations have their own ideas about how the world works, and what are the requisite elements of stability and cooperation not only for their regions but also for the world as a whole. Unlike Kissinger though, I believe such local or regional conceptions can affect not just the global balance of power, but also global interdependence, normative structures, and insti-

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[18] Jack Snyder, "'Is' and 'Ought': Evaluating Empirical Aspects of Normative Research," in *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, ed. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 377. Snyder offers several examples of such work, including Finnemore and Sikkink's work on norm diffusion. Part of their research program "is aimed at discovering 'if, then' laws about the effects of given constraints on normative outcomes," while another part is "transformational …, which seeks to understand how activists can overcome such constraints" (ibid., 371–372). Other examples Snyder cites include the work of Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink on human rights, which not only analyzes how and why human rights violations occur, but also "what tactics are most effective at what stage of the process of normative persuasion" (372). Another example offered by Snyder is J. S. Mill's analysis of the advantages of free speech in terms of normative claims and arguments about "how society *ought* to be organized or how people *ought* to behave" (350).

[19] Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 9.

[20] Ibid., 2.

tutions of cooperation. Just as the post-World War II order was conceived initially by Europe and then the United States, one finds ideas about world order emanating from China (such as its *Tianxia*, or "all under heaven" cultural concept), India, and regions such as East Asia.

If this view is accepted, it follows that global order can be affected by regional ideas and actions. In the international system, actors, especially weaker ones such as the developing countries, usually find regional action necessary and useful in developing a collective voice in international affairs and addressing global challenges that they cannot address on their own or at the more crowded and complex global level. Stronger countries and rising powers may view regions as a springboard while seeking global status and leadership. National and regional conceptions of order may filter and modify the effects of global interdependence, ideas, norms, institutions, and distribution of power. Hence regionalism and regional norm dynamics are important factors shaping global order.

A third clarification about the concept of global order is that it is not the same as global governance. As discussed earlier, global order in its descriptive sense refers to the institutions, norms, and distribution of power, etc. that exist at a given time. Global governance, on the other hand, is about addressing cross-border issues such as trade or climate change that affect the world or a significant part of it.[21] To be sure, by managing and solving common problems, global governance can facilitate the realization of a stable and just global order, but it is not the same as global order itself.

To sum up some of the key points about the idea of global order employed in this book: while taking into account both the descriptive and normative conceptions of global order, it aligns more with a normative understanding. It does not assume that global order already exists or is possible, or that there is already a progressive pathway to global order unfolding before us. Rather, this book argues that efforts at achieving global order should produce a situation of "reduced conflict," and "some degree of cooperation and stability" (Hurrell), including the absence

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[21] Global governance is the "formal or informal management of cross-border issues affecting a significant proportion of the international system by states, international institutions and non-state actors, through power, functional cooperation, laws, regimes, and norms." Amitav Acharya, "Rethinking Demand, Purpose and Progress in Global Governance: An Introduction," in *Why Govern?: Rethinking Demand and Progress in Global Governance*, ed. Amitav Acharya (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 6. Another definition of global governance sees it "as the sum of laws, norms, policies, and institutions that define, constitute, and mediate trans-border relations between states, cultures, citizens, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the market." UN Intellectual History Project, "The UN's Role in Global Governance," Briefing Note no. 15 (August 2009), www.unhistory.org/briefing/15GlobalGov.pdf.