Emerging powers, North–South relations and global climate politics

ANDREW HURRELL AND SANDEEP SENGUPTA*

There is a widespread perception that power is shifting in global politics and that emerging powers are assuming a more prominent, active and important role.[1] On this account the global system is increasingly characterized by a diffusion of power, to countries including emerging and regional powers; by a diffusion of preferences, with many more voices demanding to be heard both globally and within states as a result of globalization and democratization; and by a diffusion of ideas and values, with a reopening of the big questions of social, economic and political organization that were supposedly resolved with the end of the Cold War and the liberal ascendancy. There is a strong argument that we are witnessing the most powerful set of challenges yet to the global order that the United States sought to construct within its own camp during the Cold War and to globalize in the post-Cold War period. Many of these challenges also raise questions about the longer-term position of the Anglo-American and European global order that rose to dominance in the middle of the nineteenth century and around which so many conceptions and practices of power-political order, of the international legal system and of global economic governance have since been constructed.

Climate change politics are often viewed within this general picture. Indeed, the story of the Copenhagen climate conference in December 2009 has been used as a vignette to capture this power shift, with the BASIC group of countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) sidelining Europe in climate change negotiations and forcing the United States to negotiate within a very different institutional context.[2] Moreover, if emerging powers are seen as increasingly influential and important players, their rise is also commonly viewed as having made an already difficult problem still more intractable. Their economic size and dynamism, their

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[1] For three variations on this theme, see Parag Khanna, *The Second World: how emerging powers are redefining global competition in the twenty-first century* (New York: Random House, 2009 edn); Fareed Zakaria, *The post-American world*, rev. edn (New York: Norton, 2009); and Dilip Haro, *After Empire: the birth of a multi-polar world* (New York: Nation Books, 2010). For the most important example of the contrary view, see Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World out of balance: international relations and the challenge of American primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[2] See Karl Hallding, Marie Olsson, Aaron Atteridge, Antto Vihma, Marcus Carson and Mikael Román, *Together alone: BASIC countries and the climate change conundrum* (Copenhagen: Tema Nord, 2011); Gideon Rachman, 'America is losing the free world', *Financial Times*, 4 Jan. 2010.

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increasing share of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and their overall political salience and foreign policy activism have all become more prominent; but, on this account, they have failed to recognize or live up to the responsibilities that go with their newly acquired roles. They represent a particular class of states ('advanced developing countries', 'major emitters', 'major economies') whose development choices are critical to the future of climate change but whose governments have all too often proved to be obstructionist and negative. For many, the BASIC countries were the clear villains of Copenhagen.[3] The extraordinary complexities of climate change have been extensively analysed. It has been well characterized as 'a truly diabolical problem'[4] and 'a perfect moral storm'.[5] It is therefore all too easy to see the current shifts in global power as adding yet another twist to an already complex problem. This pessimistic view can be unpacked in three ways.

Emerging powers are a problem, first, because of the dynamics of power competition. Periods of shifting power are difficult and dangerous times. Rising states will naturally seek to challenge the status quo and to revise the dominant norms of the system in order to reflect their own interests and values. Growing multipolarity combined with weak institutionalization is a dangerous combination; rising powers introduce into the core councils of power and governance a far greater heterogeneity of interests, concerns, values and historical memories.

Although climate change is often associated with economic development, social lifestyles and patterns of consumption, these unavoidably interact with questions of relative power and global inequality.[6] After all, successful national economic development is an essential ingredient of greater national power and autonomy, and major states are unlikely to put themselves at a relative disadvantage through the imposition of 'unfair' environmental constraints. The environment is therefore central to the development–power–autonomy nexus, sharpening resource competition and intensifying distributional conflicts—whether between a declining United States and a rising China, or regionally between China and India. Pessimism is likely to be increased still further to the extent that emerging powers seek not just material power and economic development but also status and recognition.

Emerging powers are a problem, second, in so far as they subject understandings of legitimacy, fairness and responsibility to increased contestation. Power transitions among major states have never been simply about clashes of material power and material interest. Power is an intrinsically social concept; conflicts over rival justice claims are often deep-rooted; and traditional Great Power understandings of international order have, when successful, depended on some consensus

[3] See e.g. Mark Lynas, 'How do I know China wrecked the Copenhagen deal? I was in the room', *Guardian*, 22 Dec. 2009.

[4] John S. Dryzeck, Richard B. Norgaard and David Schlosberg, 'Climate change and society: approaches and responses', in John S. Dryzeck, Richard B. Norgaard and David Schlosberg, eds, *The Oxford handbook of climate change and society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 4.

[5] Stephen M. Gardiner, *A perfect moral storm: the ethical tragedy of climate change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[6] See Andrew Hurrell, *On global order: power, values and the constitution of international society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), ch. 9. On the links between recent power shifts and climate change, see J. Timmons Roberts, 'Multipolarity and the new world (dis)order: US hegemonic decline and the fragmentation of the global climate regime', *Global Environmental Change* 21: 3, 2011, pp. 776–84.

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over what constitutes legitimate foreign policy behaviour, who the members of the Great Power club are, and how responsibility for the management of global problems should be distributed. Contestation over these questions has long been at the heart of international politics, and the return over the past decade of more Hobbesian or Westphalian tendencies has brought them once more to centre stage. This tendency has been evident in the renewed salience of security and the revalorization of national security; the continued or renewed power of nationalism within major states; the renewed importance of nuclear weapons as central to major power relations, and to the structure of regional security complexes; the quiet return of the balance of power, both as a motivation for state policy (as with US policies in Asia) and as an element in the foreign policy of all second-tier states; and the extent to which economic globalization fed back into the structures and dynamics of a Westphalian states-system rather than pointing towards its transcendence.

As we shall see, emerging powers as self-perceived members of the South have laid great emphasis on arguments for fairness, most especially concerning the historic responsibility for climate change: this, the argument runs, is a problem that has been caused largely by past overconsumption by the planet's richest inhabitants but whose brunt will be borne mostly by the poorest. However, for many in the industrialized world, and especially in the United States, notions of fairness and legitimacy in climate change politics have been transformed by the developmental successes of emerging countries and their substantively improved power-political position. 'The salient feature of the Third World was that it wanted economic and political clout. It is getting both.'[7] On this view, the ever greater heterogeneity across the developing world and, above all, the power of today's emerging developing states, make any residual reliance on ideas of the Third World or the South wholly redundant. On the back of such a view come calls for major emerging powers to jettison claims for special treatment or special status: in terms of the trading system they should 'graduate' from the developing country category; in terms of climate change they should not hide behind the idea of 'common but differentiated responsibilities'. In other words, they can no longer use underdevelopment or poverty as an 'excuse' to evade assuming their 'responsibilities' as major powers.[8]

Third, emerging powers are a problem not just because of their high growth rates and rapid development but also because of the increasingly central role that they are playing within a global capitalist system. On this view, an excessive focus on the emerging nation-states of the South clouds and confuses the issue. What we are seeing is, in reality, the transformation of global capitalism from an old core, centred on the advanced western industrialized economies, into a far more global and far more thoroughly transnationalized capitalist order. The systemic change has to do with the unfolding of a deterritorialized global capitalism made up of flows, fluxes, networked connections and transnational production networks, but

[7] 'Rethinking the "third world": seeing the world differently', *The Economist*, 12 June 2010, p. 65.
[8] See e.g. Gideon Rachman, 'China can no longer plead poverty', *Financial Times*, 25 Oct. 2010.

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marked by inequality, instability and new patterns of stratification. If emerging powers are becoming more like traditional Great Powers in their pursuit of power and self-interest, they are becoming ever more like the developed world in terms of the drivers of their economic development. They have built their developmental success around incorporation into a far more complex and globalized capitalist order, much of whose dynamism is premised on ecologically unsustainable patterns of resource use and within which effective governance has become far harder, owing to both the complexity of the system and patterns of political and economic interest.

There may be claims that emerging countries are returning to more national and nationalist models of development (as is Brazil) or even that they might be representatives of a different kind of capitalist development (like China). But, on this account, those claims should be treated with deep scepticism—either because of the deep-rooted shift in primacy from states to markets and the blurring of public and private power that the reassertive state has failed to reverse;[9] or because of the extent to which the economic and class interests of the rich and growing middle class within emerging economies are increasingly resembling those of their counterparts in the North.[10] This reading of contemporary capitalism feeds into those ecological approaches that have long viewed the state as centrally connected with the development of capitalism and hence with the productivism, expansionism and emphasis on ever-higher levels of material consumption that form such a central target of the ecological critique.

In this article we would like to unsettle this general picture and to challenge several of its component arguments. In the first place, if we look back to the original UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 1992), we see that the striking feature was the prominent role played by countries like Brazil, India and China and the overall success of the South in shaping both the substantive agenda of the climate change regime and the institutional process within which these negotiations were embedded. In climate change politics, therefore, it is deeply misleading to see emerging powers as having recently 'emerged'. Second, if we contrast Rio 1992 with more recent developments—especially in the period since 2009—the striking feature is the extent to which the United States and other western industrialized states have succeeded in unpicking many of the essential elements of what was agreed at and after Rio. The United States has maintained its position without making any substantial concessions; there has been increasing fragmentation within the South; and differences have grown even among the BASIC countries. There is of course variation in the extent to which individual emerging powers have achieved their goals. However, in terms of shaping the dominant norms of the climate change regime it is unclear whether emerging powers have become more, or less, influential.

[9] Colin Crouch, *The strange non-death of neo-liberalism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011).

[10] As Peter Evans put it: 'Unfortunately, return to "nationalist" projects does not deal with the fact that the predominance of private power over public institutions is as much a problem at the national level as it is at the global level. Private economic elites in the South may not be fully integrated into Robinson and Sklar's "transnational capital class", but differences between their economic agenda and that of capital based in the North seem to be increasingly marginal and diminishing over time': Peter Evans, 'Is an alternative globalization possible?', *Politics and Society* 36: 2, June 2008, p. 283. See also William I. Robinson, 'Beyond the theory of imperialism: global capitalism and the transnational state', *Societies Without Borders* 2, 2007, pp. 5–26.

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And third, the picture of emerging powers as the 'great irresponsibles' has become embedded despite significant changes in their climate change policy—whether commitments to reduce emissions intensity in the cases of India and China, or strong emissions reduction pledges in the cases of Brazil and South Africa, or the raft of other measures that each has taken to combat this problem at the domestic level.

These arguments are developed in the following sections of the article, which sketch the chronological evolution of emerging powers' climate policies and then explore some of the major factors that have shaped their recent policy changes—external pressures, acceptance of ideas about responsibility, shifting understandings of interest and climate change preferences, and important changes at the domestic level. In the conclusion we examine the implications of the climate change case for one of the most important questions concerning today's emerging powers, namely the impact that their rise may be having on the concepts of the Third World and the global South and on the very idea of North–South relations as a structuring feature of the international system.

Looking back to Rio

If we look back to Rio 1992, a number of things stand out. First, of course, several of today's emerging powers were also central to what went on at, around and after Rio. They have not suddenly appeared at centre stage, as has been the case, for example, in international trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization. Second, Rio was in many ways a success for the South. The countries of the South managed to secure a good deal in 1992 when they were materially a good deal weaker. There was a rather striking acceptance by northern countries of not only aspirational declarations but also legal obligations. These obligations were founded in part on principles of equity and a degree of commitment to distributive justice—as with the acknowledgement by the North of responsibility for past environmental harms; the acceptance of the idea of common but differentiated responsibilities; and the incorporation of resource and technology transfers (as in the ozone, climate change and biodiversity regimes). The western industrialized states also made concessions in terms of the decision-making processes that allowed for balanced representation between North and South (as on the Global Environmental Facility) and accepted the UN system and large conferences as the natural framework and forum for climate change negotiations.

These gains need to be contrasted with the general direction of movement in North–South relations at the same time. By the early 1980s the apparent cohesion of the Third World coalition had been undermined by increased differentiation across the developing world (especially the rise of Asia's newly industrialized countries, NICs); by the strains within the coalition itself; by the loss of voices within the North open to southern demands; by the hard-line rejection of any idea or notion of a North–South dialogue on the part of the United States and its major allies; and by the deteriorating economic and political position of much of the developing world that accompanied the debt crises of the 1980s and the ensuing

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'lost decade'. The reformist rhetoric of the New International Economic Order had been both defeated and deflated. Power-centred accounts of North–South relations stressed the existence of a 'structural conflict' reducible to contending sets of power and interest—however encrusted with the empty rhetoric of justice.[11] And the powerful neo-liberal critique of rent-seeking southern elites had cut deep into the progressive Third Worldism of the 1970s.

How might we explain this picture? In the first place, there appears to have been a significant degree of institutional path dependence. The Stockholm Conference of 1972 had helped forge a widely shared acceptance of a UN and big conference framework as the natural forum for global environmental negotiations; the General Assembly was viewed as the institution within which to organize the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee mandates; and by the late 1980s/early 1990s, especially in the wake of the successful negotiations on protecting the ozone layer, the principle of universal participation, with the North–South relationship at its centre, had become a largely unquestioned part of the way in which global climate negotiations were to be conducted. Again, the contrast with other issues is noteworthy: the same period saw the marginalization of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in relation to the GATT/WTO, and the increasingly central role of the UN Security Council in relation to the General Assembly.

Second, embedding negotiations within this framework assisted the viability of southern coalitional politics. The G77 + China coalition remained largely unified despite the existing fissures (for example, between oil-producing and small island states), while the industrialized world was divided between competing visions of how to address the problem (with a particularly significant transatlantic rift separating the US and Europe, the former preferring a looser 'pledge and review'-type system and the latter calling for a more legally binding 'targets and timetables' approach). Southern states were also able to find increasingly vocal sympathetic interlocutors within the environmental movement in the North. The environment was an issue-area in which northern civil society groups mobilized successfully and incorporated some justice concerns, both because of their broader interest in sustainability, and because southern cooperation was considered vital to this cause. In the South, local environmental organizations, motivated by their desire to ensure equity and fairness, helped marshal arguments that supported the positions of their governments.[12] For their part, Southern governments themselves were determined to use whatever collective leverage they had on the environment to drive a hard bargain to help level what they otherwise considered a vastly unequal global playing field.

Third, climate change was a largely specialist issue at the time, dominated mostly by environmentalists, scientists and a relatively small group of government experts and professional negotiators. If the issue had been more salient, then perhaps the North would have been more circumspect about agreeing to some of the language that it did under the United Nations Framework Convention on

[11] Stephen D. Krasner, *Structural conflict: the Third World against global liberalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[12] See e.g. Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, *Global warming in an unequal world: a case of environmental colonialism* (New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment, 1991).

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Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Rio. Moreover, it also underestimated the extent to which some of the clauses under the convention would be interpreted by the South, and become reinforced and solidified over time.

Finally, the very weakness of such developing countries as India and Brazil in the late 1980s (in the wake of debt crises, balance of payments crises and crises of the state) may have contributed to their success at Rio, resulting as it did in their underestimation by the North. The apparent obviousness of the 'unipolar moment' and the 'victory of the West' prevented northern negotiators from foreseeing that some of these countries could, one day, emerge as powerful global actors and economic competitors in their own right. Concessions to weaker states, on this account, are easier to make in times of predominance. While this argument has some force, the puzzle remains. After all, the weakness of the South at this time did not prevent the industrialized world from pressing consistently and ruthlessly for very major changes in the areas of economic reform and neo-liberal restructuring, and in many of the dominant rules and norms of the global economy. The imbalance between the commitments of developed and developing countries in the UNFCCC therefore remain noteworthy, especially in terms of some of the open-ended undertakings that the North seemed to make to finance climate change mitigation and adaptation in the South.[13]

The gap between the achievements at Rio and what subsequently happened is central to understanding the current situation. For many in the developing world, especially in the emerging powers, climate change is not simply a story of a traditional sovereignty-obsessed, responsibility-evading South seeking to remain in its comfort zone. In the case of climate change, it has been the South that, on this view, has sought to protect the globalist commitments of Rio against the revisionism of the United States and some of its allies. Emerging powers, particularly, have thus come to see themselves as defenders of the status quo and of established international norms rather than as revisionist states seeking to challenge the dominant norms of the system.

The climate-related foreign policies of emerging powers

For most of the period after Rio 1992, the story was predominantly one of continuity. Emerging powers, in generally secure coalitions with other developing countries, opposed the demands of industrialized countries that they accept international obligations to control the growth—and allow greater scrutiny—of their national emissions beyond what they had agreed to at Rio. They defended the international climate regime, especially its 'differentiated' architecture, which exempted developing countries from having to undertake any uncompensated mitigation actions, and its various principles and provisions that explicitly accepted that their share of global emissions would grow in the future to meet their development needs, and furthermore recognized sustained economic growth and poverty eradication as legitimate national priorities.

[13] Tony Brenton, *The greening of Machiavelli: the evolution of international environmental politics* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs/ Earthscan, 1994).

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Their opposition to taking greater action on climate change typically rested on three grounds. The first was historical responsibility. Noting that industrialized countries have been responsible for three-quarters of the cumulative global emissions released into the Earth's atmosphere since the start of the Industrial Revolution, and continue to have much higher per capita emissions even today, emerging powers forcefully argued that the primary responsibility for global emissions reductions lay with the developed world, and not with them. Second, emerging powers such as India argued that, despite their recent economic successes, they still had a long way to go before they could achieve a reasonable standard of living for their citizens and eradicate the high levels of poverty prevalent within their large populations. Hence, their aggregate and per capita emissions would need to continue to grow. Third, they stressed that questions of international responsibility and accountability on this issue had already been discussed, negotiated and settled at Rio, when the present climate regime had been set up and unanimously agreed upon, including by all western states.

Under the UNFCCC, developed countries had agreed to 'take the lead' in combating climate change, while developing countries had been exempt from any emissions reduction obligations in view of their relatively low per capita emissions and future development needs. Moreover, developed countries had also agreed to provide new and additional financial and technological resources to developing countries to meet the 'agreed full incremental costs' of their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. Under the follow-up Kyoto Protocol treaty in 1997, developed countries had also accepted quantified legally binding targets to reduce their emissions over its 'first commitment period' from 2008 to 2012. Yet GHG emissions in most OECD countries have continued to grow.[14] Pointing to the consistent failure of the developed world to deliver either on their own emissions reduction commitments or on their promises on finance and technology, emerging powers have argued that the burden of solving climate change cannot now be passed on to them.

Yet, despite the longevity of these traditional positions, notable shifts began to be seen in the climate-related foreign policies of all the key emerging powers—Brazil, South Africa, India and China—in the lead-up to the 2009 Copenhagen summit. At the Major Economies Forum in L'Aquila, Italy, in July 2009, the leaders of 17 major developed and developing nations, including all the BASICs, accepted the 'scientific view' that increases in global average temperature 'ought not to exceed 2 degrees C', and also agreed to identify a 'global goal for substantially reducing global emissions by 2050'.[15] While this was only a political declaration, and not legally binding in any way, the decision of emerging power leaders to consent to this 2°C global limit suggested a greater willingness on their part, compared to the past, to accept the possibility of a future cap on their national emissions at some stage. However, given the weakness of the language, the absence

[14] United Nations Development Programme, 'Fighting climate change: human solidarity in a divided world', *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 54.

[15] Major Economies Forum, 'Declaration of the leaders of the Major Economies Forum on energy and climate', L'Aquila, Italy, 9 July 2009, http://www.majoreconomiesforum.org/resources.html, accessed 28 Feb. 2012.

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of an actual 'global goal' and the non-binding nature of the declaration, it may be argued that this was not really much of a concession on their part.

A much more tangible shift in their positions was seen just before the start of Copenhagen summit, in November and December 2009, when each of the BASICs announced, in quick succession, concrete, quantitative, mid-term targets that they would unilaterally implement within their own countries to mitigate their respective emissions. Brazil, which was the first emerging power off the block, announced that it would voluntarily reduce its national emissions by between 36 and 39 per cent below 'business as usual' levels by 2020. South Africa similarly pledged that it would reduce its emissions to 34 per cent below 'business as usual' levels by 2020. China announced that it would reduce the 'emissions intensity' of its GDP to between 40 and 45 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020. Finally, India also pledged that it would reduce the 'emissions intensity' of its GDP by 20–25 per cent against 2005 levels by 2020.

Although all of these declarations were made in the form of voluntary pledges rather than international legal commitments as such, and remained conditional on western financing, they nevertheless reflected a significant shift from the original negotiating positions of these states. For the first time in the history of the climate negotiations, these countries were willing to put hard numbers for climate change mitigation on the table. In contrast, in 1997, during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations, these very same nations had rejected any notion of 'voluntary commitments' outright.

Moreover, in the Copenhagen Accord itself, which the BASICs played a key role in negotiating, it was agreed that developing countries, in addition to recording all their mitigation pledges on an international list, would also provide more rigorous and transparent reporting of their domestic emissions reduction efforts, including through more frequent and detailed 'national communications' and a new process of 'international consultations and analysis'. In exchange, what developed countries offered at Copenhagen was to record their 'economy-wide' mitigation pledges and commitments internationally as well (albeit in a different list) and to 'mobilize' US$100 billion of annual climate financing for developing countries from 'a wide variety of sources' by 2020.[16]

In other words, what the Copenhagen Accord, and the subsequent Cancún Agreements of 2010, essentially yielded for emerging powers was a much more ambiguous and uncertain international climate regime, which has largely managed to invert the top-down, 'differentiated' architecture based on 'targets and timetables' that was the characteristic feature of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, replacing it with a much more bottom-up, 'undifferentiated' system based on 'pledge and review' that requires developing countries, especially the emerging powers, to be treated in much the same way as the developed world with regard to their climate mitigation and reporting obligations.

The undoing of the logic of 'differentiation' between North and South was further consolidated at the 2011 Durban Conference. Even though the Kyoto

[16] UNFCCC, 'Copenhagen Accord', decision 2/CP.15, FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1, 30 March 2010.

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Protocol managed to survive, with developed countries agreeing in principle, on the insistence of the South, to a 'second commitment period' that requires them to reduce their emissions in a legally binding manner, potentially up to 2020, the fact that few industrialized states are willing to seriously commit to it reveals, as Bolivia's former chief negotiator Pablo Solon has graphically pointed out, its present 'zombie'-like state.[17]

On the other hand, what the West secured in return for making this concession was arguably much more significant. At Durban, countries agreed to terminate the negotiating track that had been launched under the Bali Action Plan in 2007 by the end of 2012, and replace it with an entirely new negotiating process. Unlike the Bali mandate, which had notably maintained the 'firewall' between developed and developing countries, the new 'Durban Platform for Enhanced Action' makes no obvious distinction between developed and developing nations. Calling instead for the 'widest possible cooperation by all countries', it launches a new process to develop a 'protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force' by 2015, which is to be 'applicable to all Parties' and enter into force from 2020.[18]

What makes this decision even more remarkable is that, unlike the Copenhagen Accord and the Cancún Agreements, which had explicitly reaffirmed the core UNFCCC norms of 'equity' and 'common but differentiated responsibilities', the Durban Platform text makes no reference whatsoever to these foundational regime principles. Although one can argue that since this new process has been launched 'under the Convention', all its principles and provisions will automatically apply, their absence from a key decision for the first time in 20 years of international climate talks is nevertheless significant, and indicative of the diminishing ability of the developing world, especially the emerging powers, to maintain their case for 'differential' treatment on the subject of climate change.[19]

Durban also clearly brought to the fore the fragility of emerging power coalitions in the face of sustained pressure from the West, and from segments of the developing country bloc itself. At Durban, the BASICs had to face not only unified northern opposition to their demands for maintaining 'differentiation' (with the North insisting that this principle be reinterpreted in the light of 'contemporary economic realities') and calls for increased responsibility on their part (both from the North and from least developed countries and small island developing states), but also internal tensions and differences within their own ranks. With Brazil and South Africa able and willing to go further than China and India, and China able and willing to go further than India (occupying a very different global economic status and GHG profile), it was no surprise then that India—which, in reality, has as much in common with the least developed countries as with the other BASIC states—was in the end left isolated, and fighting its own corner.

[17] Praful Bidwai, 'Durban: road to nowhere', *Economic and Political Weekly* 46: 53, 31 Dec. 2011, p. 10.

[18] UNFCCC, 'Establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action', 11 Dec. 2011, advance unedited version.

[19] See also Lavanya Rajamani, 'Deconstructing Durban', *Indian Express*, 15 Dec. 2011.

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Explanations

For a former adviser to the US chief negotiator, the outcome at Durban represented a clear victory. 'There is no mention of historic responsibility or per capita emissions. There is no mention of economic development as the priority for developing countries. There is no mention of a difference between developed and developing country action.'[20] How and why did this come about?

Power and bargaining

One part of the explanation can be sought in the changing dynamics of bargaining and in the overall balance of power. Despite all the rhetoric of the growing power of emerging developing states in the climate regime, it is actually the more traditional northern powers that have managed to hold their ground, and get their way, in the period leading up to and following Copenhagen, in terms of successfully advancing a revisionist strategy. In other words, rather than helping them get what they want, the so-called power shifts in their favour have arguably made life harder for the emerging states in some ways. Or perhaps what is actually happening here is a belated, more hard-nosed, realization (within the North but maybe also in the South) that, ultimately, their much greater vulnerability to climate change places developing countries (even the BASICs) at a disadvantageous negotiating position *vis-à-vis* the richer and less vulnerable industrialized world. In other words, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the North thought it needed the South and made concessions under a misplaced assumption that it could afford to do so. However, if climate negotiations are to be viewed and played as a high-risk game of chicken by the North instead, to preserve their economic dominance and advantage at all cost, then one could argue that it is actually the South that needs the North a lot more, since southern countries are the ones that stand to suffer the most from climate change in the end. Viewed in this way, the emerging powers are not really as powerful as they are made out to be.

Bargaining has also been affected by growing fragmentation and differences within the South. On one side, there have been differences between the BASICs and other developing countries. At Copenhagen, the apparent entry of the BASICs into the closed councils of the most powerful caused intense resentment on the part of countries such as Bolivia. At Durban, the representatives of small island developing states were even more critical of an India that seemed to stand in the way of a final deal: 'While they develop, we die; and why should we accept this?'[21] On the other side, there have been underlying differences among the BASIC countries themselves, which do not necessarily share the same interests and national characteristics on climate change, as Durban also revealed.

[20] John M. Broder, 'Signs of new life as UN searches for a climate accord', *New York Times*, 24 Jan. 2012. We thank Henry Shue for this reference.

[21] Cited in Richard Black, 'Climate talks end with late deal', BBC News, 11 Dec. 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-16124670, accessed 28 Feb. 2012. See also 'Durban and everything that matters', *The Economist*, 12 Dec, 2011, http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2011/12/climate-change?page=7, accessed 28 Feb. 2012.

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As noted earlier, during the climate negotiations in the 1990s and even early 2000s, the main cleavage was between Europe and America on what sort of climate regime they wanted to build.[22] Even though there were different sub-groups within the South there was a much stronger sense of a coherent developing country coalition built around the G77 and China than there is today. Climate negotiations have now witnessed a role reversal of sorts, with greater unity within the developed world, centred on getting emerging countries to do more, and greater fragmentation within the South (with the emergence of even more sub-groups such as BASIC, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, the Coalition of Rainforest Nations and the Least Developed Countries, among others, along-side OPEC and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)). The coming together of BASIC in the lead-up to Copenhagen itself represented to some extent an attempt by the emerging powers to cope with this new negotiating environment. With the emergence of even newer groupings and alliances (for example, between the EU, LDCs and AOSIS at Durban; the Australia- and UK-backed Cartagena Dialogue; and the recently launched six-country initiative by the US that brings together parties as disparate as Bangladesh, Ghana, Mexico, Canada and Sweden, reminiscent of the now concluded 2005 Asia–Pacific Partnership), it is clear not only that climate coalitions today—by chance or by design—are in flux, but that traditional southern coalitions are in particular disarray, with emerging powers finding it ever harder to rally support.

The politics of responsibility/vulnerability

Another part of the explanation needs to look beyond bargaining dynamics to the gradual acceptance on the part of emerging powers that their own international and domestic responsibilities have shifted—or, at least, that if they want to be seen as 'responsible powers' then some policy change is unavoidable. On the one hand, all the emerging powers—China, India, South Africa and Brazil—have continued to hold steadfast to the core regime norm of 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities' agreed under the UNFCCC, especially their 'differentiated responsibility' *vis-à-vis* the industrialized world. Yet, on the other hand, as we have seen in the case of their voluntary mitigation pledges, there has been greater implicit acceptance on their part that their 'emergence' as key powers in the international system, their growing emissions, and their growing 'respective capabilities' have also given them a commensurately greater responsibility on this issue, especially compared to their less well-endowed fellow states in the global South. This shift has also been driven in part by growing scientific knowledge of the risks of climate change, as encapsulated in successive reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and their awareness of their own individual vulnerability. It is this combined awareness of both greater capability and greater vulnerability that has led them to articulate that they are now willing to play their

[22] See e.g. John Vogler and Charlotte Bretherton, 'The European Union as a protagonist to the United States on climate change', *International Studies Perspectives* 7: 1, 2006, pp. 1–22.

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full part in dealing with this issue as responsible members of the international community.[23]

India offers good illustrations of this gradual shift. For example, at the meeting of the G8+5 in Heiligendamm in 2007, India's Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, stressed that India 'recognize[d] wholeheartedly' its 'responsibilities as a developing country', and was ready 'to add [its] weight to global efforts to preserve and protect the environment'.[24] Similarly, in the lead-up to Copenhagen, the then Indian Environment Minister, noting India's global ambitions, acknowledged that 'having global aspirations and assuming global responsibilities are two sides of the same coin'.[25] In explaining India's decision to sign the Cancún Agreements the following year, he then went on to note that it was 'important for India to demonstrate that it was not completely oblivious and insensitive to the views and opinions of a large section of the global community', also recalling its historical traditions in this respect and India's particular vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change.[26]

If coalition politics has shifted, so too has the solidity of the institutional framework within which climate change negotiations have taken place. Another key challenge for emerging powers has been the recent proliferation of fora in which climate change has been discussed internationally—ranging from the G8+5 to the Major Economies Forum (formerly the Major Economies/Emitters Meeting), the Asia–Pacific Partnership, the G20 and so on. These developments are important in themselves but also in so far as they open up the possibility of more power-centred and concert-like conceptions of global order. For many, especially in the United States, Copenhagen reinforced doubts about traditional multilateralism. While it might be legitimate, multilateralism, in this view, is a thoroughly bad way to try to reach agreements. Rather, revising and reforming global order should be much more about rearranging the seats around the table to include those with the power and the relevant interests, as well as in some cases expanding the size of the table—as in the move from the G7/8 to the G20. The chairs around the table would be rearranged and the table probably expanded. There would be a good deal of 'global à la cartism'—a mosaic of different groupings—and a great deal of 'messy multilateralism'.[27]

It is certainly the case that much of this thinking picks up on the need for 'better' global governance. In part, new groupings and concerts would be functional and be formed according to the needs of the problem in hand. But issue-specific interests, functional problem-solving and the provision of global public goods would

[23] This would also seem to align well with some of the arguments made in Detlef F. Sprinz and Tapani Vaahtoranta, 'The interest-based explanation of international environmental policy', *International Organization* 48: 1, 1994, pp. 77–105.

[24] Manmohan Singh, 'PM's intervention on climate change at the Heiligendamm meeting of G-8 plus 5', 8 June 2007, http://www.indianconsulate.org.cn/site/?q=node/72, accessed 29 Feb. 2012.

[25] Jairam Ramesh, 'Discussion regarding impact of climate change', *Lok Sabha Debates*, Parliament of India, New Delhi, 3 Dec. 2009, http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/Result15.aspx?dbsl=1436, accessed 29 Feb. 2012.

[26] Jairam Ramesh, 'Letter to Members of Parliament on the Cancún Agreements', New Delhi, 17 Dec. 2010, http://www.sanctuaryasia.com/index.php?view=article&catid=122%3Aclimate-change&id=3929%3Aletter-from-jairam-ramesh-on-the-cancun-agreement&option=com_content&Itemid=289, accessed 29 Feb. 2012.

[27] Richard Haas, 'The case for messy multilateralism', *Financial Times*, 5 Jan. 2010.

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only be one part of the story. The really important thing about such groupings is that their logic would be power-centred—both in terms of negotiating bargains quite narrowly around the core interests of the major powers and in terms of the fora being essentially hierarchical and exclusionary.

This idea of seeking membership of new groupings of major powers and within new or re-formed informal groups, clubs and concerts has certainly been an extremely important aspect of the general foreign policies of emerging powers, both for instrumental reasons and because of the status and recognition that membership brings. And, as noted above, there is evidence that notions of responsibility and membership have influenced the climate change policies of emerging powers. But, in relation more specifically to climate change, emerging powers have on the whole been sceptical of these moves, even as they have been unable to stop them. They have often viewed them as representing an attempt by the North to dilute the validity of the existing UN regime on climate change, and to get their preferred outcomes through the back door (including, for example, through unilateral measures such as extending the EU Emissions Trading System to cover international aviation emissions). As is often noted, 'forum shopping' can reinforce the power of the strong.[28] And the proliferation of fora has posed serious internal capacity challenges for at least some of the emerging powers. Consequently, their strategy has been to insist that the UNFCCC remains the only legitimate forum for formal negotiations on this issue, even while participating in the discussions held in others.

Domestic change

The third category of explanations looks to domestic politics and to the interaction between the domestic and the global. In contrast to realist narratives of emerging powers that stress the recurrence of power-seeking foreign policy and the inevitable 'return of history', liberal perspectives stress the impact of higher levels of development, combined with ever greater degrees of enmeshment and integration into the global economy, on domestic politics and society within emerging nations. At a minimum, development and integration are likely to dislodge the centrality of the state and to lead to increasingly plural environmental politics, in terms of both actors and ideas. At a maximum, development and integration have the potential to undermine older national projects, to shift the balance of power within the state and to lead to the formation of more overtly pro-environmental coalitions involving a broader range of economic and civil society actors.

The scope and variety of developments relevant to climate change lie beyond the scope of this article. But it is exactly that scope and variety that need to be stressed. If one looks beyond the international negotiations to see what emerging powers have been doing on climate change within their own national jurisdictions, a number of important shifts are evident here as well. In terms of state policy, the

[28] See Eyal Benvenisti and George W. Downs, 'The empire's new clothes: political economy and the fragmentation of international law', *Stanford Law Review* 60: 2, 2007, pp. 595–631; Daniel W. Drezner, 'The power and peril of international regime complexity', *Perspectives on Politics* 7: 1, March 2009, pp. 65–9.

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BASICs have undertaken a suite of domestic-level actions in recent years with the specific intent of combating climate change.

In 2007 China released its National Climate Change Programme, which set specific national-level targets to reduce the country's energy intensity and raise the share of renewable energy in its primary energy supply mix. Similarly, in 2008 India released a National Action Plan on Climate Change, under which it launched eight national missions to address the mitigation and adaptation challenges of climate change. Both countries have, over the past two decades, also introduced and implemented a wide range of domestic laws and policies on energy conservation, energy efficiency, afforestation and so on, which have had significant effects in moderating their national emissions.

Furthermore, such mitigation efforts have not been limited to actions taken by the state alone. A range of other domestic actors, including industry and NGOs, have also independently undertaken or supported initiatives that have contributed to emissions reductions at the national level in both countries. For example, private sector entrepreneurs in India have played a key role in promoting renewable energy development, which has resulted in India emerging as one of the top five wind energy producers in the world today. Similarly, China has emerged as a global leader and investment destination for green energy technologies. Indeed, it can be argued that it is these countries' success at the domestic level on mitigation that eventually enabled them to offer the sorts of pledges they were able to make at Copenhagen. The fact that many of these climate-friendly measures also aligned well with other national imperatives such as enhancing energy security, reducing costs and saving valuable foreign exchange, through more rational and efficient use of resources, was also a critical enabling factor. Some have questioned the level of ambition of such measures, and whether they can indeed be viewed as evidence of emerging power seriousness and leadership on this issue.[29] But to do so is to miss the point that whatever the motivations might have been, these emerging power actions, taken together, are now delivering significant climate change mitigation benefits. A recent review even concluded that 'there is broad agreement that developing country pledges amount to more mitigation, on an absolute basis, than developed country pledges'.[30]

One of the notable changes seen within emerging powers on climate change since Rio, particularly in India and Brazil, has been the emergence of newer domestic constituencies and pressure groups within these countries that are in favour of, or at least less opposed to, taking more progressive action on climate change, both domestically and internationally. For instance, in contrast to earlier periods, when environmental civil society groups, from North and South alike, were to a large extent supportive of the standard southern position on this issue,

[29] See e.g. David I. Stern and Frank Jotzo, 'How ambitious are China and India's emissions intensity targets?', *Energy Policy* 38: 1, 2010, pp. 6776–83; Carlo Carraro and Massimo Tavoni, 'Looking ahead from Copenhagen: how challenging is the Chinese carbon intensity target?', *Vox*, 5 Jan. 2010, http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/4449, accessed 28 Feb. 2012.

[30] Sivan Kartha and Peter Erickson, *Comparison of Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 pledges under the Cancún Agreements* (Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute, 2011), p. 3.

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the lead-up to Copenhagen saw the emergence of a new domestic politics on climate change in these countries.

Even though many of the traditional environmental organizations active on climate change (for example, the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment) continued to maintain their high level of visibility in policy-making circles—persisting in their strong criticism of the industrialized world for inaction and double standards, and supporting the continuance of a hard-line foreign policy by their governments—the notable fact is that theirs was no longer the sole non-governmental domestic voice in the room. Instead, it was now accompanied by a diverse range of other opinions, including other civil society organizations, key industry and business interest groups, and individual politicians and opinion-formers, who offered contrasting and even competing arguments of why it was now necessary, or beneficial, or acceptable for their governments also to adopt a more flexible line, and take greater responsibility and action on this issue.

The extent to which this changing domestic politics has been responsible for driving the recent shifts seen in the climate-related foreign policies of key emerging powers is, however, debatable. In some cases, such as India, it may be argued that the domestic debate was more a consequence than a cause of the pre-Copenhagen foreign policy decisions that were taken, largely independently, by key politicians and policy-makers.[31] But even in this case there had clearly been a change in the domestic landscape: pre-existing (although mostly latent) domestic voices had already been demanding change; and when change came, these new voices rallied in support of it, and acted as counterweights, to some extent, to those arguing in favour of retaining the status quo. But the more recent reversion of India's foreign policy on this issue shows the limits of the influence of such domestic actors in the Indian case.

In other cases, the impact of domestic and transnational factors has been more direct. Brazil's climate change policy has shifted very significantly since 2007.[32] It has consolidated climate change targets in domestic legislation at both the national and, in some major cases, municipal levels. In part, policy change here simply reflects the pattern of Brazil's concrete interests on the climate change issue, with its energy profile dominated by hydroelectric power and biofuels and its GHG emissions by land use change and deforestation. But the prioritization of these interests has been mediated and pressed by a closely connected set of domestic political changes—the growth of the environmental movement and green attitudes (92 per cent of the population believe that global environmental problems are very serious); the formation of new business coalitions in favour of policy change; the role of Green parties and green issues within electoral and presidential politics; and the greater willingness to accept external commitments that has followed from greater state capacity to control Amazonian deforestation. Against these trends are set two factors: first, the continued or even revived power

31 Sandeep Sengupta, 'International climate negotiations and India's role', in Navroz K. Dubash, ed., *Handbook of climate change and India: development, politics and governance* (London: Routledge, 2011).

32 See Kathryn Hochstetler and Eduardo Viola, 'Brazil and the multiscalar politics of climate change', paper presented at the 2011 Colorado Conference on Earth Systems Governance, 17–20 May 2011.

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of national developmentalism; and second, the continued importance attached to the ideology of southern solidarity and the concrete interests that have developed around Brazil's heavy investment in South–South relations.

While the politics of climate change continues to remain heavily contested in the developing world, particularly within emerging powers, it is clear that the emergence of this complex plurality of domestic voices today—some supporting continuance of earlier policies, others demanding the formulation of new ones—is both complicating the existing negotiating landscape for southern governments and creating new space for rethinking and reshaping their traditional views on this issue.

Several of these developments challenge the third strand of pessimism identified at the start of this article, providing evidence for those who stress 'bottom-up' approaches to climate change governance and for a more positive reading of the potential for green capitalism. The development of transnational industrial and commercial interests is influencing both domestic policies (in both emerging and OECD economies) and formal interstate negotiations. And large developing countries are coming to play a critical role in accelerating the process of energy sector decarbonization. However, these trends will not necessarily feed easily into international agreement on climate change norms. The broader diffusion of power in the system is making it harder for the governments of large, fast-developing states to maintain coherent and consistent foreign policies as more groups domestically are mobilized and empowered. The centrality and often problematic impact of domestic politics is raised almost automatically in relation to the United States—not as a contingent matter of President Obama's limited domestic space to manoeuvre but in connection with the persistent difficulty of meshing the external bargains that are inevitably involved in the ongoing negotiation of hegemony with the complexity and relatively closed character of US domestic politics. But—and this is the critical point—something similar has to be said about today's large, complex and fast-developing emerging powers. India's domestic constraints on climate change are every bit as complicated and contested as America's.[33]

Nor would it be accurate to characterize the increasingly plural character of domestic politics in terms of a straightforward spread of norms and ideas from the advanced core to the developing and emerging world. In relation to climate change, it could be argued that western discourses on environmentalism have gradually percolated through to the South, a process facilitated by a greater transnational diffusion and adoption of modern best practices and technologies. Yet this underplays the South's own very significant contribution to global environmentalism in the past.[34] Moreover, the complex character of global order means that we need to be especially alert to the recombination of old and new, not just at the level of global order but also at the level of the state and of state–society relations domestically. And here one might focus less on the BRICs and

[33] See e.g. Navroz Dubash, 'Toward a progressive Indian and global climate politics', CPR working paper 2009/1 (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, Sept. 2009).

[34] Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martínez-Alier, *Varieties of environmentalism: essays North and South* (London: Earthscan, 1997).

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BASICs as groups and more on the intellectual and policy 'bricolage'—to use Mary Douglas's term—that has been taking place within each of the emerging states, through which old and new ideas and policies are melded together in ways that are working against these states becoming simply absorbable within some expanded version of a liberal Greater West.[35]

Climate change and the future of North–South relations

One of the most important questions concerning today's emerging powers is the potential impact of their rise on the concepts of the Third World and the global South, and on the very idea of North–South relations as a structuring feature of the international system. As we have seen, for much of the past 20 years climate change has been widely understood through the prism of North–South relations and framed in a way which foregrounds the problem of global inequality.[36] As we have also seen, this picture has come under increasing challenge; and the challenge has coincided with a broader questioning of the relevance of North–South relations as a way of making sense of the political groupings, spatial categories and taken-for-granted historical geographies that shape both academic analyses and political understandings. It has become common to suggest that the rise of new powers, the tremendous macroeconomic gap that has opened up between them and other developing countries, and their very different power-political, military and geopolitical opportunities and options simply underscore the outdatedness and irrelevance of old-fashioned notions of the Third World or the global South. Their success places them in an objectively different analytical category from other developing countries. It also underpins political demands—most notably, that they should act as 'responsible stakeholders'—and affects how we should view problems of global justice. In terms of economic development, Paul Collier, for example, makes the following claim:

> The Third World has shrunk. For forty years the development challenge has been a rich world of one billion facing a poor world of five billion people. The Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations, which are designed to track development progress through 2015, encapsulate this thinking. By 2015, however, it will be apparent that this way of conceptualizing development has become outdated. Most of the five billion, about 80 percent, live in countries that are indeed developing, often at amazing speed. The real challenge of development is that there is a group of countries at the bottom that are falling behind, and often falling apart.[37]

Looking more broadly, Robert Zoellick also argues for the 'end of the Third World':

> If 1989 saw the end of the 'Second World' with Communism's demise, then 2009 saw the end of what was known as the 'Third World'. We are now in a new, fast-evolving multipolar world economy—in which some developing countries are emerging as economic

[35] Mary Douglas, *How institutions think* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

[36] For one of the clearest elaborations of this view, see J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks, *A climate of injustice: global inequality, North–South politics and climate policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

[37] Paul Collier, *The bottom billion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 3.

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powers; others are moving towards becoming additional poles of growth; and some are struggling to attain their potential within this new system—where North and South, East and West, are now points on a compass, not economic destinies.[38]

Does this, or should this, mean an end to the North–South framing of global climate change politics?

It is certainly the case that a great deal has changed in the period since Rio 1992. If the debate over where power was located in the 1990s concentrated on the shift of power from states to firms and non-state actors, the 'power shift' of the past decade has correctly focused on rising and emerging powers and on the mismatch between existing global economic governance arrangements and the distribution of power among those with actual and effective power. The very dynamism and successes of liberal globalization have had a vital impact on the distribution of interstate political power—above all towards the East and parts of the South. The global financial crisis fed into these changes. In part this has been because emerging economies have been relatively less directly affected. But in part it has followed from less direct impacts. It is historically extremely significant that the financial crisis broke out and most seriously damaged both the economies and also the technical and moral authority of the centre of the global capitalist system. The crisis has also shifted the balance of argument back to those who stress the advantages of large, continentally sized or regionally dominant states—states that are able to depend on large domestic markets, to politicize market relations globally and regionally, and to engage in effective economic mercantilism and resource competition.

It is also the case that, across a range of issue-areas including climate change, emerging powers have achieved what George Tsebelis terms 'veto-player' status. 'A veto player is an individual or collective actor whose agreement (by majority rule for collective actors) is required for a change in policy.'[39] Applying the concept to international regimes, veto-players are states which have the power to block. If they object, no international agreement can be reached, and they must be on board if the agreement is to be effective.

However, while important elements of the broader 'power shift' thesis need to be recognized, our principal purpose in this article has been to draw attention to the complexity and multiplicity of the power shifts taking place in the climate change policies of emerging powers—at the level of international bargaining as well as at the domestic and transnational levels. Within this picture, it is important not to overestimate the shifts in power that have taken place, or to underplay the continued relevance of understanding climate change within the North–South frame. Emerging powers will certainly remain at the top table of climate change negotiations, but their capacity actively to shape the agenda has been limited and has, in some respects, declined.

[38] Robert B. Zoellick, 'The end of the Third World: modernizing multilateralism for a multipolar world', Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, 14 April 2010, http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22541126~pagePK:34370~piPK:42770~theSitePK:4607,00.html, accessed 29 Feb. 2012.

[39] George Tsebelis, 'Decision making in political systems', *British Journal of Political Science* 25: 3, 1995, pp. 289–325.

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In the first place, unequal development and inequality remain at the heart of the problem of global environmental politics. On the one hand, there is the range of environmental problems caused by the *affluence* of the industrialized countries; by the extent to which this affluence has been built upon high and unsustainable levels of energy consumption and natural resource depletion; and by the 'ecological shadow' cast by these economies across the economic system. On the other, there is the widely recognized linkage between *poverty*, population pressure and environmental degradation. Sustainable development is an inherently global issue, both because of the high levels of economic interdependence that exist within many parts of the world economy and because it raises fundamental and unavoidable questions of justice concerning the distribution of wealth, power and resources between rich and poor.

It may be technically or technologically possible to imagine dealing with climate change without considering inequality and global poverty. But, from a wide range of moral viewpoints, it would be wholly unacceptable to deal with climate change in a way that would worsen the welfare and life-chances of the currently poor; that would fail to provide sufficient developmental and ecological space for these poor to satisfy their rights to reasonable standards of subsistence and well-being; and that would undermine or close off the developmental prospects for the poor of future generations.

It is true that emerging southern powers complicate the simple normative picture of a world divided between a rich and powerful North and an impoverished and marginalized South—in terms of the aggregate contribution of their societies to the problem, in terms of their capacity as states and societies to contribute in financial and technological terms to solutions, and in terms of the moral relevance of unequal patterns of wealth and resource use within them. The very rich within emerging powers and those often labelled the 'growing middle class' should not be allowed to hide behind the poor. On any cosmopolitan or individualist account of climate change justice, clear responsibility should be allocated to the rich within emerging powers, who should be prepared to bear an increasing share of the burden.[40] It is also undoubtedly the case that today's emerging powers are making moral demands in relation to climate change for self-interested and often crudely instrumental reasons.

Yet we should be careful not to push these arguments too far. The emissions of even the richest 2–10 per cent of India's population today are, at least on some accounts, still lower than those of America's poorest 10 per cent.[41] Moreover, some of the most serious moral problems have to do not directly with the distribution of costs and benefits but rather with the absence of the political or institutional conditions for fair bargaining over climate change. The unequal past consumption of the global carbon budget has reinforced unequal bargaining power between

[40] For an overview of these arguments, see Paul Baer, 'International justice', in Dryzek, Norgaard and Schlosberg, eds, *The Oxford handbook of climate change and society*, pp. 328–31; Paul G. Harris, *World ethics and climate change: from international to global justice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

[41] For a recent review of such claims, see Shoibal Chakravarty and M. V. Ramana, 'The hiding behind the poor debate: a synthetic overview', in Dubash, ed., *Handbook of climate change and India*.

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rich and poor and represents a threat of compound injustice.[42] The legitimacy of international institutions will remain seriously weakened to the degree that inter-state inequalities continue to generate asymmetrical bargaining and continue to involve the domination of weaker parties by stronger.[43] The policies of emerging countries matter in normative terms precisely to the extent that they are able to shift the distribution of power and to place a broader range of moral issues on the global agenda—including the importance of representation and of 'democratizing' international institutions, the role of differential needs in trade negotiations, and the role of historical and current inequalities in assigning responsibilities within a climate change regime.

Second, for all their economic success, the BASICs remain developing economies and developing societies, marked both by incomplete development and by incomplete integration into a global economy whose ground rules have been set historically by the industrialized North. It is easy to exaggerate the strength of emerging powers and the extent of the power shift taking place. Yes, China, India and Brazil have indeed acquired veto power within the WTO; yes, changes are under way in the voting structures and governance arrangements of the international financial institutions; and yes, the creation of the G20 does represent an important change in the nature and membership of the top table. But these changes are, thus far, hardly revolutionary. Developmental policy space remains restricted by the current rules of the global game. As a result, there remain many areas of common interest and common concern among a broad range of developing countries which remain rule-takers far more than rule-makers.[44]

Finally, although this article has stressed the differences within the South, the clearly increased differentiation that has resulted from the rise of emerging powers, and the limits to the 'power' of emerging powers, we should be cautious before condemning South–South collaboration to the dustbin of history. Recent climate change politics have taken place within a broader context that has witnessed the growth of both South–South trade and economic ties and of southern coalitions such as the trade G20 within the WTO, or groupings such as the BRICS (especially after South Africa joined Brazil, Russia, India and China in April 2011), or the IBSA Trilateral Forum of India, Brazil, and South Africa created in 2003.[45] New forms of southern multilateralism led by today's emerging and regional powers have firmly reasserted the position of the global South on the political and intellectual map.[46] As a result, and especially following the financial crisis and the creation of the G20, we are seeing an ever more open and dynamic series

42 Henry Shue, 'The unavoidability of justice', in Andrew Hurrell and Benedict Kingsbury, eds, *The international politics of the environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 373–91.

43 Philip Pettit, 'Legitimate international institutions: a neo-republican perspective', Princeton Law and Public Affairs Paper series 08.012 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

44 See Robert Wade, 'Emerging world order? From multipolarity to multilateralism in the G20, the World Bank and the IMF', *Politics and Society* 39: 3, 2011, pp. 347–78.

45 Despite the presence of Russia, the BRICS grouping is routinely described as the most influential grouping of developing nations.

46 The links between the specific issue of climate change and this broader pattern are very well developed in Hallding et al., *Together alone*. See also Chris Alden and Marco Vieira, *The South in global politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011).

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of negotiations between North and South over the nature and agenda of global governance. Indeed, even on climate change itself, depending on how the future negotiations go and the fairness of outcomes that are realized, a more unified southern coalition could yet make a comeback. After all, it remains the case that the United States has only ever made concessions in climate negotiations—as in Berlin in 1995, or Bali in 2007—when completely isolated by the rest of the world.

We can indeed understand much about emerging powers in terms of how they are seeking to navigate and best position themselves within an existing state-centric, liberal and capitalist order while accepting most of the underlying assumptions and values of that order. But the nature of that navigation has been shaped by their historical trajectory within that order and by the developmental, societal and geopolitical context of their emergence. On the one hand, it is far from clear that identity-based solidarity has disappeared: we still need to ask about the legacy of historical perceptions of second-class treatment, of subalternity, of marginalization and of subordinate status within an unequal and exploitative global political and economic system. On the other, the bottom line is that climate change cannot be solved on the back of preventing or slowing down the development of developing countries. The development needs both of the BASIC countries and of the South more generally will need to be adequately catered for in the future, and cannot be compromised in the name of solving global climate change. Rather, a different sort of development will have to be found, incentivized and followed, if a workable solution to climate change is to be devised in the long run.

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