

INTERNATIONAL LAW, AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER POLITICS?

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Abstract: *We have always viewed international law as a cultural and historic product of the European doctrines that have been extended to the rest of the world. Nowadays international law constitutes a legal order subject to strong changes that decompartmentalize the classical categories on which it was built, which go as far as to doubt its existence as an order and make it go through a true identity crisis. It remains therefore to consider it through its purposes, instruments and its main areas of application. International law, ordered around certain generous and general scopes, explains its **raison d'être**. International law in the current milieu is meant to fulfill its ends by exercising more and more diverse functions and by assimilating power instruments characteristic to politics that go beyond its primary and traditional function of regulating conduct and managing conflicts. While it is impossible to analyze all these functions within the framework of a single article, we set out to demonstrate, above all, that international law has become, through its norms, regulation, instruments and intervention, a dual purpose **Deus ex machina** defined by its social environment and its current developments.*

Keywords: *international law, norm, international politics, instruments, instruments of power, power, power politics, balance of power, security, peace, development, human rights.*

INTRODUCTION

Law and power are generally regarded as notions in an antithetical balance of *Odyssean* dimensions. Generally, we tend to deify the law, to see it not as a mode of exercising power but, much more, as an instrument of restraint of said power. Pure law, however, does not exist and any reflection on the law implies that we reflect on its context, its objectives, its instruments and its effects. In other words, *legal norms*¹ are the result of power relations.

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¹ Legal norms are binding rules, or norms, of conduct that organizations of sovereign power promulgate and enforce in order to regulate social relations. Legal norms determine the