

Culture and Order in World Politics

Understanding how cultural diversity relates to international order is an urgent contemporary challenge. Building on ideas first advanced in Christian Reus-Smit's *On Cultural Diversity* (2018), this book advances a new framework for understanding the nexus between culture and order in world politics. Through a pioneering interdisciplinary collaboration between leading historians, international lawyers, sociologists and international relations scholars, it argues that cultural diversity in social life is ubiquitous rather than exceptional, and demonstrates that the organization of cultural diversity has been inextricably tied to the constitution and legitimation of political authority in diverse international orders, from Warring States China, through early modern Europe and the Ottoman and Qing Empires, to today's global liberal order. It highlights the successive 'diversity regimes' that have been constructed to govern cultural difference in these varied contexts, traces the exclusions and resistances these projects have engendered, and considers contemporary global vulnerabilities and axes of contestation.

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This project was supported by the Social Trends Institute (STI), a non-profit international research centre dedicated to fostering understanding of globally significant social trends. To this end, STI brings together the world's leading thinkers, taking an interdisciplinary and international approach.

Currently, STI's areas of priority study are family, bioethics, culture and lifestyles, governance and civil society. Findings are disseminated to the media and through scholarly publications.

The individuals and institutions that support STI share a conception of society and the individual that commands a deep respect for the equal dignity of human beings and for freedom of thought, as well as a strong desire to contribute to social progress and the common good. STI is grateful for the Saxum Foundation's interest and support in the area of cultural diversity.

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Preface

This book is the second of three volumes on cultural diversity and international order, and it follows Chris Reus-Smit's monograph, *On Cultural Diversity: International Theory in a World of Difference*.¹ A central theme of that first book was the disconnect between the arguments of international relations (IR) scholars about the nature and role of culture and the views of cultural specialists, particularly in anthropology, cultural studies, history, political theory and sociology. With notable exceptions, IR scholars continue to write about culture as though nothing new has been said since the 1950s. For their part, cultural specialists have done little to apply their more recent insights to the issues that most concern IR scholars, not least questions of international order. On a critical issue of our time, therefore – the relationship between cultural diversity and international order – there has been virtually no conversation (let alone cross-fertilization) between these key fields of scholarly inquiry: a classic case of academic silos.

This book confronts this siloing head on. It is edited by two IR scholars and addresses debates most prominent in IR; its primary (but hopefully not only) audience is scholars of international relations. It is the product, however, of a unique exercise in intellectual engineering. We decided to bridge the silos by bringing together some of the world's leading scholars of international order with pioneering specialists on cultural diversity from other fields. We assigned the former a list of readings on culture, the latter a syllabus on international order, and asked both to write short papers on cultural diversity and international order that straddled the two literatures. The papers – first presented at a workshop in Barcelona – were nothing short of remarkable, challenging the most fundamental assumptions undergirding debates in IR. The conversation continued at a second workshop in San Francisco and as we worked our way

¹ Reus-Smit 2018a.

through four to five drafts of full chapters. The arguments and analyses presented in the following pages are the result.

Our greatest debt is, of course, to our extraordinary contributors. Without them there would have been no new conversation, none of this volume's collective insights, and we would have never seen our authors' rich, highly innovative individual chapters. We asked them to step out of their disciplinary comfort zones, to engage with unfamiliar literatures and debates and to think afresh about diversity and order. They did this with enthusiasm, creativity and patience (especially with their editors), and we thank each of them: Michael Barnett, Arnulf Becker Lorca, Ellen Berrey, Maria Birnbaum, Victoria Tin-bor Hui, Andrew Hurrell, G. John Ikenberry, Elif Kalaycioglu, James Millward, Ann Swidler, Ann Towns and Ayşe Zarakol. We also thank Patrick Herron and Anne Norton for their invaluable contributions to our discussions in Barcelona.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the Social Trends Institute (New York and Barcelona), its President Carlos Cavallé and its Secretary General Tracey O'Donnell. The Institute provided generous financial support for our first workshop in Barcelona (30 March–1 April 2017), and hosted the event enthusiastically and flawlessly. More than this, Carlos and Tracey did us the honour of attending our sessions and offering keen insights at key points in our discussions. The Institute has been enthusiastic about our interdisciplinary project from the outset, and we are pleased to offer this book in return.

The International Studies Association supported our second meeting (in San Francisco on 3 April 2018) through the awarding to Andrew Phillips of an ISA Research Workshop Grant. We thank the Association for continuing to support the face-to-face meetings that are essential to collaborative research, and express our gratitude to our authors who were able to participate (the majority), as well as the outstanding scholars who offered their thoughts as discussants: Elif Kalaycioglu (who later became an author), Jacinta O'Hagan and Maja Spanu.

Projects such as this seldom succeed without a talented support crew, and we have benefited from the assistance of several excellent young scholars. Eglantine Staunton provided early research assistance, Ryan Smith continued this work and compiled the bibliography for Chris's first volume, *On Cultural Diversity*, and Melinda Rankin did the heavy lifting of preparing this manuscript for submission. We have relied heavily on these three, and express our sincere thanks for all of their efforts.

Since the completion in January 2018 of *On Cultural Diversity*, Chris has given seminars, lectures and workshops on cultural diversity and international order at a variety of institutions, the feedback from which

has influenced the arguments advanced here. He thanks audiences at Aberystwyth University, Monash University, the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, the University of Birmingham, the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford, as well as participants in a two-day workshop at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo. He also wishes to thank the students who, in 2018, participated in the most recent of a series of masterclasses he has run on cultural diversity and international order at the University of Queensland – an enriching testing ground for ideas if there ever was one.

A final word is needed on the image that graces the cover of this book. One of our central arguments is that order builders have powerful incentives to tame cultural heterogeneity, to define acceptable forms of cultural difference and expression. These include social control and coordination, but also what we term ‘self-location.’ Order builders’ legitimacy depends in part on positioning themselves in the cultural landscape they curate and choreograph, casting their identities, practices and objectives as culturally intelligible and acceptable. The Qing Chinese emperors, who belonged to an ‘alien’ Manchu dynasty and who dramatically expanded China to encompass peoples of diverse cultures, were masters of this art of self-location. They carefully crafted and narrated their cultural identity in ways that resonated not only with Han cultural meanings and practices but also with those of other cultural and religious communities. This wonderful image illustrates this artful practice of self-location. It depicts the Qianlong Emperor (1735–1796), not in his imperial robes or in armour astride a war horse, but as Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom in Mahayana Buddhism. We thank the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art for permission to reproduce here such beautiful and intriguing work.

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