Contested World Orders: 
Rising Powers, Non-State Actors, and the Politics of Authority Beyond the Nation-state

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Introduction

World order is becoming increasingly contested. Rising powers are changing the international distribution of power and displacing many smaller developed countries from the top of the international hierarchy. Having entered strong growth paths a few decades ago, the continental economies of China and India are emerging in the top ranks of the world hierarchy, with countries like Brazil and Russia also (re-)gaining the status of major powers.\(^1\) A changing distribution of power has long been associated with fundamental changes to the hierarchies and structures of international politics. Compared to the past, international politics today has however become highly institutionalised. As a result, demands for change are not only directed towards other states, as in earlier instances of power transitions, but are increasingly directed towards international institutions. At the same time, it is not only rising powers but also transnationally organized non-state actors (NGOs) who are emerging as new actors on the international scene. NGOs are often associated with a more ‘civilized’ and less power-driven state of world politics. To add complexity, these power shifts are mediated by the outlooks, preferences, and strategies that major states adopt.

While the combined implications of these changes are not widely understood, each of the mentioned changes has been reflected in the discipline of International Relations. The rise of new powers is predominantly seen through the lenses of the traditional understanding of an ‘international system’ characterised by the strategic interactions of unitary states under anarchy. Power transition theory is the

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most obvious example for this perspective. But, as institutionalists point out, the exclusivity of state actors, underpinned by traditional notions of sovereignty, has been modified through the increased institutionalisation of world politics. ‘Global governance’ has emerged as a way to incorporate these new features of international politics into the persistence of the traditional state system, which, while contested in prescriptive terms, indicates descriptively at a minimum a departure from the idea of an ‘international system’ as the unmediated interaction of self-interested states in anarchy.

Global governance is, according to this view, also no longer limited to intergovernmental organizations and formal inter-state diplomacy. A multi-layered system of overlapping and differentiated institutions and actors has emerged that goes beyond the traditional world of governments and intergovernmental organizations, even though international organisations remain premier venues by which decisions are made and agreements enforced.

Moreover, it is argued that the emergence of a transnational civil society also questions the exclusivity of state actors in the international realm. Transnational civil society and private agents have taken on a direct role in both providing new ‘governance’ mechanisms and in providing new sources of criticism and change in global governance. Widespread economic and societal globalization or ‘denationalization’ has not only generated increased functional demand for coordination and cooperation between states, but many scholars of international relations have noted an increased societization of international politics.

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5 Arguably, such developments were foreshadowed in Bull’s notion of a ‘new medievalism’, but has been carried forward into more recent studies of ‘governance’ or ‘authority’ ‘beyond the state’. See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society. A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); James N. Rosenau and Ernst Otto Czempiel (eds.) *Governance Without Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).


characterised by the rise to prominence of a putatively ‘global’ or ‘transnational’ civil society, and the increased role of formalised transnational NGOs. 

There is a widespread perception that these three developments—shifting international power, institutionalisation of world politics, and the rise of transnational civil society organisations—have far-reaching implications for the global order in material, institutional, and ideational terms. We contend however that these implications can be only understood, if the three sketched developments are studied in relation to each other. The prevailing mode of studying rising powers and NGOs, as if they act on two different stages, misses that both type of actors most often put forward their demands and ideas to the same addressees: international institutions as the institutional core of global governance. In this paper we aim therefore at bringing these three components of change together by suggesting a conceptual framework that looks at agents that seek to contest, stabilise or control global order. We do this by analysing the demands of rising powers and non-governmental organisations towards international institutions. Both types of actors are relatively new sources of influence in international affairs, and both are perceived as holding different preferences for global governance than traditional centres of power. But how do these two sets of agents relate? Do rising powers’ and transnational NGOs demands’ intersect or diverge? Do these demands have a systemic nature or do we observe variance over different policy fields and forms of international institutions? Do they challenge or advocate the aggregation of political authority beyond the nation state? Will transnational NGOs prolong the normative influence of the West or are they potential allies of new powers? How are transnational NGOs affected by a more equal distribution of power?

These questions have barely begun to be asked. In part, this is due to the varying theoretical views of IR scholars, whose basic ontologies of world politics have emphasised different actors and different forms of power. Power-based and state-centric theories naturally incline towards a focus on power transitions amongst major states, while attention to the growing role and influence of non-governmental

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organisations has come largely from scholars working within a societal and norm-based approach. Global Governance studies, in turn, has been the focus of institutionalist theorizing. Consequently, the existing literatures on great and rising powers, that on civil society and transnational NGOs and that on Global Governance, have developed largely in parallel and rarely in intersection. Here, we address this gap by systematically comparing these two relatively new sets of actors, their demands and criticisms regarding global governance, and their patterns of interaction.

This paper reviews these developments, situates them conceptually and theoretically, and outlines a preliminary research programme. The text is structured as follows. First, we position the contemporary power shift and the increased salience of transnational NGOs within the broader emergence of the heightened role of international institutions. Against this background, we secondly develop a framework that enables us to compare the demands and challenges posed both by newly empowered actors in the state sphere, and those emerging from transnational civil society. Finally, we formulate deductively several propositions about the relationship between rising powers, transnational NGOs, and the direction of the existing world order that can be applied are used to structure the following studies.

I. Why is the Global Order Contested?

Transnational NGOs and rising powers are seen as animals so different that their study in one common framework seems to be odd. Rising powers are associated with size, with power, with hard structures and hierarchy, with billions of people, with the emphasis on sovereignty; NGOs are associated with speed, with ideas, with flexible structures and networks, with a small membership base and with cosmopolitanism undermining sovereignty. There is however one commonality between them: both gear their demands and actions to a significant extent towards international institutions. Both can be seen as actors challenging the current status quo of world order, both contest the existing international institutions. We see two distinct processes that have contributed to the increasingly contested nature of international institutions: the rise of international authority and a changed distribution of power in international relations. Whereas the former reasons is often associated with the rise of NGOs and the latter with rising powers, both developments have contributed to the rise of both types of new actors.

a) The rise of international authority:

The traditional Westphalian notion of sovereignty emphasized the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs and, closely related to this, the consensus principle. While major powers have never
fully respected sovereignty, the principle has been widely considered to be central in international politics. It involves three norms: first, that the ruler of a state exercises sole authority over the territory of that state; second, that all states are judicially equal; and third, that state parties are not subject to any law to which they do not consent. On this view, international institutions are considered to be instruments of the territorial state.

The time since the Second World War, especially spanning the last two to three decades, has brought changes that have undermined Westphalian sovereignty. In addition to violations by major powers, international institutions have developed procedures that contradict the consensus principle and the principle of non-intervention. Some international norms and rules compel national governments to take measures even when they have not agreed to do so. In some cases, decisions made by international institutions even affect individuals directly, like those taken by the United Nations Security Council Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee or by transitional administrations. Both types of activities – those that bind states thus affecting private actors only indirectly and those that affect individuals directly – are indications that international institutions have public authority. In general, international institutions have authority when the addressees of their policies recognize that these institutions can make competent judgments and binding decisions. International institutions exercise authority in that they successfully claim the right to perform regulatory functions like the formulation of rules and rule monitoring or enforcement.

The new, authority-generating quality of international institutions shows at different phases of the policy cycle. Focusing, first, on the negotiation or decision phase, majoritarian decision making in international institutions indicates the authority shift. Majoritarian decision making increases the ability of international institutions to act, by cancelling the vetoes of individual states and overcoming blockades.

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Today, roughly two-thirds of all international organizations with the participation of at least one great power have the possibility to decide by majority. Monitoring and verification of international rules are, likewise, increasingly carried out by actors who are not directly under the control of states. Two prominent examples are the International Monetary Fund (for the global financial system) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (for the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty). In addition to such bodies, the role of international secretariats in regulatory monitoring has increased notably in recent years.

Regarding disputed cases of rule interpretation, there has been a significant increase in international judicial bodies. In 1960, there were worldwide only 27 quasi-judicial bodies; by 2004, this number had grown to 97. If we narrow the definition and include only those bodies that meet all of the prerequisites for formal judicial proceedings, then only five such bodies existed worldwide in 1960, climbing to 28 by 2004. Concerning rule enforcement, we can observe an increased readiness to levy material sanctions against violators. Ius cogens (independent and binding international law, not requiring the consent of states) in the meantime reaches beyond the prohibition of wars of aggression include inter alia the prohibition of crimes against humanity, genocide, and apartheid. Furthermore, especially since 1989, the international community has begun to respond to cases of gross violation of ius cogens increasingly with military force and economic sanctions.

In addition, transnational governance institutions, which are able to partially escape the control of nation-states, have gained in importance. Some examples of private forms of transnational governance include the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), and the countless ‘codes of conduct’ and certification systems (e.g., Forest Stewardship Council,

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Rugmark, etc.). Thus the number of sectoral and company-wide codes of conduct have greatly multiplied since the 1990s.\(^8\)

Overall, a dense network of international and transnational institutions of unprecedented quality and quantity has developed in recent decades. Many of these new institutions are far more intrusive than conventional international institutions. They can circumvent the resistance of most governments via majoritarian decision-making and dispute settlement procedures, through the interaction of monitoring agencies with transnational society, and by dominating the process of knowledge interpretation in some fields. With the – most often consensual – decision to install international institutions with such features, state parties become subject to a law other than their own, to which they have either not agreed upon (mission creep) or do not agree any more (costly exit option). At least in some issue areas, the global level has achieved a certain degree of authority and has thus partially replaced the consensus principle of the traditional international system.

Problems of legitimation and resistance can be seen as the flip side of the increased authority and distributional significance of institutions beyond the traditional national context. Growing resistance against international institutions occurs to the extent that international institutions exercise authority but cannot build on sufficient stocks of legitimacy.\(^9\) This understanding of a growing post-national dynamic between ‘power’ and ‘resistance’ or ‘governance’ and ‘opposition’ has found expression in varying conceptual vocabularies emerging from a variety of theoretical perspectives, all of which attach a significant role to the trend for the exercise of authority beyond the national context to become increasingly contested.\(^{20}\) Especially in the 1990s, during the height of American power and the expansion of liberal economic globalisation, much of this contestation was associated with transnational protest activism and the anti-globalisation movements, symbolised and propagated by spectacular protest events on the sidelines of major world summits. Many international institutions were associated with the propagation of liberal economic norms and intrusive policy agreements, ultimately with a disruptive and socially corrosive form of capitalism. The agents of contestation were associated with domestic and


transnational social mobilisation, often conceived as part of the emergence of a putatively ‘global’ civil society.  

Where previous approaches have tended to assume that the agents of contestation emerge primarily or exclusively from the non-state realm of civil society, this study is designed to extend previous attempts at bridging the gaps between the ‘politics of governance’ with the ‘politics of resistance’. It thus follow the notion that resistance to global governance comprises “social movements, global civil society actors such as NGOs and, potentially, coalitions of Third World states.” We see governance and contestation as part of a single process of political decision making and claims making beyond the nation state in a broader reflexive dynamic of global governance, in which progressively more political actors pay attention to and reflect on political order beyond national borders. We therefore expect a growing utilization of international institutions to the extent that they exercise authority. Many governments, transnational non-governmental organizations and social movements publicly address international institutions in a positive way, for instance, by calling for drastic intensification of climate policy measures at the international level. Similarly, there have been numerous recent demands for much stronger interventions by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and multilateral development banks as a response to the financial crisis. At the same time, various groups seek permanent access to international institutions in order to facilitate their influence on internal agendas and policy formulation, as well as to hold these institutions accountable in the phases of policy implementation.

In short, the rise of international political authority has increased the contestedness of international institutions. It has increased the political opportunities for transnational activities on the side of NGOs, and it has become a major object of interest for non-Western states.

b) Power Shift

The second dynamic is external to international institutions themselves, and accompanies the global redistribution of wealth within the international society of states, the constituent members of international institutions. The economic growth of major countries outside the G7 group of developed states has shifted the balance of power away from the traditional custodians of the international institutional order. For example, the OECD directs attention to the ‘BRIICS’ countries of Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa, the six largest non-OECD countries in the world.²⁶ In 1995, these six countries’ gross national products represented around a third of that of the G7. By 2013, this portion had risen to nearly three-quarters. In addition, expectations about the future have fuelled perceptions of importance of today: the OECD expects this growth trend to continue so that by 2030 the BRIICS will represent nearly one-and-a-half times the economic output of the G7.²⁷ From this longer historical perspective, the ‘unipolar moment’²⁸ of American power after the Cold War appears more as a hiatus than an enduring feature of the international system.

There is a virtual theoretical consensus that international institutions reflect existing relations of power, regardless of whether the fundamental subjects of that power are considered to be states or social groups, or whether international institutions exercise a more than epiphenomenal role in world politics.²⁹ Consequently, power shifts will lead to new challenges for existing institutions. There are at least three separate mechanisms by which an increased share of the world’s economic activity translates into a new power position regarding international institutions, with consequent expectations for a renegotiation of global governance arrangements by rising powers. First, economic expansion increases the resources upon which a state can draw in its dealings with other states. Economic resources can be converted into instruments of ‘direct’ and ‘relational’ power, such as bureaucratic capacity, epistemic

²⁶ OECD, Globalisation and Emerging Economies: Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa (Geneva: OECD Publishing, 2008).
resources, and the ability to furnish material (dis)incentives and side-payments. It can also ultimately be converted into military capabilities, as often underlined by realist theories. Secondly, having a large economy also conveys bargaining power through the leverage of access to large internal markets, which are particularly relevant in economic policy fields such as trade. Economic size conveys the potential for ‘asymmetrical interdependence’ (or rather, simple dependency) regarding smaller states, and increasingly ‘symmetrical’ interdependence with the economic hegemon. Thirdly, a country’s share of the world economy is significant from a systemic point of view. Countries with particularly large shares of the world economy have a functional importance to the global economy that makes them ‘systemically significant’. The threshold for systemic significance has moreover been lowered as a result of economic globalisation, as it increases the need for states to coordinate and collaborate in their decisions in order to govern effectively. Consequently, new powers have achieved a kind of veto or spoiling capacity over collective decisions in global governance. States’ systemic significance is arguably decisive also for the positioning of which states occupy central positions within transnational networks and for the cultivation of economic and cultural ‘structural power’. It is some time now since it was still reasonable to assert that “Even in specific issue areas, developing countries rarely have national power capabilities to bargain effectively with the more industrialized states, much less to change international regimes.” Two decades ago the G7 countries could override the rest of the world if they agreed. Today, little can be agreed without the consent of China, India, and several other new powers.

In addition to the power that flows from material resources and centrality to global economic processes, another indication of the emergence of new centres of power lies in their increased status flowing from their recognition by established powers. The shift from the G7 to the G20 as the primary intergovernmental forum for the governance of the global economy is the clearest indicator of the increased status of some major non-G7 countries, but it can also be observed in other institutional domains, such as the changes in the inner circle of negotiators in climate and trade politics, and in statements such as President Obama’s public recognition that India is “not simply emerging; India has

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emerged”.\(^{35}\) This external recognition is, moreover, complemented by the increased ‘self-identification’ of some states as ‘rising powers’, which can be seen in the proliferation of new coalitions and networks of rising powers,\(^{36}\) such as IBSA (since 2003), BRICS (since 2008-2009), and BASIC (since 2009).

Many of today’s rising powers have been long-standing critics of the established order, either on the ‘inside’ as members of the developing world, or externally as champions of revolutionary change. The question is how these newly empowered states will relate to international institutions that have already acquired significant levels of political authority and domestic intrusiveness. At the same time, the power shift has opened up new opportunities for NGOs. They can point to the need include Southern perspective and they can to some extent mediate existing conflicts. The rise of international authority and the power shift together have thus empowered NGOs and rising powers.

Against this background, we turn our focus onto the specific forms and content of contestation as played out in the international public sphere. Contestation plays an important role in our conceptual scheme, as a mechanism by which international institutions increasingly become the targets of political demands and criticisms.\(^{37}\) From the vantage of democratic theory, contestation is considered a necessary condition for ‘democracy’ or ‘polyarchy’ and shares cognate status with concepts like “opposition, rivalry, or competition.”\(^{38}\) It is a critical transmission mechanism by which public authority can be exposed to the preferences of the citizenry. In such a view, the contestation of international institutions could be seen as a means by which international authority is held accountable to the subjects of that authority. An alternative conception of the role of contestation can be gleaned from deliberative theory, in which the exchange of contending ideas in the public sphere is a form of ‘communicative action’ that contributes to the formation of a ‘common understanding’ of the public good or a ‘reasoned consensus’ through the exchange of argumentation, reasoning, and deliberation.\(^{39}\) In such a view, contestation can contribute to the discursive diversity of the global public sphere in the search for the common good.

More radical theories of democracy, on the other hand, resist this idea of a search for a ‘rational’


consensus, favouring instead the democratic value of “leaving this space of contestation forever open.”

In such a view, contestation may be considered a constitutive feature of a desirable political order for the manner in which it promotes pluralism as an ‘axiological principle’ that is “constitutive at the conceptual level of the very nature of modern democracy and considered as something that we should celebrate and enhance.”

These varying approaches from democratic political theory – liberal, deliberative, and agonistic – have all associated contestation with fundamental features of an open, and desirable, political order.

Rising powers and NGOs are the most visible agents of contestation in the international sphere and thus substantively important when studying contested world order. Any outcome of increased contestation can thus only be understood, when both type of these change actors are taken into account. We thus need to study how they relate to each other.

II. Rising Power and NGOs: Preferences and Strategies

(a) The variety of Rising Powers and NGOs

Rising powers and NGOs have both been identified as especially significant agents of contestation in the antagonisms of contemporary global governance. This raises the question of the extent to which either set of actors can be considered a coherent group and social category, open to the kind of generalizable propositions aimed at in nomothetic social science. Structural realist theories provide propositions based on deductive reasoning that suggest that rising powers should behave in a similar manner due to their increasing material capabilities (which is their major constitutive feature). The most developed line of enquiry in this regard stems from theories of ‘power transitions’ and hegemonic cycles, for whom rising states tend to be ‘dissatisfied’ with the existing hierarchies, institutions and structures of the international system. Realism has always attached a primary significance to a states’ position in the international power hierarchy in shaping their outward behaviour. Although the countries considered as central to the contemporary power shift (such as Brazil, China, India) exhibit considerable power

variation, with China occupying a privileged position as it overtakes even the United States in terms of sheer economic weight,\textsuperscript{44} one can expect from this perspective significant similarities among rising powers. On the other hand, other accounts stress the diversity of contemporary rising powers and the many varying factors – such as regime type, level of development, and normative compatibility with the existing order – that affect their behaviour and demands regarding global governance.\textsuperscript{45} Liberal and critical theoretical approaches have often emphasised the importance of domestic political and economic structures in shaping states’ international behaviour, with the latter emphasising also transnational linkages.\textsuperscript{46} Constructivists challenge both views by pointing to collective ideas about international order and the role of the country therein. In this view, it is collective intentions that guide the strategy – separatist, integrationist or revisionist – of rising powers.\textsuperscript{47} These collective ideas and the associated strategies can vary not only across rising powers, but also within a rising power over time. Such a reasoning is most sceptical about the value of the common category rising powers.

Similar disagreements exist concerning the behaviour and broader role of transnational civil society organisations in global governance. Whether thought of as international,\textsuperscript{48} transnational,\textsuperscript{49} or global ‘civil society’,\textsuperscript{50} or in the form of transnational ‘social movements’\textsuperscript{51} and ‘advocacy networks’,\textsuperscript{52} a vast literature has emerged which sees this non-state social space as contributing to far-reaching changes

\textsuperscript{44}Leslie Elliott Armijo, “The BRICs Countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) as Analytical Category: Mirage or Insight?”, \textit{Asian Perspective} 31:4 (2007): 10-14; Andrew F. Cooper and Daniel Flemes, “Foreign Policy Strategies of Emerging Powers in a Multipolar World: An introductory review”, \textit{Third World Quarterly} 34:6 (2013): 943–962 at 949-951.
\textsuperscript{45}Leslie Elliott Armijo, “The BRICs Countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) as Analytical Category: Mirage or Insight?”, Asian Perspective 31:4 (2007):7-42.
\textsuperscript{51}Robert O’Brien, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams (Eds.) \textit{Contesting Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Donatella dell Porta and Sidney Tarrow (Eds.) \textit{Transnational Protests and Global Activism} (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).
\textsuperscript{52}Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, \textit{Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)
within the institutions and processes of global governance. One strand sees NGOs as means to ensure participation of world society in global decision-making and implementation. In this view, they serve as “transmission belts” between society and governance units and contribute to the democratization of global governance. Other accounts stress the role of these agents in contesting and resisting features of existing international institutions. Yet simple equations of civil society with resistance are strongly contested by accounts that emphasise the co-optation of civil society groups within the very machinery of global governance that they are supposedly to contest. Gramscians have long argued that the apparent separation of the ‘state’ from ‘civil society’ is more apparent than real, with dominant social forces able to transform “civil society into a mechanism for stability and control.” In this vein, the transnationalisation of civil society can be linked to the projection of influence of the particular state-society forms of the advance, capitalist West, reducing civil society groups to the status of ‘shock troops of the Empire’, in which “global civil society and human rights NGOs are seen as representing a culture that is Western and universalist in orientation and thus part and parcel of the configuration of power relations that maintain global governance structures.” The “politicization” perspective therefore emphasizes the multiple roles of NGOs: They can be sites of resistance against global governance, but they can also utilize international institutions to achieve their goals. In any case, Western views are much better represented than the South. It is then exactly the interplay of NGOs with different views and goals that lead to the politicization of international institutions.

60 Cf. the contributions in Michael Zürn and Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt (Eds.) Die Politisierung der Weltpolitik: Umkämpfte internationale Institutionen (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2013).
The diversity of nomenclature seems also to be indicative of the substantive diversity of this group of actors. Some point to a differentiation between transnational actors with a primarily instrumental motivation (such as multinational corporations, business associations and lobby groups) and those motivated by the pursuit of the ‘common good’ appears most salient, even if such a distinction must be treated “as a continuum rather than sharply divided classes of actors.”\textsuperscript{61} Similarly, we employ a distinction between groups that demand institutions and policies that are compatible with the short-term material interests of their members (member driven) from groups with defend purposes that do not necessarily foster material interests of members (purpose driven).

For all of these reasons, it appears unlikely that either of our two sets of actors – rising powers and transnational NGOs – speak with a single voice regarding the politics of authority beyond the nation state. Consequently, we focus on the articulation of demands and criticisms regarding specific international institutions including other forms of communication such as voting in the General Assembly. In order to better understand the real interaction of rising powers and NGOs regarding the increased authority of international institutions, we therefore look at a selection of rising powers and NGOs in order to find out which types of groups take similar positions.

(b) Justifications as Indicators of Preferences and Strategies

A complete account of contested world orders would look at preferences of rising powers and NGOs in a first step, then at the observable behaviour and strategies of these actors in a second step, and finally at counter-strategies of incumbent powers.\textsuperscript{62} The informational requirements for such a complete account are enormous and almost impossible to fulfil in a study that focuses on multiple rising powers and multiple NGOs in multiple issue areas. Moreover, preferences cannot be directly observed nor adequately deduced from existing theories. We therefore focus on contestation in public spheres and aim to derive from statements and claims both preferences and behavioural strategies.

Both groups of actors under question necessarily engage in the public processes of contestation and deliberation involved in the politics of international institutions, and both are required to provide justifications and legitimation for their preferred visions for global governance. Central to our


\textsuperscript{62} We thus roughly follow the conceptual framework of Kahler, who distinguishes preferences over institutional design, from capabilities and strategies and counterstrategies. See Miles Kahler, “Rising powers and global governance: negotiating change in a resilient status quo.” \textit{International Affairs} 89:3 (2013): 711-729.
understanding of the public contestation of international institutions are therefore political evaluations and criticisms.

Public discourse and political statements are important because they represent the threshold at which a privately held preference enters into the domain of political contestability. States and NGOs can privately aspire to profound changes in the global order (preferences), but these aspirations only become a feature of international politics and public debate if they become part of their strategic and communicative behaviour, at which point they become part of the terrain of political contestability. It is only by crossing the threshold onto the ‘public transcript’ of international politics that these aspirations and dissatisfactions can be considered a feature of the public contestation of international institutions. Public communications and statements can both provide insight into preferences, and be meaningful in themselves as contributing to normative development.

Firstly, statements can be considered from a purely rationalist perspective as a mechanism by which states as well as non-state actors exchange information about their preferences, making promises about their future actions, and issuing credible promises or threats – a ‘cheap talk’ idea of communicative behaviour. Of course, interpreting such statements must take into account the strategic nature of the international environment, so that statements cannot be read uncritically as reflections of ‘true’ preferences. Taking states’ (or NGOs’) statements at their face value risks conflating strategic discourse for honest reflections of underlying interests or preferences. Even from a purely ‘cheap talk’ model of public statements, however, political evaluations and criticisms are important sources of information regarding the preferences that rising powers and non-state actors hold regarding international institutions. There may be instances of international interactions in which actors may have a strong interest in revealing their true preferences. In the case of NGOs, the reputation costs of disingenuousness could be fatally high. For powerful states, there are clear incentives, especially in bargaining situations, to exaggerate or downplay one’s demands as a bargaining tactic. But there are,

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equally, reasons for state officials to stipulate their true preferences in order to elicit compromises from the opponent. Secondly, whereas an individual’s real preferences may lie within “the most illusive of psychological data,” the public statements of states can be cross-checked through other empirical strategies, including archival research and expert and decision-maker interviews. The interests of corporate entities such as NGOs and states can be publicly embedded in “symbols, speeches by officials, and even in institutional rules and procedures.” For both reasons, taking statements as clues to actor’s preferences can be cautiously justified.

Secondly, a different interest in public acts of communicative contestation stems from interest in the discursive politics of legitimation and delegitimation. This approach emphasises the role of legitimacy as a mechanism for political control, but also as a mechanism by which existing institutions and relationships can be challenged and contested through the act of withholding legitimacy or the use of strategic delegitimation. The interest in legitimacy can be traced not simply to new agents questioning the legitimacy of global governance, but also to the increased authority of supranational institutions. This mechanism of contestation has been often associated with the tactics of civil society organisations, such as naming and shaming campaigns. As Martha Finnemore explains, “Even actors with limited or no material capability can mount damaging attacks on the credibility, reputation, and legitimacy of the powerful. The tools to mount such attacks are not hard to come by in contemporary politics.”

But challenging the legitimacy of international institutions is also a mechanism by which institutionally marginalised powers can contest their subordination, especially when formalised routes to institutional change are difficult or blocked by incumbent powers, and the legitimacy discourses of states retains a

prime position if states remain “the privileged constituency of legitimation for intergovernmental institutions.” Such approaches lend themselves methodologically to the study of the ‘legitimation statement’ as the primary unit of analysis. Such an approach asks of public political actors “Which criteria and arguments do they use to assess their regime and to justify these evaluations?” While this can be dismissed as ‘rhetorical action’, many argue that such rhetorical action can slide uneasily into genuine deliberation via the mechanisms of the ‘civilizing force of hypocrisy’, ‘hypocrisy traps’, ‘rhetorical entrapment’, and “argumentative self-entrapment.” Consequently, the statements become meaningful in a second, normative sense. As Hurd explains, “public statements about a principle of legitimation might be turned around by others in ways the speaker never intended but from which they can’t escape. International talk may be cheap, but it is never free.”

For these reasons, we propose that public statements can be a useful resource with which to study the contested politics of authority beyond the nation state. Our focus on contestation, i.e. discursive statements, claims and symbolic acts, delimits the research and thus allows for comparisons and the development of hypotheses about the contestation of global governance (not the outcomes). It is however not restricted to the process of revealing preferences, we also include statements about who is considered as coalition partner or opponent and about which strategies should be taken. In this way, we want to study both preferences and strategies in contested world orders.

On preferences: As this study lays out a systematic and comparative inquiry into the nature of the contestation of international institutions by rising powers and NGOs, we foreground in particular three dimensions of rising power and NGO preferences and demands that we consider deserving of particular attention. We formulate these in terms of three research questions:

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1. What is the extent of support or opposition for the aggregation of political authority by the international institution?

2. To what extent does the actor advocate or oppose the institutionalisation of liberal policies and principles?

3. Taking these two measures together, what is the distance between the calls for change and the institutional status quo? Does this bi-dimensional measure of the extent of change called for by each actor reflect a revisionist or status quo character?

Let us examine each of these dimensions in some greater detail.

(1) The first question concerns the degree to which the actor under question demands international rules, institutions and authority. This dimension consists of two components. On the one hand, we want to know whether international rules are called for or are opposed. On the other hand, we aim at grasping the preferred institutional form. Here, we distinguish mere intergovernmental cooperation from international authority. These components can be thought of as a spectrum along which three major benchmarks can be identified: national discretion, intergovernmental coordination, and supranationalism. National discretion leaves all decisions to sovereign states, prioritising unilateral autonomy over international coordination. Mere intergovernmental coordination leaves the implementation and the decision whether or not to comply completely on the side of the states. Supranationalism denotes an authoritative international order. International authority involves institutional devices that undermine the consent principle of international politics. In this case, international organizations even foresee the possibility of majority decisions (with the possibility to press minorities to do something they have not agreed to) or install governance units that possess autonomy.

(2) The second question aims at grasping the content of the rules under question. In our analysis, the degree of liberalism is most apt to capture the decisive differences systematically and across cases. It has been suggested that the ‘core commitment’ of liberalism is to the concept of liberty, and it is subsequently associated with both economic openness (the lack of political barriers to the unhindered
exchange of capital, goods, and labour) and political individualism (the commitment to human rights). International institutions are liberal to the extent that they promote the reduction of political barriers to the cross national exchange of material goods (capital and commodities), labour power (services and migration), and ideas (cultural goods and knowledge). Demands and claims that ask for a reduction of barriers to allow for free exchange across borders and for a strengthening of international mechanisms to guarantee human rights will be counted as liberal. These demands can also be labelled “market-making-demands”, and have been seen as part of attempts at constitutionalising neoliberalism at a level beyond the nation state. Essentially they ask for institutions that guarantee the free and unhindered exchange of goods and ideas. They are directed against national political interventions and can be labelled negative integration. The other pole of this continuum may be labelled positive integration. These demands and claims ask for political interventions in order to reduce the unwelcome effects of free exchange, be it inequality, environmental degradation or the erosion of national cultures and habits. These word order demands either ask for global recognition of national autonomy or for stronger interventions on the international level such as global redistribution.

Combining the two dimensions of the content and level of regulations and institutions, we identify six varieties of world order demands.

Matrix 1: Six Types of World Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Interventionist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supranationalism</td>
<td>Neoliberal Minimal Order (Neoliberal Global Governance)</td>
<td>Cosmopolitan Constitutionalism (Positive Integration)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

World order demands which are simultaneously liberal but reject all forms of international coordination result in a competitive system of rival liberal capitalisms – a system depicted most vividly in the concept of a competitive ‘race to the bottom’ of market regulations and the idea of the market-oriented ‘competition state’.\(^82\) A similar rejection of international coordination combined with non-market structures can be discussed as a ‘sovereign autonomy’ system, and which results in economic terms as a mercantilist order. The era of rival imperialisms and the lead up to World War Two can be considered historical precedents.\(^83\) At the other extreme, world orders with high levels of supranational authority combined with the institutionalisation of liberal content can be considered the ideal type of a neoliberal minimal order in analogy to Nozick’s minimal state.\(^84\) Many critics see the existing order as one of neoliberal global governance.\(^85\) On the other hand, such a supranational order based on non-market coordination and interventionism can be thought of as representing attempts at authoritative global redistribution, or for providing the international rules necessary to preserve national autonomy. Some varieties of cosmopolitanism approach these demands,\(^86\) while others represent a compromise with liberal constitutionalism in the form of global social democracy.\(^87\) Between world orders demands of national discretion and supranationality are world orders of intergovernmental coordination, which compromise between national discretion and global supranationality. John Ruggie’s concept of ‘embedded liberalism’ as descriptor of the post-World War II order reflects a mostly intergovernmental

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order which sought a balance between liberal openness (coordinated liberalism) and domestic economic interventionism (coordinated dirigisme).  

(3) The real world knows at best approximations to ideal types. The demands of different actors will therefore be located in all parts of the two-dimensional space, not only at the poles of the dimensions. The same is true of the status quo. By comparing the status quo with the demands of the actor under question, we can determine the distance and the direction of the changed aimed for by a given actor. Calls for radical departures from existing levels of liberalisation and authority will result in a wider distance between the agent’s position and the institutional status quo, while positioning in defence of existing arrangements moves the agent closer to the ideal type of satisfaction with existing institutions. Calls that lie northeast of the status quo ask for a more encompassing global governance, while the ones being southwest of the status quo effectively aim at creating a system in which states engage in competitive liberalisation.

Surely, the status quo is most policy fields is not just somewhere. The status quo is seen by most people as quite liberal. The influence of liberalism as an animating principle of international institutions is consequently seen in the trade protocols of the WTO, in the articles of agreement of the IMF, in the policy advice of the World Bank, and in the diffusion of a global human rights regime and attendant notions of ‘responsible’ sovereignty. That there are deep connections between international institutions and liberalism has come to be appreciated from a variety of theoretical perspectives in world politics. International institutions are seen both as a product of the liberal preferences of major states and groups, and as important conduits for the dissemination of liberal policies and worldviews.

Most prominently, John Ikenberry has trenchantly argued that existing multilateral institutions reflect a ‘liberal international order’ that owes its existence to the hegemonic activities of the United States and its allies in the aftermath of World War Two. This liberal order is characterised by its relative economic openness and is based on a ‘loosely rule-based’ international order.  

Existing multilateral institutions are ‘liberal’ in the sense that they are designed to stabilise these liberal principles, and multilateral in the

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89 G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), xii. Note that this definition of liberalism contains both of the dimensions that we separated. It points to the free exchange and individual rights as well as to a world order which applies some rules more or less consistently.
sense that “openness and rules are inclusive and nondiscriminatory.” Indeed, although this order was created by the exercise of hegemonic power by the United States, the liberal nature of today’s institutions ensure their robustness in the face of the decline of American power. The WTO is an example of such a ‘post-hegemonic’ liberal institution, in which the US has no special rights or privileges, “But the norms of trade law are fundamentally based on notions of equality and reciprocity.” Similar thoughts underlie the renowned argument that the social purpose of the post-war institutional order reflected a normative structure of ‘disembedded liberalism’ in which the needs of both market and society would be reconciled through multilateralism and domestic interventionism. By extension, many have now argued that contemporary international organisations provide the global regulatory framework for a hyper- or neo-liberal order, as a more-or-less intended outcome of a transnational movement to strengthen the rights of the owners of capital. For some, the connection between global governance and liberalism is so deep as to be constitutive, seeing global governance itself as a distinctly neo-liberal political project. On a more abstract level, theorists of the world polity posit that international organisations have literally constructed a world culture sustained by broadly liberal ontological and cognitive models, such as individualism, rational progress, and world citizenship.

In summary: locating the demands of rising powers and NGOs within this three dimensional framework of contestation should provide us with insight into the direction for the development of world order that they aspire to: away from or towards greater international authority, more or less liberalism, and demanding change or defending the status quo.

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On strategies: Studying the statements, claims and symbolic acts of rising powers and NGOs will not only provide insights about the preferences of these agents, it should as improve our understanding of the strategies preferred and employed. We are aware that our focus on contestation is not able to capture the full scale of conceivable strategies. Whereas public contestation certainly is a kind of resistance, there are other forms of resistance that do not entail public contestation. It has been trenchantly and persuasively argued by James Scott that to limit one’s attention to those openly declared instances of public resistance is to obscure the world of passive, ‘everyday resistance’ and undeclared resentments “by which new political forces and demands germinate before they burst on the scene.”

For Scott, confining “our conception of the political to activity that is openly declared… is to focus on the visible coastline of politics and miss the continent that lies beyond.” Resistance can be openly declared, or disguised and undisclosed; by contrast, contestation is inherently public. We agree it would be a categorical mistake to conflate public contestation with resistance, even if, as we believe, public contestation covers an important public face of resistance which can also tell us much about actual preferences. But there is also reason to think that in the cases we examine, all of the major actors have incentives to translate their resentments or aspirations into public contestation, in order that they are taken into account. While it is important to be aware of extant power asymmetries which constrain actors from revealing their true preferences, there are reasons to think that public contestation will capture a good deal of the preferences and strategies relating to our two sets of actors. The nature of NGO advocacy ensures that they publicly articulate their preferences, and, while it is important to be aware of the power asymmetries that may constrain states from revealing their true preferences and resorting to hidden resistance (such as foot dragging on implementing international agreements), the vigour of public debates amongst major powers indicates a relatively unconstrained speech community. We believe that in these debates, as in contemporary democracies domestically, “an exclusive concern for open political action will capture much that is significant in political life” due to the relative freedom and ability of these states and NGOs to speak their minds.

To capture variation on the strategies that rising powers and NGOs employ when they engage in public contestation, we focus on their chosen patterns of coalition formation. As we expect that public claims,
statements, justifications and voting decisions reveal to a large degree states’ preferences, we believe they can also give us an indication of their preferred strategies. Again we ask three questions.

1. Which are the agents targeted by the demands? Who is seen as the incumbent?
2. Which actors are considered as the major opponents aiming at drastically different goals?
3. Which actors are considered as supporters or even as coalition partners? What mechanisms are advised for utilizing the partnership?

Especially, the latter two questions are important to develop categories with which strategies can be conceptualized. As a first step, we would distinguish roughly between different types of partners and opponents. The combination leads to four archetypes of strategies. The typology certainly needs to refined in the process of research considering issues such as whether or not formal coalitions are envisioned or whether the partner states are seen in the OECD world.

Matrix 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Opponents</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States</td>
<td>Intergovermental</td>
<td>Sovereignty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Like-Minded</td>
<td>World Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Case Selection

Which actors and which policy fields contribute the most analytical value to understanding the interaction of rising powers and NGOs over the development of world order? Case selection here is guided by three major considerations: capturing institutional variation regarding both international authority and the degree of liberal policy content, capturing actor-level variation regarding the population of our two sets of actors (NGOs and rising powers), and selecting from a variety of policy fields or issue areas.

Regarding actor-level variation, while we allow for some across-case variation regarding the specific NGOs and rising powers depending on their salience for each institution, we seek to incorporate as much variation as possible regarding possible explanatory factors. Indeed, the ‘BRICS’ category is a blessing in
this respect, as it combines variation on regime type, level of economic development, economic size, and levels of material power. From the world of transnational NGOs, we seek to incorporate both actors that can be classified as lobby groups for specific interests, as well as those serving broader normative goals. We seek to include NGOs with origins in the developed and the developing world, from both the service and advocacy types of activity, and from different areas of policy focus (human rights, development, environment, etc.).

Our selection of institutions as cases is guided by their internal features as well as the need to encompass a variety of issue areas. Issue areas are realms of social activity that share common features. These can be delineated in different ways depending on the analytical interest, such as the substantive policy field, the problem structure (‘game’) underlying it, the kinds of actors involved, and so on. Here, we attempt to include international institutions from three major issue areas of world order: welfare (the material basis for existence through allocation of economic goods), security (protection against physical threats), and authority (the organisation of freedoms and political participation).

We therefore draw our case studies from all four of the cells below, which positions international institutions regarding their authority, the extent of liberal content, and issue area. For example, the WTO combines high levels of international authority with a high degree of liberal policy content. The G7, and more recently the G20, are major institution that follows strictly intergovernmental procedures of decision making. It has no autonomous authority, but serves as an important cite for possible policy coordination of all sort amongst major powers. While the affinity for the proliferation of liberal tenets of governance was a feature of the G7, this trait is less obvious regarding the much more diverse G20. In this manner, we seek to draw case studies from a variety of issue areas from all four of the quadrants below.

Matrix 3: Case Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Liberal Content</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


A major interest underlying this project stems from descriptive and normative considerations: what are the implications of the emergence of rising powers and NGOs for the trajectory of world order? In order to arrive at sounds judgments, our project also aims at developing and testing theoretical propositions about the contestation of world order. We want to know: which actors have preferences significantly different from the status quo? Is the difference mainly regarding the content or the institutional form? Which actors are rather in favour of the status quo? Do rising powers and NGOs systematically differ? Do they come out at different sides of the status quo? Do they see each other as opponents or as partners? Moreover, we expect to give differentiated answers to these questions depending on the type of rising power and the type of NGO. Different theoretical approaches to world politics provide us with different ways of understanding these questions, and can give rise to different expectations and propositions which can be evaluated with this material.

Hypothesis about Preferences

Great power realists hold that international institutions are epiphenomenal to the distribution of material power, and foremost military power, in the international system. International institutions “reflect state calculations of self-interest based primarily on the international distribution of power. The most power states in the system create and shape institutions so that they can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it.” It follows that rising powers will have preferences at variance to the

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**IV. Non-State Actors, Great Powers, and Global Governance: Propositions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>UNGA (authority)</th>
<th>IAEA (security)</th>
<th>UNFCCC (welfare)</th>
<th>G7 (encompassing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>UNSC (security)</td>
<td>WTO (welfare)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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established powers, whose institutions reflect their own interests, and will seek to challenge these institutions as their ability to do so increases.

H 1a: The more power a rising state has, the more its preferences diverge from the status quo.

Similarly, power transition theorists and theories about cycles of hegemonic conflict share an assumption that rising powers tend to be sources of conflict and contestation of existing international institutions. Both theories are also structuralist in the sense that a states’ position in the international power hierarchy shapes to a large extent its avenues for behaviour, but differ crucially from great power realists in adding a consideration of rising powers’ domestic structures. Power transition theory focuses on the two major antagonists: the biggest rising state and the established state. The dominant state will defend the status quo, “from which it accrues substantial benefits”, while when the rising challenger state approaches parity with the dominant state, it “greatly increases the probability of conflict.” However, the potential for conflict is only severe when the rising state is also dissatisfied. In particular, “states with economic and political institutions similar to those of the dominant power likely will be satisfied with the status quo.” This would imply that considerable variation should exist in rising power preferences. As the authors note, this places power transition theory in tune with democratic peace theory. Similarly, from the point of view of hegemonic cycles, it has been argued that because international institutions reflect the interests of powerful states, rising powers are likely to be dissatisfied with them. Nonetheless, it is possible for these tensions to be successfully contained, “provided that the interests and social purposes of the major economic powers are congruent.”

Neither power transition nor hegemonic stability theories believe that rising powers are necessarily revisionist – but they do consider growing power to be an essential prerequisite for dissatisfied powers to begin to challenge the international order. Consequently,

H 1b: The closer a rising power comes to parity with the dominant state, the more likely it is to challenge the status quo openly (unless its internal institutions are similar to those of the dominant state).

Curiously, it is the opposite logic that underpins some neoclassical realist accounts.\textsuperscript{109} As Randall Schweller summarises, “By definition, rising powers are doing better than everyone else under the current order. It is not obvious, therefore, why they (of all states) would seek to spoil the established order.”\textsuperscript{110} By such a reasoning, the fastest growing powers should be the most satisfied with the existing order. This gives rise to the counter-hypothesis,

H 1c: The more power a rising state has, the less its preferences diverge from the status quo.

Liberal approaches to international relations have often emphasized the significance of domestic factors in explaining state preferences, and rising powers are no exception.\textsuperscript{111} From this point of view, states’ preferences are not structurally determined by the distribution of power, but arise from their domestic social bases. To the extent that existing international institutions represent the societal preferences of open, liberal democracies, the status quo should align with liberal interests. For example, it has been argued that the liberal the trade policies of the rising powers assists in their integration into the existing order.\textsuperscript{112} This has also been complemented by a liberal constructivist perspective, in which liberal democratic states internalise norms that lead to common ‘security communities’. The security community of liberal democracies aligns them with the status quo via three mechanisms: “collective identities and shared values; transnational political, economic, and cultural interdependence; and international structures of governance regulating social order.”\textsuperscript{113} This implies that any obstacles to the co-optation of rising powers into existing regimes and institutions would likely come not from inherent conflict between rising and established powers but from ‘blocking coalitions’ of vested interests at a


domestic level, who have something to lose from continued liberalisation or the adaptation to western liberal ideas and ideologies. Because the dominant states in the system have externalised a specifically liberal world order, the more liberal the domestic structures of the rising powers, the more they should be satisfied with the status quo.

H 2a: Liberal Order Hypothesis: The more liberal the internal order of a rising power, the more it favours the current liberal status quo.

H 2b: The more a state has benefitted from the current order (measured in growth rates), the more it favours the current status quo.

A related argument focuses more particularly on the nature of rising powers’ domestic political institutions: namely whether they are democratic or not. Many authors have assumed for different reasons that non-democratic states favour sovereignty as the primary principle of world order, such that non-democratic rising powers are likely to be particularly sceptical regarding the emergence of international authority. Following this logic, we consider:

H 3: Authoritarian Sovereignty: It is especially the authoritarian states that emphasize sovereignty and challenge the liberal supranationalism of international institutions.

A related strand of literature argues that rising powers are characterised by societies that are both vastly unequal and rapidly changing. The governments of rising powers are therefore permanently short of legitimacy. While they realize that their rise has been made possible by the status quo order, they want to appear more radical to the domestic audience in order to shore up their domestic legitimacy, often focusing on the shortcomings of Western institutions. It can be expected that the divergence between statements and claims in the international realm and statements and claims direct to the domestic

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audience is especially accentuated if it is an authoritarian system with especially high levels of internal inequality.  

H 4a: Rhetorical Dissidence I: In claims and statements directed at the own population, rising powers are much more radical than in international statements and claims.  

H 4b: This difference is especially accentuated in authoritarian states with high inequality.

As mentioned above, transnational NGOs are often seen as representatives of civil society and the common good, especially if they cannot be easily portrayed as interest groups. Such groups stand procedurally for more open and more transparent international organisations and in terms of content for strong international institutions that are able to national overcome vetoes in the pursuit of the common good.

H 5a: Civil Society Hypothesis I: Especially civil society NGOs (as opposed to interest groups) systematically favour more international authority.  

H 5b: Civil Society Hypothesis II: Especially civil society NGOs (as opposed to interest groups) systematically favour positive integration over negative integration.

Those who are more critical of NGOs often see them above all as representatives of Western interests. In this view, an alliance of Western governments and non-state actors dominate international institutions. This coalition has laid the fundament for the Washington-Consensus and stand for a neo-liberal world order.

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H 6: Western Dominance Hypotheses: Especially Western non-state actors favour further liberalization

A final proposition in terms of preferences concerns institutional inequality. A critical version of power-based theories points to the hypocrisy of the most powerful states in the international system. A More specifically, top ranked powers use effectively international institutions to influence other states, but are powerful enough to resist international norms. In this sense, the US has established a system that may be labelled institutionalized inequality including veto rights and formal as well as informal privileges in international institutions. There is little reason to assume that rising powers behave differently. It can therefore argued that the most powerful rising power increasingly demands the same privileges as the most powerful status quo power.

H7: Institutionalized Asymmetry Hypothesis: The most powerful rising powers demand privileges in the decision-making process

Hypotheses about Strategies

Finally, we consider expectations about rising power and NGO strategies. Existing International Relations theory is relatively silent on political strategies. Whereas especially American politics theory has analysed strategies such as pork-and-barrel and minimal winning coalitions extensively, there is little systematic work in International Relations on this. We therefore formulate here a set of generic hypotheses that derive from the textbook of politics based on fundamental concepts like preferences and ideas.

H 8: Polycentric Contestation: The status quo lies in between the majority of NGOs and the majority of rising power, thus allowing status quo powers to mediate or to play them out against each other.

H 9: Preference Driven Coalitions: The closer the positions of agents are, the more likely they work together in a coalition

H 10: Unit driven Coalitions: Rising powers and NGOs do not coalesce, even if they have similar positions.

H 11: Ideology Driven Coalitions: Liberal Governments coalesce with NGOs; authoritarian states do not.

V. Conclusion

The rise of new powers and the emergence of transnational NGOs signal new challenges for the authority of international institutions. Externally, a redistribution of international power is causing an exogenous change to the power basis for existing institutions. Internally, the authority of international institutions has generated new political awareness and mobilisation on behalf of transnationally active publics. Together, both processes contribute to the increased contestation of international institutions. Distinguishing between claims targeting institutions’ authority and claims targeting liberal policy content, we aim to investigate empirically this contestation by both new actor groups. Moreover, by focusing on their strategies of contestation, we seek for the first time to analyse both actors together. In this way, we hope to develop the conceptual and theoretical point of departure for the systematic and comparative study of the demands of rising powers, NGOs, and the implications for the emerging world order.