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Introduction: Evaluating global orders

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This is the final special issue of the *Review* under the Editorship of the team at St. Andrew's University.[1] In previous special issues we have investigated the critical turn in International Relations (IR) theory,[2] the politics of global communication[3] and the phenomenon of regionalism in contemporary IR.[4] For our final such issue we decided that we wanted to look, in rather more general compass, at conceptualisations of 'global order' *tout court*. That is to say, we wanted to look at the way in which we – all of us in this hugely contested and contestable field – imagine and evaluate both the 'orders' that make up what we often rather loosely refer to as '*the* global order', and the ways in which we do the evaluating.

Thus, in this special issue we look at a number of different ways of evaluating and assessing the global orders that characterise contemporary International Relations, both as it is conventionally understood (and practiced) and as it is variously and differently understood or imagined. We make no claim to exhaustiveness – indeed we doubt if an exhaustive understanding of the different ways we might imagine and evaluate global orders is possible – but we do hope that the various articles that collectively make up this special issue offer interesting and provocative 'evaluations' that can spark other such reflections in our readership.

We do not intend to list here or discuss the individual contributions – they will speak for themselves. While some of the chapters that follow have been specially commissioned for this issue – such as some of the responses to Louise Arbour's July 2008 article on the 'Responsibility to protect' and the discussion of David Miller's *National Responsibility and Global Justice* – others were submitted to the journal in the usual way and were selected for inclusion here because they seem to offer particular ways of 'evaluating' global orders that were interesting to reflect upon. Some reflect on a particular aspect of the contemporary global order (the role of the UN as an 'ideas entrepreneur', perhaps, or the problems and prospects of the 'liberal peace') others imagine a very different world order (that envisaged

[1] It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have been the custodians of the *Review* over the last five years. We thank all those who submitted articles to the *Review*, all of our referees without whom the job of the editorial team would be literally impossible and all of those at Cambridge University Press who work with such tireless efficiency to produce the journal. And we wish the new team every good fortune during their tenure.

[2] The 2007 special issue later published as Nicholas Rengger and Ben Thirkell-White (eds), *Critical International Relations Theory After twenty Five Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[3] The 2008 special issue, later published as Oliver Richmond, Alison Watson and Costas Constantinou (eds), *Global Communications and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[4] The 2009 special issue later published as Rick Fawn (ed.), *Globalizing the Regional, Regionalizing the Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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by ancient tradition, for example) but all make us think about how we might 'evaluate' global orders and what it is we do when we think of global order at all, in any context, and that was really our aim in this special issue.

While people will, of course, be inclined to agree with this or that article more than with some others, what these articles really constitute is an invitation to further dialogue. If we are to understand the complexities, opportunities and problems that constitute our increasingly global society, it is to such dialogue that we must look. And in that context the role of journals such as the *Review*, in facilitating such a dialogue is more important than ever. We look forward to seeing how the *Review* continues the dialogue in the years to come.

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