**DISSENT AND DIVERSITY IN THE GLOBAL ORDER**

Chapter 2, Amitav Acharya, *Different Worlds: Contesting Sovereignty and Security in International Relations*,

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**Chapter 2:**

**DISSENT AND DIVERSITY IN THE GLOBAL ORDER**

*[A]ctive pretensions to universality are ultimately reducible to power,” (Robert W. Cox)[[1]](#footnote-1)*

*“We have to recognize that the nascent cosmopolitan culture of today, like the international society which it helps to sustain, is weighted in favour of the dominant cultures of the West. Like the world international society, the cosmopolitan culture on which it depends may need to absorb non-Western elements to a much greater degree if it is to be genuinely universal and provide a foundation for a universal international society.” (Hedley Bull)[[2]](#footnote-2)*

How is order “made” in world politics? Who are the makers and managers of order? What means they employ to realise their goals? What are the points of contestation and conflict in the global order-building processes? These questions are of course hardly new. Indeed, they have preoccupied international relations scholars since the beginnings of the discipline. But the answers to these questions remain hotly contested. And they are constantly evolving, in keeping with new developments, crises and responses around the world.

We live in a moment in which both the challenges and approaches to global order are undergoing fundamental transformation. On the challenge side are momentous events like the end of Cold War, the 9/11 attacks, and the growing prominence of transnational threats. On the response and approach side are the doctrine and practice of humanitarian intervention, the war on terror and a major and continuing redefinition of North-South relations, the rise of new powers such as China and India, along with new approaches to global governance. Yet, international relations theory, in so far as it concerns the understanding of global order, has been slow in taking stock of these developments and adjusting to these new realities.

Our conception of global order and its foundational concepts such as sovereignty and security are often underpinned by a deep normative desire for universality. Yet, the prevailing conceptions of universality privileges power (see Cox at the outset of this chapter), and continue to ignore the varieties of actors, approaches, and experiences in order-making – including approaches to sovereignty and security, around the world. As the world around us changes, the need for new approaches to and understanding of global order has never been more urgent or pronounced.

**Interpretations of Order**

Part of the problem has to do with the concept of order itself. What order means and how it is created is not a given, but very much a matter of interpretation and hence, contestation.**[[3]](#footnote-3)** As Alagappa notes, while order has been a “slippery” concept in international relations, and can be used in “multiple ways,” “policymakers and academics use the term as though its meaning were self-evident. Very few define the concept or even clarify how it is used.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

It may be good to begin with generic definition of world order, which is what this book is about. According to the *Macmillan English Dictionary,* “world order” means “[the](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=the) [political](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=political), [economic](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=economic), [or](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=or) [social](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=social) [situation](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=situation) [in](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=in) [the](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=the) [world](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=world) [at](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=at) [a](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=a) [particular](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=particular) [time](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=time) [and](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=and) [the](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=the) [effect](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=effect) [that](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=that) [this](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=this) [has](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=has) [on](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=on) [relationships](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=relationships) [between](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=between) [different](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=different) [countries](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=countries).”[[5]](#footnote-5) But this definition obscures much. Bull’s definition of international order is more precise. Bull defines order as “a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society.”[[6]](#footnote-6) He identified five goals towards which the pattern of activity is geared: preservation of the state system, maintaining the sovereignty or independence of states, and relative peace or absence of war as normal condition among states, limitation of violence, keeping of promises and protection of property rights.[[7]](#footnote-7) Although Bull’s general conception or order has been highly influential among international relations scholars. But there also have been criticisms. Bull’s definition of order conflates international order with “international society”, which assumes the existence of common interests and values, and thereby excludes considerations of order within Hobbesian worlds. It also excludes Kantian conceptions of morality and law, which seeks “to replace the system of states with a universal community of mankind.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

But a generic definition of order does not settle the question of *how order is constructed*, *who are involved in its creation* and *how do they go about it* - questions that are central to this book. This requires us to enter into a deeper set of distinctions and debates. International relations scholars have used the concept of order (international and regional) in both descriptive and normative ways. The first is “as a description of a particular status quo.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Here, order means an existing distribution of power or an institutional arrangement, irrespective of its consequences for peace or conflict. The second usage of order has more normative content. It refers to increased stability and predictability, if not peace per se, in international relations. Thus, order implies “a system of controlling world events esp. for political stability.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Morgan defines order, albeit in a regional context, as “dominant patterns of security management within security complexes.”[[11]](#footnote-11) Hurrell suggests the notion of international or global ‘political order’, which may be conceived as a “world made up of separate, sovereign states which are, in turn, linked through various kinds of political practices and institutionalized structures”. From this assumption, “We can understand the question of global political order by assessing the manner and degree to which these political practices and institutions have reduced conflict and facilitated some degree of cooperation and stability.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

Order has been an expansive notion in a variety of ways. While realist conceptions of order focuses mostly on security, attained though a (largely military) balance of power, liberal conceptions of order have revolved around both security and welfare, and identified international institutions, market-driven economic interdependence and liberal democracy as the basic foundations/instruments of order. Another major revision in our thinking about order came with constructivism, which viewed world politics (hence world order) in strongly ideational and normative terms. Order meant rule-governed behavior, norms, socialization and identity-construction are the key instruments for order building. Alagappa draws upon this when he defines order as “a formal or informal arrangement that sustains rule-governed interaction among sovereign states in their pursuit of individual and collective goals.” The existence of order depends on “whether interstate interactions conform to accepted rules.”[[13]](#footnote-13) But in contrast to this state-centric definition (which it shares with Bull’s definition), a major epistemic community on world order, the World Order Models Project (WOMP) sought to “…go beyond the nation-state system…to use a much broader range of potential actors, including world institutions, transnational actors, international organization, functional activities, regional arrangements, the nation-state, subnational movements, local communities, and individuals.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Despite its admirable inclusiveness, WOMP has been criticized as a quintessential liberal prescription for reorganizing the world.

### Yet another perspective was offered by Robert Cox, who combined material with ideational elements. Hence, in Cox’s view, “material relations and ideas are inextricably intertwined to co-produce world orders.”[[15]](#footnote-15) 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. Moreover, Cox’s notion of hegemony – defined as both material dominance and ideological consensus fostered through it- as an objective condition, and as a globalized, powerful and pervasive architecture of world order leaves little room for local autonomous initiative and action, moral or material, by weaker actors, despite Cox’s somewhat idealistic and prescriptive notion of counter-hegemonic coalitions led by a transnational civil society. Cox’s notion of hegemony, derived from Gramsci, lays too much emphasis at the global level of order, and may unwittingly overstate the singular construction of world politics by a powerful state, and obscures the autonomous constructions of order by weaker and local actors even in the heydays of hegemony.

To sum up, order in international relations has acquired meanings ranging from the absence or significant reduction of conflict, to rule-governed behavior, including rule-governed use of force (as in the case of principled humanitarian intervention).One thing that emerges from the various contributions to the discourses on order is the shift from international to world or global order. In this book, instead of offering another unsatisfactory definition, I stress the following three elements of global order:

1. rule-governed interactions involving states, non-state actors and international institutions, across the East-West, North-South divides,
2. addressing local, international and transnational challenges,
3. with the goal of reducing violence and contributing to the realization of humankind’s common interests and goals.

Global order does not equate world government, but neither is it a Hobbesian world. Moreover, order does not rest of physical resources or material balances of power. One of the key shifts in our understanding of order, which informs the theoretical framework of this book, is the growing recognition of its ideational elements, including but not limited to the changing ideas of security and sovereignty. Order refers to the evolving relationship among states and societies where anarchy (in the sense of absence of any higher authority above the state) is significantly mitigated interactions based on shared ideas, norms and institutions. The changing notion of security, including the broadening of the narrow state-centric notion of national security and new thinking of intervention are increasingly important to our understanding of global order, just as the balance of power, defined primarily in a military and diplomatic sense, was key to understanding of order in 19th century Europe and the Cold War period. International institutions, whose density has grown decade after decade, have contributed to common expectations about conflict management and are a major component of global order. Moreover, the idea of global order as understood and employed in this book is not beholden to the view of the international system as the “European states system write large,” but allows considerably more scope for local initiative and variation, and regional construction of and contribution to international rule-making and order which may have no bearing to European concepts and practices. It speaks to a more norm-bound and institutionalized order across cultures and continents that that is increasingly the reality today.

**Whose Universalism?**

In his presidential address to the International Studies Association in 1988, Robert Keohane, rated as the “most influential scholar” in the field of international relations[[16]](#footnote-16) exhorted his audience that:

The ways in which members of this Association study international relations are profoundly affected by their values. Most of us are children of the Enlightenment, insofar as we believe that human life can be improved through human action guided by knowledge. We therefore seek knowledge in order to improve the quality of human action. Many of us, myself included, begin with a commitment to promote human progress, defined in terms of the welfare, liberty, and security of individuals, with special attention to principles of justice (Rawls, 1971; Haas, 1986). With this commitment in mind, we seek to analyze how the legal concept of state sovereignty and the practical fact of substantial state….” [[17]](#footnote-17)

It would not be too much of a distortion to read Keohane’s “most of us” as “most of us” in the Western world. Security, welfare, liberty, and the “legal concept of state sovereignty”, are among the values that “most of us” seek to study in our professed “commitment to promote human progress”. It’s a commitment that we share because we are the “children of the Enlightenment.”

What does being the “children of the Enlightenment” mean? Robert Cox, while not debating Keohane directly over this issue, would offer a succinct answer in an essay written more than a decade later, by equating Enlightenment with a certain conception of universalism. “In the Enlightenment meaning universal meant true for all time and space – the perspective of a homogenous reality.” For Cox, an alternative understanding of universality would mean “comprehending and respecting diversity in an ever changing world.”[[18]](#footnote-18)

In other words, the prevailing sense of global or international order, including its key ingredients such as sovereignty and security, has been imbued with a strong sense of universalism, defined from the “perspective of a homogenous reality”. A fuller understanding of this homogenization would require an investigation into the concept of universalism itself. As an abstract concept, the notion of universalism (a belief or a position, closely tied to the idea of universality, denoting a condition) is found across social science disciplines.[[19]](#footnote-19) In one formulation, universalists are “Those who believe that some fundamental ethical principles are universal and unchanging. In this vision, these principles are valid regardless of the context or situation.”[[20]](#footnote-20) The most common understanding of universalism is "applying to all", as in “social rules applying to all people in the group, equally.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Universalism has been used in a wide variety of ways, for example to describe a Stoic philosophy, a religious, theological, and philosophical underpinning of the world’s major religions in the sense of “applying to all” and, in Christianity, as “the final salvation of all souls”.[[22]](#footnote-22) Moreover, this understanding of universalism is a direct offshoot of the European Enlightenment. As Cox put it, “In the Enlightenment meaning universal meant true for all time and space – the perspective of a homogenous reality.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

Other usages of universalism view it as the highest value superseding any other individual or institutions,[[24]](#footnote-24)as absence of exception on the basis of national or cultural origins, and the expansion of the states-system from Europe to non-Western states. Universalism also refers to aspects of international norms and institutions that cannot be seriously challenged, and to the stance taken by Western liberals over the meaning and scope of human rights and democracy against different viewpoints from the developing world, to the extra-territorial application of national bankruptcy law (“as a sort of one-world government system,”[[25]](#footnote-25)) and to the European Union’s international posture or claim to be a normative power. Universalism is also deeply implicit in the constructivist literature on norm diffusion.

As with the abstract notion of universalism, the historiography of universalism in international relations is too well known to warrant a detailed exposure here.[[26]](#footnote-26) Suffice is to note that the most common referent points of universalism found in IR scholarship start with the Enlightenment, Kantian idealism and Grotian natural law, and the values and norms of what the English School theorists call the European international society. That society, as the founders of the English School would put it, (discussed in Chapter 2) later expanded to cover the whole world via a process of colonialism and decolonization. It also set the standard in terms of which the status and role of other states from outside the West would be judged, in what came to be known as the “standard of civilization.”

In the post-second World War period some of the main referent points of universalism have been put forward by Western liberal thinkers for the protection of sovereignty and security. These include the doctrine of universal collective security and universal human rights. More recently, liberal universalism has been joined by constructivist universalism, focusing on the spread of ideas and norms. Globalization and the doctrine of humanitarian intervention have set another benchmark for the spread of universalism.

Of these multiple but interrelated meanings, there are at least three major usages of universalism in the theory and practice of international relations which, while by no means exhaustive, are especially relevant to this book. The first relates tothe global spread of institutions and norms that are assumed to be fundamental to international relations. Perhaps the best example of this sense of universalism can be found in the idea of a “universal international society” found in the English School literature. Its most succinct articulations can be found in the following words of Hedley Bull. [[27]](#footnote-27)

By the time of the First World War…there existed not only a world-wide international system but also an international society that was universal in the sense that it covered all the world and included states from Asia, Africa, and the Americas as well as Europe. In this universal international society, however, a position of dominance was still occupied by the European powers, or more broadly (since Europe’s offshoots in north and south America, southern Africa, and Australasia partook of this dominance) by the Western powers, which continued to occupy this position until the end of the Second World War….The dominance of the European or Western powers at the turn of the century was expressed not only in their superior economic and military power and in their commanding intellectual and cultural authority but also in the rules and institutions of international society… [[28]](#footnote-28)

More on Bull’s perspective will be discussed later in this Chapter, but suffice is to say here that Bull clearly and closely associates universal with European dominance. What is the difference between universal and pre-universal systems? In the latter, “there was no single, agreed body of rules and institutions operating across the boundaries of any two regional international systems, let alone throughout the world as a whole.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Moreover, Bull (and Watson) do concede that the universal international system of the early 20th century was based upon European hegemony, and posit the possibility of a universal international system which is not based on European hegemony, in order to become a “genuinely universal and non-hegemonial structure of rules and institutions” (Bull and Watson, “Introduction”, Expansion of International Society, p. 8). But for all practical purposes, Bull’s concept of universal is hegemonic particularism. Or universalism and hegemony go hand in hand. Universalism was a byproduct of colonialism.

A second usage of universalism concerns the applicability of a single idea (or approach) to all actors (in the sense of “applying to all” or “inclusion of all”). One of its most common referent points is the idea of universal human rights.[[30]](#footnote-30) Thus, universalism in human rights means that “those rights belong to everyone, no matter of what status that person holds in society…Every individual has a claim to enjoyment of human rights, wherever the individual resides.”[[31]](#footnote-31) By contrast, ‘‘cultural relativism maintains that there is an irreducible diversity among cultures because each culture is a unique whole with parts so intertwined that none of them can be understood or evaluated without reference to the other parts and to the cultural whole, the so-called pattern of culture’’.[[32]](#footnote-32) A more contemporary example of notion of universality can be found in debates over meaning of security, especially the challenge posed to the idea of national security by the notions of “Third World security problematique” or human security. As will be discussed later, a central issue in this debate is whether the national security idea has the same meaning across the North-South divide and whether the state as the presumed provider of security for its citizens may be a source of their insecurity. (In this book, I am more concerned with the universality of human security, rather than of human rights per se, partly because the latter has been too well covered in the literature)

A third meaning of universalism approximates centralization of roles. A crucial example of this can be found during the negotiations over the UN Charter at the San Francisco conference in 1945, in the form of a spirited argument between the “universalists” and the “regionalists” (this is discussed in Chapter 9). The former were arguing for investing the entire responsibility for global peace and security in a single, new organization, while the latter demanded some autonomy for regional organizations, out of fear of losing their rationale and voice. The debate produced a compromise, with regional groups sharing some role in peace and security in their neighbourhood, while the Security Council was assigned the dominant role. In this sense, universality meant including all the countries in the world, and maintaining a singularity of authority in peace and order. The irony here is that universalism here meant and required marginalization of other functional groups dealing with same issue areas, like regional organizations, while from the perspective of the advocates, such marginalization may be justified for the same of efficiency of function.

As is the case with universalism as concept and practice, the criticisms of Enlightenment Universalism are also well known.[[33]](#footnote-33) But chief among them is the suppression of diversity, marginalization of the local, and the production of Western imperialism. Hughes observes that the “the Enlightenment actually threatened the local, embedded rights that people do possess because its universalism ignored the importance of local culture, seeking to overturn national traditions in favor of global cosmopolitanism.”[[34]](#footnote-34) This marginalization of the local extended beyond the ontological domain to the epistemological. Thus, Outram sees Enlightenment devoting “as much energy to designating entire social groups, such as women and peasants, as impervious to the voice of reason, as it did constructing a better world for human beings.”[[35]](#footnote-35) As such, it permitted an artificial divide between pre-Enlightenment concepts and origins of human rationality. Moreover, this cultural divide paved the way for a new form of political of dominance. Outram notes that the Enlightenment had more impact in uniting elites than reaching out to underprivileged groups.[[36]](#footnote-36) In so doing it established, at best, the supremacy of the West while denying the agency of non-Western states. At worst, it produced or legitimized imperialism.

What is more, the proponents of universalism conveniently ignore the fact that it was born out of a specific time and context. Yet, IR theory presents it as something that transcends time and space.

One of the most powerful contributions to our prevailing conceptions of how the contemporary international system came about and became a universal order comes from the founders of the English School. A brief analysis of this literature may be a helpful starting point before moving on to the specific contestations over global order that this book focuses on.

**‘The Expansion of International Society’ Revisited**

Perhaps no other group of international relations theorists has done more to self-consciously articulate an evolutionary theory of global order from its (presumed) European origins to universality than the founders of the English School. It is also the first IR school to take a long historical view and investigate the role of classical non-Western systems. Hence, a closer look at *The Expansion of International Society,* the founding text of the English School, is helpful for setting the stage for this book’s main points about the merits and limitations of the dominant conceptions of universal international order found today.[[37]](#footnote-37)

At the core of the narrative of *Expansion* is a claim that the universal international society of today is founded upon the expansion of the European-derived international society. It was not only a physical expansion, but also normative and institutional. By the First World War, the European-derived international system had become “universal in the sense that it covered all the world and included states from Asia, Africa, and the Americas as well as Europe.” Moreover, in this society, the “dominance of the European or Western powers at the turn of the century was expressed not only in their superior economic and military power and in their commanding intellectual and cultural authority but also in the rules and institutions of international society…” [[38]](#footnote-38)

The founders of the English School, such as Hedley Bull, Adam Watson, Martin Wight and Herbert Butterfield, were not entirely oblivious to the Eurocentric nature of this claim. Their project contained an acknowledgement of the existence of other historical state-systems, and their growing importance in international relations, their approach remained Eurocentric.[[39]](#footnote-39) In a 1978 concept paper for the Committee’s project which led to *The Expansion of International Society,* Bull noted that “Today, non-Western states form the overwhelming majority, the society of states is proclaimed to be universal or global; the rules of international law have been modified so as to take account of the interests and attitudes of the non-Western majority…In terms of economic and military strength the Western minority of states and peoples are still in the ascendancy, but a shift in the distribution of power towards the non-Western states and peoples has taken place.”[[40]](#footnote-40) Moreover, Bull and Watson conceded that the universal international system of the early 20th century was based upon European hegemony, and posited the possibility of a universal international system - a “genuinely universal and non-hegemonial structure of rules and institutions”[[41]](#footnote-41) - which is not based on European hegemony.

Bull and Watson deny that their perspective was Eurocentric with the assertion: “it is the historical record that can be called Eurocentric.”[[42]](#footnote-42) Yet, the “Expansion of International Society” project was conceived on the very positioning of Europe as the ‘ideal type” of international society/civilisation.[[43]](#footnote-43) Moreover,although it does not explicitly convey the impression that it holds the European nation-state model to be superior to all other forms, and takes account of past forms of statehood and regional systems in non-Western societies and civilisations, the pathways to order and disorder are defined in terms of nation-states and the rules developed in Europe over managing relations among them. There is some acknowledgement that the European-derived universal international society might be an exception in the long course of human history that might not far outlive the disappearance of European dominance. But there is an implicit view in the project that the development of a universal international society has been an ultimately desirable outcome of European expansion. Moreover, although Bull and others did investigate the possibility of regional orders, they concluded that such orders were not sufficient to break up the universal international society or undermine the primacy of European-derived rules.

Such a perspective, while it affirms a strong belief in at least the theoretical possibility of a universal international society, does not ask why universality is a better alternative than particularities. Some may argue that the variations in sovereignty regimes (such as that found in Jackson and Goldberg’s famous distinction between ‘juridical’ and ‘empirical’ statehood)[[44]](#footnote-44) in the non-Western world and the explicit challenge – as acknowledged by Bull in his “revolt against the West” thesis - thrown by non-Western countries to various European -derived institutions and rules of universal society (such as aspects of international law permitting humanitarian intervention) and the North-South conflicts over the global economic order (which Bull considers part of the overall picture) would make the very assumption of a universal international society tenuous or at least severely qualified. A major irony here is that even at the time *The Expansion* was being debated and compiled, the differences (in terms of attitudes towards sovereignty) between the European Community as a system of states, and the non-Western regional orders was sufficiently apparent to cast doubts about the ideal of a universal international society. At best, one can speak of a universal international society in terms of a limited number of institutions and rules, but to speak of it in any comprehensive sense would be problematic.

The role that force played in the creation and expansion of a Western-dominated international order is also important. Bull says that European-led international society was made possible because at that juncture, ‘the capacity of Asian and African powers to enter into relationships on a reciprocal basis with European states was less than in earlier times’.[[45]](#footnote-45) Can we then say that the emergence of a universal international society was due to the superior ‘relationship capacity’[[46]](#footnote-46) of Europeans (ability to forge reciprocal relationships) relative to that of non-Western societies, rather than due to their superior military force?[[47]](#footnote-47) In his chapter for *The Expansion*, Michael Howard concludes that “superior military technology was…not in itself a sufficient explanation for the European conquest of the world during the centuries of imperial power.” [[48]](#footnote-48)Yet this by itself (given its focus on the narrow variable of military technology rather than the broader instruments of military power including strategy) does not answer the above question. Yet, the role of force was the key to European dominance, leading to the creation and expansion of universal international society. Ultimately, ‘the standard of civilisation; was contingent on the ability of Europeans to enforce it through their superior military might, This was an important reason why Japan focused so much on expanding its military capabilities (to enter the society and keep its place) and which became one of the major consequences of its entry into international society .[[49]](#footnote-49)

*The Expansion* thesis accentuates voluntary acceptance of European rules, institutions and practices by non-Western states as a reason for the expansion of European international society. Asian and African states found utility in incorporating European rules, institutions and standards for instituting their own domestic reforms and their adoption of these standards eventually led to the end of the extraterritoriality regimes and European privileges by narrowing the gap between themselves and European states.[[50]](#footnote-50) Yet the assumption and explicit argument that non-Western states were willing and keen to enter into a European-conceived and managed international society understates the coercive nature of the assimilation of non-Europeans into the European/Universal international society.

In other words, before we consider whether non-Western states were *able* to forge reciprocal relationships with the Europeans, one must consider whether they were *willing* to do so. There is no question that some non-Western rulers, for reasons of enhancing their prestige and power, willingly accepted the rules and institutions of European international society. However, this was true only of some large and powerful states. Japan’s case fits particularly well. Yet the vast majority of non-Western countries were neither in Japan’s situation or craved entry into European international society. This is especially so in the early stages of European expansion, when the benefits of entry in to the European international society were not clear to non-Western societies, and when entry into an European-dominated international order might have been seen as a non-reciprocal bargain from their vantage-point, since reciprocity then mainly meant offering trade concessions to Europeans. This is very clearly seen in the Qing elite’s response to the English King’s solicitation for a trading relationship; the substance of which was that China neither needed nor wanted anything that Europe produced.

Thus, the very idea of ‘reciprocity’ as implied in Bull’s formulation of the lack of “capacity of Asian and African powers to enter into relationships on a reciprocal basis with European states,” is problematic. If one considers carefully this statement, one would conclude that the Europeans were demanding from non-Western societies was an ability “to provide domestic law and order, administrative integrity, protection of the rights of foreign citizens, or the fulfilment of contracts.”[[51]](#footnote-51) In reality, the European demand for reciprocity was intended to secure for themselves economic opportunities and privileges (everything else, including spreading the gospel, was secondary), which had been gained sometimes voluntarily, but on many occasions through use of force or coercion. Not only were the benefits to non-Western states in these arrangements unclear, but non-Western states might have recognised that they would be entering into one-sided relationship that would heavily favour the Europeans. The demand for reciprocity in this sense could be construed as an excuse for exploitation. By viewing the expansion of European international society as a matter of Europeans seeking reciprocity, the early English School proponents obscured the fact that colonialism was a fundamentally a non-reciprocal institution.

*The Expansion* is ambiguous about the ‘standard of civilisation’ criteria employed by the Europeans.Bull and Watson acknowledge that standard of civilisation reflected European arrogance, and that it was highly self-serving. They also acknowledge important variations within Europe itself regarding the values and interaction capacity of European states at the time (where some Europeans had low capacities similar to many in the non-West). Moreover, European states did not always adhere to their own very *European values.* They also accept variations within non-Western societies regarding values and interaction capacities. Some had more of these than others. But there is a tone of ambiguity here; they still stress the standard as being based on the realities of international life.

No doubt the ‘standard of civilisation’ which the European powers used initially to deny equal status to others was often a cloak for their own aggression, but it is a shallow view which treats it as nothing more. The standards of international conduct which the European powers observed in relation to one another could not in fact be met by those Asian and African states that were unable to provide domestic law and order, administrative integrity, protection of rights of foreign citizens, or the fulfilment of contracts.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Bull himself was somewhat half-hearted in his critique of the standard of civilisation thesis. His assessment of the criticism of ‘standard European view’ of the emergence of a universal internal society[[53]](#footnote-53) is revealing. Bull notes that the standard view has been rightly criticized because Europeans in the past had conceived of international society as more than European. He gives the example of natural law theorists who had a global conception of international society even though it had an inner European, Christian core. At the same time, he defends the standard view: ‘It could hardly have been expected that European states could have extended the full benefits of membership of the society of states to political entities that were in no position to enter into relationships on a basis of reciprocity…”.[[54]](#footnote-54)

*The Expansion* in general gives little agency to non-Western states and societies in the making of the universal international society.As a criticism of the ‘standard view of the standard of civilisation’, Bull speaks of the influence of Asian international practices on the evolution of European-ness[[55]](#footnote-55) but he does not specify these influences. We do not know what were the revisions to the European-derived international rules in the hands of non-Western states, when and how were they made, and how deep or far reaching was their implications for international order. Bull speaks of a “revolt against the West”, but this revolt is against European physical dominance (or direct colonialism) not against the predominance of Western rules and institutions. Nor do they indicate the voluntary and positive construction of international rules by non-Western states.

What constitutes agency in international relations has been contested. Constructivists as well as what can be discerned from a reading of the English School writings offer a narrow ideational conception of agency. For example, Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit view agency primarily in terms of how ‘inter-subjective meanings, operating at the levels of domestic and international society, license and define sovereign, territorial political units, and how the definition of such units constitutes and empowers certain political actors, particularly governments.’[[56]](#footnote-56) While I agree with this, I also offer a broader conception. In my view, an agent-oriented narrative should describe how actors (states and non-state), through their material, ideational, and interaction capabilities construct, reject, reconstitute, and otherwise influence a prevailing international system. Price and Reus-Smit purposely deemphasizes state actors as agents in favour of “inter-subjective meanings, since constructivists generally define the state as an administrative and institutional structure, not an actor”. The English School on the other hand accepts a primarily state-centric view of agents. While it recognizes the importance of inter-subjective meanings (‘rules’), it does not really tells us much about how these might ‘empower’ political actors that are non-Western states and governments.

In terms of non-Western agency, it is interesting to note that *The Expansion* does not deal with the alternative argument put forward by C.H. Alexandrowicz, which held that prior to 19th century, Europeans dealt with non-Western states in essentially similar ways as they dealt with other Europeans. This was not necessarily an argument to recognize the agency of non-Western states, but at least it recognised their equality, and rendered them as *subjects* of a world of diverse cultures and polities that is getting to know each other, rather than as *objects* of an expansionist European international society. Bull, however, was sceptical of this claim. For Bull, Alexandrowicz had made his case “provocatively” but “in the end unconvincingly”. [[57]](#footnote-57)

In this book, while recognizing the contribution of the English School as a point of departure for our understanding of a universal global order, I offer a fundamentally different conception of agency that goes into the making of this order: My perspective on how order is constructed rests on three main arguments. First, order cannot be understood purely or mainly as a function of material power and resources. Ideational pathways to order exist and matter. Second, contestations about, and resistance to, ideas and practices that are seen as deficient on grounds of justice, morality or functionality can be the starting point of order-building. Third, there are multiple pathways to order, involving actors from North and South, global and regional, state and non-state. While this book does not deal with all of them, conceptually, it highlights several which have not received sufficient attention in the existing literature on international relations. In this sense, order-building involves:

* Interpreting global norms of sovereignty, such as non-intervention and their adaptation and application to the local and regional contexts and more broadly to a wider international setting. (Chapters 3, 7)
* Constructing local rules of sovereignty to support and strengthen global rules and institutions especially when these rules are being challenged or undermined by their original formulators to serve their own changing interests. (Chapters 3, 7)
* Conceptualising and carving out new pathways to security which combines freedom from fear and freedom from want and shift the focus of security analysis from protecting state sovereignty to the capacity of the individual. The human security concept also represents the culmination of a distinctive non-Western perspective on development (human development), which challenges the dependency theory on the one hand and Western neo-liberalism on the other. (Chapters 4, 5)
* Creating and maintaining regional institutions and orders that serve the set goals of sovereignty and security and offer a framework of conflict reduction and management in different regions. Admittedly, the record here is uneven, but the failures should not obscure the successes. (Chapters 2, 6, 7)
* Countering great power dominance in international and regional norms and ordering mechanisms (such as humanitarian intervention) that result in the loss of autonomy and leads to diminished security and sovereignty. This resistance applies not just to Western great powers, but also to non-Western ones. And involving both state and non-state actors. It’s a long-term trend, evident in immediate post-war period as well as in the emerging ‘world of regions’ (Chapters 2, 4, 7)

The key theme here then is broadening of what we mean by agency in order building. Much of the literature on order in international relations has privileged the material agency of Western actors operating at a global level. In this book, I call for greater recognition of the *agency of ideas*, *the agency of the local*, and *the agency of the non-Western actors*. The three are not mutually exclusive, but can be closely interlinked. Third World states look to normative agency, often through local structures and regional institutions. And it is here that one might see one of the most fundamental shifts in global order-making. As Ramesh Thakur puts it, “In the construction of the normative architecture of world order after the end of the cold war, developing countries have been ringside observers, not members of the project design and implementation team.”[[58]](#footnote-58) But he also notes hopefully, that “As China, India and Brazil emerge as important growth centres in the world economy, the age of the West disrespecting the rest’s role, relevance and voice is passing.”[[59]](#footnote-59)

**Contestations about Order**

Contestation has various meanings, such as “a contentious speech act”,[[60]](#footnote-60) **“**to compete or strive for”, “a struggle for superiority or victory between rivals”, and “to call into question and take an active stand against; dispute or challenge”.[[61]](#footnote-61) Contestations are of course nothing new in the study of IR. IR theory has seen major debates over ‘paradigms’, such as idealism and realism, scientific and classical approaches, and positivism and post-positivism. But it is important to note that contestations are not just about discourse, but also practice. Yet, IR theorists, particularly critical theorists, when they engage in contestation, have paid far greater attention to the discourse element and ignore how different conceptions of security, sovereignty and other ideas of IR are actually represented in practice. In this book, I speak of multiple contestations over the meanings and practices of sovereignty and security. This refers not so much to the fact that they take place at different levels of analysis, e.g. states, individuals and the system at large, but more importantly to that they can take different forms and occur on multiple sites and along several faultlines. Some are within the West, organized hypocrisy, some are between West and non-West, and some take on global versus local character. For example, the concept of security has been contested within the realist schools, between realists and constructivists and post-modernists, and even among the critical theorists themselves. Some contestations of security are between those who speak from the vantage-point of the West (although they need not be from the West), and those who are do so from the non-Western or subaltern perspective. There have been similar debates between universalist/globalist and regionalist/localist conceptions of security.

Here I focus on a different set of contestations, which have received far less attention in IR theory. In my engagement with international relations, I have been interested in three forms of contestations. The first corresponds roughly to Cox’s famous distinction between *problem-solving* and *critical* approaches.[[62]](#footnote-62) Hobden and Wyn Jones offer a succinct contrast between the two approaches: “problem-solving theoryis “theory which accepts the parameters of the present order, and thus helps legitimate an unjust and deeply iniquitous system,” whereas critical theory “attempts to challenge the prevailing order by seeking out, analyzing, and where possible, assisting social processes that an potentially lead to emancipator change.”[[63]](#footnote-63) While Cox focused on debates between problem-solving and critical approaches, it is also the case that a good deal of contestation in world politics occur *among* or *between* the “problem-solving theories”, such as the neorealist-neoliberal debates of the 1980s or the rationalist-constructivist debates of the 1990s. But such discussions are often limiting and limited by the predilections and biases of those who command the enterprise. For example, in a influential publication entitled *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics,* which appeared in 1998 as a special issue of *International Organization,* three leading scholars of American IR, Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane, and Stephen Krasner, argued that rationalism (encompassing both liberal arguments grounded in economics that emphasize voluntary agreement and realist arguments that focus on power and coercion) and constructivism now provide the major points of contestation for international relations scholarship.”[[64]](#footnote-64) This formulation captured the state of IR studies in the USA, and to a lesser extent that in Europe, but missed out “points of contestation” that revolves around the claims to space for other approaches, identities and voices, especially from non-Western societies, and the body of critical theories (post-modernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, feminism etc). Yet these latter perspectives arguably offer a much more of an alternative perspective on the central issues of IR than constructivism, the putative “major” challenger to rationalism in IR then.

This is not to say that problem-solving contestations are unimportant or not serious. As Table 1 shows, debates over the meaning of intervention within the so-called West can be quite fundamental. Moreover, the debates among problem-solving theories have usually ended up in synthesis, as happened to the neorealist-neoliberal debate of the 1980s, and the rationalist-constructivist debate since.[[65]](#footnote-65) This does not mean such debates are unimportant. Some do more so than others, for example the Idealist-Realist debate in the wake of World War I was a genuine disagreement over world order, as is the neorealist-constructivist disagreement (as opposed to the rationalist-constructivist one) over the causal and constitutive effects of norms or the agency and impact of international institutions. While the Coxian formulation might place constructivism firmly within the camp of problem-solving theory, regarding Marxism, Gramscian theory and post-modernism, feminism etc, as critical, this would be a simplistic schema. Many constructivists regard themselves as critical theorists, and there is at least one strand within constructivism that departs from Wendtian state-centric variety. Constructivists and Neoliberals do point to very different outcomes when they speak of the constitutive versus the regulative impact of institutions. The rationalist-constructivist synthesis should not obscure the fact the normative predisposition of constructivism towards fundamental transformation, to a far greater degree than liberals might concede. The rationalist-constructivist debate is about status quo versus change, rather than about making the existing system more efficient and responsive.

The second type of contestation lacks a precise accepted vocabulary. It may be variously labeled as a contestation between core and periphery North and South, West and non-West, or more simply, West and the Rest*.* I acknowledge fully and readily that none of these categories involved - West, non-West, North, South, and Third World - is coherent. It is understandable how the sheer diversity of actors that comprise each category makes these terms analytically suspect. Many of the contestations about world order, including those over sovereignty, security, and identity, take place as much within and across these categories as between them. But this does not mean that North-South (or West-non-West) contestations do not exist or are unimportant. A quick look at the international reaction to the “Responsibility to Protect” idea (discussed in Chapter 4) suggests that some of the most severe contestations over world order occur along North-South lines. As Ramesh Thakur notes, “differences within both camp notwithstanding, the global North/South divide is the most significant point of contention for ‘the international community’.[[66]](#footnote-66) Indeed, it can be argued that the contestation between the West and the non-West over the meaning of and approaches to order is perhaps the most fundamental challenge facing global order-building since the end of World War II.

In this book, by “non-Western”, I mean the members of what used to be called, and is still recognized by many as such, the “Third World”, albeit acknowledging it as a more differentiated and regionalized entity today than the conventional understanding of the term implied. There could be legitimate grounds for doubt and debate about whether there is any such thing as a non-West.To some extent, this is akin to the much debated question during the Cold War: was there a Third World? This controversy has probably run its course.[[67]](#footnote-67) But the term non-West as used here is both a term of convenience as well as a way of expressing the Western dominance and ethnocentrism of IR theory. Simply stated, it refers to countries which are not part of what is recognized as the West (Western Europe and North America in particular).

Notwithstanding misgivings over the analytic utility of concepts such as Third World, periphery Global South, or non-West, and debates surrounding them are themselves a challenge to our assumptions about a universal global order being out there. There are two key issues here. First, the widely-held view, most clearly associated with the English School but also accepted by the IR community as a whole, that the modern international system is Westphalia “writ-large”, and that the non-Western countries embraced the ideas and rules of the European international society, obscures the contestations that occurred in the course of the spread of these ideas, contestations that involved the use of force, coercion and injustices on the part of the rule-givers and resistance on the part of the rule-takers. As Bull and Watson acknowledge in their introduction to *The Expansion of International Society,* the “revolt against the West” was really a revolt against the “universal international society” already created by European imperial expansion and dominance by the early 20th century. This included the so-called European society’s ideas and rules of sovereignty and security. Second, the “Westphalia writ-large” perspective ignores the agency role of the non-Western actors in the construction of global order with the help of their own ideas, institutions and practices. To be sure, there would be a great deal of synergy and synthesis between the rules and institutions of the European-derived international society and those of local communities in the non-West. But this does not mean we should uncritically focus on the question of “who gives” and “what is given” and ignore “who takes” and “what is taken”. This is fundamental to understanding how and why the meanings and scope of core ideas of the modern international system, including security and sovereignty, differ considerably between the West and the Third World, as well as between different regions of the world.

The third type of contestation concerns the claims of is between the global and the local. While local can mean many things in international relations, I have been much interested in throughout my academic career in studying locality primarily in terms of regions and regionalism. There are important reasons for focusing on the global-regional contestation. First, regionalism –formal and informal- has been a persistent phenomenon in world politics and has been a key channel for articulating the voices and concerns of weaker actors, including non-Western states. Second, regional interactions and institutions have been crucial to norm diffusion, both in terms of localizing global norms and globalizing locally-developed norms. Third, regions are a site for resistance to powerful and hegemonic actors in global politics and important alternatives to the dominant theories and discourses about international relations which have privileged, falsely in my view, a universal framing. The understanding of regions and regionalisms are indispensable to any meaningful debate about and analysis of global order.

The three contestations are not mutually exclusive, but may overlap to a considerable extent. For example, in the universalism-regionalism debate over the UN Charter, the main advocates of the latter were also the non-Western (latter Third World) countries from Latin America and Middle East. But the Third World was not emerged then, and the term had yet to be invented. So it is justified to keep them separate. Similarly, while Third World and local/regional overlap, there are contestations and variations within the Third World along regional lines; regionalism in Asia is different from that in Africa and Latin America. Differences between problem-solving and critical can be found not only within the West, but also in the Third World and within regions. West-Non-West distinctions, while useful do not capture the variations and differences within the non-West. Hence we need a local/regional category to refer to different regions, including those which are not part of the Third World (like Europe). This way, the book overcomes the dichotomy between Western and non-Western, and presents contestations and challenges to universalism in a more comprehensive way.

While there is a growing literature on each of these contestations and how they influence global order, none have taken into account all three of them within a single framework. For example, there has been lots of work on redefining security, some within problem-solving perspectives, while others have been between problem-solving and critical approaches. But these do not pay adequate attention to the debates that have occurred over the distinctive meaning of security in the Third World, or the North-South dimension of the disagreement.[[68]](#footnote-68) Similarly, a good deal has been written about the security concerns of Third World, and the Third World’s demands concerning sovereignty, but this is usually presented as a West versus Rest, and does not take into account the broader debate over the meaning of security that is going on, these often miss the extent to which variations exist in the understanding and practices of security and sovereignty between regions. And the literature on regional orders sometimes sidesteps the larger questions of the changing meanings of security and sovereignty in other parts of the world; work on regionalism has been either Eurocentric or lacking in a comparative focus. This book presents a more holistic framework for analyzing contestations over security and sovereignty and global order at large, by incorporating these different forms of contestations.

The various chapters of this book illustrate the three types of contestation discussed above (Table 1.1). In so far as the contestation between problem-solving and critical theories is concerned, Chapter 3 and 4 are especially relevant. Chapter 3 demonstrates the debates over the efficacy, morality and freedom-impeding implications of the war on terror. But the same chapter also discusses the debates about the necessity and modality of humanitarian intervention (Realists versus Liberal internationalists/ Constructivists). It also shows objections to humanitarian intervention over its motivations and double standards from developing countries. Chapter 4 highlights the debates over expanding the scope of security to include non-military phenomena. This is essentially a debate within problem-solving theory although it extends to problem-solving and critical.

Several chapters are about the core-periphery contestation. Chapter 2 is concerned with local actors’ resistance to outside ideas about sovereignty and non-intervention. Chapter 4 deals with debates about the competing meanings and implications security in the Third World and the West. Chapter 5 looks at debates over human security as “freedom from fear” popular in the West versus “freedom from want” popular in Asia and the developing world more generally. Chapter 7 looks at norm building by regional actors in the non-Western world against Western great power hypocrisy.

The examples of the third form of contestations can be found mainly in chapters 6, but also chapters 2 and 7. Chapter 6 examines not only the Universalist-Regionalist debate over conflict management and order-building but also the debate over European regionalism as a universal standard and competing regionalism in world politics. Chapter 2 discusses how regional actors challenge, resist and re construct global norms. Chapter 7 illustrates local or regional resistance to global norms, attempts to localize outside ideas to fit them to local context and build and project regional norms to strengthen global order.

**Table 1.1: The Analytic Framework**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Problem Solving – Critical** | **Core-Periphery** | **Global-Local** |
| Debates within the English School about the “expansion of international society” (Bull versus Buzan/Little) (Chapter 2)  Debates about “responsible sovereignty” - the necessity and modality of humanitarian intervention (Realists versus Liberal internationalists/ Constructivists) (Chapter 4)  Debates over “selective sovereignty” - the efficacy, morality and freedom-impeding implications of the war on terror (Chapter 4)  Debates over expanding national security to include non-military phenomena (Chapter 5) | Asian and African Resistance to great power-organised alliances (Chapter 3)  Objections to humanitarian intervention from developing countries over its motivations and double standards (Chapter 4)  Debates about the nature of security in the Third World (Chapter 5)  Debates over human security as “freedom from fear” versus “freedom from want” (Chapter 6) | The Universalist-Regionalist debate over conflict management (Chapter 7)  Regions as sites of resistance to great power hegemony (Chapters 3, 7, 8)  Debate over European regionalism as a universal standard (Chapter 7)  Moral cosmopolitanism versus constitutive localization and norm subsidiarity in the creations and diffusion of ideas and norms (Chapter 8) |

**Why Contest?**

Why do contestations occur in world politics? For realists, most contestations are over power and security. For liberals, contestations occur over function and efficacy of ideas and institutions. For constructivists and critical theorists, contestations are largely about identity, meaning and interpretation. In this book, I depart from the strict analytic parsimony of individual theories, and employ all these contestations into an analytic holism.

*Power and legitimacy:* Some contestations occur because ideas and practices are imposed by powerful actors upon weaker ones, or when the actions of the powerful actors lack legitimacy, for example when they refuse to accept self-restraint towards the weaker actors, or propagate their ideas and pursue their policies through violence and unilateralism. It is also likely when weaker actors feel marginalized in the process of making of international rules and institutions, thus denying them representation and participation and rendering them marginalized. Another reason could be when the rules and institutions of order, once established by general agreement of all or accepted by all (both strong and weak) are violated capriciously by the powerful actors when their interest and purpose dictates such violation. In other words, when such rules and institutions are subjected to the “organized hypocrisy” (which I have reformulated as “disorganized hypocrisy” in Chapter 5) orchestrated by powerful actors, and when weaker and marginalized actors perceive hypocrisy on the part of the powerful actors who frequently violate agreed rules and defy established common institutions. Plenty of examples of such action can be found in the attitudes of the superpowers towards Third World countries during the Cold War, and in the policies of US during the Bush administration in waging it “war on terror”, which was predicated on violating the sovereignty of some states in order the preserve and protect a world-wide system of sovereign states. Either type of marginalization, whether through non-representation in the construction of global order, or being subjected to the violation of the common rules and institutions, creates the ground for resistance and protest, even if powerful actors claim, sometimes even with justification, that their actions are efficient and results-oriented. In other words, the contestation here is about legitimacy, rather than efficacy.

*Adequacy and efficacy:* But contestations over efficacy are also commonplace in international relations. This second type of contestation has to do with the perceived or actual ability of existing ideas, institutions and practices to capture or address the range of challenges and changes facing the international community. Although some ideas and practices may have seemed adequate in the past, new developments may undermine their relevance and usefulness. This can happen with the emergence of a new threat, or the sudden aggravation of existing challenges (such as pandemics and climate change), or the activities of epistemic communities in highlighting a previously neglected issue and offering new solutions. A good example of this type of contestation is over the meaning of “national security”, a concept which seemed adequate to describe the threat of the early Cold War period and organize response to it, but which later on came to be seen as limited in capturing the challenge of economic interdependence, environmental degradation, or the threat of regional and ethnic conflicts. Policies and practices, no matter how durable and legitimate they might have been in the past, may be overtaken and overwhelmed by new developments such as a crisis (like 9/11 or the financial crises of 1997 and 2008), or a transformative event that brings closure to a historical epoch (e.g. the end of the Cold War). Ideas and institutions are often resistant to change. Path dependence is rife in international institutional and ideational politics. Hence contestations are common place when existing ideas, institutions and practices square off against new challenges or knowledge about challenges.

*Meaning and interpretation:* Third, contestations over global order also arise when different actors attach different meanings and interpretations to ideas and institutions of order-building. These differences may be caused or aggravated by differences in culture, context and the normative predispositions of different social groups. The famous and seemingly endless debate between the universalists and cultural relativists over human rights and democracy, or the meaning of security in the Third World, are examples of such contestations. Different regions may attach different meanings to sovereignty and security. When group identity is strong, there is a greater chance that a particular group would resist, reject or at least try to localize a supposedly universal norm or practice which may be seen a good and efficient by actors outside of the group. The emergence of new ideas/norms and invention of new solutions to existing problems might make existing norms, policies and practices seem out of date and deserving of resistance and change. Similarly, the moral prestige or functional claim of norms may change with time. A good example is the non-intervention norm, which was once seen as a bulwark of resistance to neocolonial or hegemonic practices of Western nations and the superpowers, but now seen as a cover for human rights abuses. These contestations are not always total and result in the decisive victory of one side over others, but can produce compromise and synthesis. And these contestations are not merely discursive in the sense that they do not have material implications. They do act as catalysts of change, sometimes big and dramatic, sometimes gradual and implicit.

The various chapters of the book illustrate the three main reasons for contestations about global order. To the extent that it challenges the overriding emphasis of early English School representation of the international system (and society) as European state-system writ large (with scnt acknowledgement of the role of colonialism and force) Chapter underscores contestations about power and legitimacy. Both chapter 3, with its focus on the delegitimation of hegemonic military alliances (SEATO), and chapter 4 dealing with the dilemmas of responsible sovereignty (humanitarian intervention) and the contradictions of the selective sovereignty (war on terror), speak to contestations over power and legitimacy. Chapters 5 speaks primarily to contestations over adequacy and efficacy, whether the idea of national security as conventionally understood adequately captures the challenges we face today, in the era of globalization and since the end of the Cold War. Chapter 6, on the human security idea, is about meaning and interpretation, whether human security is about freedom from want or freedom from fear, although interpretation is also crucial to the legitimacy and diffusion of the concept of human security.

Chapter 7 also deals with power and legitimacy: capturing how regionalism and regional institutions act as sites of resistance to powerful actors and underscoring regional action as a key ingredient for the legitimacy of global security management (Universalism-Regionalism debate). Chapter 8, which addresses moral cosmopolitanism, embraces a variety of contestations, but it is primarily about meaning and interpretation. Both processes are a form of resistance to powerful actors, especially their moral cosmopolitanism. But the resistance is carried out mainly in the domain of meaning and interpretation. Localization is in many ways an act of reinterpretation to make foreign ideas congruent with preexisting local beliefs and practices. Subsidiarity is also normative action but it creates new norms for diffusion beyond its original locale, thereby allowing variations and reinterpretations.

**Moving On**

In this book, I recast the idea of global order on an altered conception of universality. A supposedly “universal” international relations theory should reflect the totality of human condition and experience of different actors including states, societies, and individuals. It should incorporate the experience of both West and non-West, and recognizes the agency role of both, in the construction of global order. Such a theory shuns ethnocentrism, or centrism of any kind, and delegitimizes dominance as the organizing principle of global order.

One of the key aspects of Western IRT has been to assume that what is good for hegemonic actors is good for the rest of humankind. The theory of hegemonic stability offers the most important example of this kind of thinking. Such theories acknowledge differentiations in levels of material power, but legitimize these differences by projecting the essential benignity of the highest level actor (hegemon) or actors (great power management). A truly universal discipline of international relations would acknowledge inequality among nations and societies, but render institutionalized dominance illegitimate. It would acknowledge variations in power as well as other material and ideational conditions, resources and capacities among actors, but would seek to redress those variations and injustices through cooperative norms and institutions.

If the search for universal leads us to a situation where local community, national or regional differences are regarded illegitimate and are wished away from the picture, or suppressed because of the dominance of one set of actors over other, then such a project is not desirable. But if by universality we mean *inclusiveness without uniformity*, then there is much to celebrate it. At the same time, while local identities are important and should have their place in international relations theory, the goal should be *identity without exceptionalism*, rather than parochialism that sometimes comes with the celebration of local identities. The quest for global order is really about a quest for *inclusiveness without uniformity*, *differentiation without dominance*, and *identity without exceptionalism*.

To sum up, in this book, I only interrogate the concept of universality, but also id entify some possible directions in international relations in which the global and universal claims about order and material power disparities that sustain them are challenged by countervailing ideational and normative forces, and local identities. In this process, I offer an alternative to both the Westerncentrism in IR as well as the dominance of the globalization perspective. But with Cox, I look for an alternative understanding of universality that would not only mean “comprehending and respecting diversity in an ever changing world”,[[69]](#footnote-69) but also the *agency* of diverse local actors in constructing global order.

1. Robert W. Cox, “Universality in International Studies: A Historicist Approach,” in Michael Brecher and Frank P. Harvey, eds., *The Essence of Millennial Reflections on International Studies: Critical Perspective* (University of Michigan Press), p.50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 2nd edition, Columbia University Press, p.305. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 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*, Sep 02, 2004 <Not Available>. 2009-05-26 <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p59921_index.html>. Sorensen divides theories and approaches of order into four categories: “(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.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Muthiah Alagappa, “The Study of International Order,” in Muthiah Alagappa, *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.34. For a discussion of regional orders produced by internationalist coalitions, see Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century’s Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Macmillan English Dictionary,* 2nd edition,(Oxford, Macmillan Education, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society,* 2nd ed.,(Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid., pp.16-19. Alagappa argues that Bull’s definition of order conflates international order with “international society”, which assumes the existence of common interests and values, and thereby excludes considerations of order within Hobbesian worlds. It also excludes Kantian conceptions of morality and law, which seeks “to replace the system of states with a universal community of mankind.” Alagappa, “The Study of International Order,” p.36. But Bull also mentioned the concept of world order, which means “patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of social life among mankind as a whole”. Bull, *Anarchical Society* , p.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Alagappa, “The Study of International Order,” p.36. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Mohammed Ayoob, "Regional Security and the Third World", in Ayoob, ed., *Regional Security in the Third World* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Dictionary.com, "world order," in Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon. Source location: Dictionary.com, LLC. [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/world order](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/world%20order). Available: <http://dictionary.reference.com>. Accessed: March 15, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Morgan, “Regional Security Complexes and Regional Orders,” in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, eds., “The New Regionalism in Security Affairs,” in Lake and Morgan, eds., *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: oxford University Press, 2007), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Alagappa, “The Study of International Order, p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Cited in Daniel Taylor, “[1970′s “World Order Models Project” sought to use Pope as spokesmen for globalization agenda](http://www.oldthinkernews.com/?p=128),” 26 September 2007. Available at: <http://www.oldthinkernews.com/?p=128>. See also Richard Falk, “The World Order Models Project and its Critics: A Reply,” *International Organization,* vol. 32, no. 2 (Spring, 1978), pp. 531-545; David Wilkinson, “World Order Models Project: First Fruits,” *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 91, No. 2 (Summer, 1976), pp. 329-335. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “Robert Cox on World Orders, Historical Change, and the Purpose of Theory in International Relations,” [Theory Talk #37: Robert Cox](http://www.theory-talks.org/2010/03/theory-talk-37.html) , <http://www.theory-talks.org/2010/03/theory-talk-37.html>. Robert Cox, *Social Forces, States, and World Orders*, *Approaches to World Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, “The View from the Ivory Tower: TRIP Survey of International Relations Faculty in the United States and Canada,” February 2007. Available at: http://web.wm.edu/irtheoryandpractice/trip/surveyreport06-07.pdf?svr=www. The survey was based on 1,112 International Relations scholars. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Robert Keohane, “International Institutions: Two Approaches,” p.380. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cox, Universality in International Studies, p.53. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* lists the different meanings of univeralism, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.Universal: (1)**:** including or covering all or a whole collectively or distributively without limit or exception; especially **:** available equitably to all members of a society <universal [health coverage](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/universal)>; (2) a**:** present or occurring everywhere, b **:** existent or operative everywhere or under all conditions <universal cultural patterns>; (3) a **:** embracing a major part or the greatest portion (as of humankind) <a universal state> <universal practices> , b **:** comprehensively broad and versatile <a universal genius>; (4) a **:** affirming or denying something of all members of a [class](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/universal) or of all values of a variable, b **:** denoting every member of a class <a universal term>; (5) adapted or adjustable to meet varied requirements (as of use, shape, or size) <a universal gear cutter> <a universal remote control>. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. McGraw-Hill Higher Education's Integrative Biology Page.  
    [www.mhhe.com/biosci/pae/glossaryu.html](http://www.google.com/url?ei=5RnMTOnlGIGglAetweybBg&sig2=aFyxv9ub6js8BFGwTq8Ohw&q=http://www.mhhe.com/biosci/pae/glossaryu.html&sa=X&ved=0CBoQpAMoCQ&usg=AFQjCNFJDjSGWu-_tAv5AgJbkbAiP-MxHg) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Cary L. Cooper, ed., [*The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management*](http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/book?id=g9780631233176_9780631233176)*,* <http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9780631233176_chunk_g978063123493724_ss>, 1-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. “Universalists,” *Catholic Encyclopedia,* <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15181a.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Cox, “Universality in International Studies,” p.53. On Enlightenment universalism, see: Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment,* 2nd editionCambridge University Press, 2005); Downing A. Thomas, *Double Dialectics: Between Universalism and Relativism in Enlightenment and Postmodern Thought* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); “Universalism,” in The Columbia History of Twentieth-Century French Thought, By Lawrence D. Kritzman, Brian J. Reilly, M. B. DeBevoise; [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice.* [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Frederick Tung, **“**Skepticism about Universalism: International Bankruptcy and International Relations,” Berkeley Program in Law and Economics, Working Paper Series (February 2002), p.8. <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/0kn6d3dw>) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For an excellent overview, see: Armin von Bogdandy & Sergio Dellavalle, “Universalism Renewed: Habermas’ Theory of International Order in Light of Competing Paradigms,” <http://www.germanlawjournal.com/article.php?id=1072> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Stanley Hoffman, “Hedley Bull and His Contribution to International Relations,” *International Affairs,* vol.62, no.2 (Spring 1986), [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Bull, “The Revolt Against the West”, p.217. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Bull and Watson, “Introduction,” in Bull and Watson, ed., *The Expansion of International Society*, p.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Elisabeth Reichert, Human Rights: An Examination of Universalism and Cultural Relativism, *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (April 2006), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Stephanie Lawson, “Democracy and the problem of cultural relativism: normative issues for international politics,” Global Society, 12(2), 1998, p. 13 (cited in Reichert, 28-29). In human rights discourse, “Cultural relativism is the assertion that human values, far from being universal, vary a great deal according to different cultural perspectives. Some would apply this relativism to the promotion, protection, interpretation and application of human rights which could be interpreted differently within different cultural, ethnic and religious traditions. In other words, according to this view, human rights are culturally relative rather than universal.” Diana Ayton-Shenker, The Challenge of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity (United Nations Background Note, <http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1627e.htm>). On the articulation of cultural relativism in relation to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, see: Executive Board, American Anthropological Association, "Statement on Human Rights" in American Anthropologist, vol.49, no. 4 (1947), 539-543; Julian Steward, "Comments on the Statement of Human Rights" in American Anthropologist, 50, no.2 (1948), 351-352; Melville J. Herskovitz, "Some Further Comments on Cultural Relativism" in American Anthropologist, vol.60, no.2 (1958) 266-273. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. J. Hughes, “Problems of Transhumanism: Moral Universalism vs. Relativism,” Institute of Ethics and Emerging Technologies, 8 February 2010. Available at: <http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/hughes20100208/>. Accessed 13 December 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment,* 2nd edition(Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. I do not imply here that the English School is monolithic or unchanging. But *The Expansion of International Society* has been called by Vigezzi in his intellectual history as the English School’s “the most complete achievement”.Brunello Vigezzi, *The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics 1954-1985: The Rediscovery of History* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2005), 289. Notable subsequent contributions to the core theoretical literature of the English School include Tim Dunne*, Inventing* International Society(London: St. Martin Press, 1998); Barry Buzan From International to World Society*?: English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2006); Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). A contribution that took particular account of the non-Western world, see: Adam Watson, The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis (London: Routledge, 1992, Reissued in 2009 with a new introduction by Barry Buzan and Richard Little). Also important in relating the English School to the colonial order, hence especially relevant to my critique, is Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Bull, “The Revolt Against the West”, p.217. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Barry Buzan and Richard Little make a major effort to address the Eurocentrism of Expansion of International Society in their work, “Beyond European International Society. Barry Buzan and Richard Little: “The Idea of ‘International System’: Theory Meets History”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, (July, 1994), 231-255. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Hedley Bull, “The Revolt Against Western Dominance: From a European to A Global International Order,”…in Vigezzi, 425). Despite this acknowledgement, according to Vigezzi’s account, Bull and to a lesser extent Watson are far more enthusiastic about the *Expansion* project than the other core members of the committee, including Wight and Butterfield. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Bull and Watson, “Introduction”, *Expansion of International Society,* p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Bull and Watson, Introduction, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Barry Buzan and Richard Little, “World History and the Development of non-Western International Relations Theory,” in Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives On and Beyond Asia,* (New York: Routledge, 2010).argue that: “in their individual and joint contributions to *The Expansion of International Society,* Bull and Watson(1984), central figures in the first generation of the English School, demonstrate a clear awareness of the need to consider the question of global connections in their attempt to establish a ‘grand narrative’ from an international relations and world historical perspective. They work, however, from an essentially Eurocentric perspective and argue that the basic features of the contemporary international political structure have been inherited from Europe. Moreover, because ‘it was in fact Europe and not America, Asia, or Africa that first dominated and, in so doing, unified the world, it is not our perspective but the historical record itself that can be called Eurocentric’(Bull and Watson(1984a,2).” (PAGE NUMBER?) [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, “Why Africa's weak states persist*:* the empirical and the juridical in statehood,” World Politics, Vol. 35 (October 1982), 1-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Bull, “The Emergence of a Universal International Society,” 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. The term ‘interaction capacity’ was coined by Buzan and Little, *International Systems and World History.* [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. One question that remains unclear here is whether interaction capacity subsumes the use of force or can interaction be defined as war-making? Buzan and Little take interaction capacity to mean ‘the amount of transportation, communication, and organisation capability”, rather than force per se. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Michael Howard, “The Military Factor in European Expansion,” in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson *The Expansion of International Society,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Hidemi Suganami brings this out clearly in “Japan's Entry into InternationalSociety,” in *The Expansion of International Society,* Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 185-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Bull and Watson, “Conclusion,”*,* 437. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, “Conclusion,” in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson eds. *The Expansion of International Society*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 427. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Bull and Watson, “Conclusion,” 427. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Bull, “The Emergence of a Universal International Society,” 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Bull, “The Emergency of a Universal International Society,” 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid., 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit , “Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism,” *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (September 1998): 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Bull, “From A European…”, in Vigezzi, 426 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Thakur, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Thakur, *The Responsibility to Protect*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Contestation. (n.d.) WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection. (2003-2008). Retrieved March 15 2011 from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Contestation>. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. S.v. "Contestation." Retrieved March 15 2011 from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Contestation> [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Robert W. Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory', in Robert O. Keohane ed., *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Stephen Hobden and Richard Wyn Jones, “Marxist Theories of International Relations,” in Baylis, Smith and Owens, eds. *Globalization of World Politics,* 4th edition, (Oxford, 2007), 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. This special issue of *International Organization* also appeared as a book under the same time. The quote is taken from the book (MIT Press, 1999), p.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Among scholars who have made a plea for integrative approaches involving rationalism and constructivism, Risse put it most bluntly, “Rationalist and constructivist institutionalists do not constitute either/or propositions, but complement each other, at least to a considerable extent.” Thomas Rise, “Rational Choice, Constructivism, and the Study of International Institutions,” Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Washington, D.C., August 31 – September 3, 2000. See also: James Fear on and Alexander Wendt, “Rationalism vs. Constructivism: A Skeptical View,” in Walter Carlines, Thomas Rise, and Beth Simmons. Eds. *Handbook of International Relations*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 52-72. Wendt’s own work foreshadowed this synthesis. For him rationalism and constructivism “each concentrates on a different aspect of process…the choice between the two models is primarily an analytical or methodological one, a function of what question we are interested in.” Furthermore, “Rationalist models would be most useful when it is plausible to expect that identities and interests will not change over the course of an interaction, and constructivist models would be most useful when we have reason to think they will change. Since change is more likely the longer our time frame, this suggests a temporal division of labor: rationalism for today and tomorrow, constructivism for the longue duree.” Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).p. 367. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ramesh Thakur, *The Responsibility to Protect: Norms, Laws and the Use of Force in International Politics* (London: Routledge, 2011), 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of the analytical utility of the concept “Third World”. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Exceptions are Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World* Security Predicament*: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Brian L. Job, ed., *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States.*( *a* ( Boulder, CO: [Lynne Rienner](http://www.questia.com/SM.qst?publisher=Lynne%20Rienner&publisherSearchType=1002&act=search), 1992); Meryl A. Kessler and Thomas G. Weiss, eds., *Third World Security in the Post-Cold War Era* ( Boulder, CO: [Lynne Rienner](http://www.questia.com/SM.qst?publisher=Lynne%20Rienner&publisherSearchType=1002&act=search), 1991); Stephanie Neuman, ed., *International Relations Theory and the Third World* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); Louise Fawcett and Yezid Sayigh. *The Third World Beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Amitav Acharya***,*** “The Periphery as the Core*:* The Third World and Security Studies,” In Keith Krause and Michael Williams, eds., *Critical Security Studies*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Cox, “Universality in International Studies,” p.53. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)