more about the perverse, unintended consequences of U.S. programs aimed at encouraging democratization. *Marketing Democracy* is an exemplar in showing how the United States can do more for the Arab world by doing less.

Ascending Order: Rising Powers and the Politics of Status in International Institutions. By Rohan Mukherjee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 324p. $99.99 cloth, $34.99 paper.
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Rohan Mukherjee's book builds on the literature on status-seeking in international relations to investigate how states jockey for position within international institutions. In the first part of the book, Mukherjee develops "institutional status theory," which aims to predict whether rising powers will cooperate with, challenge, or seek to reform key institutions based solely on their characteristics. The book then tests the argument against the records of the United States during the nineteenth century, Japan during the 1920s, and India during the Cold War, suggesting that institutional status theory illuminates variation in China's approaches to different elements of the liberal international order.

Ascending Order makes an especially valuable empirical contribution to scholarship on status in world politics. Although prominent research on status focuses on questions related to militarized competition, Mukherjee reminds us that status concerns also inflect foreign policy in other areas. The case studies are well written and richly detailed, and they make excellent use of archival material. Although the Japanese case study largely replicates the analysis and confirms the findings of prior research (see Steven Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*, 2017, chap. 4), the other two empirical chapters are highly original. Mukherjee sheds new light on the United States' approach to the international naval order during the middle of the nineteenth century and on the rationale for India's shifting approaches to the Cold War (and post–Cold War) nuclear order.

The value of the book's theoretical contribution is more uncertain. At a broad level, the argument is reasonable and even familiar. Others have proposed logics similar to Mukherjee's central claim that the experience of being unjustly excluded from an "elite" club can turn a rising power against the international order (e.g., see Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, *Quest for Status*, 2019). Mukherjee aims to refine these models in ways that allow for more precise behavioral predictions (pp. 12–13) within the context of specific international institutions. But the refinements involve simplifying assumptions and theoretical moves that create logical problems and raise questions about the model's ability to account for the historical processes documented in the empirical chapters.

Mukherjee proposes a structural account that predicts rising power behavior based on two features of an institutional order: (1) the degree to which the "great power" club is "open" to new members and (2) the "procedural fairness" of the institution's rules (p. 69). The theoretical framework explicitly assumes that states are rational (p. 35) and unitary (p. 55): they are modeled as status-maximizers that respond reasonably and predictably to incentive structures determined entirely by institutional openness and fairness, without any meaningful role for domestic political contestation or disagreement among elites.

To specify how institutional openness and fairness affect state behavior, *Ascending Order* relies on a reformulation of social identity theory (SIT; p. 56). SIT is a social-psychological framework for understanding how individuals manage membership in groups with inadequate status. SIT proposes three broad identity management strategies: (1) social mobility involves an attempt *by the individual* to join a different group with higher status, (2) social competition aims to raise the status of *the group* by improving its standing along valued dimensions of comparison, and (3) social creativity reinterprets the rules of status attribution in a way that improves the group's status position.

A prominent strand of IR research on status-seeking has promoted what I have argued is a misinterpretation of SIT that ignores the social-psychological framework's multilevel character and interprets all three identity management strategies as ways in which *states* can improve their status (for an overview and critique, see Ward, "Lost in Translation: Social Identity Theory and the Study of Status in World Politics," *International Studies Quarterly*, 61, 2017). Mukherjee's theory adopts this approach but widens the divergence from the social-psychological framework by defining social mobility as institutional cooperation (p. 56) and social competition as behavior that challenges an institution's rules through noncompliance or withdrawal from the institution (p. 57).

Mukherjee claims these innovations are consistent with the social-psychological framework (p. 58), but this is not borne out by an examination of the social-psychological scholarship that *Ascending Order* invokes to buttress the argument. For instance, to support the equation of social mobility with cooperation, Mukherjee cites an article that mentions neither social mobility nor cooperation (Itesh Sachdev and Richard Bourhis, "Status Differentials and Intergroup Behaviour," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 17, 1987; p. 57, fn 10). To support the equation of social competition with rule-breaking, Mukherjee cites Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams's influential *Social*

Identifications (1988; p. 57, fn 11). Hogg and Abrams define both social mobility and social competition but make clear that the former denotes an individual strategy that "leaves the status quo unchanged, in terms of the power and status relations between groups" (Hogg and Abrams, pp. 24–25), whereas the latter refers not to rule-breaking, noncompliance, or withdrawal from institutions but to "direct competition between subordinate and dominant groups on dimensions consensually valued by both groups" (p. 49).

This conceptual confusion contributes to substantial theoretical and empirical ambiguity. For example, Mukherjee argues that states challenge institutions (via withdrawal or noncompliance) when they face exclusion and unfairness because doing so is the most effective means of improving their status given the conditions (p. 70). Yet, as Mukherjee notes, status requires recognition by others (p. 43). *Ascending Order* does not persuasively explain why institutional withdrawal or noncompliance should lead to the recognition of a status claim, rather than to stigmatization or diplomatic isolation. The case studies also never demonstrate that institutional withdrawal or noncompliance leads to higher status, although at times (as when he claims that India's 1974 nuclear explosion "restored its status") Mukherjee asserts this without providing evidence related to changes in recognition (p. 237).

Indeed, because they are so rich and carefully researched, the case studies often highlight the significant *limitations* of theoretical frameworks that—like institutional status theory—model states as rational actors and assume that domestic politics are unimportant. This is most striking in the explanation for Japan's changing orientation toward the interwar naval order. In chapter 5, Mukherjee tells a persuasive story about how accumulating evidence that Japan could not achieve equal membership within the Western-dominated great power club eventually benefited "right-wing groups and militarists" in political contests with moderates over the direction of foreign policy (p. 145). As compelling as it is, this narrative bears little resemblance to institutional status theory, which does not consider or theorize (and actually excludes by explicit assumption) the possibility that international status dynamics might influence domestic politics. Mukherjee is thus right to call, in the conclusion, for greater attention to the relationship between status and domestic politics (p. 291).

Overall, *Ascending Order* is worth reading for those interested in how concerns about prestige and position influence foreign policy. The book provides some important insights about what drives states' orientations toward international institutions; it is a model of careful, detailed historical research and a provocative entry in the ongoing debate over how to productively integrate insights from social psychology into the study of status in world politics.

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At the turn of the century, scholars asked whether participation in the international human rights regime had changed China. Some, like Rosemary Foot and Ann Kent, argued that Beijing's increasing involvement in the regime had led its leaders to comply more and more with human rights norms—even if they had not yet fully internalised those norms.

In this book, Rana Siu Inboden explores how Chinese leaders have responded, and in particular, how they have sought to shape the human rights regime in return. Inboden talks us through how, between 1982 and 2017, Chinese leaders gradually developed more sophisticated views of institutions like the UN Human Rights Council and the Convention against Torture, and refined their understanding of what China's role within them should be. The book gives us a fascinating insight into Beijing's strategies towards these institutions, and into officials' evolving tactics in debates and negotiations.

But Inboden argues that Beijing's evolving actions towards the human rights regime have a wider importance. She asks: "Will a rising China threaten or accept the liberal international order?" (p. 2). If it does threaten that order, how might it seek to change global institutions in the future? From the evidence in this book, not very much. Certainly, the book provides no more indication that Chinese officials have been deeply socialised in human rights norms than twenty years ago. But Inboden also finds that Beijing has not yet sought to break up or hollow out the regime, even when it posed a direct challenge to the Chinese Communist Party's policies at home.

By tracing through Chinese officials' responses to the establishment of the Convention against Torture and the UN Human Rights Council, and its participation in the International Labour Organisation, Inboden argues that China has instead been a "taker" and a "constrainer" of the human rights regime. In other words, as officials worked out through the 1990s how to effectively deflect scrutiny over China's own actions, they have generally "taken" the rules and norms of the regime—but have also sought to make sure to "constrain" the regime from being significantly strengthened. The argument is a persuasive one, although the determination to fit Beijing into categories of "taker" and "constrainer" is sometimes more confusing than illuminating, and the two categories often blur into one.

Nevertheless, the book's discussions of the human rights regime's negotiations and debates are thorough and incredibly detailed. Inboden draws on over seventy