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Article

Introduction: Neither Liberal nor International nor Order

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The liberal international order (LIO) has long been playing a central role in current analyses of and debates over U.S. foreign policy. Even though there are numbers of different attributions and characterizations, the LIO comprises first several institutions that has been created by the US after the second World War. Those institutions include security alliances in Europe (NATO) and Asia (the US bilateral hub and spoke system), Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations (Glaser 2019). LIO comprises several normative assets such as openness, free-trade, democracy promotion, freedom, respect for human rights as well. Therefore, LIO is generally defined as an international system in which norms, rules, obligations and rights are broadly settled under institutional procedures and they are followed by the community of nations (Ikenberry 2001, p.36). Thus, what LIO is an aggregation of these rules and institutions, many of which Western (American) in their origin.

Nevertheless, we have observed different variants of LIO since the end of the WW II as the character of governance shifted with changes in these norms, rules and practices and the role and functions of embedded institutions. The scope (membership) and depth (issue areas) of the institutional order expanded significantly over the years and LIO become much more complex, multifaceted and multilayered in the post-Cold War era. With Ikenberry's, who is the founder of the concept, own definitional labels this evolution has gone through the from LIO 1.0 to 3.0. According to him, the current phase of liberal order (LIO 3.0) is "an international system that is co-managed by 'a group of states that will collectively provide the various functional services previously provided by the United States - providing security, uphold open markets, and so forth".

We call it liberal because it consists not only of rules, norms, practices and formal/informal institutions but also of an underlying social and normative understanding (or so-called ideology or liberal social purpose)(Peterson 2018). That normative understanding is widely embedded in those so core liberal ideals and concepts such as economic freedom, individual choice, rational actor, open markets, individual rights, neoliberal practices, liberal democracy etc(Stephen & Skidmore

2019). These liberal ideals and concepts as the defining features of the LIO have been produced and reproduced by a rigid and vivid elite knowledge networks to legitimate the liberal ideology (Parmar 2019). We call it international because after the end of the Cold War, it expanded its Euro-Atlantic regional outlook into more global one (remember Ikenberry's analogy of LIO 3.0)(Ikenberry 2009). LIO was born out after the second World War as several binding institutional agreements among Europeans and Americans. Many of those institutional arrangements were American in origin and that American led order later resulted in an broader order with constitutional characteristics, facilitated by a layer cake of global and regional alliances and multilateral agreements (Ikenberry 2019). We call it order because it restrains the major powers and functions as an order building tool that allowed the Western democracies to reorient and transform their mutual relations. Nevertheless, the LIO has never been truly liberal or international or order, which is akin to what Voltaire's interpretation of the Holy Roman Empire as "neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire."

In this special issue, we try to analyze i) the core theoretical underpinning of the so called LIO; ii) the historical evaluations of the LIO; iii) The challenges of the LIO in the post-hegemonic world. The latter topic is initially what we really try to deal with by addressing the challenges stemming from the outside of the LIO. The outside refers those countries who joined in the LIO later. Given the fact that LIO is an American enterprise (American led- order), other countries perspective and attitudes towards LIO merits systemic and comparative analysis. Especially, rising/emerging countries' perspective and attitudes towards LIO are up most important to understand today's world.

Challenges Ahead

The liberal institutionalism lies at the core of theoretical understanding of the LIO (Ikenberry 2014). As such, binding institutions is probably the most important assumptions of the theory of LIO. Ikenberry notes that "binding is an under-recognized and under-appreciated organizational logic in modern international relations" (Ikenberry 2019). According to him, that is also related to the discussion on regimes types. Departing from the democratic peace theory, he argues that binding institutions are most fully manifest among the advanced industrial democracies. Thus regime type (being a democracy) is one of the factor that has been utilized by the theory of LIO to explain why powerful states would want to bind and restrain themselves through institutional agreements. Here, Ikenbery makes also an important observation that institutions do not just restrain powerful states but also, they can be used by the leading state to entrench - and thereby extend - power into the future by 'locking in' other states into desired policy orientations (Ikenberry 2019). That simply means as the hegemonic power becomes more institutionalized by the binding international institutions,

they become more acceptable. That is the pretty much the logic behind the LIO or the constitutional order, which tries to explain the foundational character of the postwar institutional settlement in the world politics.

Therefore, the main questions are whether institutions can actually i) restrain a hegemonic power; ii) by doing so provide a durable and legitimate political order. In theory of LIO, a hegemonic power can assure secondary states that it will remain engaged and will not arbitrarily or coercively exercise its power by establishing binding institutions. These binding institutions functions also as an emergency security system in order to protect weaker stats' sovereignty from the arbitrary exercise of hegemonic power (Schweller 2019). These binding institutions should provide high degree of autonomy in order to be both effective and legitimate, that means all members including the hegemonic power must delegate some of their sovereignty to these institutions (Keohane & Martin 1995).

Even though the power asymmetry between the US and other major powers grew, the American-led LIO survived after the Cold War's end. According to Ikenberry, the absence of balancing against the United States as the world moved from a bipolar to a unipolar system was important evidence for the LIO (Ikenberry 2019). In the post-Cold War era, the relationship remained stable. Moreover, states outside the Western order - most notably China and Russia - did not respond with overt balancing behavior. From a vantage point, the end of the Cold War provided very fertile ground for a globalized LIO since liberal international orders can arise only in unipolar systems where the leading state is a liberal democracy (Mearsheimer 2019). However, over the years several ruptures coming from within and outside of the American-led LIO.

Challenges within

Only the US had the sufficient power to pursue a global unipolarity in the post-Cold War era (Nye 2019). However, the central question, which is both a theoretical and practical one, whether the hegemonic power such as the USA in the post-Cold War era, would not use its preponderant power to impose a self-serving coercive order over the world instead of restraining itself under the net of several binding institutions and alliance mechanisms. Indeed, there are numbers of theoretical and practical argument against the assumptions of the binding institutions (Mearsheimer 1994, 2019; Schweller 2001). Many of these theoretical criticisms comes from realist views arguing that institutions are either instruments of strong states or they are independent of strong states and thus leading states can never be bound by institutions. For example, Schweller points out that the United States consistently violated the spirit of multilateral cooperation within its own alliance system. He lists number of occasions where the US was at odds with the assumptions of LIO (binding institutions and strategic restrains) by taking unilateral

decision and actions:

> *"the U.S. Senate rejected the International Trade Organization treaty in 1947. The Eisenhower administration unilaterally ended the imperial careers of Britain and France during the 1956 Suez War. The Kennedy administration adopted the doctrine of flexible response against the wishes of West Europeans, who, for obvious reasons, did not want to increase the likelihood of tactical, limited nuclear war or conventional defense on their territory. The United States similarly ignored the wishes of its NATO allies and fought unpopular wars in the Pacific against North Korea (a classic example of pseudo-multilateralism) and North Vietnam. Then, in an extraordinarily arrogant display of unilateralism, the Nixon administration shocked Japan on July 15, 1971, when it unexpectedly announced that it was normalizing relations with China. Months later, it once again stunned Japan and the other industrial democracies when it unilaterally and without consultation decided to close the gold window. The Bretton Woods agreement, which had regulated international monetary arrangements since 1944, was suddenly made irrelevant because it was no longer seen as serving American interests, narrowly defined" (Schweller 2019).*

Even Ikenberry himself recognizes how weak the institutional constraints were on American foreign policy as he has witnessed the pattern of unilateral American actions in both economic and security realms under several US administrations (Ikenberry 2001, p.272, 2019). The US actions against the spirit of UN, NATO and WTO as well as frequent American military interventions in recent years-Somalia, Haiti, Iraq, and Kosovo-also underscore the assumptions of strategic restrain in American foreign policy. It was obvious that the US seemed willing and able to step out of the postwar system institutions when it wanted to: that was the message of the Iraq War. That self-inflicted wound into the American-led ILO has been rooted even deeper once the Trump administration riding a populist wave of anti-globalist sentiment has come to power (Nye 2019; Peterson 2018; Mearsheimer 2019). Indeed, the surprising election victory of Donald Trump has generated profound questions about the viability of American-led LIO as Trump has proved to be an American president who is actively hostile to liberal internationalism. The US under Trump administration has unilaterally imposed import tariffs to pretty much everyone including its friends and allies, withdrawn from JCPOA (the Iran deal), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and TTIP, exited the United Nations Human Rights Council, reduced financial support for the United Nations, repudiated the Paris climate accord. At a deeper level, Trump seems to be questioning the entire idea of an American-led order (Ikenberry 2019). As the US' will and power to defend and empower the rule-based order and the very institutions upon that order has been built decrease, the LIO has become much more strained and tamed.

In addition to this type of US unilateral actions, hyper globalization and its end results as recurring financial crises, declining wages, jobs loses, income inequality, corruptions and rigged political systems erodes the support for the liberal democracy and neoliberal economy politics. That have had also huge ramifications on the support to the US role in the LIO as the policemen of the world politics (Mearsheimer 2019). As a result, majority of the US citizens questions the American-led LIO. Indeed, the popularity of Trump and his campaign theme, 'America first', was largely a product of the populist backlash to Liberal Hegemony and globalism (Schweller 2019).

Challenges from outside

The US-led LIO has developed as a system of the West and the rest (Parmar 2019). Therefore, the second fundamental challenge to LIO is the challenge of the rising/emerging powers. In the current post-Western international order, almost all major actors are redefining their international roles and responsibilities to successfully respond to global challenges. The LIO has been influenced greatly by the outcomes of the rise in status of emerging powers at multiple policy levels of global governance such as economics, trade, development cooperation, diplomacy, soft power, energy, environment, security, and conflict management. With given differences in the expectations and gains for and from the very LIO, their responses to the power shifts taking place in the international relations vary from country to country. The USA/EU alliance and emerging powers pursue both convergent and divergent policies in these policy areas depending on their mutual interest and each bloc has its own conception and assessment of the liberal international order. On the other hand, we have witnessed that the meergin/rising powers do not cooperate or lucked in the US-led LIO, they are also showing numbers of competitive behaviors on multiple scenes such as security, diplomacy, trade, finance and broader economic and international development. In addition, rising powers' relative increase in material power sources and diplomatic leverage in global governance has also drawn a great deal of attention to both their institutional relations with the US led institutions. In short, the current multilateral era has become much more multifaceted and the US is now well outside its comfort zone n this post-hegemonic international order. We should equally underlined that some of the LIO supporters tend to exaggerate the intentions of the rising power taking actions on their own by characterizing them (in many instances rejecting them completely) as revisionist. That types of hyped assumptions and assessments encourage the United States to adopt overly competitive policies with the emerging/rising powers (Glaser 2019). In many occasions rising powers, including China and Russia, do not aim to confront with the US as long as the US actions happens within the rules, regimes, arrangements, and institutional designs they have long embraced (Ikenberry 2019). However, it is fair to claim

that the Western countries (the US and EU) enjoys privileges in the existing arrangements and institutions of LIO such as WB and IMF. Changes to the LIO's decision-making structures and power relations would alter its power-based and distributional consequences, but not necessarily the order itself, as defined by its social purpose. The rest (emerging powers or rising powers) faced the choice either to abandon or transform the existing institutions created by the US and its allies after the WW II or create their own institutions and structures that define and defend their own preferred values, norms, interests, identities, and beliefs instead of the US and its allies. For instance, China's focus for some years was on joining and participating in existing multilateral institutions, today China is increasingly building its own. Prominent among them is the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), launched in late 2014, which is China's growing externalization of its own non-liberal, state-led model of political economy (Stephen & Skidmore 2019). China along with other rising powers has pursued this trend as they are constructing new multilateral institutions, including the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB, created in 2014), the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization Agreement (CMIM, signed in 2014), the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO, founded 2001), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP, under negotiation). Such efforts for building up international institutions are generally characterized as a challenge to liberal international order(Stephen & Skidmore 2019) even if they conforms international institutional standards. Therefore, we can argue that rising powers generally open to cooperate within institutionalized forms of global governance, yet they are seeking more autonmy and say in those institutions.

When it comes to liberal democracies, the second important feature of LIO, besides binding institutions, it is probably the most contested issue for the rising powers. LIO assume a political convergence in the long run. The political convergence argument simply assumes that as those authoritarian regimes engages with the LIO and socialize within those norms and institutions, they eventually become liberal democracies. Yet, that assumption has been proven wrong. On the contrary, there are backslides in democratization in the world politics (Mechkova, Lührmann & Lindberg 2017). However, the main problem is that the US has long actively promoted that idea even though there are lots of odds in practice. For example, Mearsheimer notes that:

> *"Nevertheless, the United States has been committed to turning China and Russia into liberal democracies and absorbing them into the U.S.-dominated liberal world order. U.S. leaders have not only made their intentions clear, but they have also relied on nongovernmental organizations and various subtle strategies to push Beijing and Moscow toward embracing liberal democracy. In effect, the aim is peaceful regime change. Predictably, China and Russia have resisted the uni-*

pole's efforts for the same reason that minor powers have contested U.S. efforts to shape their domestic politics, and indeed for the same reason that Americans now recoil at the idea of Russia interfering in their country's politics. In a world in which nationalism is the most powerful political ideology, self-determination and sovereignty matter hugely for all countries. China and Russia have also resisted the spread of the liberal order for realist reasons, because it would allow the United States to dominate the international system economically, militarily, and politically"(Mearsheimer 2019).

In a Post-Hegemonic World Order

An international order is widely understood by scholars as the "explicit principles, rules, and institutions that define the core relationship between the states that are party to the order (Glaser 2019). Most analyses of international orders concentrate on major powers, focusing on their achievement of peace and prosperity, and emphasize the benefits of states' acceptance of norms and institutions. In that sense, there are numbers of momentous events or tectonic shifts in world history(Ikenberry 2014; Flockhart 2016). There are at least there such moments in the last century: 1919, 1945, and 1991(Schweller 2019). Probably 2008 will be remembered as such momentous events in the world history giving way for waning hegemony of the US. Generally, a preponderant hegemon like the US is able to do a variety of thing to extend the power transition and it is doing to restore the systemic equilibrium. However, in the age of nuclear calamity, a hot war is not an option. In the absence of war or economic calamity, the old liberal order is not likely to completely breakdown or disappear (Ikenberry, 2009: 84). That is, we will not see a grand institutional bargain but the focus has shifted sharply to the return of major power competition (Glaser 2019). Against the LIO, there will be many countries who adopted a neo-mercantilist, 'developmental state' approach to economic development. Especially that is prominent in Asia and rising in the Middle East and broader Euro-Asia (Stubbs 2018). As Robert Kaplan underlines that China (or other rising powers) is something more than just an economic challenge for the US. It is a philosophical challenge because its unique system, at least at this juncture, provides its own people and its neighbors with dependable and concrete policies for development (Kaplan 2018). Overall, the new order certainly be less liberal and less American while being more developmentalist and soft mercantilist. The Trump administration's harsh economic policies toward China are just the start of what promises to be a long-running and intense rivalry between the U.S.-led and Chinese-led orders (Mearsheimer 2019). On that basis, the article concludes that the hegemonic liberal international order and its core states and elite networks are engaged in a titanic struggle against forces unleashed by a combination of its own successes, inadequacies, and exclusions. What Susan Strange (1987, 1988) called 'structural power' - undergirds the exist-

ing order(Strange 2004). Security alliances, market relations, liberal democratic solidarity, deeply rooted geopolitical alignments - there are many possible sources of American hegemonic power that remain intact. Therefore, despite turbulence, the hegemonic liberal international order has significant powers of adaptation, co-optation, and resistance, and is likely to remain resilient, if turbulent and not unchanged, for the foreseeable future (Parmar 2019).

The Scope of the Special Issue

Since the end of the WW II, the so-called liberal international order (LIO) has been attached to the US role in international politics and economics strongly. The LIO has long been challenged by the unilateralist tendencies in Washington. At the age of Trump, that very order has been completely abandoned by the sole founder. Other part of the Atlantic alliance, the EU, has been going through a series of crisis like Brexits, other rising disintegrationist tendencies, rising populism, retreat in democracy, financial difficulties, rising xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments, etc. Besides these challenges within, LIO has been facing challenges from outside. As the global distribution of power shifting, it is generally accepted that LIO has been challenged by the rising powers. Therefore, one of the most discussed topics among International Relations (IR) scholars today is the future of the American led LIO. At the height of the discussion, some argued that the end of the LIO has already arrived, some said the LIO will survive, even some questioned the very existence of the LIO by describing it no more than a myth. There are numerous studies that deal with the history, current and the future as well as the very meaning of the concept. In this sense, views on a post-Western or post-American world focusing on the new distribution of power and the role and capacity of rising powers in shaping and reshaping the global order have become one part of the discussion. In addition to that the opportunities and risks for the rising powers as the American led liberal international order fading away have been at the top of the discussion lists among the IR scholars. Yet, there are too many what, why and how questions in this regard. This special issue brings papers from different perspectives in order to analyze the fate of the LIO and rising powers by taking individual cases by asking four basic questions in addition to others:

- What does the LIO mean to different rising powers? How do these rising powers think about the American led LIB at the first place?
- What ways in which do rising powers see the history, current and the future of the LIO?
- How and to what extent do rising powers are capale to shape or reshape or reform the exsisting LIO?
- How can rising powers bring about a new international order, and what

would be the basic parameters such order? Can it be more liberal, less American?

To this end, we have collected four flattering papers analyzing different aspects of LIO and rising powers from different angle that are not addressed before in the literature. The first paper written by Carvalho and Amorim with a title "The Long Goodbye: U.S. ILO and Rising Powers". In their paper they uses Giovanni Arrighi's hegemonic cycles theory and apply it to explain the links with Rising Powers and, ultimately, concluding about the effects on the present International Liberal Order (ILO).The basic hypothesis is that the world is experiencing a period of systemic chaos (according to Arrighi's theoretical framework) but with many anomalies compared to previous analog events. Despite neoliberal globalization having a direct positive effect on Rising Powers political prominence in the last decades, it also reinforced economic inequalities and divides between the developed countries of the Centre under the U.S. hegemony and the Rising Powers as developing countries of the Periphery in the ILO.

In the second paper titled as "Correlation between American policy schizophrenia with China, and Indian funambulism on integrating with the U.S.-led liberal order", Kashish Parpiani analyses the Indian perspective towards the American led order. In recent times, Indo-U.S. relations have steadily progressed — mainly in the realms of defense trade and defense interoperability. However, India — to U.S. policymakers' frustration, has not transitioned into fully engaging with the U.S. — and integrating into the U.S.-led liberal order by extension. Instead, New Delhi has pursued ties with nations adversarial to the U.S., and even invested in parallel institutions that seek to challenge the U.S.-led liberal order. Indian policymakers often attribute this diversification of its foreign policy stock to its quest for "strategic autonomy". However, one may argue the same to also partially, stem from a degree of insecurity over American policy incoherence vis-à-vis China. In responding to China's rise, the United States has alternated between a liberal internationalist prescription of engagement, and a more unilateralist primacy-driven containment agenda. Given this policy schizophrenia, Indian policymakers and commentators often deem the U.S. to be an unreliable partner. This has stoked Indian insecurity, to spur abandonment or entrapment concerns (à la Glenn Snyder) on either being shortchanged in face of a prospective US-China grand bargain, or chain-gained into an American conflict with China. The Trump administration's approach to China however, may dampen that correlation holding back India's integration into the liberal order.

In the third paper titled as "Contemporary Challenges to the U.S.-led Liberal International Order from the United States and the Rising Powers of China and Russia", Cottle, Keys and Costigan look at the challenges coming from Russia and China to the LIO. The continuation of U.S.' hegemonic leadership of the

liberal international order is being challenged by U.S. domestic factors and Trump Administration policies, and by the emergence of the rising regional powers of China and Russia. This article examines some of the contemporary challenges to the U.S.-led liberal international order presented by China and Russia, as well as developments related to the United States that have impacted upon the liberal international order.

The last paper written by Nicholas Ross Smith titled as "International order in the coming cryptocurrency age: The potential to disrupt American primacy and privilege?". This article considers whether the emergence of cryptocurrencies - both independent and state-backed - can disrupt the liberal international order by challenging the underpinning stabilizer of that order, the United States' financial hegemony. While this article acknowledges the volatility of independent cryptocurrencies and the inherent limitations of state-backed ones, it is argued that, regardless, the technological revolution they are precipitating is disruptive and should eventually undermine and change the international financial system, which could lead to a new, less US-centric international order emerging.

In international politics, there are rules, norms, and regimes, practices that constrain and shape state's behavior. In addition to those rules, norms, and practices, we have institutions ranging from formal to informal institutions.

Bio

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