MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
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Back to Consent: International Organizations in a Post-Hegemonic Order

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The global order is undergoing rapid changes. The most striking feature of this reordering is the declining influence of the United States as a global hegemon, maybe inevitable in the long run due to the rise of China and other BRICS, but fast-tracked by the current US administration. This development has prompted some scholars to ask whether we are entering a post-hegemonic era of international law. Rather than answer this question, this paper takes a post-hegemonic order as a premise and reflects on its implications for the functioning of international organizations.

International organizations are a defining feature of the "era of hegemony". Perhaps paradoxically, they thrived in conditions of hegemony. Through an analysis of decision-making in two sets of organizations (the institutions of the liberal international economic order and the United Nations), the paper describes how international organizations functioned in times of hegemony. It draws a distinction between hegemonic and non-hegemonic constituent treaties and presents the strategies which the hegemon adopted to dominate decision-making under them.

Building on the findings of the first part, the paper then makes predictions about the functioning of international organizations in post-hegemonic conditions. In the absence of a hegemon, so the main argument goes, state consent will come to strictly guide the functioning of international organizations. Crucially, it is argued, this refocusing should come hand in hand with harnessing the *institutional potential* of international organizations.



About the Speaker

Robin Beglinger is completing a PhD thesis on voting rights in international organizations at the University of Zurich. He holds a bilingual law degree from the University of Fribourg and a certificate from the Center for Transnational Legal Studies in London. Before arriving in Heidelberg, Robin was visiting researcher at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge. Previously, Robin lived and worked as a Scientific Advisor for the Embassy of Switzerland in the United States.

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