Cultural Diversity and International Order

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Abstract The modern international order faces profound challenges. Power is shifting to non-Western states and diffusing to non-state actors, including transnational insurgents. This is more than a power transition: it also about culture. Western states now share the stage with powers such as China who bring their own cultural values, practices, and histories, and new forms of transnational violence are justified in the name of religious identity and belief. Some see this as a fundamental threat to modern international order, an order created by and for the West. Others see the "liberal" order as uniquely able to accommodate states and peoples of diverse cultures. How well equipped is IR to contribute to these debates? I review four recent works on the future of the modern international order, asking what conceptual, theoretical, and empirical resources they offer for understanding the relationship between cultural diversity and international order. This literature suffers from four limitations: culture is essentialized or bracketed; institutions are seen as either simple expressions of cultural values or structures that neutralize culture, with their recognition function ignored; the structural power of international orders—how they produce political and cultural subjectivities—is underappreciated; and international orders are conceived too narrowly as orders of sovereign states. To overcome these limitations, I advance a new perspective on cultural diversity and international order. International orders evolve in heterogeneous cultural contexts, and the governance of diversity is a key imperative of order building. In response, international orders develop *diversity regimes*: institutional norms and practices that define legitimate units of political authority, authorize certain forms of cultural difference, and relate the two. These regimes are essential to the legitimacy of international orders, but face two interrelated pressures for change: shifts in underlying material capabilities, and new claims for cultural recognition, often rooted in grievances against past or prevailing forms of recognition.

Evelyn Goh. 2013. *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy, and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

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G. John Ikenberry. 2011. *Liberal Leviathan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Henry Kissinger. 2014. *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*. London, UK: Allen Lane.

Andrew Phillips. 2011. *War, Religion, and Empire*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

The modern international order faces profound challenges. Power is shifting: horizontally to non-Western great powers, and vertically to non-states actors, including transnational insurgents. But these challenges are not just about power: they are also about culture. Shifting configurations of power are entwined with new articulations of cultural difference. Western states, struggling with a resurgence of ethnonationalism, challenges to multiculturalism, and the rise of the far right, now share the stage with rising powers such as China and India who bring their own cultural values, practices, and histories. And transnational violence is being justified not in the name of national liberation or political ideology, but religious identity and grievance.

Many fear that these challenges spell the end of the modern international order, an order made by the West, for the West. Western values inform its institutions and practices, and Western power built and sustain it. As power shifts to the East, it is argued, the foundations of the modern order will collapse, and newly ascendant great powers will seek to construct an order that better reflects their distinctive cultural values.[1] Others are more sanguine. The modern order is robust: its pluralist structure, based on formal sovereign equality, and its open, rules-based institutions are uniquely capable of accommodating states of diverse cultural backgrounds. Regardless of whether power is shifting—and some contest this[2]—the modern international order will endure.[3]

How well equipped is International Relations (IR) scholarship theoretically and empirically to understand the implications of new conjunctions of power and cultural difference for the future of the modern international order? The past decade has seen a wealth of new scholarship on international order in general, and the future of the modern order in particular. I review four key works in this literature, critically evaluating the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical resources they bring to understanding the relationship between cultural diversity, power, and order.

These works—by Evelyn Goh, John Ikenberry, Henry Kissinger, and Andrew Phillips—represent the main strands of contemporary debate about the nature and future of international order. Goh presents a modified version of English School theory; Ikenberry, a prominent articulation of liberal theory; Kissinger, a classical realist account of power and legitimacy; and Phillips, an amalgam of constructivism

1. See Blair 2014; Jacques 2012; and Rudd 2012.
2. Brooks and Wohlforth 2016.
3. See Chatham House 2015; and Nasr 2013.

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tinged with realism. Each is anchored in a longer tradition of thinking about the nature, development, and erosion of international orders, and even if it is not their primary concern, each makes assumptions, explicit or implicit, about the relationship between cultural diversity and international order.

In assessing these writings, I draw on recent work in anthropology, history, political theory, and sociology. Despite the pressing need to comprehend cultural diversity and its effects, IR scholars have largely ignored insights from these fields. This is a critical oversight because how specialists now conceive culture is starkly at odds with the 1930s understandings still assumed in IR, and a wave of new histories challenge our long-held assumptions about the cultural conditions in which international orders emerge, develop, and collapse.

I begin by setting out several propositions about international order, culture, and power that I carry forward into my analysis of the books. The following section presents this analysis. While Goh, Ikenberry, Kissinger, and Phillips each advance distinctive perspectives on the future of the modern international order, I group them into two broad approaches: culturalist (Kissinger and Phillips), and institutionalist (Goh and Ikenberry). The former see culture as foundational; the latter see it as neutralized by institutions. For some, this grouping will appear counterintuitive: surely Kissinger is a realist? But, as we shall see, Kissinger's work highlights how realist theories, while stressing the struggle for power and the distribution of material capabilities, can rest nonetheless on cultural assumptions, especially when they acknowledge, as do classical realists, that legitimacy is a key source of international order.

Viewed broadly, the books under review exhibit four principal weaknesses. First, culturalists essentialize culture and institutionalists bracket it, leaving few resources for understanding the nature and effects of cultural diversity. Second, culturalists see institutions as simple expressions of deeper cultural values and practices, and institutionalists see them as rendering culture irrelevant. Neither, however, see the recognition function of institutions: how they construct and order cultural diversity, not neutralize it. Third, all of our authors except Kissinger acknowledge the structural power of international orders and how they constitute units of political authority. Yet these are thin subjectivities, simple bearers of rights and responsibilities, not substantive political, social, or cultural identities. Finally, with the exception of Phillips, they conceive of international order narrowly, as an order of sovereign states, thus preventing useful macrohistorical comparisons, and obscuring what is distinctive about the modern order.

In the final section I move beyond these limitations, advancing an alternative understanding of the complex relationship between cultural diversity and international order. Our starting assumption should be one of existential diversity. International orders emerge in heterogeneous, not unitary, cultural contexts: diversity is a given, just like unequal material capabilities. International orders are configurations of political authority, and as such, their stability depends on legitimacy as much as material capabilities. But building and sustaining such legitimacy requires two things: converting material might into political authority, and transforming complex heterogeneity into authorized forms of cultural difference. To meet these

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challenges, international orders develop *diversity regimes*: institutional norms and practices that define legitimate units of political authority (sovereign states, empires, etc.), authorize certain categories of cultural difference (civilization, nation, religion), and relate the two. Westphalia (1648), Versailles (1918), San Francisco (1945), and the 1960s end of empire were great moments of order building, and all entailed the construction of distinctive diversity regimes. But while these regimes lend orders a certain stability, they face two pressures for change: shifts in underlying material capabilities, and new claims to cultural difference, often animated by grievances against prevailing or past forms of recognition. In such contexts, the key question is not whether a culturally homogeneous order is threatened by the sudden onset of diversity, but whether the prevailing diversity regime can accommodate new conjunctions of power and difference, a question of critical importance today.

Three Propositions

All arguments about cultural diversity, power, and international order rest on prior conceptions of each. This is true of the books I consider here, as well as the perspective from which I consider them. It is appropriate, therefore, that I explain my preferred understanding of these concepts, laying the foundations for not only my critical engagement with Goh, Ikenberry, Kissinger, and Phillips, but also the new perspective I advance.

International Order

We use the term "international order" in two ways: to describe stability in international relations—"there is order among the great powers"—and to describe how international political life is organized—"the modern international order is different from that of Ancient Greece." It is widely assumed that order in the second sense is essential to order in the first: that the organization of international life affects the stability of that life. All of the authors considered here are concerned with international order in the organizational sense: order as an arrangement, not the absence of upheaval.

Most theorists of international order build on the classic definition provided by Hedley Bull. For Bull, order is always purposive: it is an arrangement that serves certain ends—the order of books on a library shelf, for example.[4] He defined international order as "a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society."[5] Its purposes are to preserve society among states, protect the territorial independence of individual states, and

4. Bull 1977, 4.
5. Ibid., 8.

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minimize interstate violence. Its organization, or arrangement, is determined by prevailing institutional practices, such as international law and diplomacy. Bull's emphasis on animating purposes suggests that there is a functional logic behind the development of international orders. More than this, it implies an element of design—that international orders are not unintended consequences of interstate competition, as John Mearsheimer holds: they are social constructions.[6]

Widespread as this conception is, it has a significant analytical limitation. It attributes the arrangement of an order to its fundamental institutions, to the diplomatic and legal rules and practices that facilitate coexistence and collaboration among sovereign states. But as John Ruggie argued long ago, the structure of an international order is determined by its underlying organizing principle, which determines the legitimate units of political authority and how they stand in relation to one another.[7] Historically, international orders have been structured by very different organizing principles: some have been suzerain, some heteronomous, and only a few, sovereign. IR scholars, as Janice Bially Mattern observes, have continued to define orders only in terms of sovereignty.[8] But as Ruggie argued, this undermines our ability to conceptualize systems change, which commonly involves a shift from one organizing principle to another, and forecloses fruitful macrohistorical comparisons of different orders.[9] Furthermore, sovereignty settled as the organizing principle of the modern international order only in the second half of the twentieth century: prior to that the modern order was structured by a hybrid principle of sovereignty in the core and empire in the periphery.

For these reasons, I favor a more expansive conception of international order that retains Bull's emphasis on purposive organization, but does not assume that sovereign states are the principal political units. International orders, I propose, are systemic configurations of political authority, comprising multiple units of authority, arranged according to some principle of differentiation. This principle might be sovereignty, heteronomy, suzerainty, or some combination. By this measure, medieval Europe, Qing China, and the Ottoman Empire were all international orders, though different than the modern configuration.

Culture

Probing the nature of culture is not a central concern of IR, even if the concept is invoked and assumed in multiple and diverse contexts. For some it is ontologically irrelevant: not a recognized causal influence on international politics.[10] Some declare an interest in cultural phenomena, but disaggregate culture into individual

6. Mearsheimer 2001, 49. Compare with Ikenberry 2001.
7. Ruggie 1983, 274.
8. Bially Mattern 2005, 29.
9. Ruggie 1983, 279.
10. See Waltz 1979, for example.

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norms, leaving the broader concept on the sidelines.[11] Others reduce culture to preferences, or imagine it as significant only as a source of common knowledge: a necessary condition for the solution of collaboration problems.[12] When it comes to thinking about the relationship between culture and international order, however, one approach predominates. From this perspective, culture is understood as a coherent whole, an integrated and bounded system of values and practices that is both a necessary background condition for the emergence of an international order, and the principal determinant of that order's institutional structure and processes. This informs many scholarly accounts of international order—from classic writings of the English School to recent constructivist writings—as well as much of the current anxiety in the West about the impact that rising non-Western powers will have on the modern international order, rooted as it is assumed to be in Western culture.

This view of culture is radically at odds, however, with decades of scholarship in anthropology and sociology. The best entrée into this literature is Ann Swidler's writings on culture. Swidler is often cited by IR scholars for her argument that actors can use cultural resources as tools in the strategic pursuit of their interests, a view that enables rationalist arguments about the instrumental use of norms. Yet Swidler's more fundamental point is largely ignored: that cultures are not seamless wholes—"all real cultures contain diverse, often conflicting symbols, rituals, stories, and guides to action."[13] This view is now commonplace among cultural specialists,[14] and political theorists have quickly followed suit. James Tully famously describes culture as a "strange multiplicity," a "tangled labyrinth of intertwining cultural differences *and* similarities."[15] More recently, Alan Patten argues that in "groups of any size, beliefs and practices will be heterogeneous and contested. They change and fluctuate over time. And they are formed interactively and dialogically with members of other groups, often taking on a recognizably hybrid character as a result."[16]

The inherent diversity of all cultural formations led Swidler and others to ask what it is that gives culture form. Culture is not just a mess of meanings, symbols, and practices—a grab bag of atomized resources for strategic use—it is patterned and structured: even its contradictions bind as much they divide. A key insight of this literature is that social structures give culture form. In calling for a "sociology of culture," Ulf Hannerz argues that "the social structure of persons and relationships

11. This is the principal way in which constructivists deal with cultural phenomena. See Katzenstein 1996; Klotz 1995; Price 1997; and Tannenwald 2007. The subtitle of my own book, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, is "Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations," but culture is barely mentioned again as the discussion turns to particular constitutional norms. See Reus-Smit 1999.

12. See Chwe 2001; and O'Neill 1999.

13. Swidler 1986, 277.

14. See Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Hannerz 1992, 2010; Laitin 1986; Merry 2001, 2009; Todorov 1993; Vertovec 2007; and Wolf 1982.

15. Tully 1995, 11.

16. Patten 2014, 40.

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channels the cultural flow at the same time as it is being, in part, culturally produced."[17]

Particularly important here are social institutions, and Swidler's work on the sociology of love is instructive. Love is deeply cultural: it permeates literature, music, social media, television, and movies, and it is constantly enacted and performed through fashion, bodily expressions, and collective rituals. Yet among her Californian respondents, Swidler found very different, often contradictory, conceptions of love. Even for the same individual, love was presented variously as a free choice, a commitment, and as a growing organism, despite the obvious tensions between these. "Free choice," for example, "implies that one could cease to prefer the person to whom one is already committed."[18] Swidler did find consistencies across these views, though. Her respondents moved back and forth between "mythic" and "prosaic" conceptions of love: the first highly romanticized, the second realist, even functional.[19] Swidler attributes this to the social and legal institution of marriage, which all of her respondents had to navigate. "One is either married or not (however ambivalent the underlying feelings might be); one cannot be married to more than one person at a time; marrying someone is a fateful, sometimes life-transforming choice; and despite divorce, marriages are still meant to last."[20] These structural realities of the institution encourage both the mythic and prosaic conceptions of love: the first providing a rationale for that "decisive choice," the second "an ethic about *being* married."[21] Focusing on institutions, Swidler concludes, provides "one answer to the question of why culture might develop coherent patterns even though individuals operate quite happily with diffuse, often incomplete and internally contradictory cultural resources. This cultural structuring by institutions might be thought of as operating from the outside in, organizing dispersed cultural materials the way the field surrounding a magnet links iron fillings or the way the gravity of the sun orients the planets."[22]

These insights support two propositions. First, old notions that imagine cultures as coherent, neatly bounded systems of meaning and practice are unsustainable, and instead we should assume that all cultural formations are highly variegated, internally contradictory, loosely integrated, and deeply interpenetrated.[23] And if this is true for more localized cultural formations, it is undoubtedly true of the cultural contexts in

17. Hannerz 1992, 14.
18. Swidler 2003, 26.
19. Ibid., 111–15.
20. Ibid., 117.
21. Ibid., 118.
22. Ibid., 158. For similar findings, see Ellen Berrey's work on the effects of institutionalized policies and practices of "diversity" on the racial order in the United States, and Kenan Malik's work on how institutionalized multiculturalism takes complex heterogeneity and constructs authorized forms of diversity. Berrey 2015; Malik 2015.
23. Several IR scholars have already adopted this conception of culture. Peter Katzenstein's work on civilizations and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd's writings on religion are informative. Katzenstein 2010; Shakman Hurd 2009, 2015.

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which international orders evolve. Indeed, new histories of diverse historical orders—from early modern Europe and Qing China to the Ottoman Empire—reveal the heterogeneous, not unitary, cultural contexts in which they emerged.[24] Second, to the extent that culture is patterned, we should look to the structuring effects of social institutions. The prevailing approach to culture and international order treats the institutions of an order as a simple instantiation of dominant cultural values and practices. But if cultural contexts are heterogeneous, even contradictory, this is implausible. It is more fruitful, the specialist literature suggests, to treat social institutions as emerging within heterogeneous cultural contexts, but once established, playing a powerful role in structuring the cultural terrain.

Power

Much of the current speculation about the future of the modern international order rests on assumptions about the nature and effects of power. The material might of the West allowed leading Western states to create an order that embodied their cultural values, and as the balance of material capabilities shifts to the East, non-Western great powers will have the opportunity to build an order that better reflects their values. However, any consideration of the relationship between power, culture, and international order has to be mindful of two well-established distinctions.

The first is between power understood as material capability, and power as authority. Max Weber famously defined power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability exists."[25] The most commonly cited basis is material capability: actors with preponderant material resources have more power because resources enable them to impose their will on actors lacking such capabilities. Yet power can also be authoritative, resting on the perceived legitimacy of an actor, or the legitimacy of their actions: on their "right" to command. It is widely held that authoritative power leads to more stable rule than material power alone, since authoritative power draws on voluntary compliance, whereas material power depends on the continued application of coercion and bribery. Because of this, Inis Claude Jr. notes, "among statesmen, the lovers of naked power are far less typical than those who aspire to clothe themselves in the mantle of legitimate authority: emperors may be nude, but they do not like to be so, to think themselves so, or to be so regarded."[26]

Second, it is important to distinguish between power as an enabling condition for international order, and power as a product of an order. With the former, the distribution of power defines the limits of possibility for an order. It might not be sufficient

24. See Barkey 2008; Cameron 2012; and Hao 2012.
25. Weber 1964, 152.
26. Claude 1966, 368.

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to explain an order's institutional complexion, as Mearsheimer holds, but it determines who the powerful actors are and the constraints and opportunities they encounter. On the latter view, power is constituted, in significant measure, by the prevailing order. As soon as one acknowledges the importance of authoritative power, some version of this argument follows. If authority rests on perceptions of legitimacy, then these in turn rest on prevailing institutional norms defining rightful agency and action.[27] The authority of the sovereign state, for example, does not derive simply from the material capabilities of individual states, but from the deep constitutional norms of the modern international order, which ordains the sovereign state as the primary unit of political authority.[28] International orders themselves have a kind of power: structural power, the production of "the very social capacities of structural, or subject, positions in direct relation to one another, and the associated interests, that underlie and dispose action."[29]

These distinctions imply two imperatives. First, if international orders are best conceived as systemic configurations of political authority, then power must be understood as more than material, as authoritative. In fact, a key dynamic in the construction of any political order—international or otherwise—is the necessary conversion of material might into political authority. Second, and following from this, any account of shifting power within an order needs to consider not only the changing distribution of material capabilities between units, but how units of political authority are defined and institutionalized, how they stand in relation to one another, and how this might be changing. Since the late nineteenth century, the modern international order has experienced multiple shifts in the distribution of material capabilities, from multipolarity, through bipolarity and unipolarity, to the current reconfiguration. But there were also profound changes in the organization of political authority. Most notably, empire disappeared as a formal unit of legitimate political authority, leaving the sovereign state as the primary locus, and hierarchy took new forms in a universal sovereign order based on formal legal equality.[30]

Four Theses on International Order

Although complex and varied in their arguments, the books reviewed here divide into two broad categories: culturalist, and institutionalist. In its classic form, the first consists of two interrelated claims: that a common culture is a necessary prerequisite for the development of an international order, and that the values and practices of that culture condition the order's institutions. Martin Wight made the first claim when arguing that "a states system will not come into being without a degree of cultural

27. Suchman 1995, 574.
28. Jackson 1990.
29. Barnett and Duvall 2005, 53.
30. See Bially Mattern and Zarakol 2016; Bukovansky et al. 2012; Clark 2011; and Lake 2009.

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unity among its members,"[31] and Adda Bozeman voiced the second when attributing the modern institution of international law to Western cultural values: "law has been consistently trusted in the West as the main carrier of shared values, the most effective agent of social control, and the only reliable principle capable of moderating and reducing the reign of passion, arbitrariness, and caprice in human life."[32] For culturalists, diversity threatens international order. Writing in the wake of post-1945 decolonization, as more and more non-Western states gained sovereignty, Wight feared that the modern order had "outrun cultural and moral community,"[33] and Bozeman lamented the profound gap "between the inner normative orders of the vast majority of states on the one hand, and the substantive concepts of established international law and organization on the other."[34]

Institutionalist arguments, by contrast, hold that the institutions of the modern international order accommodate cultural difference, neutralizing its effects. Terry Nardin puts the theoretical essence of this position succinctly: "international society" is a "practical association," a "relationship among those engaged in the pursuit of different and possibly incompatible purposes, and who are associated with one another, if at all, only in respecting certain restrictions on how each may pursue his own purposes."[35] What holds this association together is "authoritative practices," principally the institutions of diplomacy and international law.[36] There are two versions of this argument, both found in the books under review. The first is advanced by "pluralists" of the English School. The religious turmoil of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) shattered any notion that order could rest on cultural unity, demanding a unique institutional solution. Forging what Robert Jackson calls the "global covenant," European rulers institutionalized the norms of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and non-intervention, establishing a prudential framework for coexistence in a world of "value-diversity."[37] Jackson hails this as "the most articulate institutional arrangement that humans have yet come up with in response to their common recognition that they must find a settled and predictable way to live side by side on a finite planetary space."[38] The second version is expressed by liberal international theorists, who focus on the institutions of the twentieth-century "liberal" international order. These institutions are distinguished by their "open" and "rules-based" nature: by the ability of all states to access them, and by their legalized, reciprocally binding rules of conduct.[39] Just as liberal domestic institutions are said to accommodate individuals with diverse backgrounds and interests, liberal international institutions are considered uniquely robust, posing no

31. Wight 1977, 33.
32. Bozeman 1971, 38.
33. Wight 1977, 33.
34. Bozeman 1971, 181.
35. Nardin 1983, 9.
36. Ibid., 19.
37. Jackson 2000, 162–69.
38. Ibid., 181.
39. Keohane 1984, 243–47.

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discriminatory obstacles to the admission of states of culturally diverse backgrounds, and a common, rules-based framework in which to pursue their interests.

Four deficiencies in current expressions of these culturalist and institutionalist arguments together impede our understanding of how cultural diversity, power, and international order are related. First, culturalists rely on essentialist conceptions that are theoretically redundant and empirically unsustainable. Second, institutionalists assert the capacity of institutions to accommodate cultural difference, but nowhere demonstrate this. More importantly, by emphasizing the neutralizing effects of institutions they miss how institutions construct and organize cultural diversity: their "recognition function." Third, while three of our authors acknowledge the structural power of international orders, they understand this narrowly as constituting only thin subjectivities: units of rights-bearing authority. They ignore the role of orders in constituting thicker units of identification. Finally, with the exception of Phillips, our authors define international orders as orders of states, foreclosing fruitful macrohistorical comparisons that might illuminate the broader nature and workings of international orders, while obscuring what is distinctive about the modern case.

The Culturalists

Henry Kissinger's *World Order* returns to themes first advanced in *A World Restored*, his classic account of the post-Napoleonic European order.[40] Reflecting on the long peace that followed the Congress of Vienna (1814–15), he identified two preconditions for a stable order: "a generally accepted legitimacy," and an equilibrium of power. The first was primary: states that rejected the principles on which the order was organized would identify their security with revolutionary change and work to shift the prevailing balance of forces.[41] Written six decades later, *World Order* examines the multiple challenges facing the current international order, asking whether we are "facing a period in which forces beyond the restraints of any order determine the future."[42] Kissinger stresses the same foundations of order identified in *A World Restored*: "a set of commonly accepted rules that define the limits of permissible action and a balance of power that enforces restraint where the rules break down, preventing one unit from subjugating all others."[43] His conclusion in *World Order* is deeply pessimistic. "A reconstruction of the international system is the ultimate challenge to statesmanship in our time," he argues, because "our time, facing even graver prospects [than at Westphalia], needs to act on its necessities before it is engulfed by them."[44] Excavating the reasoning behind this stark assessment reveals the cultural foundations of Kissinger's position, as well as the limits of his diagnosis.

40. Kissinger 1957.
41. Ibid., 1–6, 144–47, 172–73.
42. Kissinger 2014, 2.
43. Ibid., 9.
44. Ibid., 371, 373.

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Early in the book he makes claims about the modern international order that appear similar to those of English School pluralists like Jackson. Exhausted by the religious and political "conflagration" of the Thirty Years War, Westphalian negotiators forged an order of independent sovereign states that "reserved judgment on the absolute in favor of the practical and ecumenical: it sought to distill order from multiplicity and restraint."[45] Over the next three-and-a-half centuries this "system spread around the world as the framework for a state-based international order spanning multiple civilizations and regions because, as European nations expanded, they carried the blueprint of their international order with them."[46]

Undergirding this narrative is a set of deeper cultural assumptions. Unlike Jackson, Kissinger attributes the Westphalian solution to more than pragmatism: it was the product of a distinctly Western, civilizational understanding of reality. Since the Renaissance "the West" had seen reality as separate from the observer, as something that was amenable to categorization and manipulation. The "Westphalian peace represented a judgment of reality … as a temporal ordering concept over the demands of religion."[47] Other civilizations could not have reached this solution, not only because of the unique challenges of the Reformation, but because they understood reality differently: "reality was conceived as internal to the observer, defined by psychological, philosophical, and religious convictions."[48] The pragmatism of Westphalia was thus culturally contingent, dependent on a prior set of civilizational understandings about the nature and malleability of reality.

These ideas inform Kissinger's understanding of the contemporary predicament. As a general proposition, he holds that legitimacy is easier to construct "the smaller the geographic area to which it applies and the more coherent the cultural convictions within it."[49] Establishing principles of legitimacy at Westphalia or in post-Napoleonic Europe were simpler affairs, therefore, than establishing and maintaining such principles in a global system of states, encompassing multiple civilizations. Kissinger is clear that the principles of the rules-based order that the West carried into the global system of states have been heavily dependent on Western power. The key problem today is that this power is waning, leaving a culturally divided global system, inimical to a "generally accepted legitimacy." How, Kissinger laments, "can regions with such diverse cultures, histories, and traditional theories of order vindicate the legitimacy of any common system?"[50]

Beneath Kissinger's classical realism lies a deep civilizational determinism that has been widely critiqued, especially since the publication of Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*.[51] Echoing the wider critique of cultures as homogeneous

45. Ibid., 4.
46. Ibid., 6.
47. Ibid., 363.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 9.
50. Ibid., 8.
51. Huntington 1997.

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entities, Peter Katzenstein argues that civilizations "are not fixed in space and time," "are both internally highly differentiated and culturally loosely integrated," and they "generate debate and contestations."[52] Not surprisingly, Kissinger's views sit uncomfortably with the historical record, both within Europe and further abroad. The Europeans were by no means alone in establishing temporal orders to manage religious or cultural difference. The Ottomans created the Millet system of hierarchically ordered, associated sovereignty for governing relations between Muslims, Christians, and Jews,[53] and the Qing Chinese instituted the Lifan Yuan system for coordinating relations with minorities on the imperial periphery.[54] Within Europe, Kissinger's neat story of profound religious divisions being transcended by a new civilization-wide scientific conception of reality is contradicted by a complex and contradictory reality. Contending religious identities and cosmologies persisted in Europe long after Westphalia, and stood in a complex relationship with evolving scientific knowledge: at time reinforcing, at times contradictory.[55]

If Kissinger's culturalist assumptions complicate his realism, his understanding of power is truer to type. Power, for him, is simply material capability. In *A World Restored* he attributes the post-Napoleonic peace to the negotiation of an acceptable principle of legitimacy and the arrangement of a "balance of forces."[56] The principle of legitimacy ordained monarchies as rightful sovereigns, and licensed the use of force to crush liberal and nationalist revolutions. In this respect, the post-Napoleonic order constituted a particular configuration of authority in Europe. Yet Kissinger does not conceive such authority as power, reserving the term solely for underlying material forces. The same is true in *World Order*. There are two ways in which an order can fall into crisis, he reiterates: the erosion of agreed principles of legitimacy, or a shift in the balance of power.[57] As we have seen, Kissinger thinks both are currently underway. What matters, though, is that the shift in power is simply a shift in material capabilities, most notably the rise of China.[58] The fragmenting terms of legitimacy, which Kissinger casts as "a world of increasingly contradictory realities,"[59] is not considered a power shift, despite its implications for the international organization of political authority.

Like Kissinger, Andrew Phillips is centrally concerned with the transformation of international orders, though armed in his case with the wealth of post-Cold War social theorizing in IR and empirics that span Latin Christendom, the Sinosphere, and the contemporary international order. To gain this empirical reach, Phillips adopts a more expansive conception of international order than the other authors, not

52. Katzenstein 2010, 5.
53. Braude 2014.
54. Crossley 2006, 68–69.
55. Harrison 2007.
56. Kissinger 1957, 146, 173.
57. Kissinger 2014, 365.
58. Ibid., 367.
59. Ibid., 365.

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assuming that international orders are organized on the principle of sovereignty. International orders, he writes, are "systemic structures that cohere within culturally and historically specific social imaginaries, and that are composed of an *order-producing* normative complex and its fundamental institutions," both of which "rest in turn on a permissive *order-enabling* material foundation."[60] In this conception, "fundamental institutions" include the basic units of political authority and how they stand in relation to one another (sovereignty, suzerainty, or heteronomy), as well as the authoritative norms and practices that enable coexistence and cooperation (systems of law, legitimate modes of violence, etc.). These institutions are informed and licensed by the "normative complex," which consists of the values that legitimize political authority.[61] Undergirding an order's normative complex and fundamental institutions are deeper "social imaginaries"—"tacit assumptions, images, and symbols"—and enabling "material foundations": principally, commercially and technologically determined modes of "violence interdependence."[62]

Drawing on detailed analyses of the collapse of the pre-Westphalian order of Latin Christendom and the demise of the Qing Chinese order, Phillips argues that international orders fall after sustained "systemic crises" that are generated by challenges to foundational social imaginaries and the advent of disruptive military innovations. Long periods of "institutional decay," "ideological dissent and cultural innovation," and heightened "violence interdependence" are followed by acute crises, where ideological shocks coincide with military change.[63] In an explicit attempt to meld realist and constructivist insights, Phillips argues that "international orders are transformed when they experience systemic legitimacy crises occasioned by a combination of institutional decay, disruptive military innovations, and ideological shocks that terminally destabilize existing social imaginaries and thus shatter the normative consensus upon which international orders depend."[64] In the pre-Westphalian order, this was manifest in the conjunction of the Reformation theology and the introduction of modern artillery, the increased use of mercenaries, and the enhanced financial resources of European monarchs.[65] In nineteenth-century Qing China, it was the ideological and geopolitical challenges of the encroaching West, combined with the domestic upheaval of the Taiping Rebellion.[66] Reflecting on the present, Phillips sees a global order in trouble. While not yet in crisis, the "present world order is bedeviled by widespread institutional decay, the emergence of anti-systemic ideologies and increases in violence interdependence."[67]

60. Phillips 2011, 23–24.
61. Ibid., 26–27.
62. Ibid., 24, 46.
63. Ibid., 46.
64. Ibid., 43–44.
65. Ibid., 84.
66. Ibid., 175.
67. Ibid., 319.

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Despite adopting a more expansive conception of international orders, illustrated through a novel macrohistorical comparison of Western and non-Western cases, the underlying logic of Phillips's argument is remarkably similar to Kissinger's. For Kissinger, international orders are sustained by an artful combination of legitimacy and power. Phillips echoes this: "In stable orders," he writes, "authoritative and coercive power form complementary and mutually indispensable modes of action."[68] The similarity runs deeper than this, though. Kissinger thinks that common civilizational beliefs are a precondition for the development of "a generally agreed principle of legitimacy." Such beliefs facilitated the Westphalian solution, and their absence today threatens international order. Phillips's argument is considerably more sophisticated, but the logic is essentially the same. An order's principles of legitimacy are located in its normative complex, which is grounded in a deeper, more foundational social imaginary, an imaginary characteristic of a distinctive civilizational world view. Following Charles Taylor, Phillips argues that such imaginaries "encompass our most basic and mostly unarticulated assumptions about social reality, extending to those that condition our experience of categories as allegedly basic as time, space, language and embodiment."[69] Collectively held assumptions such as these, he argues, are essential to the viability of an order's normative complex because they provide "a primary condition of possibility for orders' constitution and operation."[70]

In essence, this is a contemporary restatement of Wight's position that the development of a "states system" depends on preexisting cultural unity.[71] Wight was decidedly unclear about what this meant, implying some combination of shared identity, agreed principles of political legitimacy, and a common institutional rationality. By comparison, Phillips's social imaginaries are far better specified and operationalized. Yet this remains an argument about cultural unity, as incompatible with contemporary specialist understandings as Kissinger's. For today's anthropologists and sociologists, any claims to underlying cultural unity on the scale of international orders must necessarily obscure the differences, contradictions, and contestations that characterize any cultural landscape, while at the same time neglecting the institutional construction of aspects of unity. For Phillips, the Latin and Sinic orders evince some of this. In the Latin case, from the eleventh century onward a "unifying religious and cultural identity is said to have replaced Europe's past 'fragmented social landscape.'"[72] And in the Sinic case, prior conflicts between Confucianism and Legalism were superseded by the hegemony of Confucian values and ideals.[73] Each account is prefaced, therefore, by a unity-triumphs-over-diversity thesis. Yet in both cases this is belied by the continued diversity of periods of purported

68. Ibid., 21.
69. Ibid., 24.
70. Ibid., 25.
71. Wight 1977, 22.
72. Phillips 2011, 62.
73. Ibid., 150–54.

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unity, and this diversity was organized and tamed by the institutions unity was meant to have facilitated. For example, the Chinese empire of the late seventeenth century was a rich and variegated religious and linguistic tapestry, and from this cultural heterogeneity the Qing institutions fashioned, and refashioned, distinct forms of ethnic identity.[74] Similarly, Phillips's own account of the unity of Latin Christendom stresses, among other factors, the reassertion of Papal control over local priests, and the role a more centralized Church played in structuring Christian belief through standardized rituals, principally the Mass.[75]

If Phillips is close to Kissinger on the question of culture, he is not when it comes to power. For Kissinger, power takes one form: the balance of material capabilities that together with an agreed principle of legitimacy sustains international order. This kind of power also appears in Phillips's account, where international order rests on a social imaginary and an "*order-enabling* material foundation."[76] Unlike Kissinger, however, Phillips is conscious of the structural power of international orders; how they constitute and arrange units of political authority. Included among his fundamental institutions are an order's principal political units, and the associated normative complex contains "power-legitimating norms" that license these forms of "organized domination."[77] Power thus appears in both material and authoritative forms, and in the former case, as an enabling substrata, and latter case, as a product of international order.[78]

The Institutionalists

Evelyn Goh's *The Struggle for Order* is the most comprehensive and sophisticated study to date of East Asia's evolving international order. It is also an exemplary application of the pluralist institutionalism of the English School, evincing both its strengths and limitations. She seeks to move beyond three positions currently dominating debate on the region: the "Asian century" thesis, which sees a power shift to the East producing a new "Sinic-centric" order informed by Chinese civilizational values; the "liberal-hegemony" thesis stressing the continued socialization of Asian states into a normatively and institutionally robust liberal order; and the "realist" thesis that shifts in material capabilities will generate a heightened struggle for power, leading at best to a fragile multipolar system, at worst to war between China and the United States. All of these positions are flawed, Goh contends, because they ignore a fundamental reality of the region: the simultaneous reassertion

74. Crossley 2002.
75. Phillips 2011, 63–65.
76. Ibid., 24. Emphasis in original.
77. Ibid., 24–27.
78. Phillips's recent book with Jason Sharman departs from his earlier work, focusing on the persistence of "durable diversity" in international orders, specifically the Indian Ocean system between 1500 and 1750. The diversity that interests them is the forms of polity, not cultural diversity. See Phillips and Sharman 2015.

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of American power *and* the strategic rise of China, a combination that is generating a struggle for order, not power.[79]

Goh conceives East Asia as a regional international order in transition. And she adopts explicitly Bull's definition of international order as "a pattern or arrangement that sustains the primary goals of a society of states."[80] The crucial thing about such order, Goh argues, is that it "must be underpinned by an intersubjective consensus about the basic goals and means of conducting international affairs."[81] Constructing and sustaining this consensus in a regional setting requires the ongoing negotiation of two things. The first is an order's "normative structure," which Goh understands as "the contested process by which states come to a shared understanding about a set of core strategic understandings specific to the region."[82] In post-Cold War East Asia, this process has revolved around "institutional bargains; authority and public goods provisions; regionalism and community; and collective memory revision."[83] The second focus of negotiation is the region's "social structure": "its membership composition and collective understandings about position and status, rights and responsibilities."[84] An order's normative and social structures are closely related, with social structures generated by the normative structure's processes. The distinctive feature of contemporary East Asia, Goh argues, is that it is undergoing an order transition, where the "social compact" on which American hegemony rests is being renegotiated. "The strategic transition that has taken place in East Asia since the end of the Cold War," she writes, "has been critically constituted by the "clash of meanings" over the changing patterns of unequal power, and the struggle for regional order has been about mediating between these competing meanings and claims to achieve a new regional social compact."[85]

The order gradually emerging from this struggle has a distinctive social structure, which Goh labels "hegemony with hierarchy." The United States remains the regional and global hegemon, a "legitimate superordinate authority."[86] But where hegemony is usually associated with a simple hierarchy—the hegemon and the rest—Goh identifies a more complex set of hierarchical relations nested within hegemony. Below the US sit China and Japan, and below these are the remaining East Asian states. The gap in power and status between the US and everyone else constitutes the first of two "breaks" in this hierarchy. And the gap between the US, China, and Japan, and all other states, constitutes a second.[87] This "multilayered hierarchy"

79. Goh 2013, 1–4.
80. Ibid., 7. For original quote, see Bull 1977, 8.
81. Ibid., 8.
82. Ibid., 21.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., 11. David Kang reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that the key question is "whether the East Asian states can develop a clear and *shared* set of beliefs and perceptions about one another's intentions and their relative positions in the regional and global order." See Kang 2010, 169.
86. Goh 2013, 210.
87. Ibid., 209–13.

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is the product of, and sustained by, a mixture of complicity, on the one hand, and resistance, on the other. It depends on assurance from the United States and deference from other states, as well as differential dynamics of assurance and deference between China and the others, and Japan and the others. Yet these stabilizing dynamics always go hand in hand with resistance to superordinate/subordinate relationships. Resistance can take the form of constraint, through "institutional binding" or "normative censure," or outright revolt, where the goal is to overturn the prevailing hierarchy. While the first has been common in relations between China, Japan, and the US, Goh argues that revolt has been "noticeably absent" from post-Cold War East Asia.[88]

For those interested in how shifting conjunctions of power and cultural difference are affecting international order, a study of East Asia promises much. It is here that struggles between the US, as the liberal hegemon, and China, as its principal non-Western challenger, are most pronounced. Yet *The Struggle for Order* is largely silent on the question of culture, despite Goh's claim that East Asia is being constituted by a "clash of meanings." Far from an oversight, this is a function of her pluralist institutionalism. For Goh, a regional international order is a practical association; an association of states with different values and purposes, who nonetheless negotiate rules and norms that enable them to coexist and cooperate. From this perspective, underlying cultural values and practices—conceived as homogeneous or heterogeneous—can be bracketed to focus attention on the negotiation of functional, order-specific norms: those governing membership and status, as well as rightful conduct.

In the penultimate chapter, however, culture breaks the surface, and in suggestive if undeveloped ways. Addressing the perennial English School theme of order and justice, Goh examines struggles over collective memories: struggles that place questions of justice at the heart of the renegotiation of regional order. She defines such memories as shared interpretations of the past, manifest in "communications (textbooks, political rhetoric), symbols (flags, national anthems), and symbolic interactions (commemorative ceremonies)."[89] While these memories take different forms in different states, with the contrasting Chinese, Japanese, and Korean understandings of a century of war especially important, Goh is primarily interested in the negotiation of regional "collective memory regimes," which she sees as essential to the order's social structure: its membership and status ranking. These regimes involve two elements: a "historical script" (of invasion or defeat, for example), and a master narrative (about the causes of key events in the script).[90] After 1945 the US promoted a distinctive collective memory regime in East Asia that attributed Japanese aggression to a misguided military clique, sought remedy in Japanese demilitarization, and relied

88. Ibid., 222.
89. Ibid., 164.
90. Ibid., 164.

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on the US mediating relations between China and Japan.[91] After the Cold War, resurgent nationalisms challenged this regime, requiring the negotiation of a new historical script and master narrative, a negotiation still underway regionally and within key domestic contexts.[92]

Defining collective memories as intersubjective understandings, manifest in communications, symbols, and symbolic interactions, suggests that they are cultural, and at one point Goh casts them as "a vital part of political culture."[93] Yet this is not culture as a deep constitutive substrata, as the culturalists see it. Culture here is "negotiated, contingent, and liable to contestation."[94] This is a promising move because it brings us closer to contemporary understandings of culture as highly variegated, even contradictory. Goh is sensitive to how collective meanings are conditioned by social institutions, in this case US hegemony. Her argument about "the determining hand of the United States" is reminiscent of David Laitin's discussion of British hegemony and mobilization of cultural meanings in Nigeria.[95] Suggestive as these moves are, though, they are insufficiently developed, and Goh's discussion of collective memories is assimilated within her pluralist institutionalism. To begin with, the collective memories that interest Goh are order-related meanings: they gain salience, domestically and internationally, because of their implications for how regional international relations are ordered. Second, the negotiation of collective memories is part of the order's normative structure, and the resulting memory regime conditions its social structure. Finally, once a collective memory regime has been institutionalized, the "clash of meanings," and the cultural differences they imply, are, for all intents and purposes, negotiated away.

Of our four authors, Goh is most explicit that power "has crucial social foundations." "Great power projects," she writes, "are mediated through social frameworks, often of a normative nature, that other states must acquiesce to."[96] Authoritative power is crucial, therefore, and it has to be negotiated and institutionalized. In East Asia, this has focused on the negotiation of US hegemony, along with the hierarchical relationships nested within. Once these configurations of authority are institutionalized, the regional order exerts structural power, constituting subjectivities and defining how they stand in relation to one another. Yet, consistent with the pluralist institutionalism of the English School, the subjectivities constituted in Goh's order are thin; they are the product principally of institutional bargains about the appropriate distribution of functional rights and responsibilities, not the recognition of substantive identities or underlying purposes. This is most pronounced when Goh discusses regional institutions, where three bargains are central: those concerning the "restraint and commitment" of the hegemon; the "mutual restraint" of regional

91. Ibid., 165–72.
92. Ibid., 194–98.
93. Ibid., 163.
94. Ibid., 164.
95. Laitin 1986.
96. Goh 2013, 4.

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powers; and the "security binding of great powers by subordinate states."[97] All of these bargains define and distribute authority, but none are acts of recognition: powers not purposes, interests not identities, are the stuff of negotiation. The underlying cultural dynamics highlighted by David Kang, Martin Jacques, Yan Xuetong, and others are bracketed, and the emphasis placed on practical accommodation.[98] While this may or may not be sufficient for the contemporary East Asian case, it leaves Goh's framework blind to a key feature of order construction historically: the recognition (or misrecognition) of cultural difference, and the organization of diversity. Westphalia authorized forms of religious identity and defined their relation to secular authority; the Congress of Vienna licensed Christian monarchies as the sole legitimate sovereigns; and until the 1960s civilizational difference was a legitimate basis on which to distribute sovereignty. Recognition has been a key institutional dynamic of order building.

If Goh offers an exemplary application of pluralist institutionalism to East Asia, John Ikenberry advances the most thoroughly elaborated liberal account of the post-1945 global international order. Building on his earlier study of order construction after systemic wars,[99] *Liberal Leviathan* explores in greater detail the nature and likely fate of "America-led liberal world order."[100] In contrast to the wave of new works heralding the order's demise,[101] Ikenberry stresses its durability in the face of shifts in its "Westphalian underpinnings." He distinguishes between the order's "authority structure," on the one hand, and its deeper "open and rules-based" logic, on the other. If the order is experiencing a crisis, he contends, it is an authority crisis: the deeper logic commands widespread support. What is contested is "America's role and the hegemonic bargains that surround it."[102] In an argument reminiscent of Robert Keohane's thesis in *After Hegemony*,[103] the order might survive but with a different, post-hegemonic authority structure.

Ikenberry defines international order as "the "governing" arrangements among a group of states, including its fundamental rules, principles and institutions."[104] He then identifies three ideal types. A "balance of power" order is a simple byproduct of great power competition, an equilibrium generated by struggle, a "necessary and inevitable outcome of states seeking to ensure their security in an anarchic system."[105]A "hierarchical" order is "organized around the domination of a powerful state," and the "rules and rights are established and enforced by the power capabilities of the leading state."[106] Lastly, a "constitutional" order consists of rules and

97. Ibid., 33–34.
98. See Jacques 2012; Kang 2010; and Yan 2011.
99. Ikenberry 2001.
100. Ikenberry 2011.
101. See, for example, Acharya 2014; Kissinger 2014; and Kupchan 2012.
102. Ikenberry 2011, xii.
103. Keohane 1984.
104. Ikenberry 2001, 23. A more recent expression is found in Ikenberry 2011, 47.
105. Ibid., 25.
106. Ibid., 55, 57.

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institutions that reflect the common interests and consent of member states: they "enter the international order out of enlightened self-interest, engaging in self-restraint and binding themselves to agreed-upon rules and institutions."[107] Questions surround this typology, the most significant being whether balance-of-power systems, which do not require any framework of rules, qualify as international orders, at least according to Ikenberry's definition. This aside, though, the key point is that the post-1945 American-led order is seen as a hybrid, in which hegemonic leadership is embedded within a framework of agreed, mutually binding rules: it is hierarchical *and* liberal.

Where, if anywhere, does culture fit in this perspective? Nowhere is it discussed explicitly, and cultural terms, such as "intersubjective meanings," "symbolic interactions," or "social imaginaries," are never smuggled in as surrogates. As with Goh, this not an oversight: it is a product of Ikenberry's liberal institutionalism. Liberal political theory holds that the state's institutions are blind to cultural difference, and provide a neutral framework of rules and procedures that allow individuals of different cultural identities and affiliations to pursue their ends in peace.[108] Ikenberry's account of the liberal international order replicates this logic. When discussing the challenge posed by the rise of non-Western great powers, particularly China, he stresses the order's open and rules-based nature, which gives "it an unusual capacity to accommodate rising powers. Its sprawling landscape of rules, institutions, and networks provide newer entrants into the system with opportunities for status, authority, and a share in the governance of the order. Access points and mechanisms for political communication and reciprocal influence abound."[109] Nowhere is the rich cultural diversity of the human community denied, but liberal international institutions render differences of value, identity, and practice politically insignificant.

There is, of course, one place in Ikenberry's argument where such things are significant: when it comes to liberal hegemony. The liberal international order dates back to the early nineteenth century, and its rise was a direct consequence of the growing ascendance of liberal great powers. "Through the Victorian era and into the twentieth century, the fortunes of liberal democratic states flourished—and with the growth and expansion of this liberal core of states and its organizing principles, world politics increasingly took a liberal internationalist cast."[110]After 1945 the US pushed the order to an entirely new level, promoting the construction of a dense network of political, economic, and security institutions informed by liberal principles.[111] None of this could have happened, Ikenberry insists, without a favorable balance of material power. But while this balance was enabling, he goes on to argue, alone it tells us little about the kind of order liberal states constructed. "The distribution of power provides opportunities and constraints for states within the

107. Ikenberry 2011, 61–62.
108. Kukathas 1998.
109. Ikenberry 2011, 345.
110. Ibid., 15–16.
111. Ibid., 16

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system. But it does not, in itself, determine the way power is exercised or how order is created."[112] To understand this one has to grasp the principles animating the United States, Britain, and their liberal counterparts: principles invariably informed by their underlying values and identities. Indeed, in one of his few references to culture, Ikenberry writes that "Washington policy makers drew upon American values and political culture to emphasize the organizing principles of liberal rule-based relations—openness, nondiscrimination, and reciprocity."[113]

Unlike Goh, Ikenberry defines power in strictly material terms, with the "distribution of power" referring "to the way in which material assets and capabilities are arrayed among states and other actors."[114] This distribution, we have seen, provides the basic framework of opportunities and constraints in which states must act, and a balance of power favoring the US and is allies enabled the construction of the liberal order. Yet Goh and Ikenberry agree that today's struggles—globally or in East Asia—are about the definition and distribution of authority. It is not clear, however, that they understand authority in the same way. For Goh, authority is inherently social: it has to be negotiated and institutionalized. This is not the case for Ikenberry. He contrasts two forms of international hierarchy—empire and liberal hegemony. The first is a system of domination, and authority is simply command backed by force: it is not the product of a social contract, as David Lake holds.[115] Liberal hegemony, by contrast, "is a bargained order in which the lead state provides services and frameworks of cooperation. In return, it invites participation and compliance by weaker and secondary states."[116] Here authority is the product of a social contract, bringing Ikenberry closer to Goh. Only in a liberal hegemonic order, therefore, does the order have structural power (even if Ikenberry does not see this), generating the subject positions of the hegemon and subordinate states. As with Goh, however, these are only thin subjectivities, units of authority defined by bundles of rights and responsibilities. The institutions of the liberal order have no recognition function; they generate no substantive identities. America's identity as a liberal hegemon is something it brings to the order, not something constituted by it—a "corporate" not a "social" identity, in Wendt's terminology.[117] Not only does this leave Ikenberry's account of international order blind to a key institutional dynamic of prior orders, but also to the recognition politics currently challenging the order: politics in which the international distribution of authority is confronted by claims to civilizational, ethno-national, and religious difference.

112. Ibid., 39.
113. Ibid., 182.
114. Ibid., 39.
115. Lake 2009, 19.
116. Ikenberry 2011, 70.
117. Wendt 1994, 385.

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The Organization of Diversity

Earlier I proposed three conceptual moves that are necessary if we are to comprehend adequately the relationship between cultural diversity, power, and international order. Culture should be conceived as highly variegated, often contradictory, loosely integrated, and deeply interpenetrated. Power should be understood as taking both material and authoritative forms, with the latter seen, in significant part, as a product of political orders. International orders thus have structural power, generating differentially empowered subjectivities. International orders should also be defined expansively to grasp their deep "arrangement," enable fruitful historical comparisons, and illuminate key dimensions of change. The books considered here make these moves at best only partially. Nowhere is culture understood adequately, being either essentialized or discounted. Three authors see power as both material and authoritative, but touch only lightly on the structural power of international orders. And with the exception of Phillips, they conceive of international orders narrowly as systems of sovereign states, and generate theory from single cases: the Westphalian order (Kissinger), the liberal hegemonic order (Ikenberry), and the East Asian regional order (Goh).

I suggest an alternative theoretical framework for thinking about cultural diversity and international order. I develop this in four steps, moving from the deep existential context in which international orders emerge, through the institutional consequences of managing unequal material power and articulations of cultural difference, to the sources of change and crisis. Through this a new perspective on how cultural diversity affects international order emerges. The principal impact of diversity is not as a corrosive force, any more than cultural unity works as a deep constitutive force. Rather, cultural diversity shapes international order as a governance imperative—as an existential condition that demands institutional ordering.

Existential Diversity

Culture matters. Humans live in webs of intersubjective meanings, expressed through, and embedded within, language, images, bodies, and practices. These meanings are constitutive, shaping identities and interests, *and* they are strategic resources that actors can mobilize in pursuit of diverse goals. Constructivists and rationalists are both correct. Culture is not a unitary, coherent whole. Instead of treating cultures as coherent intersubjective organisms, we should assume as our starting assumption, that culture is inherently heterogeneous. As John and Jean Comaroff argue, "culture always contains within it polyvalent, potentially contestable meanings, images, and actions … Some of these, at any moment in time, will be woven into more or less tightly integrated, relatively explicit world views; others may be heavily contested, the stuff of counterideologies and 'subcultures'; yet others may

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become more or less unfixed, relatively freefloating, and indeterminate in their value and meaning."[118]

The inherent heterogeneity of culture takes infinite forms and multiple expressions. Three forms stand out. The first is the diversity of social identification. The literature on multiculturalism highlights the coexistence of multiple communities of religious, linguistic, and ethnic identification within single national societies.[119] Yet patterns of identification are greatly complicated by cross-cutting identifications. While individuals often have distinctive religious, linguistic, or ethnic identities, they have other meaningful social identities as well: national, transnational, professional, familial, class, gender, etc. These identities become more or less salient in different social contexts, often conflicting. The second form is the diversity of meaning complexity. In all social contexts, culture sends mixed messages. Individuals do not encounter a simple cultural script, or a neatly ordered repertoire of practices. Instead they have to navigate complex, often conflicting, meanings. There are few if any societies, for example, where "traditional" and "modern" meanings and practices do not coexist, posing challenges for individuals as they negotiate social life. The third form is the diversity of interpretation. Not only do cultural environments involve multiple, complex meanings but individuals interpret these differently. Religious meanings are a prime example. Religious doctrine, codified or otherwise, is invariably subject to diverse interpretations, at times producing deep confessional schisms. If religious meanings were amenable to only one interpretation, there would have been no Reformation in Christianity and no Sunni/Shia divide in Islam.

If cultural heterogeneity is a feature of small and medium societies, this is certainly the case with far larger international social orders. And if recognizing this heterogeneity led anthropologists and sociologists to ask what it is that gives culture form, IR scholars should do the same. Instead of assuming the unity of cultures—civilizations, nations, religions, etc.—we should assume diversity and then ask what produces elements or strands of coherence or commonality. Again, cultural specialists provide a vital lead: social institutions, as Ann Swidler demonstrated, structure culture. This is important not only because it sheds light on the configuration of cultural meanings in a given social context, but in contexts where the organization of diversity matters for social and political order it helps explain the nature of prevailing institutions.

Material Power, Cultural Diversity, and Legitimacy

International orders, I argued earlier, are systemic configurations of political authority, made up of multiple units of authority, arranged according to some organizing principle: sovereignty, suzerainty, heteronomy, or some combination. Because they are configurations of authority, not simply material power, their stability depends

118. Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, 27.
119. See Kymlicka 1995, 2007.

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on the cultivation and maintenance of legitimacy, on the social perception that they are "desirable, proper, appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions."[120] On this point, all four authors agree.

All international orders face two legitimation challenges. The first, and most commonly observed, is to convert an unequal distribution of material capabilities into a configuration of political authority: might has to be translated into right. When Goh and Ikenberry point to a struggle for authority in the contemporary international order, they are referring to this process of translation. Why such legitimation is necessary has been explained many times, with an emphasis on the efficiency of legitimate rule. As Edmund Burke famously observed, "the use of force is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed, which is to be perpetually conquered."[121] The second challenge, so far largely ignored, is to organize cultural diversity: to create authorized forms of difference, and order them hierarchically. Complex heterogeneity has to be converted into institutionalized diversity. Genocide, assimilation, the "melting pot," and multiculturalism are all manifestations of this within sovereign states, and the Ottoman Millet system, the Qing Lifan Yuan system, the Westphalian recognition of only Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, and the nineteenth-century "standard of civilization" are examples at the level of international orders.

Three imperatives drive this second form of legitimation. The most important is control. In a culturally heterogeneous environment, multiple opportunities exist for the construction of identities, the mobilization of meanings, and the harnessing of both to a range of political projects, some order threatening. By organizing cultural diversity, order builders simultaneously seek to institutionalize a preferred configuration of meanings and identities, engineer consent for this configuration, and limit the scope for innovation. The second imperative is coordination. Rationalists have rightly observed that shared cultural symbols and rituals can facilitate social coordination by providing common knowledge.[122] Coordination problems arise when "each person wants to participate in a group action but only if others want to participate," and solving such problems requires common knowledge: everyone needs to know the same thing, and everyone needs to know that everyone knows it. Rituals and symbols help generate such knowledge, enabling individuals to participate in group activities. By organizing cultural diversity, order-builders privilege and structure meanings, license and order certain forms of identification, and authorize common practices, generating common knowledge and enabling coordination. The third imperative is the satisfaction of ecumenical sensibilities. Order-builders are often animated by beliefs about what constitutes a legitimate cultural order, beliefs that commonly have broader social resonance. When the Ottomans privileged and ordered Christian, Jewish, and Islamic communities, and when Europeans divided

120. Suchman 1995, 574.
121. Burke 1908, 76–141.
122. Chwe 2001; and for a similar argument on symbols and common knowledge, see O'Neill 1999.

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the world into civilized, barbarian, and savage peoples, they were not simply exercising control or facilitating coordination—they were instituting an order they considered right.

Diversity Regimes

To meet these legitimation challenges, international orders develop *diversity regimes*: systems of norms and practices that simultaneously configure authority and construct diversity. Codified in formal institutions, such as treaties and conventions, and embedded in informal understandings and social practices, these regimes do three things. First, they legitimize certain units of political authority—states, empires, cities, etc.—and define the scope of legitimate political action. Second, they define recognized categories of cultural difference (religion but not civilization or nation, for example), and order these normatively (Catholics, Lutherans, or Calvinists, but not Anabaptists, Muslims, or Jews). And, third, they relate legitimate units of political authority to authorized categories of cultural difference (sovereign state and religion, empire and civilization, etc.).

These are not "regimes" as commonly understood in IR: issue-specific institutions around which actors' expectations converge.[123] Rather, their constitutive norms and practices straddle different institutional levels. Elsewhere I identify three such levels: constitutional structures, fundamental institutions, and issue-specific regimes. The first are the metavalues that define units of political authority and the nature of rightful political action. The second are the basic institutional practices that facilitate coexistence and cooperation among political units. And the third are the regimes commonly discussed in IR.[124] Diversity regimes work primarily at the first two levels, but in doing so condition the institutional architecture in which functional cooperation takes place. By defining units of legitimate political authority, authorizing certain forms of cultural difference, and relating these to one another, they are integral to an order's constitutional structure. In many cases, though, they also condition fundamental institutions. For example, the late nineteenth-century diversity regime rested on the notorious "standard of civilization," which not only licensed imperial rule and established civilization as the principle axis of cultural difference, but also profoundly affected the institution of international law.[125]

Understanding the nature and significance of diversity regimes is currently impeded by two blind spots in the literature. First, conceptions of international order that ignore the structural power of orders—how they constitute subjectivities—cannot see, let alone comprehend, institutions that constitute and arrange political and cultural units and identities. And conceptions that define structural power narrowly,

123. Krasner 1983, 27.
124. Reus-Smit 1997, 559.
125. Anghie 2005.

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as constituting rights-bearing "powers," are blind to how diversity regimes link units of authority and cultural difference, thus constituting thicker, more substantive subjectivities. Second, neither culturalist approaches that see institutions as simple expressions of deeper, unitary cultural values, or institutionalist perspectives that see institutions as neutralizing culture, can see how institutions, in the form of diversity regimes, take complex heterogeneity and construct authorized forms of cultural diversity. In other words, they miss the recognition function of institutions. All institutions have this function. They all need to define which actors are subject to a given system of rules or norms. This is especially so when it comes to primary institutions that define units of authority and axes of legitimate cultural difference—recognition is their game. Focusing on diversity regimes brings both of these areas of neglect to the fore because they are a key engine of an international order's structural power, but this power rests on the recognition function of institutions.

The Westphalian settlement offers a prime example of how the construction of a new international order entails the development of a diversity regime. The settlement resolved 120 years of religious conflict in Europe, and many scholars attribute this to the creation of a pluralist order of sovereign states. By recognizing princes as sovereign, and giving them the right to define the religion within their territories, the treaties relegated religious faith, identity, and difference to the domestic realm, effectively secularizing international relations. But this oversimplifies the Westphalian settlement. That the treaties helped reconfigure political authority into a nascent order of sovereign states is well established. But they also constructed diversity in a particular way, privileging religion as the predominant cultural category, and recognizing some religious identities over others (Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism over "heretical" Christian sects, Islam, and Judaism). Furthermore, they related the new configuration of political authority to authorized forms of cultural difference in a distinctive way. It is a myth that the treaties simply rearticulated the "Augsburg Principle" of *cuis regio, eius religio*: that princes had the right to define the religion within their territories. Rather, under the treaties' extensive provisions on "Liberty of Conscience," such rights were severely circumscribed: Catholic and Protestant minorities were granted significant protections, and princes were forbidden to force their peoples to change confession.[126] The Westphalian settlement was not an exercise in secular pluralism, therefore: it was an act of politico-cultural construction in which the reconfiguration of political authority was entwined with a particular construction of legitimate cultural difference.

A key implication of this argument is that there has never been a truly pluralist international order that does not seek to organize diversity, privileging certain axes of cultural difference and relating them to legitimate units of political authority. Different kinds of international orders develop different kinds of diversity regimes, a consequence of the varied ways they distribute political authority, as well as the distinctiveness of their heterogeneous cultural environments. The diversity regime of the

126. Reus-Smit 2013, 99–102.

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suzerain Qing order differed markedly from that of the sovereign order of Absolutist Europe. But even within sovereign orders, diversity regimes have always existed, but varied greatly. Since the nineteenth century, the modern order has been structured by three different diversity regimes. At Versailles civilization and ethno-nationalism were privileged, the former tied to empire, the latter to the sovereign state. After 1945 the link between civilization and empire persisted, but in the wake of the Holocaust, sovereignty was tied to civic, not ethnic, nationalism. And after the 1960s, when decolonization had run its course, empire collapsed as a legitimate unit of political authority, yielding a new diversity regime that linked universal sovereignty to civic nationalism (now deepened through international norms of domestic multiculturalism and human rights).[127] As will be clear, the diversity regimes of sovereign orders do not just organize diversity at the systemic level; their norms also prescribe how culture should be organized domestically. Westphalia's rules on liberty of religious conscience, Versailles' combination of ethno-national sovereignty and minority rights treaties, and today's international norms of multiculturalism are all examples.

Sources of Change

Diversity regimes are constructed in response to particular configurations of unequally distributed material capabilities and articulations of cultural difference. Once established, regimes have a structural quality, confronting actors as social facts that condition action, and constituting political and cultural subjectivities. This gives them considerable stability, since over time their norms configuring authority and constructing diversity are reproduced by the subjectivities they constitute. However, they face two pressures for change: shifts in the underlying distribution of material capabilities, and new cultural claims, often animated by grievances against past diversity regimes.

The first is well canvased in the existing literature. While not focused on the fate of the contemporary diversity regime, much of today's debate about the future of the modern international order assumes that the balance of material capabilities is shifting to the East. For Kissinger, material power is in "unprecedented flux," eroding one of the two pillars of international order (the other being legitimacy).[128] For Ikenberry, "economic growth in countries like China and India has created new centers of global power," which has "led to profound questions about the American-centered nature of the old order."[129] With this shift in capabilities assumed, debate centers on its implications. For some, it is inevitable that the order will fragment, as Western leadership weakens and normative consensus erodes. In Charles

127. Kymlicka 2007.
128. Kissinger 2014, 367.
129. Ikenberry 2011, 7.

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Kupchan's words, "the West and the rising rest are poised to compete over principles, status, and geopolitical interests as the global turn proceeds."[130] For others, including Goh and Ikenberry, material capabilities may be shifting, but the liberal international order is relatively autonomous; its institutions flexible enough to accommodate new distributions of material power. If there is a crisis in the modern order, it is a crisis of authority, driven by contests "over the distribution of roles, rights, and authority."[131]

The second pressure for change has received little attention, largely because of a failure to recognize how international orders are structured by diversity regimes. Because diversity regimes authorize and order certain forms of cultural difference and relate them to units of legitimate political authority, they constitute social hierarchies and create patterns of inclusion and exclusion. As we have seen, the diversity regime of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century privileged civilizational difference at the global level and primordial conceptions of ethnicity in Europe, tying the first to empire and the second to the nation-state. The resulting hierarchies were manifest in the subordination of "barbarian" and "savage" peoples in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, and the pernicious distinction between "state people" and "minorities" in Europe, which in Hannah Arendt's words, "handed out rule to some and servitude to others."[132] Like all hierarchies, the hierarchies produced by diversity regimes are stabilized by a combination of material inducements and intersubjective understandings about the order's legitimacy and the appropriateness of its constituent role identities. Such hierarchies also generate grievances, however: grievances rooted in unequal recognition.

To the extent that humans have basic interests, social recognition is fundamental. If social identities are understood as "sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself *while taking into account the perspectives of others*,"[133] then actors' senses of self are dependent on social recognition. The individual self cannot develop without such recognition. It enables individuals to understand what it is that makes them distinctive as human subjects, and that as such subjects, they are valued.[134] This need for recognition is a potent source of political struggle. Denial or withdrawal of recognition—which Axel Honneth terms "disrespect"—threatens basic self-understandings and esteem, fueling anger and humiliation.[135] Only when these feelings are generalizable, however—when a group of individuals, through communication, are able to experience them in common—can they animate collective action. Denials of "legal" and "achievement" recognition are particularly important here. The former refers to an individual's status as a rights-bearing member of a community; the latter to the degree to which her qualities, capacities, and achievements are thought "to realize

130. Kupchan 2012, 10.
131. Ikenberry 2011, xii.
132. Arendt 1973, 270.
133. Wendt 1994, 385.
134. Honneth 1995, 89–90.
135. Ibid., 131.

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culturally defined values."[136] In both cases, lack of recognition is generalizable because the denial of rights, and the denigration or devaluing of social roles, commonly apply to classes of actors (workers, women, untouchables, barbarians, savages, etc.).

By constructing diversity in particular ways—authorizing certain forms of difference, ordering them hierarchically, and relating them to units of political authority—diversity regimes are institutionalized forms of recognition: they recognize certain cultural identities, constituting them in the process, and allocate them rights and entitlements. At the same time, however, they are institutionalized forms of disrespect. From complex heterogeneity, they privilege some cultural identities, norms, and practices, while marginalizing others. At Westphalia, religion was privileged, while at Versailles it was civilization and ethnicity. More than this, within the authorized forms of identity, value, and practice, hierarchies are the norm. Westphalia privileged religion, but ranked Christians over Jews and Muslims, and Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists over heretical sects. Versailles privileged civilization over religion, but as a means of ranking humans into developmental tiers to allocate differential rights and entitlements within the evolving international order. Because diversity regimes are institutionalized forms of recognition, they enable control and coordination under conditions of cultural heterogeneity, but they are also pregnant with the potential for alienation, humiliation, and stigmatization, and in turn political resistance and mobilization.[137]

Shifting distributions of material capabilities and new articulations of cultural difference challenge prevailing diversity regimes. It is new conjunctions of the two that are particularly challenging because those mobilizing cultural claims are enabled by new material conditions. These conjunctions are presently understood in two problematic ways. Culturalists treat beneficiaries of the shifting balance of material capabilities as thickly constituted cultural actors who will seek to reshape international order according to pre-determined cultural scripts.[138] Institutionalists treat newly endowed states as rational actors, reduce cultural claims to preferences, and assume that they can be accommodated through bargaining within pluralist institutions. Both of these miss the recognition demands generated by prevailing diversity regimes: how the hierarchies and exclusions that attend such regimes fuel alienation, humiliation, and stigmatization. What makes new conjunctions of shifting material capabilities and articulations of difference so challenging for international orders is not that cultural claims express underlying cultural identities—it is that such claims are often animated and conditioned by demands for recognition. Similarly, the cultural claims of newly endowed actors are not easily reduced to preferences

136. Ibid., 122.

137. On the nature and dynamics of stigmatization, see Ayşe Zarakol's fine study of how Japan, Turkey, and Russia were integrated into international society. See Zarakol 2011.

138. See Jacques 2012.

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because they are often infused with recognition grievances. Indeed, such grievances may color the pursuit of other interests, even the most material.

Conclusion

There is widespread anxiety among Western policy-makers and commentators about the future of the modern international order. This is not just an anxiety about shifting material capabilities. It is a cultural anxiety: a fear that as power shifts to the East, non-Western great powers will seek to reshape international order according to their own values and practices. In the words of former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, "we find ourselves at a point in history when, for the first time since George III, a non-western, non-democratic state will be the largest economy in the world. If this is the case, how will China exercise its power in the future international order? Will it accept the culture, norms and structure of the postwar order? Or will it seek to change it?"[139] When combined with concerns about the diffusion of power to transnational insurgents, justifying violence in the name of religion, the anxiety is especially pronounced. As President Barack Obama told the United Nations General Assembly, "we can renew the international system that has enabled so much progress, or we can allow ourselves to be pulled back into the undertow of instability … And it is no exaggeration to say that humanity's future depends on us uniting against those who would divide us along the fault lines of tribe, sect, race, or religion."[140]

IR is not well equipped, though, to understand the implications of new conjunctions of power and cultural difference for the future of the modern international order. As my discussion has shown, the existing literature suffers from four principal weaknesses. First, culture is either essentialized or bracketed, offering few conceptual and theoretical resources for comprehending the nature and effect of cultural diversity. Second, institutions are considered either simple expressions of underlying cultural values or structures that neutralize culture. Nowhere is the recognition function of institutions understood: how they construct and order cultural diversity. Third, while most of our authors note the structural power of international orders—how they constitute subjectivities—these are thin subjectivities, units of political authority with rights and responsibilities, not substantive political, social, or cultural identities. Finally, because international order is generally conceived narrowly as an order of sovereign states, fruitful macrohistorical comparisons are foreclosed, obscuring the modern order's distinctiveness.

To overcome these limitations, I have proposed an alternative perspective on cultural diversity and international order. Culture matters, but we should assume that international orders emerge in heterogeneous, not unitary, cultural contexts.

139. Rudd 2012.
140. Obama 2014.

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Because international orders are configurations of political authority, their stability rests not only on material capabilities, but also legitimacy. They face two interrelated legitimation challenges: to convert unequal material capabilities into political authority, and complex heterogeneity into authorized forms of cultural difference. To meet these challenges, international orders develop diversity regimes: formal and informal norms and practices that define legitimate units of political authority, authorize certain categories of cultural difference, and relate the former to the latter. But because the distribution of material capabilities changes over time, and prevailing constructions of cultural difference generate grievances, diversity regimes are forced, periodically, to either adapt or collapse. From this perspective, the principal effect of cultural diversity on international order is not corrosive, any more than cultural unity is constitutive: diversity shapes international order as a governance imperative.

This has significant implications for how we think about contemporary challenges. The key question for research is not whether a culturally homogeneous Western order is threatened by new-found diversity—it is whether the modern order's prevailing diversity regime can accommodate new conjunctions of material power and articulations of cultural difference. As I've suggested, the diversity regime that has prevailed since the 1960s combines universal sovereignty and civic-nationalism, the latter expressed through well-developed norms of multiculturalism and human rights. Two things should be noted about the challenges this regime now faces. First, newly empowered actors are mobilizing claims to civilizational, ethno-national, and religious identity, claims that were privileged in prior diversity regimes (Westphalia, Versailles, post-1945), but that the present regime is deliberately blind to (a function of the pathologies of past regimes). Second, these are not just claims for the free expression and practice of these forms of difference: they are claims for recognition, often rooted in past ways of organizing diversity internationally (Chinese references to the "century of humiliation" are but one example). The question now is whether the current diversity regime can accommodate such claims, and if not, how it might be reconstructed to meet current challenges, ensure global stability, and augment cooperation.

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