

Abstract: China's approach to international law and to many aspects of its foreign policy places the United Nations in a central role, alongside some (but not all) other core multilateral institutions. Arguably, its trajectory of engagement with these institutions, especially within the UN, is now undergoing a historic shift from "engagement" to "leadership". At the same time, Chinese norm-entrepreneurship faces significant obstacles resulting from three factors: 1) the fragmentation and dysfunction of some of these core institutions; 2) geopolitical rivalry and competing, bloc-based agendas; and 3) the existence of alternative normative visions that may have more appeal for some sectors of the global community regarding key issues related to development, human rights, non-intervention, and state responsibility. This talk identifies both prospects and challenges for China's norm entrepreneurship across these areas in the effort to achieve a balanced perspective. It also draws on historical and current examples to envision possible futures for a global legal order in which Beijing and other "emerging" powers may exert a more pervasive influence.

Bio: [Ryan Martínez Mitchell](#) is an Associate Professor of Law at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His work on international and comparative law, legal history, Chinese law, and Asian legal systems has appeared in leading academic journals. His analysis of these issues has also featured in policy-related publications including *Foreign Affairs*, *The National Interest*, *The Diplomat*, and others, and his analysis has been cited in media including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *The National Interest*, *NPR*, *Bloomberg*, *Nikkei Asia*, *Al Jazeera*, *Foreign Policy*, and other major media outlets. His first book, [*Recentring the World: China and the Transformation of International Law*](#), was published by Cambridge University Press in 2022. Mitchell holds a B.A. with honors from The New School, a J.D. from Harvard Law School, where he was also a Cravath International Fellow and an Irving R. Kaufman Public Interest Fellow, and a Ph.D. in Law with distinction from Yale Law School, where he was an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Humanities Fellow and also obtained Yale's Archaia qualification in the study of premodern societies. He is a member of the State Bar of California and has experience in international human rights litigation. In the current academic year, he will be a visiting Fellow at Yale Law School's Orville H. Schell Jr. Center for International Human Rights, visiting Global Faculty at the Freie Universität Berlin Department of Law, and an International Affairs Fellow in Japan for the Council on Foreign Relations.