



Beyond Post Cold War Liberalism: A Critical Agenda for New Powers in World Politics

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Abstract

This is a thesis on the normative consequences on policymaking of the post-Cold War liberal agenda developed by mainstream scholars of International Relations and International Law, more prominently Andrew Moravcsik and Anne-Marie Slaughter. My hypothesis is that the liberal agenda has worsened internationalists blind spots – such as the separation between politics and economics - and hence has restricted their political imagination. The superficiality of post-Cold War liberalism reinforces the exclusion from the political agenda of issues connected to development – such as hunger, poverty and income distribution - and leads to outcomes that are the opposite of the professed goals of liberal internationalists, the enhancement of human rights and international peace and security. I argue through a multidimensional concept of power that the foundational assumptions of post-Cold War liberalism – derived from the broader discourse of “globalization” - and theoretical pitfalls - including a narrow concept of law – cover up some manifestations of power by overlooking asymmetries generated by international institutions, structures and discursive practices. The political consequences of the liberal agenda are scrutinized through the analysis of three cases: the creation of the WTO, the economic crisis in Argentina (2000-2) and the breakup of Yugoslavia. Having unveiled the liberal agenda as status quo scholarship, in the sense that it ultimately reflects the interests of the most powerful countries, I propose the creation of a critical alternative centered on development. In the context of the emergence of new powers in world politics such as Brazil and India, which remain in the group of developing countries, the critical agenda addresses background power-generated asymmetries that restrict the choice set of people, especially in the developing world, to lead a long and healthy life, according to decent living standards and informed by a proper level of education in an environment of peace and security.



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Bio: Igor Abdalla Medina de Souza holds bachelor degrees in Economics and Law and a Master degree from the Institute of International Relations of the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro. Medina de Souza wrote articles in International Relations and Law to specialized journals in Brazil and taught International Political Economy and legal issues related to humanitarian intervention in the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in the years 2005-6. He joined the foreign service of Brazil as a diplomat in 2006, the same year in which he started his PhD at the European University Institute under the supervision of professor Friedrich Kratochwil. Medina de Souza's fields of interest are the intersection between International Relations and International Law, International Political Economy and Foreign Policy. He also studied at the Diplomatic Academy of Brazil before being assigned in 2009 to the Embassy of Brazil to Ljubljana, in which he has performed the function of Second Secretary and occasionally Chargé d'Affairs