**Introduction: Changes in the Distribution of Power in the International System through the Prism of International Relations Theory**

**A.Krickovic**

**D. Suslov**

How will the shift in the distribution of power in the international system impact international order and stability, including the relations among the US and rising powers on hard security issues? 2) How will it impact the ability of the US and the new power centers to cooperate among themselves and address questions of global governance?  Will the increasingly complex relationship between the US and the other great powers affect their will and capacity to cooperate on transnational threats and challenges?

There is a long tradition of thinking about these problems in the field of International Relations. While realist theories focus on the power structure of the international system and the implications of its shifts on stability and order, they usually omit globalization-driven determinants of interstate, including great power, behavior, including transnational threats and challenges. By contrast, the liberal tradition favors the latter and discusses cooperation for the sake of the “common good” and “global public goods”, while usually downplaying the role of power and changes to the distribution of power. Constructivist approaches criticize the “rationalist” approach adopted by realists and liberals and instead focus on the impact that ideas, perceptions and identities have on state behavior. However it is unclear where exactly constructivist fall in this debate. Some believe that the experience of participation in international institutions will socialize leaders of rising powers and get them to adopt norms of compromise and cooperation. Others however, point to the resilience of nationalist identities which may make conflict more likely and also note that experience of rivalry and conflict may perpetuate competitive and zero sum thinking.

The present article will present a brief overview of these theoretical approaches. It is intended to serve as theoretical introduction to the articles in this volume, which look to synthesize and bridge the various theoretical approaches in approaching in examining various theoretical and empirical aspects of the changing power dynamics in the modern world. For the most part, adopt a relist approach as the starting point of their analysis and are skeptical of many claims forwarded by liberal theorists. Nevertheless, the articles do try to escape form the rigid determinism imposed by many realist theories and they apply the insights of all of the various schools (realist, liberal, as well as constructivist) in their analysis.