

# New kids on the block

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The negotiating styles of the world's biggest rising powers - China, India and Brazil - could offer important clues about any future challenge they may pose to international stability, a new study suggests.

Writing in the book *New Powers*, University of Cambridge researcher Dr. Amrita Narlikar argues that the negotiation behaviour of these three emerging giants could act as an early warning system for diplomats, enabling countries like the US to better understand and handle them.

[China](#), [India](#) and [Brazil](#) are all expected to rank within the world's top five economies by 2050. All three, however, also sit outside the circle of liberal, western powers which has dictated the course of international politics since the end of the Cold War.

Potentially, each could challenge the existing international order, and the rules and organisations that underpin it, and thereby pose a threat to international peace and stability.

Their intentions, however, remain obscure. The study argues that any new power will temper its [diplomacy](#) while still rising in an effort to gain acceptance on the world stage. At the same time, however, it suggests that by forensically examining their negotiating behaviour, clues emerge about what kind of great power each of China, India and Brazil will be.

"Rather than attempting to make educated guesses and predictions about these powers' future behaviour, we should be examining the methods that they are using to negotiate their way to the core of the international

system," Dr. Narlikar said. "If correct, this research suggests that so far the established powers in the west have not negotiated correctly with any of the three."

The study examines the negotiating approach of each of the three emerging powers, with particular emphasis on recent talks such as the Doha Development Round, or the UN Climate Change Conference at Copenhagen in December 2009.

It offers an analysis not just of each country's strategy, but also the basis on which it forms coalitions, the way in which its arguments are framed and the willingness or otherwise it has shown to lead on issues of international importance.

Among other recommendations, it suggests that the west should be moving towards a policy of "containment, rather than engagement" with China, which, it argues, will pose perhaps the biggest challenge to the existing international order in the future.

For some, China's high levels of military spending, economic growth and different political system already provide cause for alarm. Typically, however, the west has sought to handle its emergence by engaging it, for example, by giving it a seat on the UN Security Council, or in a variety of bilateral discussions with the US.

Dr. Narlikar suggests that the reason for this may be that since the 1970s, China has generally acted with "quiet restraint" on the international stage - a strategy which has made it appear more moderate than countries such as India, which has a longer record of blocking international agreements.

That position could, however, be changing. The study documents how in the past few years China's tactics have become more heavy-handed,

pointing to examples such as the increasingly liberal use of its veto on the UN Security Council, its intransigence at the Copenhagen summit, and its supply of aid to African countries in a manner that appears to rival openly existing international development systems.

"China's recent negotiating behaviour discloses revisionist intentions, in contrast to cautious hedging in the past," Dr. Narlikar writes. "It allows established powers greater reason to pursue containment rather than engagement. Insofar as China's power is only growing, containment today is likely to be less costly than containment tomorrow."

By contrast, the study sees India as characteristically argumentative on the international stage, not least because its domestic political culture rewards its politicians for standing up to the west and its legitimacy rests on the support of smaller, developing countries.

While this may explain India's "just say no" stance on issues such as climate change, the book also indicates that both India and the West need to change their approach. India, it suggests, will secure greater acceptance at the global high table by leading more balanced negotiations internationally and regionally. The West, which has shown a preparedness to bend rules to accommodate India, should be demanding more concessions from it in return.

Brazil emerges as the one power among the three whose negotiation style exhibits a consistent willingness to act as an engaged and co-operative member of the international community.

Dr. Narlikar suggests that the time has come to engage it more seriously, rather than treating it as a "pushover" because it does not pose a threat to the existing order. Doing more to accommodate Brazil, she adds, for example by granting it a much-coveted seat on the UN Security Council, would legitimise and strengthen existing forms of international

governance, and send out powerful signals to India and China as they strive for similar levels of acceptance.

**More information:** New Powers; how to become one and how to manage them, by Dr. Amrita Narlikar, is published by C. Hurst & Co. on Thursday, July 8th.

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