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Why the Values of the BRICS Matter

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Abstract

This paper seeks to achieve two goals. First, it attaches importance to values as a key determinant of legitimacy and order in international society. Second, it explains why the BRICS are important to understanding the nature of international order in the coming decades. Overall, the case is made that anyone investigating the nature of order and possible reordering in the near future must consider the values of the BRICS.

Conceptually, the paper outlines an argument for understanding changes to international society in terms of legitimacy. There are two sources of authority in international society, power and values, which comprise legitimacy. Changes in the hierarchy of each power and values yield different kinds of respective change. Change in the power hierarchy of international society, or power transition, yields change in the identity and/or number of great powers. Change in the value hierarchy of international society, the values which define the purpose of international society, can be thought of as hegemonic succession and is what leads to reordering.

This framework and these concepts are then applied to the BRICS and contemporary international order. Two exemplary values of contemporary international society are highlighted. The BRICS are then shown to be the group most likely to affect the pervasiveness of these values in international society. The possible policy positions of the BRICS in the context of these two values are mapped to show that the BRICS are crucial to understanding 21st century order.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This paper seeks to identify the importance of the extent to which the BRICS maintain the existing international order. Such an inquiry has important implications for our understandings of the general processes of contemporary international politics and the state of future international order. In terms of the general processes of contemporary international politics, this paper will identify values as the determinant of change in a primarily social international order. In terms of the future of international order, this paper will identify the BRICS as key determinants of the values which will underlie any changes in international society. In conclusion, it will be shown that the BRICS story is yet to be written, and the important issues which lay ahead will be mapped out.

These ideas will be investigated in turn. The first chapter of this paper will address determination and change of international order in two sections. The first section of this chapter shows that order is determined in the context of an international society. The idea of international politics as a means to an end will be highlighted as crucial to the understanding of order and international society will be identified as the appropriate expression of such a concept of order.

The second section of this first chapter addresses change in order and is broken down into four parts. The first identifies the social nature of change in international society. There are many forms of change, but all forms of change occur due to lack of legitimacy in international society. The second section conceptualizes legitimacy as the interplay between power and values. The third section locates authority in legitimacy, highlighting how separate hierarchies of power and values hold authority in international relations. The final section identifies different forms of change respectively related to power or values and explains that values are the only determinant of reordering in international society.

The second chapter of this paper addresses contemporary international society. First, it locates liberalism in contemporary international society. It highlights the values of democratic freedoms and human rights as fundamental to the liberal order. Then the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are examined in relation to these values. While the story has yet to be written, it is clear that any inquiry about the sustainability of the contemporary order in international society should focus on the BRICS.

This paper has two overarching goals. First, it seeks to highlight the importance of values in relation to order. It locates values as a key component to legitimacy in international society and thus as fundamental to any understanding of order. Second, this paper seeks to identify the BRICS as meaningful to any analysis of contemporary order and explains that the differences between these

states are just the reason for this. Any change in the values underlying order, and thus change in order itself, will be identified by co-operative visions amongst the BRICS.

In the process of elucidating these goals, this paper makes four key contributions to international politics literature. First, this paper contributes to any emphasis on the role of values and moral obligations in international politics. Second, this paper also contributes to literature which emphasizes legitimacy as a useful analytical tool for understanding international society. These are two related contributions, in the sense that values and legitimacy are intimately tied (along with power), and provide a nuanced way of thinking about legitimacy itself, order, and international society. Thirdly, this paper contributes to non-anarchical understandings of international society. This contribution is embedded in discussion of legitimacy.

Finally, this paper highlights the BRICS. There is not much academic literature on the BRICS, particularly in the English School. This paper attempts to articulate their importance and highlights that their existence and future actions, individually and collectively, will tell us much about the nature of international society and order in the 21st century.

Chapter 2: Values and Change in International Order

An answer to the ultimate question posited in this paper must be rooted in a theoretical understanding of international order. This chapter will step back to provide these necessary roots of understanding and crystallize a view of the nature of international politics to which contemporary international politics can be applied. The view of international relations taken here will be primarily based on English School writers and international society. Legitimacy will be given a key explanatory role.

Determination and change of order are two separate ideas and will be handled separately in two sections. Thus, the question of the first section of this chapter will be: how is order determined in international politics? This section will locate this paper in the literature of international society. It will do so in order to highlight the social nature of determination of order and attach this to purposive order. This emphasizes that politics are means to an end, not an end themselves. International society captures this concept and gives order a purposive role in international life.

In turn, the question of the second section of this chapter is: why does reordering occur in international society? This section will ultimately set the stage for the importance of legitimacy, and particularly values, in reordering of international society. It will be shown that various forms of change in international society are essentially social phenomena and that legitimacy captures the political complexities related to reordering. Legitimacy can be conceptualized as a condition of political equilibrium between power and values in international society. These concepts are to be thought of as separate sources of authority and are related to separate types of change. Ultimately, values are most strongly connected to reordering.

How is Order Determined in International Politics?

The question of this section is: how is order determined in international politics? At the outset, it must be clarified that this paper indeed focuses on the international. This is done under the premise that states are key actors in world politics and considering international rather than other cross-sections of world politics is meaningful. To be sure, "international order is order among states, but states are simply groupings of men, and men may be grouped in such a way that they do

not form states at all."[1] At the moment, however, it remains useful to understand the "constitution of world politics by thinking primarily in terms of a world made up of… states."[2] A focus on international politics does not imply a view that other actors are ineffectual upon world order. Rather, a focus on international politics should be understood to be a focus on one particularly important determinant of world order.

With the scope of inquiry established, order must be defined. What is order? Bull's definition of order will be used in this paper and explained in two parts. The first part of the definition refers to order as a "pattern or regularity in the relations of human individuals or groups."[3] As established, this paper's focus is on groups of individuals manifested as states. Thus, the subject of inquiry here, under this first part of the definition of order, is the pattern of relations between states.

The second part of Bull's definition of order is that these patterns must lead "to a particular result [and arrange] social life such that it promotes certain goals or values."[4] This is an important addition to the definition of order and the idea of international order being a means to certain ends is important to consider. This will be elucidated here briefly.

Some analysts, in a family of thought stemming from realism, view the relations of states to be ultimately regulated by conflict and anarchy.[5] This leads to a conclusion that states are in a tragic world, where fear and uncertainty mean states are only, by nature or necessity, concerned with survival and power-maximization.[6] It follows from this that "institutions… always and inevitably… do not matter."[7] Political outcomes are essentially products of the distribution of power. Such a view precludes any possible ends for international life, or common goals and values of states and relations between them. Bull writes that such a realist pattern of "violence conflict… is a situation we should characterize as disorderly."[8] The argument could also be made that there is order in the realist view, in that it illustrates a behavioral pattern of conflict and self-help based on the zero-sum, yet still common, goals of survival and power-maximization. Regardless, the realist understanding

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[1] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics,* 3rd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), 19.
[2] Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3.
[3] Bull (2003: 3)
[4] Bull (2003: 3-4)
[5] Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, eds. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), 7.
[6] John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (eds.) *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity,* 2nd edn. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010: 78-81.
[7] Hurrell (2007: 39)
[8] Bull (2003: 3)

of the relations of states is incompatible with the conception of order used here because it does not allow for an international political structure that promotes ends of common goals or values.

Other analysts, however, see the relations of states involving "continuous and organized intercourse."[9] The intercourse can be understood as a pattern of behavior between states which takes the form of engagement "with one another by common rules and institutions."[10] These rules and institutions stabilize and legitimize power, making power "a social attribute."[11] In this view, order comes as the product of a social international system as well as the distribution of power. Such an environment allows for common interests and values to manifest from the relations of states, which means this definition of order has a significant constructivist element to it.[12] Acknowledgement of the social elements of international life allows for development of ends in the form of common goals or values, which is what Bull's definition of order prescribes.

This conception of order leads us to the usefulness of the concept of international society. International society "exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions."[13] Such an understanding of international life accounts for many social determinants of order in international life for which realism, or strict focus on the distribution of power, does not. Thus, international society will be taken forward as the most useful understanding of international order because of its accounting of social considerations such as norms, institutions, and rules along with the distribution of power.

It must be mentioned that there are fundamental questions at stake in this debate. There is no doubt the discourse on the applicability of these theories is vast and complex and full examination cannot be completed here. However, as Bull says, despite the problems this definition presents, "it places the emphasis on ends or values, [and] provides a helpful starting point."[14]

In sum, order is defined as a purposive pattern of activity. International order, then, is a purposive pattern of activity amongst states. International society is the manifestation of such a purposive pattern of norms, institutions, and rules. Accounting for social considerations is to account for important non-material determinants of order, and such depth of understanding is why

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[9] Wight (1991: 7)
[10] Bull (2003: 25)
[11] Hurrell (2007: 38-39)
[12] For an understanding of constructivism, see especially Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.
[13] Bull (2003: 13)
[14] Bull (2003: 4)

international society is the most useful framework for thinking about the determination of order. It is this framework and these definitions which will carry forward throughout this paper.

Why Does Reordering Occur in International Society?

The question of this section is: why does reordering occur in international society? This question will be answered in four sections. First, it will be shown that change in international society is driven by legitimacy. Second, legitimacy will conceptualized. Legitimacy accounts for the combination of power and values in international society and as such is an important concept in assessing the palatability of international society. Thirdly, legitimacy will be given a place of authority in international society because change should be understood to take place when a certain authority is no longer legitimate. Finally, it will be explained that reordering, as a specific type of change, should only be understood to occur when the values underlying international society are deemed illegitimate.

Change Driven by Legitimacy

What causes reordering in international society? As a departure point, it should be acknowledged that international society writers acknowledge and investigate the changing nature of international society. For example, Bull distinguishes Christian, European, and world international societies, and assigns them timeframes of prominence in the 15th-17th, 18th-19th, and 20th centuries respectively.[15] Many discuss the "expansion" and "transformation" of international society in the 20th century.[16] Others discuss international society contracting after the Cold War.[17] It is clear international society is seen as prone, if not accustomed to, various forms of reordering.

This begs two related questions: when has reordering occurred, and why has reordering occurred? Put differently, at what points in history has change in order come, and what are the underlying forces which cause these changes in order? These questions will help us develop a fundamental understanding of reordering in international society. First, history will be shown to be a host of many forms of reordering over varieties of timeframes. However, a common thread can be

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[15] Bull (2003: Chp. 2)
[16] Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, "Introduction," in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.) *The Expansion of International Society*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1984: 1.
[17] Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), chp. 8.

found amongst these varieties, which can help us understand the second question of why reordering occurs that is most relevant to this paper.

When has reordering occurred historically? There are three useful accounts of change which have historically brought about new orders in international society. For one, Clark establishes post-war peace negotiations as times of opportunity for states to revise international society since Westphalia.[18] This identifies that international society, when it fails to avoid war, is open to change at the discretion of the victorious at periodic intervals.[19] In another view, Hobson and Sharman establish that the succession of orders grounded in Christendom, imperialism, and decolonization were driven by change in social logics within Europe.[20] This identifies that international society can be subjected to change stemming from "ideational decay" over long periods of time.[21] Buzan identifies a third type of change, which he refers to as the "interplay between different institutions, and the tensions and contradictions among them."[22] This identifies the short-term, or even constant, ideational debates which lead to reinterpretation, atrophy, or development of new institutions.[23] These three examples can be understood as various historical accounts of change in international society.

These historical accounts of change do not offer much explanatory power due to their variety. Reordering, considering all three of these models, could be seen as materially disruptive and epochal, ideational and centuries-long in development, or variable and incessant. This spectrum of possibilities signifies there is not a timeframe or single form of conflict to which analysts can look to identify reordering of international society. To understand new orders in international society, delimiting history by only one of these logics cannot be the guide. Nor is it the case that an explanation strictly relying on distribution and balance of power is helpful, as Hobson, Sharman, and Buzan point out. However, Clark reminds us that power cannot be disregarded as influential either.

This means that a different question must be asked: Is there a common explanatory theme which can be found amongst these various historical forms of reordering? Tellingly, one can be found. This theme is that they all indicate a time in history when legitimacy lacked in international politics. In Clark's discussion, international society in general fails and leads to conflict if its

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[18] Clark (2005: Chps. 1-8)
[19] Clark (2005: Chps. 1-8)
[20] John M. Hobson, and J. C. Sharman, "The Enduring Place of Hierarchy in World Politics: Tracing the Social Logics of Hierarchy and Political Change," *European Journal of International Relations*, 11, no. 1 (2005): 81-92.
[21] Hobson and Sharman, (2005: 77)
[22] Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 249.
[23] Buzan, (2004: 249)

premise and structure is not palatable to enough of international society.[24] In Hobson and Sharman's discussion, social logics and identities give way to one another as morally inferior to their successors.[25] In Buzan's discussion, international society's institutions adapt, develop, or cease as changes occur in international, domestic, and world politics.[26] There is something bigger than simply material or simply normative considerations which drives change in order. A concept encompassing these considerations, and the interplay between them, is necessary. This can be found in discussion of legitimacy.

Whether it is power balancing or long-and-short term ideational change in international society, reordering comes when the whole or a part of international society fails to be legitimate. With this established, we must untangle what legitimacy means and how it accounts for material power as well as normative considerations.

Conceptualizing Legitimacy

If the legitimacy of international society is the focal point for thinking about reordering in international society, as prescribed above, how can we conceptualize it? To begin with, the concept of legitimacy must be defined. There are two aspects to legitimacy. The first deals with normative considerations and goes beyond norms to bring values into the definition of legitimacy. The second has to do with material power considerations. Overall, legitimacy will be defined as a political condition of equilibrium between the two aspects.

First, the normative aspect of legitimacy will be discussed. Clark says legitimacy should not be understood as a norm itself, but as a political condition grounded in consensus about norms.[27] Its presence is "parasitic" upon other norms "that are embedded in international society."[28] This means there is a strong social dimension to the political condition of legitimacy because its presence depends upon non-material considerations and relies on consensus regarding norms.

What are these norms and how do they help us understand legitimacy? Clark's definition of legitimacy, which is so far the definition employed here, identifies three important norms to which the presence of legitimacy is owed: legality, morality, and constitutionality.[29] He shows that these norms often pull in dissimilar directions, and this helps us understand how legitimacy is a political

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[24] Clark (2005: Chps. 1-8)
[25] Hobson and Sharman (2005)
[26] Buzan (2004: 240-249)
[27] Clark (2005: 220)
[28] Clark (2005: 220)
[29] Clark (2005: 208-209)

equilibrium that must be found as these norms fluidly contradict and coalesce in relation to each other.[30] Interestingly, he indicates this means legitimacy, as an aggregator of the interactions between these three norms, "denotes a combination of values."[31] Values are different from norms, and can be understood to be moral principles, beliefs, and standards of, in this case, a group of states.[32] Clark indicates a clear connection between norms and values, but he does not explicate it in his discussion of legitimacy.

This seems to be an important point and leaves questions about whether or not there is something deeper at play in legitimacy than simply norms. Is there something more fundamental than norms which must be understood? If it is true, as political philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah asserts, that "values guide our acts, our thoughts… these are our responses to values,"[33] then the answer is yes. Tellingly, in terms of legitimacy, ideas relating to this can be found elsewhere.

One such source of help is Hurd. For him, legitimacy "refers to the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed."[34] This places values as *a priori* to any actions, along the lines of Appiah. Social authority can be derived from such "ought-ness" because if a belief is internalized by an actor, there is a standard for behavior which has authority over its actions.[35] It is not necessary for the actor to believe in the moral justice of the belief, but only that there is social pressure from other actors for this belief to be internalized. In this view, there is authority of moral obligation governing the pattern of activity, or order, which occurs in international politics.

This concept of moral obligation of action helps us fill in the gap Clark leaves to our understanding of legitimacy. Moral obligation affecting the nature of action, as Hurd describes, requires a set of values to which there is obligation. This means that a presence of values is necessary for the existence of a pattern of activity, or order. Indeed, values guide behavior. This is why order requires "imposing one set of values over others."[36]

To understand order as a pattern of purposive activity, then, the values which inform the activities of order must be understood. Norms are an integral part of legitimacy, but only as an

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[30] Clark (2005: Chp. 11)
[31] Clark (2005: 208)
[32] Buzan (2004: 164)
[33] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, (London: The Penguin Group, 2006), 25.
[34] Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization*, 53, no. 2 (1999): 381.
[35] Hurd (1999: 388)
[36] Hurd (1999: 383)

indicator of the values which underpin international society. The normative aspect of legitimacy can be understood to deal with values, and legitimizing actions against a set of values.

We can now turn to the second aspect of legitimacy, which is power. Power can be defined as coercive authority, along the lines of fear producing acquiescence.[37] The condition of legitimacy is dependent upon the intersection of material power realities as well as the normative consideration of values described above. It is not enough to simply say values exist: values must be supported by materially powerful actors or a materially powerful coalition. Legitimacy "signifies a point of political equilibrium, but there is much more to its determination than the validity of the normative principles to which appeal is made. Principles [of legitimacy] are mediated through consensus, and subject to the play of power. The outcome is inherently political."[38] Once power is brought back in, we can think of legitimacy as a condition of political equilibrium which accounts for the interaction between power and values.

Locating explanatory power of social tenability in the hands of legitimacy is useful because it accounts for the delicate political balance between power and values in international society. Indeed, "to understand power [which, after all, is a social attribute] in international relations, we must place it side by side with other quintessentially social concepts."[39] Legitimacy accounts for this social essence of power, forcing power to interact with values and act "as a constraint on the strong, not simply on the weak."[40] Legitimacy as political equilibrium between power and values identifies the overall social nature of international politics.

This is especially an important point in the discussion of change in international society. To highlight this: "it is the underlying social relations that give material disparities causal significance… It was the failure to create legitimacy, after all, that led to the collapse of the GDR; and legitimacy is a social, not a material, relation."[41] The presence of legitimacy, or lack thereof, indicates the degree to which change is imminent because of its strong explanatory power as an encapsulation of the interplay between power and values in international society. More succinctly, emphasis on legitimacy allows us to begin building a framework for understanding change in international society.

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[37] Hurd (1999: 383)
[38] Clark (2005: 256)
[39] Hurrell *On Global Order*, 39
[40] Ian Clark, "China and the United States: A Succession of Hegemonies?," *International Affairs*, 87, no. 1 (2011): 24.
[41] Alexander Wendt, and Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy Under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State," *International Organization*, 49, no. 4 (1995): 691.

We first established that international society is a useful way of framing international order. We then established that the various forms of change in international society are best understood in terms of legitimacy. There were two aspects to legitimacy, power and values, which were identified as the key concepts upon which the condition of legitimacy is based. This begs for further insight into legitimacy: if consideration of legitimacy is the conceptual essence of change, can a framework be established for identifying the existence of legitimacy?

To establish a framework to identify the existence of legitimacy, we must return to the concepts of power and values which constitute legitimacy. As identified above, power has a coercive function and values have a normative function in legitimacy. Importantly, these functions were also identified as authoritative in international society. Power is a coercive authority because, as stated above, fear produces acquiescence. Values are a coercive authority because, as stated above, moral obligation stems from their existence. Legitimacy, by encapsulating power and values, essentially encapsulates forms of authority in international society.

Authority in international society has traditionally challenged international society writers and the concept must not be left undeveloped here. The dilemma can be thought of in terms of anarchy and hierarchy. Anarchy is the absence of government or rule over units.[42] More functionally in international politics, it is the absence of a "common authority," the likes of which is often assumed to exist in domestic but not international political life.[43] Hierarchy, in contrast, is super-ordination and differentiation between units.[44] Analysts of international society struggle with the concept of hierarchy due to a commitment to anarchy as the benchmark of English School theory: the problem arises because hierarchy implies preponderances of power and sources of authority, which would lead to "authoritative decision making" and the undermining of the anarchical nature of international society.[45] For the purposes of understanding legitimacy as defined in this paper, this is important. If legitimacy is so integral to the functioning of international society as suggested here, and legitimacy as such implies authority of power and values, how can this be reconciled with insistence upon anarchy and absence of authority by traditional analysis of international society?

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[42] Bull (2003: 44)
[43] Bull (2003: 44)
[44] Jack Donnelly, "Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society," *European Journal of International Relations*, 12, no. 2 (2006): 139-170, 141.
[45] Ian Clark, "How Hierarchical can International Society Be?," *International Relations*, 23, no. 3 (2009): 464

The argument to be made here is that international society is not necessarily anarchical as many analysts insist. Instead, international society is the host of a range of anarchical and hierarchical relations, between states and between states and the values of international society. This must be explained, so as to further explain legitimacy's usefulness as an explanatory concept in international society. The theoretical struggles of international society writers with anarchy and authoritative hierarchy will be rehashed and ameliorated.

As indicated above, anarchy has been a benchmark of international society analysis throughout the history of the English School. Yet many international society writers consistently refer to hierarchical levels of power within the society. Bull claims the term great power "implies the idea of international society" due to the need for great powers to be recognized by others.[46] He continues on to claim that other states have an "inferior status" as "middle" or "secondary" powers.[47] Hurrell also refers to "second-tier states" which are just below great powers and even differentiates amongst members of that group.[48] This says nothing of the great power-outlaw dichotomy, concerning unequal sovereignty which characterizes the relationship between great powers and many states in the lower tiers of the distribution of power.[49] Thus, it is fair to submit that "international society has always had gradations of power" between world, great, middle, minor, and other subdivisions.[50] Yet, this is incongruent with the idea of a pervasively anarchical society.

How can this contradiction be ameliorated to help clarify our understanding of order in international society? One way of solving this issue could be to restrict the scope of international society. For example, at certain points in history European international society was anarchical but markedly different as a decentralized, voluntaristic system from the hierarchical relationship it had with the rest of the world.[51] If international society is whittled down to only include relatively equal states which operate on a principle of toleration, then it could be argued that hierarchy becomes much less relevant.

However, this seems unsatisfactory because international politics includes such a wide array of states and activities which cover the globe. If international society is to have maximum applicability, it seems it should be understood to include as much of international politics as

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[46] Bull, (2003: 196)
[47] Bull, (2003: 197)
[48] Andrew Hurrell, "Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What Space for Would-be Great Powers?," *International Affairs*, 82, no. 1 (2006): 3
[49] See Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[50] Tim Dunne, "Society and Hierarchy in International Relations," *International Relations*, 17, no. 3 (2003): 304
[51] Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and Order in World Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 119.

possible. Bull would seem to endorse this view, placing importance on non-Western states having success revolting against Western dominance in the "universal international society."[52] Clark summarizes such a view well: "What were formerly external differences between groups of states- those inside and those outside- have now been internalized: all are members of international society, but not equally so."[53] This expansive, inclusive view of international society accounts for the fact that international activity is "irreconcilable with a universal society of sovereign states ordered according to principle of universal equality."[54] In this sense, restricting the scope of international society for the benefit of anarchy's usability seems to belie reality.

Another way of solving the anarchy/hierarchy issue could be to focus on the formal and legal equality accorded to states. However, "formal inequalities are standard features of almost all historical international societies."[55] As a contemporary example, hierarchies of states and concentrations of power have essentially been formalized and legalized in recent history by placing authority in unequal international organizations such as the United Nations Security Council.[56]

If limiting the scope of international society and reliance on legal sovereign equality cannot usefully resolve the anarchy/hierarchy issue, what can? Some may say hierarchy should be viewed as existing within anarchy.[57] This can be accepted; however, what is most useful is breaking down the whole of international society into various relational forms along a continuum, with anarchy and hierarchy as the poles.[58] This is most useful because placing hierarchy within anarchy gives anarchy unwarranted conceptual prevalence. The society of states itself, and the social nature of international relations, is what should be given conceptual prevalence. It is not within anarchy that international society occurs, but within international society that anarchical and hierarchical relations occur.

In this line of thinking, hierarchy correlates to empire and anarchy relates to alliance, occurring as formal contracts and informal residual effects of contracts.[59] This focuses on relations between states. Clark validates this view, explaining that "the two principles can indeed be so 'mixed,' and that many political systems are effectively hybrids."[60] Thus, some relations between

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[52] Hedley Bull, "The Revolt Against the West," in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.) *The Expansion of International Society*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1984: 228.
[53] Clark (2005: 80)
[54] William Bain, "The Political Theory of Trusteeship and the Twilight of International Equality," *International Relations*, 17, no. 1 (2003): 75
[55] Donnelly (2006: 144-145)
[56] Ian Hurd, *After Anarchy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 187-188.
[57] Donnelly (2006: 139-170)
[58] David A. Lake, "Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations," *International Organization*, 50, no. 1 (1996): 7
[59] Lake (1996)
[60] Clark (2009: 468)

states are more anarchic (indeed, states do hold a strong degree of territorial sovereignty and have high levels of agency) and some are more hierarchic or authoritative (the realities of power differentials amongst states often dictate the nature of relations, as insinuated above, and infringe on pure agency).

Hurd goes a step further, and adds that the concept of authority "is not located exclusively in states."[61] He places authority in institutions as well as states, acknowledging that authority existing outside of the state "does not mean that it has been removed from the state entirely" but does indeed exist.[62] Importantly, by placing some degree of authority institutions, he places authority in values as well as power.[63] It can be understood that there is something besides material distribution of power with authority in international society, and that is values.

This brings us back to our understanding of legitimacy, and gives authority to legitimacy as the political play between the authorities of power and values. On one hand, there is the interstate distribution of power which holds authority over state behavior in international society. On the other, there is a set of values which inform the norms, rules, and institutions of international society and also holds authority over state behavior in international society. Working simultaneously, these sources of authority lead to inherently political outcomes which can be conceptualized in terms of legitimacy.

Two paradoxical examples in Bull's writing can be given to operationalize these theoretical sources of authority and the existence of hierarchy. First, in discussing power, Bull says that the existence of great powers implies an international society due to the need for them to be recognized as such by others.[64] In so doing, they are accorded certain rights and responsibilities.[65] Great powers are thus differentiated from and by others, by definition for Bull, as more influential and powerful. If they imply international society, they simultaneously imply that it is hierarchical. The realities of material power have the "authority" of enabling and constraining, of granting rights and responsibilities, in the international social hierarchy of states.

Another example can be seen to highlight the authority of values. Bull claims that "international society is based on the rejection of a hierarchical ordering of states," which is couched in his proposition that great powers "cannot make explicit the full extent of their special

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[61] Hurd (2007: 185)
[62] Hurd (2007: 188)
[63] Hurd (2007: 54) In discussing symbols, Hurd says symbols are a representation of a form of social power. This social power "must be a powerful institution in the society" and he says values are a type of institution of social power. Thus, although articulated differently than in this paper, Hurd indicates the essential nature of values in normative political considerations and gives them authority as this paper does.
[64] Bull (2003: 196)
[65] Bull (2003: 196)

position."[66] Suggesting careful language to avoid unnecessary antagonism for maintenance of order is useful, but Bull, as an analyst, evades the realities of hierarchical relationships in international society in such an instance. However, by discussing language and communication, Bull highlights the authority of values. In this case, the value of a certain degree of equality (at least territorial sovereignty) amongst states is given authority because it restrains the actions, policies, and communiques of great powers. Authority of values in international society is how, as was cited earlier, "legitimacy functions as a constraint on the strong, not simply on the weak."[67]

These are only two examples of the authority power and values have in international society, but they help illustrate their authority and the social nature of how they obtain authority over international relations. This understanding moves away from Bull's definitional use of anarchy as the absence of government or rule. International society is not strictly anarchic and void of authority. Instead, international society is comprised of a variety of anarchical or hierarchical social relations and hosts the authorities of power and value considerations. International relations are under the authority of legitimacy.

Reordering in an Authoritative International Society

We have now seen that legitimacy is indeed a source of authority in international society. It is a source of authority because power and values simultaneously hold authoritative functions in international politics. This begs the question: how can functions of authority lose their authority? How can order change if there is authority in the distribution of power and the set of values legitimizing international activity? These questions frame discussion of change in an international society which involves sources of authority.

The answer lies in understanding the concept of crises of legitimacy, and two different types of change. Power transitions are one type of change focused on material shifts in the hierarchy of power and hegemonic successions are another type of change focused on the palatability of the value hierarchy underlying an established order.[68] Both types of change occur at moments of legitimacy crisis, but are very different in nature and should be viewed as distinct (yet potentially simultaneously occurring) types of change in international society. In the end, hegemonic succession is the only change which involves reordering of international society because it is attached to change in the values and purpose of international society.

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[66] Bull (2003: 221)
[67] Clark (2011: 24)
[68] Clark (2011)

If legitimacy is a point of political equilibrium which accounts for power and values, what is a crisis of legitimacy? Reus-Smit establishes legitimacy crises as times of adaptation or disempowerment for states and institutions.[69] This identifies that international society or institutions can experience a decline "in social recognition that its identity, interests, practices, norms, or procedures are rightful," thus bringing about change.[70]

In terms of the definition of legitimacy developed here, this means crises can come in terms of power or values. Change in terms of each function can be thought of as power transition and hegemonic succession, respectively. These must be kept distinct from one another because they imply different types of change. They may happen concurrently but they are undoubtedly separate forms of change, and only hegemonic succession implies reordering. It is this difference that Ikenberry refers to in his distinction between "just a changing of the guard" and "a transition in the ideas and principles that underlie the global order."[71] Power transition is just a changing of the guard, while hegemonic succession is change in values underlying order.

First, the concept of power transitions can be understood as "the accretion of material power… as a precondition for revising international order."[72] This is overtly about changes in the distribution of power in international society, but is applicable to discussion of international society because it "considers each country's satisfaction with the workings of the international system, or status quo."[73] When there is dissatisfaction with the status quo, power transition accounts for various methods of such change: it is a "powerful predictor of war" while also accounting for the possibility of "peaceful transfer of responsibilities and leadership."[74] A crisis of legitimacy in terms of power transition, then, comes when the distribution of power changes (violently or not) and great powers at the top of international society's hierarchy are no longer legitimately accorded such status.

In contrast, hegemonic succession can be understood as "[non-acceptance] of a dominant state's preferred international order."[75] Hegemony is a socially-bestowed form of hierarchy which is more about how power is used than the possession of power itself.[76] Hegemonic succession, then,

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[69] Christian Reus-Smit, "International Crises of Legitimacy," *International Politics*, 44 (2007): 157-174.
[70] Reus-Smit (2007: 158)
[71] John G. Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order." *Foreign Affairs*, May 1, 2011, 56.
[72] Clark, (2011: 14)
[73] Douglas Lemke, "The Continuation of History: Power Transition Theory and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Peace Research*, 34, no. 1 (1997): 24.
[74] Tammen et al, *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, (New York: Chatham House Publishers; Seven Bridges Press, 2000), 25.
[75] Clark (2011: 14)
[76] Clark (2009: 470)

identifies “much more than shifts in the balance of power:”[77] it identifies change due to disapproval of the existing order which a hegemon(s) had created. In other words, there must be a change in the purpose of order for there to be hegemonic succession.[78] A crisis of legitimacy in terms of hegemonic succession, then, comes when the purpose of international society and the values upholding order are no longer seen as legitimate.

These are important distinctions between the roles of power and values in any change in international society. A legitimacy crisis based on distribution of material power, yielding change in the identity or number of great powers, is only one kind of change. A legitimacy crisis based on the failure of order to be tenable to enough states in international society, yielding change in values and thus norms, is the kind of fundamental reordering we are seeking to isolate in this paper. Distribution of power can change but a new power hierarchy may support and adhere to the established order and the values informing it. As Clark says, a move towards multipolarity or shift in economic power does not necessarily translate into hegemonic succession.[79] Change in order requires hegemonic succession, not simply power transition. In other words, reordering is determined only by a dissatisfaction with, and subsequent change in, values.

This means that values and order are intimately connected, in a sense more so than power and order. A state could be strong, even stronger than dominant states or great powers, but not seek revision of international society because the status quo order, the status quo pattern of activity, suits them.[80] States which seek change to the values underlying international society and want reordering are revisionist states.[81] These states don’t simply seek a shift in the power hierarchy, but to foster changes in the processes and values underpinning international society. In a sense, this dichotomy of states based on values can help us investigate the degree to which international society is pluralist or solidarist, at least the degree to which it is pluralist or solidarist around certain values.[82] The less revision is sought, the more solidarist international society could be said to be.

Without a just, or at least palatable, set of values, there can be no lasting order.[83] It is value considerations which yield any revisionist states and desire for reordering. More negatively, it is values which cause the existence of any threats to or disagreements about order. To be sure, a

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[77] Clark (2011: 14-23)
[78] Clark (2011: 24-25)
[79] Clark (2011: 25)
[80] Hurd (1999: 398)
[81] Hurd (1999: 398)
[82] For definition of pluralism and solidarism, and an argument on seeing them as “ends of a spectrum,” see Buzan (2011: 45-62).
[83] Nicholas J. Wheeler and Tim Dunne, "Hedley Bull's Pluralism of the Intellect and Solidarism of the Will," *International Affairs*, 72, no. 1 (1996): 100

certain degree of power is necessary to be able to change order, but a dissatisfaction with prevalent values is more fundamentally required for reordering.

In this view, the historical accounts of various forms of change earlier in this chapter are not all that important for discussion of order in and of themselves. What is important in this context is the issue of what type of legitimacy crises causes these changes and whether an issue with values is taken up by revisionist states to the point that international society experiences reordering.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has shown that order operates in the environment of an international society. Within international society, change is driven by the legitimacy of international society. Legitimacy, as an aggregator of power and values, is a conceptual tool for understanding the tenability of an order. The authority of these two elements of legitimacy lead to understandings of different types of change. Change of *who* may come because of relative material considerations; change in *the purpose* of international society, or change in order, comes from value considerations. These two forms of social change can be thought of as power transition and hegemonic succession, respectively. Only hegemonic succession and change due to value considerations yields reordering in international society. Value change is the only type of change related to the purpose of international society.

There are a few of limits to this theoretical framework, which should be identified to indicate what this theoretical framework does not provide. First, there is no attempt to analyze the political workings of efforts to establish new orders. All that is achieved here is conceptualization of the necessary environment for reordering and what reordering entails. In other words, this paper is concerned with *why* reordering occurs, not the processes which determine what a new order looks like or the values which underpin it. While forms of reordering were highlighted as being underpinned by untenability of a particular international society's order, the processes by which new hierarchies of values and power come to form new orders is not investigated here.[84]

Relatedly, another limit is the focus on international politics, specifically international society, and legitimacy. As hinted in discussion of Buzan's identification of non-state on international society and Hurd's concept of authority also existing in institutions, there are effects

[84] For one historical account focused on post-war treaties since Westphalia, see Clark (2005: Chps. 1-8).

upon international society and international legitimacy which lie outside of international society. This is complicated and could not be addressed meaningfully here.[85] This paper's theoretical scope is strictly the concept of legitimacy as a political aggregate of power and values in international society, precluding it from investigating the wide array of determinants of it which exist outside of states. This is an important issue, though, and very much related to this discussion.

These limits are meaningful and lead to intriguing questions related to this paper. For example, could political complications and disagreements among, across, within, and outside of revisionist states preclude reordering attempts and lead to disdainful acceptance of an existing order? This is an important question which could not be meaningfully investigated here but should be considered in light of this work.

A final limit should be noted. This paper does not deeply investigate the relationship between justice and interests involved in sustainability of order, only the importance of the palatability of the values which underlie order in international society. There is no consideration of the degree of justice or satisfaction of interests necessary for palatability, nor investigation of potential analytical tools for the measurement of it. This paper can only seek to solidify the idea that values underlie order and that they are fundamental to any reordering that occurs. The issues of justice and interests in the sustainability of order is an important question, though.[86] An insightful investigation into what is required of values for them to be palatable or sustainable, and the roles of justice and interests in this analysis, is an important next step to take from here.

Regardless of the limits acknowledged here, we can meaningfully use this framework to consider contemporary international society. In so doing, values will be the key focal point of inquiry because, as we now understand, it is dissatisfaction with and desire to revise values which lead to reordering of international society.

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[85] For an example of such inquiry, see Ian Clark, *International Legitimacy in World Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[86] For an examination of this issue, see Wheeler and Dunne (1996).

Chapter 3: Contemporary International Society

We now turn from elucidation of a theoretical approach and conceptual terms to application of the terms in contemporary international society. The aim of this chapter is to highlight some of the key ways in which the BRICS may affect order (as explained in the last chapter, this essentially refers to the values which steer international society). In sum, key values of contemporary international society will be identified, the BRICS will be highlighted as the actors which will determine the sustainability of these values, and examples of specific policy issues will be suggested as key indicators of where international society's future will be determined.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, contemporary international society will be briefly described, so as to set the stage for the rest of the discussion. What does contemporary international society look like? Why is it appropriate to consider questions about change and reordering at this time? These questions will be discussed in a way that highlights recent history and locates the coming discussion in current debate. It will be shown there is much debate about pending, if not imminent, change in international society and the forms it will or will not take.

Second, contemporary international society's set of underlying values must be identified. This need extends from the fact that reordering of international society is so strongly attached to values (as explicated in the previous chapter). To understand the degree to which the global order will or will not be sustained, then, we must first identify the values of the existing global order. If international society indeed faces reordering, what values are in the balance? This section will focus on liberalism and the specific values of democratic freedoms and human rights it entails.

Third, the BRICS will be identified as the key determinant of if, and the extent to which, reordering will occur. After identification as such, the group's actions and policies in key areas will be investigated. In the end it will be shown that, while the BRICS can be understood as key to the determination of order in the coming years, they have yet to write the story. Propositions for key focal points in the immediate future will be mapped out. In conclusion, this paper shows that the extent to which the BRICS sustain the existing order cannot be identified yet; the question itself, however, is where those interested in the nature of order in contemporary and future international society must focus in the coming years.

Contemporary Order

Discussion of order in contemporary international society most usefully begins with discussion of the United States. Since the end of World War II, the United States has essentially been able to build order to its own interests and specifications.[1] After the Cold War, the United States obtained the ability to be "owner and operator" of this order.[2] Ikenberry says the United States has been championing an order which can be thought of as the "liberal international order."[3]

There is much debate as to the state of the international liberal order in 2012 and it is generally understood to be at a crossroads. Indeed, "there is no longer any question: wealth and power are moving from the North and the West to the East and the South, and the old order dominated by the United States and Europe is giving way to one increasingly shared with non-Western rising states," and the only remaining question is what kind of order will come in the aftermath of this shift?[4]

However, much of the debate misses the point which was developed in the first chapter of this paper, which is that order is intimately tied to values. For example, the position of the United States in the hierarchy of power distribution is intensely contested. The ranking or location of the United States in the power hierarchy of international society is certainly debatable, but we have developed in the previous chapter that this is not the appropriate primary focus for debate and understanding about global reordering. It is the values underlying order, and the existence of any desire to revise them, which matter the most.

Thus, it is relatively unimportant, for discussion of reordering, that there is debate about American material capabilities and other states possibly gaining relative power in various ways. Instead, the discussion must shift to focus on the values underlying the order which the United States has established in the last half-century. In the context of Ikenberry's label of this order as "liberal," we must investigate the values the liberal international order entails. After establishing the values of the liberal international order, the potential for revision can be mapped out.

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[1] John G. Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order," *Perspectives on Politics*, 7, no. 1 (2009): 72
[2] Ikenberry (2009: 72)
[3] Ikenberry (2011: 56-57)
[4] Ikenberry (2011: 56)

Liberalism

Due to reliance on Ikenberry's characterization of liberal international order, it makes sense to begin with his analysis and make an attempt to identify any hints of the values he suggests liberal order entails. He gives broad themes of "open" and "rule-based" to encompass the liberal order.[5] Within this thematic framework he sets out a litany of liberalism's practices: open markets, international institutions, cooperative security, democratic community, progressive change, collective problem solving, shared sovereignty, and the rule of law.[6] He acknowledges that liberalism cannot be understood statically and that these practices "have made appearances in various combination and changing ways over the decades."[7]

There are connections which can be made between these changing practices Ikenberry highlights and the "moral basis," or values, of democratic freedoms and human rights upon which the Bush administration rested its foreign policy.[8] Moral obligation to democratic freedoms particularly underlies practices related to democratic community, open markets, international institutions, collective problem solving, and progressive change. Moral obligation to human rights particularly underlies shared sovereignty, collective problem solving, and the rule of law. These moral obligations can be understood to capture the values underpinning the liberal international order and they highlight the idea that individuals are the ultimate bearers of rights (as opposed to states).[9] In sum, the liberal order currently overrides state sovereignty, to a certain degree, in the name of values such as democratic freedoms and human rights.

To be sure, this is one of many possible conceptualizations of the values liberalism purports to uphold. The values of democratic freedoms and human rights highlighted above are but two of many possible focal points of liberal values. Moreover, there is strong conceptual tension between and because of democratic freedoms and human rights.[10] Full investigation of liberal international order, and full investigation of the complexities of values upholding it, cannot be completed here.

Yet democratic freedoms and human rights, as rhetorically meaningful values which pervade the breadth of international society in an era of liberal order, are certainly relevant to discussion of possible reordering. They are terms which come form the leading actor, drawn upon examination of the Bush Doctrine and American foreign policy principles in regards to the management of liberal

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[5] Ikenberry (2009: 72)
[6] Ikenberry (2009: 71)
[7] Ikenberry (2009: 71)
[8] Kolodziej (2008: 4)
[9] Hurrell (2007: 85)
[10] Hurrell (2007: Chp. 6)

order.[11] For purposes of understanding reordering, it is their broad meaning in juxtaposition to alternatives which is important. The values of democratically determined freedom and human rights are complex but undoubtedly two of the most important elements of the liberal order and will be carried forward as useful focal points.

It should also be noted that, in some instances, it can be problematic to connect these values to the actual behavior of states in international society. As Hurrell notes:

> "The characterization of [international society pressed by major Western states in the post-1945 and especially in the post-1990 period] as liberal still needs significant qualification. As we see, it certainly involved many core liberal themes (human rights, humanitarian intervention, collective security, economic liberalization, etc.). But it also involved many practices whose liberal credentials are highly questionable, including the degree to which the prescriptive multilateralism of the post-Cold War period rested on unequal power and coercion [and] on selectivity both in terms of which liberal values were taken up and how and when they were to be implemented."[12]

This highlights for us, as discussed in the previous chapter, the fact that the authority of values cannot be completely divorced from power considerations and refers us back to the importance of legitimacy. The practice of politics in international society is under the authority of legitimacy. This accounts for the fact that power can overwhelm the authority of values in finding an operative political equilibrium and has indeed done so at times in recent history. Any such outcomes of legitimacy politics, however, do not trump the fact that values are what underlie the order and purpose of international society.

If liberalism is accepted as a meaningful way of understanding contemporary international order, and democratic freedoms and human rights are accepted as important values which underwrite the liberal order, we can begin to investigate the ways in which contemporary order may change.

What are alternatives to the liberal international order? Ikenberry suggests that liberal international order could breakdown and lead to an order of mercantilism, regional blocs, and bilateral pacts: "a less unified and coherent system of rules and institutions, while regional orders emerge as relatively distinct, divided, and competitive global spheres."[13] Such new organizational

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[11] Kolodziej (2008: Chp. 1)
[12] Hurrell (2007: 59)
[13] Ikenberry (2009: 83)

principles would lead to the end of the overt and rule-based support of democratic freedoms and human rights values currently pervasive in international society. However, he also identifies that liberal internationalism may not break down at all, and may evolve.[14] Either way, change is coming because the current order is in "crisis."[15] Will it be a simple changing of the guard and/or polarity, or will it be breakdown of liberalism and reordering? For such investigation, we turn to discussion of the BRICS.

The BRICS

The BRICS are a relatively new group of states which requires some introduction. Who are they? Why focus on them when considering possible reordering of international society? After such introduction, we can investigate their crucial role in determining the values underlying future international society.

Important?

The BRICS are a group of states which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The group originally included only the first four of these states and began to formalize in the late 2000's based on economic potential.[16] The formalization culminated in convention of summits amongst themselves in 2009.[17] In 2011, for the group's third summit in China, they invited South Africa to join.[18] South Africa is now an integral member of the grouping and has agreed to host the fifth BRICS Summit in 2013.[19]

Some analysts contend that the group is relatively meaningless, at least in any discussion of international political order. Arguments to this end are usually centered around the vast, conflicting differences between the countries: their economic characteristics are too different and political ambitions too much at odds to yield cooperation;[20] China is essentially the leader, and is variably

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[14] Ikenberry (2009: 82)
[15] Ikenberry (2009: 80)
[16] Stephen G. Keukeleire, and Hans Bruyninckx, "The European Union, the BRICs, and the Emerging New World Order," in C. Hill & M. Smith (eds.) *International Relations and the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011: 384.
[17] Keukeleire and Bruyninckx (2011: 384)
[18] Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs. Government of India, "Fourth BRICS Summit: About BRICS." March 29, 2012.
[19] BRICS Summit 2012. Council on Foreign Relations, "BRICS Summit: Delhi Declaration." March 29, 2012. Point 50.
[20] Walter Ladwig. "An Artificial Bloc Built on a Catchphrase." *International Herald Tribune*, March 26, 2012.

status-quo and revisionist, thus wayward itself;[21] other than being a forum for connecting to Chinese economic investment, the group is politically meaningless;[22] and there are other more politically meaningful forums for some members, such as IBSA.[23] All in all, these arguments say the BRICS are too economically various and politically conflictual to form a cohesive and politically meaningful entity that could affect international order.

However, there are also reasons for grouping them. To be sure, they are materially significant. The BRICS are strong militarily.[24] There is also clear economic potential amongst them, and there is room for growth particularly in terms of intra-BRICS trade.[25] More relevant to discussion of international politics is that there is investigation among the states regarding institutionalization of a BRICS development bank to juxtapose the IMF.[26]

But there are political reasons for grouping the BRICS as well and they are intimately related to reordering. The BRICS share a sense of entitlement to a more influential role in international politics and they lie on the margins of the schemes of the current liberal international order.[27] As they institutionalize relations between each other, the BRICS are showing that they perceive reason for grouping themselves, which may be more fundamentally meaningful than any other consideration. Indeed, Chinese President Hu Jintao called BRICS cooperation "necessary" as the "defender and promoter" of developing countries' interests, South-South co-operation, and North-South dialogue.[28] These are references to order and schisms between East and West, North and South, liberal and other aims, and the BRICS are decisively locating themselves within these issues. In sum, the BRICS are where potential for reordering of international society can be found because it is a group of the strongest states most patently disconnected from the current liberal order and the states which champion it.

Also, it is important not to overstate the potential China holds as an individual state in terms of affecting order to greater serve its interests and views. For two reasons, China would need other revisionist states to support and go along with any efforts to revise international order.[29] First, reordering would have to come as a co-operative effort among a plurality of revisionist states

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[21] Brahma Chellaney. "The Cracks in the BRICS." *Today's Zaman*, March 23, 2012.
[22] Philip Bowring. "A Gathering of BRICS." *The International Herald Tribune*, April 20, 2012
[23] Siphamandla Zondi. e-International Relations (www.e-IR.info), "South Africa and the BRICS: An Ingrained Ambiguity." June 12, 2012.
[24] Hurrell (2006:1)
[25] Oliver Steunkel. e-International Relations (www.e-IR.info), "Why BRICS Matters." March 28, 2012.
[26] Joe Leahy and James Lamont. "BRICS to Discuss Common Development Bank." *The Financial Times*, March 19, 2012.
[27] Hurrell (2006: 2-3)
[28] The Hindu. "BRICS is the Defender of the Developing World." *The Hindu*, March 28, 2012.
[29] Ikenberry (2011: 62-65)

because isolation in attempts at reordering will fail.[30] Secondly, Chinese efforts to revise order would have to not scare off relatively neutral or open-minded neighbors.[31] Importantly, the differences between the states noted above (particularly smaller groups within BRICS, such as IBSA) make the BRICS a microcosm of new order debate, not a puppet of Chinese interests. China cannot act alone to increase influence or change order and thus has aimed to promote multipolarity, expand influence in neighboring regions, and unify the developing world.[32] The BRICS symbolize such co-operative efforts.

For these reasons, the BRICS are the strongest determinant of the sustainability of contemporary liberal order and require focus as a political grouping. It is the vast differences between them critics cite to obscure the BRICS that would make any coherence of political positions by the group politically influential. Moreover, the BRICS have begun to move beyond economic considerations and cohere positions on political issues of international security and global governance in their most recent summit.[33] As noted above, this effort itself may be the most fundamental reason for placing political importance on the BRICS. Whether they revise order or not, the outcome will be important because they have begun to move in that direction. If they do not, no one will at this point in time. To write off the group as politically inept at this early stage is detrimental to proper analysis.

Thus, the question is not whether or not the BRICS are important, but to what extent will they seek reordering of international society. What will their commonly cohered political positions signify and lead to?

Policies

If it is accepted that the BRICS are important to focus on when considering the sustainability of the liberal order and its values, then where do we look from there? What behaviors and policies will indicate the degree to which the liberal international order is sustained or revised? To begin this lay of the land, we should recall the two values of liberalism highlighted previously in this chapter: democratic freedom and human rights. To investigate the question about BRICS sustaining liberal order, these two values will be the focal points used here. Each will be considered in turn.

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[30] Ikenberry (2011: 62-63)
[31] Ikenberry (2011: 62-63)
[32] Li Mingjiang, "China," in E. Kolodziej & R. Kanet (eds.) *From Superpower to Besieged Global Power: Restoring World Order After the Failure of the Bush Doctrine*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008: 55.
[33] BRICS Summit 2012 (2012)

The key gauge in determining the degree to which the BRICS perpetuate the value of democratic freedoms is how they manage and represent their domestic politics, as well as how they come to base judgment of international institutions. Overall, it will be shown that moves in support of democratic standards by the BRICS, especially Russia and China, would indicate revision of order is less likely because such moves would indicate alignment with the status quo value of democratic freedoms. Conversely, maintenance and justification of authoritarian practices internally, and support for divisive regimes internationally, would indicate a leaning towards reordering. Various issues, such as proposals for a counter-IMF development bank and degrees of proposed institutional change, will be the example used to map this issue.

The key gauge in determining the degree to which the BRICS perpetuate the value of human rights is their willingness to override state sovereignty in the name of human rights. It will be shown that policies which cross the threshold of supporting strict sovereignty, especially under the banner of human rights, would indicate alignment with the status quo. Conversely, strict adherence to state sovereignty and non-intervention would indicate illiberal values and a leaning toward reordering. Syria will be the example used to map this issue.

To be sure, this is a purview of limited scope. As acknowledged earlier, there are many values which underlie liberal order and they are complex in isolation and in relation to each other. However, for the purposes of space in this paper, the above purview is isolated to provide some depth in discussion of the ways propensity for reordering in the BRICS should be judged.

The BRICS and Democratic Freedoms

Democratic freedoms have been identified as one of the key values of the current liberal international order. Fundamental democratic principles are government support for unfettered elections, free press, free speech, and civil liberties judged by an independent judiciary, regardless of the precise form of democracy in question.[34]

The BRICS are very different on this score domestically. India, Brazil, and South Africa (the "IBSA" bloc) have "strong commitment to democratic values."[35] However, Russia's government faces accusations of fraudulent elections[36] and controversy over limitations on free speech.[37] China

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[34] Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 221.
[35] IBSA Dialogue Forum. IBSA Dialogue Forum Fourth Summit, "Brasilia Declaration." April 15, 2010. Also, see this official website for more information on IBSA.
[36] Ellen Barry and Michael Schwirtz. "After Election, Putin Faces Challenges to Legitimacy." *The New York Times*, March 5, 2012.
[37] David A. Herszenhorn. "Anti-Putin Stunt Earns Punk Band Two Years in Jail." *The New York Times*, August 17, 2012.

has an overtly authoritarian government and is perceived by many as a threat because of its undemocratic politics.[38]

The divergence in adherence to democratic principles is symbolic of the open-ended nature of the BRICS positions. If the IBSA bloc is committed to democratic principles as they purport in their IBSA position, it may be difficult for China or Russia to coordinate the BRICS to move forward politically without rhetoric that is not overtly democratic. Indeed, on the issue of Afghanistan, the BRICS have united in saying they want to see Afghanistan become a democratic state.[39] However, conversely, China's successful economic development may persuade IBSA and others to see the benefits of implementing authoritarian state-building regimes.[40]

The BRICS may not reorder at all. To date, the BRICS are tied to economic proposals such as the BRICS development bank possibility mentioned above, or Chinese desire to make the yuan the global currency.[41] But these economic moves do not necessarily entail reordering. It is the same with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform, which Brazil and India have sought as part of the G4[42] and which the BRICS have supported.[43] Such change in material hierarchies would not necessarily imply reordering. In fact, debate about such changes could be seen as supportive of the liberal order: democracy and popular rule in international society itself may necessarily imply a more central role of the Chinese and developing economies, and more political balance between North and South, are needed.

However, reordering is also a strong possibility. Reordering would be brought about via institutional change if the South-South bank refused to coordinate or operate in sync with the World Bank and forced developing states to decide which bank to engage; if Chinese currency prominence lead to complications of trade and rescinding the effects of globalization; if UNSC reform failed to the point that regional or other organizational bodies began to claim authority over use of force or establish their own sets of laws. These examples highlight that it is the effects of institutional change on the existence of a pervasive set of values, not simply institutional change in and of itself, that affects order.

Ultimately, much is left to be determined by the BRICS about the sustainability of the value of democratic freedoms. Will China and Russia seek to become more tangibly democratic to gain potential benefits from the international community for doing so, or will they remain relatively

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[38] Barry Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible?," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 3 (2010): 32.
[39] BRICS Summit 2012 (2012: Point 23)
[40] For the outline of such an argument, see Hurrell (2007: 159-160).
[41] Lingling Wei. "New Move to Make Yuan a Global Currency." *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan 12, 2011.
[42] BBC. "China and US 'Unite' Over UN Bid." *BBC*, Aug 4, 2005.
[43] BRICS Summit 2012 (2012: Point 26)

undemocratic and on the fringes of the liberal order in terms of this value? Will the IBSA bloc of BRICS remain committed to democratic values in the face of an array of possible changes in the near future, or could Chinese economic success persuade the development of more authoritarian regimes in these and other developing countries? Will the basis for any change in general international society supported by BRICS take inclusive or divisive forms? There may be signs of leaning towards a pro-Democracy stance in BRICS, as indicated in the group's position on Afghanistan, but this is far from definitive at this point and should be monitored closely by those interested in the values underlying international politics.

The BRICS and Human Rights

As we have seen, human rights are attached to the individual human and mean "the relationship between ruler and ruled, state and citizen, should be a subject of legitimate international concern."[44] Thus, enforcement of human rights often involves intervention across territorial borders, which have been so fundamental to international politics in modern history. What exactly constitutes human rights, and the security, economic, cultural influences on various understandings of them, cannot be dissected here.[45] Instead, the focus is on the question of whether or not human rights exist as morally prior to state sovereignty for the BRICS.

The BRICS have conflicting records on human rights. For example, while Brazil has been engaged with United Nations peacekeeping and observer missions for much of recent history,[46] China has criticized Western approaches to human rights with the backing of many developed countries.[47] Such variation leaves the BRICS just as heterogenous on this issue as they are in terms of democratic freedoms.

What this means is that the position of the BRICS on what, if anything, justifies concern with human rights over respect for sovereignty is still to be elucidated. For example, information security and the freedom of information is one issue with which the BRICS have yet to engage.[48] To be sure, there are numerous human rights issues with which the BRICS have yet to engage.

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[44] Hurrell (2007: 143)
[45] For an example, see Michelene Ishay, "What Are Human Rights: Six Historical Controversies," *Journal of Human Rights*, 3, no. 3 (2004)
[46] Monica Hirst, "Brazil," in E. Kolodziej & R. Kanet (eds.) *From Superpower to Besieged Global Power: Restoring World Order After the Failure of the Bush Doctrine*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008. 286
[47] Tie Jun Zhang, "China: Towards Regional Actor and World Player", in M. Farrell, B. Hettne, L. V. Langenhoeve (eds.) *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 2005: 238.
[48] Vladislav Sherstyuk. "Summit Must Play a Part in Creating a Safer Global Information Space." *BRICS: New Delhi Summit 2012*, March 21, 2012.

However, one immediate issue the BRICS have commented upon is the Syrian conflict. By the end of the 2012 summer over 21,000 civilians were thought to have been killed in Syrian civil war under the watch of President Bashar al-Assad.[49] In their 2012 Summit joint statement, the BRICS expressed "deep concern" over "human rights" in Syria but emphasized their desire to maintain Syrian "independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty."[50] In other words, they acknowledge human rights but do not define or support intervention on their behalf.

Independently, the IBSA bloc abstained from a UNSC resolution on Syria while Russia and China vetoed it.[51] Russia went to the extent of calling Western attempts to threaten the Syrian al-Assad government "blackmail" by the West.[52] Sovereignty and non-intervention are the clear modes of operation for at least some in BRICS and this lies overtly in opposition to the West and liberal order values.

Clearly the Syrian story is not written at this time. Nor is the BRICS position on human rights. They have not articulated any common positions about, nor taken any conspicuous actions indicating, what human rights are or when sovereignty should be voided on their behalf. What could cause changes in the Syria situation? Will other human rights concerns cause pro-interventionist stances? Conversely, will the economic interests of the IBSA bloc override human rights concerns and lead to further division in international society on these sorts of issues? It may be that Russia and China stand alone in their strict adherence to sovereignty, but evidently the IBSA bloc does not value this dimension of the liberal order enough to overtly support intervention in Syria. There is much more that needs to be analyzed in the near future on this issue to understand what is ahead for order and values in international society.

Conclusion

The values of the contemporary international order are tied to a liberal understanding along the lines proposed here. Adherence to and support for these values underlying order are very much in flux and discussing the BRICS highlights this. There are various degrees of support and various degrees of revision sought. Yet, as the most ably and willing countries to potentially reorder

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[49] The New York Times, "Syria." Last modified Aug 26, 2012.
[50] BRICS (2012: Point 21)
[51] Steunkel (2012)
[52] Neil MacFarquhar. "Fighting Spreads in Damascus; Russia Resists Pressuring Syria." *The New York Times*, July 16, 2012.

international society, this group of states is where focus of questions about any possible new order should be.

It could be that the BRICS end up being little more than an economic forum. However, they have made attempts to move past this purpose and have not insulated themselves from political positions. This means that if they do not ultimately cohere positions, this is meaningful in and of itself and tells us the values of liberalism are likely to continue as the basis of international society. Ultimately, whether or not efforts to form common political visions succeeds or fails, and whether or not they are revisionist, we will know more about the sustainability of the values of contemporary international society based on what happens with the BRICS.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This paper has sought to highlight the importance of values underlying legitimacy of international society and has applied the concept to the case of the BRICS to show the importance of the group.

Conceptually, the paper outlines an argument for understanding changes to international society in terms of legitimacy. There are two sources of authority, power and values, which comprise legitimacy. Changes in the hierarchy of each power and values yield different kinds of respective change. Change in the power hierarchy of international society, or power transition, yields change in the identity and/or number of great powers. Change in the value hierarchy of international society, the values which define the purpose of international society, can be thought of as hegemonic succession and is what leads to reordering.

The BRICS are identified as the crux of any debate on reordering in contemporary international society. The contemporary order, identified as liberal, is most meaningfully contested by the BRICS. This paper has mapped some of the questions the BRICS will inevitably answer which will determine the nature of order in the near future. What sorts of institutions, and implied or overt values, will the BRICS institutionalize and support? What sorts of stances on democratic freedoms and human rights questions will the BRICS take? Their efforts to cohere positions on these questions indicate that they are not steering clear of these political issues and this means the BRICS should be a subject for any inquiry regarding the sustainability of values underlying the contemporary international order.

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