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Special Report

(Re)Imagining hegemonies: Key policy outcomes

Piotr Dutkiewicz, Tom Casier, Brian C. Schmidt, Randall Germain, Ravi Dutt Bajpai, Swati Parashar, Leslie A. Pal, Martin Geiger, Elena Chebankova, Viktoria Akchurina, and Elinor Sloan (2019)

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Executive summary

Piotr Dutkiewicz

For the last two years, supported by the DOC, a group of twelve scholars from seven countries have broached changing the global configuration of power and influence; we called this project “(Re)Imagining Hegemonies”. During previous debates and conferences (once in Warsaw and twice in Berlin and Shanghai), we discussed conceptual approaches to hegemony, potential old and new hegemonic strategies, and regional applications of and variations on the concept. We focused our conversations on the changing constellations of world order from a hegemonic perspective, understood broadly as legitimated rule by a dominant power. Under conditions of hegemony, superior forces in world politics deploy their resources to sponsor – using multiple strategies – ordering mechanisms for the world’s society. These efforts evoke reactions of counter-hegemonic ideas, movements, and actions by state and non-state actors.

By design, our book *Re-Imagining Hegemonies* is not a policy-oriented text. But because it deals with the most pressing global issues, we have decided to face the DOC RI challenge and present a short collection of ‘policy briefs’ on selected policy areas related to our volume’s main topics.

As hegemonically generated rules and regulatory institutions (e.g., the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) enjoy substantial legitimacy, Tom Casier's policy brief questions whether that will continue in our new, multipolar world. His main point is that despite profound changes in power relations, it is premature to announce a change in the international order. The transformation that he contends is occurring today is largely norm-governed, reconfirming core principles such as free trade rather than overhauling them.

Brian Schmidt answers two questions about US hegemony that have become fundamental: 1) does the maintenance of hegemony continue to serve American interests; and 2) is American hegemony in decline?

Randall Germain's main argument in his policy brief is that until the hegemonic structure of the world economy changes, the global role of the US dollar as the world's most important and indeed indispensable currency will remain intact. Yet what are the main policy implications of that position?

Based on India's experience, Ravi Dutt Bajpai and Swati Parashar answer another set of policy-related questions regarding who might be the main state and non-state actors to shape this new order. They posit that the new global order is moving away from unilateral hegemony towards a multilateral hegemonic configuration. The emerging new order will eventually include a multilateral collective of prominent states who share the goal of changing the rulebook of the prevailing system.

One of the most consequential and hotly debated issues in world politics today is the prospect of orderly cooperation in the face of massive – even existential – global challenges. Leslie Pal discusses how T-20 attempts to coordinate such cooperation by creating a global advisory framework. He contends that this effort has been framed within the development of a 'global vision' and a 'narrative' of the decoupling of social cohesion from economic prosperity.

As our debate has also centred on policy areas such as migration and the roles of broadly defined ideological and regional institutions in the complex process of either entrenching existing powers or creating anti-hegemonic counterbalances to them, we present three policy notes related to these issues.

Martin Geiger's policy paper addresses how and with what consequences international migration – as a powerful social, economic, and political process – deeply transforms nation-states and the international order. It changes relations between states, signifies the rise of inter-state and non-state actors in migration management, and creates a powerful anti-hegemonic movement from the Global South.

Elena Chebankova examines the roles of ideational factors in gaining (or losing) power, while Viktoria Akchurina offers a counterpoint to Central Asia's 'big game' approaches by presenting new evidence on why establishing hegemony in Central Asia is nearly impossible today.

Finally, Elinor Sloan's policy brief contemplates the question, "Is hybrid war a useful means of seeking hegemony?" She suggests that the answer can be found by looking at state behaviour, purported uses of hybrid war, and whether these efforts have served states well in achieving their goals.

Transformation of the international order: Old wine in new bottles?

Tom Casier

Introduction

The way many wheels turn, within the complex machinery of international order, is changing rapidly. While the focus has remained mostly on China's spectacular economic boom and rise to power, the transformation goes far beyond this case. In 2013, a report from the United Nations Development Programme announced 'The rise of the South'. A few years earlier, Fareed Zakaria had predicted the 'rise of the rest' and a post-American world.

Despite spectacular changes, we should be careful not to jump to conclusions. The profound shift in power relations in the world does not necessarily entail a complete overhaul of international order; the latter is not solely based on material power. A hegemonic international order is not simply about the capacity to coerce but also about consent: the legitimacy of certain ideas that determine how states and other actors deal with each other. Additionally, international order is relevant to the institutions that may anchor these ideas and the power positions reinforced by them.

This paper explores the depth of the current transformation, adding nuance and putting change in context. Do shifts in material power relations entail an alteration of the international order? Are the dominant norms shifting? Are rising powers like China successful in promoting alternative ideas and institutions? And finally, which lessons can be drawn from this?

Global 'norm-governed' change

Upon comparing the international rivalry of the 1930s to today, the great power competition that emerged then was a full-scale clash over systems, both political and economic. The

contenders (the Soviet Union, Germany, and the UK and US) were diametrically opposed, defending fundamentally different ways in which states should interact. Now, despite rising tensions, competing states still agree on a fair amount of normative ground. A vital point of consensus for the world is that free trade is the core building block of cross-border economic interaction. It goes without saying that this consensus does not imply that the principle of free trade is universally respected; on the contrary, protectionist measures have increased over the years, and trade is only liberalised to a certain degree. Yet the principle of free trade remains standing. Virtually all countries in the world have integrated their economies into a global economy based on capitalism and free trade. Free trade is thus still seen as legitimate, and the international economic system is based on the idea that free trade is the ‘norm’ – the appropriate approach to economic interaction.

As a result, the key question has become how to manage relations between diverse modes of capitalist governance rather than trying to create alternatives to capitalism. Buzan and Lawson (2014) expected that future scenarios may shift from “intercapitalist competition” to a more cooperative “concert of capitalist nations” (p. 86).

Global change may be substantial, but it largely occurs in a ‘norm-governed’ way (Ruggie, 1982), without abandoning some of the key principles underpinning it. This contrasts strongly with the present evolution of the post-Cold War security order in Europe. Tensions between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community have morphed into a systemic crisis that could become ‘norm-transforming’, namely by altering the very normative system upon which the post-Cold War order was built. Various normative pillars are crumbling: norms related to the indivisibility of security, the arms-control regime, collective security, and the European border regime.

Contesting hegemony

The consensus around free trade does not mean that the current hegemonic world order is not contested. But it is contested in the first place because of its hierarchies and for the way it benefits dominant powers and constrains the rise of others. Krickovic (2017) called China “a cautious riser”; it wants to see change and a better political translation of its economic power but not an overthrow of the global political economy. Its export-oriented economy has grown strong precisely because of the dominant norm of free trade in global markets. Maintaining this system is essential for its growth. Russia, however, is quite a different case; it is a power in relative decline. Its share of the global economy was comparable to China’s in 1992, around 5%, but has shrunk since then while China’s share has quadrupled. In contrast to China, Russia also has not benefited much from the current hegemonic order. Therefore, it has become a “desperate challenger” of the international order, hoping that a fundamental change will reverse its decline (Krickovic, 2017). This is an interesting paradox: the steepest riser, China, has greater potential to challenge current hegemonic structures but needs to maintain some fundamental pillars of this order to protect its position. Russia, the relatively weaker player, is the most vocal contender but has limited means to back up its protests.

The resilience of hegemonic orders

How well prepared is China to change today’s US-led hegemonic order? China’s capabilities have undoubtedly grown drastically. When it comes to economic size, the country plays in the same league as the US and EU but is likely to outgrow them considerably in the near future. Its military expenditure has expanded systematically, reaching 13% of global military expenditure in 2017 (vs. 35% for the US). In terms of its nuclear stockpile, China lags well behind the US and Russia; with 270 nuclear weapons, it finds itself between France and the UK.

But a change in the hegemonic international order does not simply depend on China's ballooning material capabilities; it also depends on the vulnerability of the current order. And this one appears to be particularly resistant to change for two structural reasons. First, hegemonic orders rest not only on coercion but also on consent. Gramsci referred to the latter as a "conceptualisation of the world that is uncritically absorbed" (as cited in Bentley, 2018, p. 846). Consent frames the ways in which states and other actors interact as natural or inevitable, even if it does not always serve their interests. Consent is what makes the norms and hierarchies of the international order appear universal.

Second, hegemonic orders are based on a self-reinforcing configuration of material capabilities, ideas, and institutions (Cox, 1981). The US-led order rests on a combination of American economic and military capabilities, neoliberal ideas (e.g., free trade), and institutions (e.g., the Bretton Woods institutions and the American dollar). The three pillars of this order are mutually reinforcing. For example, the Bretton Woods institutions have traditionally facilitated the distribution of American neoliberal ideas, in turn creating economic advantages and enhancing the US's economic capabilities. This enlacement makes it hard to break hegemonic structures. Changing power relations as such is not a sufficient condition to alter hegemonic structures; it is the tight, resistant configuration between material capabilities, ideas, and institutions that must be broken.

It is interesting to reconsider China's spectacular rise from this perspective. Without question, its growth is altering power relations profoundly – but it is far from certain whether Beijing will be able to break the united front of material capabilities, ideas, and institutions. Its steep rise in terms of material capabilities is undisputed. Furthermore, China has invested heavily in building its own institutions, most prominently the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). With 70 members, many of which are European states, AIIB has the potential to become an alternative to the World Bank, one of the Bretton Woods institutions that had its roots in the US agenda after the Second World War. The distribution of power is radically

different: China holds 28.7% of votes in the AIIB versus only 4.59% in the World Bank (less than one-third of the US votes). When it comes to networks for trade and infrastructure, China has invested heavily in the Belt and Road Initiative as well as in close economic links with its neighbours and with African countries.

Where China scores weakly is on ideas. Within the international political economy, it does not offer a radically different model, instead presenting at most a different mode of capitalist governance. On the contrary, as argued above, China needs the current liberal global trade system for the sustainability of its export-oriented growth. Beyond its economic success model for growth, it has limited ideologic attractiveness to the rest of the world. Put differently, China's capacity to disseminate ideas is limited (Allan, Vucetic, & Hopf, 2018). This pitfall, especially in the absence of a strong alliance, makes it improbable that China's rise in power will translate into a change in the hegemonic international order.

However, some notes should be considered here. First, the hegemonic order of the future will not necessarily be a global one. Actually, it has seldom been: the US-led hegemony after the Second World War is often presented as global in fact but was limited for decades to the Western hemisphere (Acharya, 2017). Several scholars have suggested that we will evolve to 'decentralised globalism' (Buzan & Lawson, 2014) or a 'multi-order world' (Flockhart, 2016), whereby different hegemonic orders of clusters of states and non-state actors will co-exist. The latter are not inherently regional clusters but may take capricious forms. Thanks to its economic power and expanding international institutions, China may be well prepared to assume a leading position in this multi-order world. Second, a hegemonic order may be threatened from within and implode due to a lack of internal support. Questions have been raised in particular about the extent to which President Trump is still promoting a Western model of free trade. It could even be argued that internal support for this model is structurally waning because it has stopped benefiting the US and the West comparatively more than other actors. Yet it is far too early for conclusions. Unquestionably,

many of the practices under the Trump administration are protectionist, but the norm of free trade as such has not been abandoned. Time will tell whether a fundamental shift is occurring or whether we are dealing with the usual inconsistencies when it comes to respecting a self-proclaimed norm.

Conclusion

The world is in the midst of substantial change. Power relations are shifting, and the hierarchy underpinning the international order is being contested. Yet the profound changes taking place are predominantly 'norm-governed': they do not question some fundamental principles of the global order, most notably the fundamental norm of free trade. China, the world's most important rising power, has been cautious in challenging the international order, primarily because access to an open global economy has proven beneficial – even essential – for its steep rise to power. The future order may thus be determined more by 'inter-capitalist competition' than be completely reversed. China is in a weak position to offer an alternative idea strong enough to break the current US-led hegemony, based on a neat configuration between material capabilities, ideas, and institutions. But if we are evolving towards a multi-order world rather than one global order, then China is prepared much better. It has seen a spectacular increase in its material capabilities and has invested heavily in alternative institutions (e.g., AIIB) and networks (e.g., the Belt and Road Initiative).

At a regional level, change may be profoundly different. Such is the case for the European post-Cold War security order, characterised by transformation of the very norms on which it was built. This shift implies that policymakers will have to prepare for different realities. In Europe, parties may need to rethink the security order in the long term, but in a context where this is politically virtually impossible.

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Policy implications of the American hegemony debate

Brian C. Schmidt

A core point of my paper is that many conceptualisations of hegemony are informed by different theoretical positions such as constructivism, liberalism, and realism. I argue that these different theoretical accounts of hegemony are of fundamental importance to understanding the current debate surrounding American hegemony. Given the diversity in how these theories operationalise hegemony, it is unsurprising that there has been endless debate about the character and durability of US hegemony. Two questions about US hegemony have become essential: 1) does the maintenance of hegemony continue to serve American interests; and 2) is American hegemony in decline? The answers to these questions are interrelated. If one believes that hegemony is beneficial for the US, as proponents of primacy and liberalism assert, then every effort should be made to preserve it. Conversely, if one does not believe that hegemony serves American interests, which is the position of balance-of-power realists and offensive realists, then rather than pursuing policies to maintain it, the US should begin adjusting to the reality of inevitable hegemonic decline.

The re-occurring debate about American hegemonic decline has entered a new phase, thanks in large part to the rise of China. It has also arisen over concerns about imperial over-reaching as evidenced by the costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the 2008 financial crisis, and spiralling US debt that is approaching levels not seen since the end of World War 2. On one level, the debate is about how to interpret data. It appears obvious to many analysts that the US continues to have the largest economy and military. Yet the crux of the issue concerns the relative advantage of the US over other states, particularly China. Here the argument is that America's relative advantage has been declining in recent years;

however, those who see the glass as more than half full (e.g., Stephen Brookes and William Wohlforth) have argued that the US continues to be preeminent and, with the correct policies, will remain that way into the distant future. Those who see the glass as less than half full, such as Christopher Layne, have contended that relative decline has already set in, and the US must start adjusting its foreign policy accordingly.

In this manner, the debate about the relative decline of the US is closely tied to the policy question of whether hegemony continues to serve American interests. If one strongly believes that hegemony fundamentally serves American interests, then it is imperative to maintain it regardless of whether decline is happening. This has led most foreign policy officials in the US to recommend policies that perpetuate liberal hegemony, the grand strategy that the US has been pursuing since at least the end of the Cold War. The pursuit of primacy, or 'deep engagement', to maintain the liberal international order has been the overriding foreign policy of Democrats and Republicans. Even while rejecting some core tenets of a liberal grand strategy, the Trump administration is certainly committed to preserving America's pre-eminent position in the international system. Whether Trump's 'America First' policies will succeed is still an open question, but his commitment to primacy is not drastically different from the policies of his predecessors.

For those who no longer believe that hegemony serves American interests, the policy of primacy or 'deep engagement' is preventing the US from achieving its core national interests. Moreover, with the onset of relative decline and the rise of peer competitors such as China, realist scholars such as Christopher Layne and John Mearsheimer have argued that a fundamentally different foreign policy is necessary. Most realists tend to agree that a policy of offshore balancing, which was the traditional policy to which the US adhered before the Cold War, would better serve American interests today. Proponents of an offshore balancing grand strategy argue that unlike the current hegemonic policy of perpetuating unipolarity, offshore balancing is suited to the multipolar world that is quickly coming into

existence. Offshore balancing is only committed to maintaining the US's position as a regional hegemon in the Western hemisphere. It therefore seeks to preserve America's relative position of power by shifting the burden of providing defence to other states and distancing itself from the power struggles in Europe and Asia. Unless a potential hegemon arises in Europe or Asia, Layne and Mearsheimer have suggested that the US should remain offshore and let other countries pursue their own national security.

Of course, the policy choices that the US makes will also affect other countries and international security in general. If the US continues its pursuit of liberal hegemony, this will be good news for members of NATO and other allies because the American security blanket will remain in place. On the other hand, revisionist powers such as China and Russia will likely continue to resist American hegemony through active balancing. A policy change to offshore balancing would have an even greater impact on the foreign policies of other states; it would require a sea change in how American allies pursue national security. In short, they would become much more responsible for providing their own security. Instead of relying on the US to ensure peace, they would now need to do it themselves.

Global hegemony from a *longue durée* perspective: The Dollar and the world economy

Randall Germain

How much longer can we expect the US dollar to be the world's major global currency? The main argument of this chapter is that until the hegemonic structure of the world economy changes, the global role of the US dollar as the world's most important and indeed indispensable currency will remain intact. Using a Braudelian political economy framework, I argue that the Dollar's role as the world's key currency is enabled by the complex organisation of the world economy, which facilitates its circulation in ways far superior to other currencies; the continuing pre-eminence of the American economy and American corporations to how the world economy actually operates, which privileges the Dollar; and the appeal of liberalism and multilateralism as the chief organising ideas of global economic thought and practice, for which the Dollar is the logical representation of value. Until these conditions change, the status and role of the US dollar will continue unimpaired.

What are the policy implications of this argument? I consider this question as it pertains to three groups of actors:

1. **For the US:** *i)* to keep a hands-off approach to the Dollar itself to avoid 'politicising' its use; *ii)* to continue to push for the ongoing prioritisation of a sphere of private accumulation in relation to the organisation of international trade and investment flows (and above all, to prioritise an open capital account to allow for unimpeded mobility of capital); and *iii)* to ensure as much as possible that the rules which regulate international economic exchange are as 'friendly' as possible to American-based, globally active firms, however these are negotiated (i.e., bilaterally, regionally, or multilaterally).

In short, because of the existing pre-eminent status of the Dollar, the US should focus not on directly supporting the value of the Dollar but on supporting the global economic environment in a manner that rewards or privileges the continued use of the

Dollar as the most logical currency for international economic transactions. This means ensuring that the Dollar is easy to use and widely available and that the US government does not undermine the centrality of American corporations in global value chains.

2. **For those countries that depend upon the continued openness of the American economy to their exports (and as a source of capital):** *i)* to further support

the continued openness of the world economy in terms of trade and investment; *ii)* to support the Dollar as an international reserve currency and a foreign-exchange anchor currency by using it as such; and *iii)* to support the alignment of international laws and customs with liberal, common law as practiced in Anglo-Saxon countries.

3. **For those countries that are political and economic rivals (rather than simply competitors) of the US and who do not want to depend on American markets and firms for economic growth:** *i)* to build rival networks of economic exchange; *ii)* to

fragment the application of liberal international law so it does not apply to their networks of economic exchange; and *iii)* to insulate their economies and firms from direct competition from American rivals. Rival states could either cease complying fully with existing international institutions and their rules or establish new institutions that might supply resources and rules to support such rival networks of economic exchange. Additionally, they could try to reduce their use of the Dollar as a means of insulating themselves from certain aspects of America's extra-territorial political reach. In the short term, this would most likely mean slower economic growth rates or even economic contraction due to constrained trade and investment opportunities with the currently dominant American world economy – but in the longer term, such policies would almost certainly provide more independence for their economies in terms of growth and development prospects.

India in the 'Asian century': Thinking like a hegemon?

Ravi Dutt Bajpai and Swati Parashar

Main arguments

The legacy of colonial rule and the histories of counter-hegemonic movements continue to hold an enduring influence on the conduct of domestic politics in postcolonial societies. The Indian anti-colonial movement incorporated numerous counter-hegemonic struggles under the aegis of the overarching objective of political independence. However, the advent of the independent nation-state did not meet the aspirations of several of these counter-hegemonic struggles; instead, the postcolonial state reinforced certain types of inherited hegemonies.

India constructs its state identity as a counter-hegemonic force in world politics. India has managed to connect the discourse of its anti-colonial struggle to its ancient civilizational glory, thereby injecting its national identity with much more endurance, acceptability, and vigour for domestic and international audiences. As a counter-hegemonic, anti-colonial force in international politics, India emphasises self-determination and sovereignty as key drivers of its foreign policy and in the conduct of its international relations.

Since its independence in 1947, India has also aspired to emerge as a regional hegemon in South Asia, though its aspirations were thwarted due to the prevailing bipolar hegemony during the Cold War and a certain kind of diffidence embedded in its political culture and national identity. The onset of the 21st century has witnessed the ascent of China and India as major strategic and economic world powers. To emerge as a hegemon, a state requires capabilities and the will to deploy them. The transformation from a putative or potential power to a practising power in the global order happens once the emergent power is willing to assume additional responsibilities that come with being a major stakeholder in the global system – from being a mere 'rule-taker' to becoming a robust 'rule-maker'. The

new global order is moving away from unilateral hegemony to a multilateral hegemonic configuration. The emerging new order will eventually include a multilateral collective of prominent states who share the goal of changing the existing rulebook of the prevailing system.

Key policy implications

The immediate post-Cold War aftermath witnessed the rise of the US as a unipolar global hegemon. However, since the dawn of the 21st century, the American-led hegemonic order has encountered serious challenges: the rise of China, widespread political instability in the Middle East and Europe, and most importantly, America's reluctance to provide global public goods and its inability to enforce global norms and regulations. The current situation of flux in the global order presents a propitious opportunity for emerging/aspirational/regional powers like India to enhance their global standing and gain prominence in shaping the emergent global order. India has always perceived itself as an autonomous, non-aligned member of the international community, a champion of anti-colonial struggles, a flag bearer of the developing world, a benefactor of postcolonial societies, and the putative leader of the South Asian region.

On the other hand, India's ascent as a regional hegemon in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region is constrained by its acrimonious relations with Pakistan; the influence of extra-regional great powers (e.g., the US, China, and Russia); and the rise of China as a major economic, military, and maritime power in the region. To follow an independent foreign policy and balance its relations with the US, China, Russia, and other powers, India can undertake a number of initiatives to strike the right balance in the emerging multilateral global hegemonic structure.

- India must take leadership in providing public goods for the South Asian region. India has an uneasy relationship with Pakistan, and this bilateral tussle has prevented

regional cohesion in South Asia. Lately, India has focused its attention on fostering closer cooperation and connectivity with all its South Asian neighbours beyond Pakistan. India needs to invest many more resources in underwriting the creation, maintenance, and expansion of public goods and services that facilitate physical connectivity, trade and energy networks, and people-to-people links in this region.

- India must nurture its long-drawn civilizational links with its neighbours and other postcolonial states beyond the region to promote South–South dialogue and exchanges.
- India considers China and Pakistan as most critical for its security concerns in the region; therefore, India must seek closer security alliances with the US, European powers, Japan, South Korea, other ASEAN states, and Australia. India also needs to expand its integration with other regional powers to bring the idea of the ‘Indo-Pacific’ to fruition.
- India needs to build goodwill and long-term, trusting relationships with Central Asian and West Asian countries, including Iran. Doing so would help counterbalance Pakistan’s ties in the region while enabling India to garner diplomatic and material support for its causes.
- India may identify China as a potential security threat; however, India cannot afford to antagonise China and jeopardise existing peace and harmony with its powerful neighbour and a major trading partner. Furthermore, the existing Bretton Woods organisations and other institutions of global governance dominated by Western powers have not been amenable to India’s requirements. Therefore, India must actively promote alternative institutions like BRICS, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and New Development Bank. China is the largest sponsor of these new institutions, and for India to join the ranks of rule-makers, it must expand its engagements with China with the utmost care and finesse.

Twilight of hegemony: The T20 and the defensive re-imagining of global order

Leslie A. Pal

The main argument of this chapter is that the world hegemonic order is threatened and the T20 provides a useful guide to how intellectual supporters of that order are defending and re-imagining it. The practical policy implications of this argument are twofold: (1) for those who want to join the defence, it provides a roadmap of key ideas; and (2) for critics of the order, it suggests several strengths and weaknesses of those ideas.

Main argument

The daily list of global crises is alarming but seems to portend the imminent collapse of, or at least serious threat to, the global hegemonic order. This paper agrees with Ikenberry (2011) that the order was “organized around American hegemonic authority, open markets, cooperative security, multilateral institutions, social bargains, and democratic community” (para. 4). The crisis can be seen as either as one of economic and political institutions, including American leadership, dominance, and support, or of a liberal democracy and cosmopolitan values. Both versions imply widespread agreement that something is amiss in the foundational institutions and assumptions of the Western, American-led, post-war, and post-Cold War global order. The irony is that this global hegemonic order, while initially American-led, became bigger than the US and must now defend itself against a crisis partially initiated by American (Trumpian) assertiveness against China, Russia, the EU, central banks, the World Trade Organization, and other entities. Defenders and re-imaginings are of course everywhere among those who support the order’s values and principles (public intellectuals, media, academe, and advocacy organisations) to the institutions and governments that are part of it. The chapter takes a particular knowledge network as its

empirical case – the T20 network of global think tanks, an engagement group of the G20 – and examines its evolution and contributions to global debates and reformulations. Its re-imagining of the current order consists of a strong defence of core norms and their extension to broader inclusiveness and equity.

The G20 was established in 1999 in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, initially as a meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors of the world's leading 19 economies and the EU. It became a leaders' summit after the 2008 financial crisis and by 2012 had formalised an engagement group called the 'Think20', a global network of leading think tanks. This chapter traces the evolution of the T20, especially as it was expanded and deepened during the German G20 Presidency in 2017. By then, there were about 170 think tanks in the network along with an infrastructure of supporting summits and institutions (the Global Solutions Summit or World Policy Forum, joined with the Council for Global Problem-Solving) generating research and recommendations on key global issues feeding – hopefully – into the G20 decision-making process. These were innovations and experiments designed to provide continuity to the T20. But the aspiration (*sotto voce*) was to create a sort of 'brains trust' for the G20 and, perhaps more ambitiously, a generator and repository of ideas in defence of the achievements of the liberal hegemonic global order. The T20 is not sector-specific and deliberately tries to weave recommendations on economic policy with social and political advice. The effort has been framed within the development of a 'global vision' and a 'narrative' of the decoupling of social cohesion from economic prosperity.

Policy implications

Supporters

1. The T20 has grown remarkably since its founding in 2012 and provides an excellent dashboard of current and emerging global issues. This would have to be complemented by agendas proposed by other such summits (e.g., the World Economic Forum, the Shanghai Forum, the Gaidar Forum, and the Doha Forum) but is reasonably comprehensive.
2. While comprehensive, the T20 has some preoccupations: (i) the disconnect between social and economic progress; (ii) rules-based multilateralism; (iii) a strong emphasis on the global commons with respect to climate change, the global trading system, digital technologies, and the global financial system; (iv) the future of work and the digital economy; and (v) a critique of conventional economics in favour of resuscitating communities, families, culture, and values.
3. The T20 has strong sympathy for systemic change in economics, politics, and society.

Critics

1. Despite its growth, the T20 is fragile, especially as the G20 presidency shifts to Saudi Arabia. This may create space for other networks or actors to contribute different agendas and ideas. Indeed, as the global order fragments, regional forums may become more important in generating global agendas.
2. The T20's re-imagining of the global order remains contained within fairly predictable boundaries and demonstrates the limits of globalist policy prescriptions. Critics will find a useful compendium of conventional wisdom to challenge (e.g., carbon taxes and gender equity).
3. T20 participants are 'cosmopolitans with a conscience' who lack robust intellectual frameworks to grapple with important social forces such as nationalism or religion.

Re-Imagining Hegemony: International migration and the future management of global migration

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Context: International migration is transforming the international order; new political hegemony rises

International migration is a powerful social, economic, and political process that deeply transforms nation-states and the international order (Geiger, 2013, 2016). While an increasing share of the world's population holds entitlements, residence rights, or even citizenship in two or multiple states, states have thus far been able to maintain their principle sovereignty concerning access/immigration, integration, and other regulatory aspects (e.g., asylum). Yet the question has undeniably emerged of who else, other than states and their governments, is gaining power and influence and is increasingly required to assist states in managing migration and refugee flows. The international order concerning migration and refugees is still based on a hegemonic position of the most economically, politically, and militarily capable states along with the most important immigration countries – first and foremost the US, the EU, and other G7 countries. However, the influence of some major Global South countries, emerging economies, and traditional 'non-Western' states is growing. The US recently withdrew from the discussions and implementation of the United Nations (UN, 2018) two new global frameworks on migration and refugees, the widely debated global compacts on migration and refugees (UN, 2018; UNHCR 2018). Mexico, the Philippines, India, Brazil, and most importantly China have exhibited growing counter-hegemonic interests and behaviour. China responded to America's withdrawal with at least two significant political moves by (a) joining and committing itself to the UN Global Compacts and the emerging new global orders on migration and refugees and (b) becoming a member state in the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a traditionally US-dominated

organisation leading the implementation of the world's Global Compact on Migration and likely to become an even more powerful organisation than it already is (Georgi, 2010; Zhang & Geiger, in press). The US founded the IOM in 1951, intentionally outside the UN system to avoid any 'Communist' and 'non-Western' influence. Over the last two decades, the organisation has been able to independently acquire a supplementary hegemonic position in global migration politics. Now, with China as a new member state, the IOM has finally become a truly global organisation with the support of China, one of the most important origin countries of migrants worldwide and arguably the world's future superpower.

Supplementary and counter-hegemonies: The rise of inter-state and non-state actors in migration management

There has been a growing trend of privatisation and outsourcing of policy interventions in migration politics. States have become strongly dependent on inter-state (namely the IOM and UN High Commissioner for Refugees), civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private actors (e.g., G4S). Thanks to growing state interest and investment, the IOM and other entities have gained strong agency, power, and factual influence in the management of migration and refugees. Since the 2000s, the IOM has become the incontestable leading inter-governmental organisation and 'manager' of migration and refugees. States are able to choose from an IOM catalogue that offers tailored packages (e.g., to strengthen border management or carry out 'voluntary' assisted return [deportation] programmes), and states around the world can 'buy into' similar products. The IOM manages expansive networks of NGOs, CSOs, and private delivery organisations to then actively implement these targeted policy programmes in specific target countries (e.g., Albania or Ukraine) that usually belong to the circle of major sending or transit countries of (irregular) migrants and refugees. The IOM has ascended to a position that arguably qualifies it to serve as a supplementary new hegemon in global migration politics. Due to its

own active policy design, lobbying, and implementation – often on behalf of states concerned about rising (irregular) migration in many cases but also on behalf of migrants and their rights and entitlements – the IOM has undoubtedly moved beyond functioning as a simple service-deliverer or convener of conferences into an increasingly independent, highly influential, and powerful organisation. The IOM has doubled its membership and funding within the last 10 years and is a prime example of a fundamental transformation and the emergence of ‘globalised’ and ‘regionalised’ migration governance that, by now, has moved well beyond traditionally responsible actors in migration (individual states) and the influence of a selected circle of hegemony in the Global North (i.e., the US and its allies). This development reconfirms newer accounts of hegemony that explore the rise of non-state and inter-state actors as supplementary hegemony, at least partially replacing states in certain (sub)areas and focusing on tasks related to policymaking and implementation. Interestingly, states’ growing dependency on the IOM is not limited to so-called ‘weak’ and Global South countries; it even extends to developed and founding countries of the IOM, such as Canada and Germany (e.g., Geiger, 2018).

The IOM only joined the UN as a ‘related organisation’ in 2016, maintaining most of its independence while starting to finally move away from a position in which it was still dominated by the US. The IOM was able to directly take leadership of the UN’s Global Compact for Migration process. While the IOM is now responsible for implementation of the migration compact, for the foreseeable future it will remain dependent on financial provisions largely provided by Western (i.e., G7) governments. This ‘double dependency’ of powerful states on the IOM (as a helper to control migration), while the IOM is mostly dependent on these powerful states and their funding, is highly problematic. For decades, the IOM has provided mainly Western/G7 states with integrated border management solutions, return programmes, or factual ‘anti-migration’ campaigns among other initiatives. The IOM continues to be criticised by activists, scholars, government officials, and migrants alike for

activities that are often highly restrictive in nature and to some extent disrespectful to migrants' rights and general human rights and interests. These activities are also barely sustainable and effective at providing lasting solutions to prevent and provide alternatives to migration or to facilitate migration that actually benefits receiving countries as well as migrants and their countries of origin.

Alternatives and associated challenges in future migration management

The example of the IOM points out a fundamental question: Who, in the future, will be 'governing' people on the move, and who will have an active say and factual power to delimit, shape, and utilise migratory flows (and their direction and definition as 'irregular' or 'regular') and to determine and commend – perhaps, in a more distant future, even the power to *command* – how states are to respond to migration and refugee flows? There are at least four alternative scenarios:

1. Continuation of privatisation and outsourcing of policy interventions to the IOM and other inter-state, non-state, and private entities.
 - a. Challenges and risks: As has been demonstrated, remote control and foreign interventions in origin and transit countries greatly hinder the development of 'national ownership' and effective solutions that may provide migration alternatives (e.g., Geiger, 2016). Many IOM activities have been criticised as undemocratic, unsustainable, and ineffective in effectively governing and, for instance, preventing irregular flows. Further outsourcing and delegating 'away' will not result in effective and sustainable migration-related solutions. It will also not help to tackle citizens' growing concerns or the wellbeing of migrants and refugees. In light of growing migratory pressures and unsolved fundamental problems (e.g., conflicts and under-development), as well as growing new challenges (e.g., climate and demographic change), a continuation of 'business as usual' is problematic but, given the current state of affairs, not unlikely.

2. Adopting at the regional level (e.g., Europe and the EU) new mechanisms of migration management involving the IOM and other entities but forcing these organisations to more actively engage sending and transit states and their governments (e.g., twinning programmes, trainings, and equal partnership). A key requirement would be to impose strict control and limits on what the EU, the US, and other Western donors can outsource and the extent to which the IOM and other implementers can circumvent local entities, including state governments, in their actions. Mandatory evaluations and joint assessments of programmes involving target state governments are warranted amidst true and equal partnership among all involved actors. Given growing pressure to respond more effectively to migration and refugee flows, this alternative would not be overly difficult to achieve and could potentially lead to a more effective, genuinely partnership-based governance of migration with the help of highly specialised organisations such as the IOM.

3. Some main sending countries of migrants, such as Mexico and the Philippines, have already become active and substantial donors of the IOM. More countries should be engaged and asked to contribute. While China recently became an IOM a member (2016), Russia could also join the IOM as a member state. This would promote better regional governance of migration flows (e.g., labour mobility) and genuine partnerships in key regions such as Central Asia – all to the advantage of key destination states (e.g., Russia), their main sending countries, and these countries' populations. This alternative would not be overly difficult to achieve and would support the aforementioned scenario.

4. At the global level, further developing the IOM as a 'service provider' but for all UN member states (and funded by the UN rather than by individual donor states). A central UN funding mechanism for the IOM and similar organisations could be generated, with regular contributions from UN member states and other donors along with clear oversight. This alternative, paired at the regional level with similar policy changes (see Scenarios 2 and 3), would require a strong global consensus and acceptance of the UN as an entity tasked with helping states with growing migration, ongoing humanitarian crises and conflicts, and an acceptance that global specialised organisations like the IOM will be tasked by the UN and acquire some sovereignty to act on behalf of the world community during key events. It is currently unlikely that

donors would transfer sufficient funds to fully implement broader solutions, although this is envisioned in the UN Global Compacts. Also, at the global level, stronger monitoring and joint assessment of activities implemented by the IOM and other entities would be required. States would then have to tolerate and support these activities as well as accept their findings and implement policy changes, which is unlikely to happen in the near future.

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Ideational factors in the re-invention of hegemony: Policy implications

Elena Chebankova

International hegemony is a specific form of control over large geographic areas hosting different sub-cultures, in which the controlled willingly accept the order proposed by the controllers. That being said, all societies that enjoyed international hegemonies sooner or later lost those positions to new claimants. The question then arises as to which factors are most important in securing international hegemony? Examining the problem from a rationalist point of view, we could argue that ideational factors play the most crucial roles. Indeed, human societies (civilizations) emerge and decline with the birth and dissolution of doctrinal spiritual systems. Dialogue between societies always goes hand-in-hand with an ideological discourse, in which one or another civilization tries to convince its opponents of the correctness of its chosen path. Success in this endeavour grants cultures a hegemonic status. Hence, if societal cultural structures are vibrant and alive, such a society can exert hegemonic influence on others. Carl Jung argued that spirituality is the backbone of any society and civilization, and its decline is the surest sign of the society's disintegration. A society with decaying spirituality will be incapable of leading the rest of the world.

Western Europe secured a hold on international hegemony roughly beginning in the Renaissance. In many ways, it was a beacon of human development, an example to follow, and a rival to envy. Yet starting from the late 1970s, the West began to resemble a culture witnessing the end of its global leadership. In his 1978 Harvard speech entitled "A World Split Apart", Alexander Solzhenitsyn argued that the West is turning into a place of moral poverty and spiritual emptiness. He blamed this on "the proclaimed and enforced autonomy of man from any higher force above him", unbridled accumulation of material riches, and gratification of all sensual desires delivered as 'rights'. Such an ideological predicament

wrests international hegemony from the West. If the task is to continue Western leadership or to secure an equal place for the West among other emerging powers, some policy recommendations might be in order.

First, the focus of the Western educational system on creating highly effective and specialised labour comes at the price of losing broad knowledge. Narrowly specialised masses become easily controlled and gullible to cultural manipulation. Science, culture, art, philosophy, and academia serve as ideologically 'correct' ways of thinking, often uttering banalities and promoting mediocrities. Western countries must return to broader education focusing on historical, philosophical, metaphysical matters that might not be required immediately in the workplace but could guarantee critical thinking. Higher education should not be understood as a customer-service area, in which students seek services and a range of practical skills available from the curricular menu.

Second, and related to the above, are essential changes in cadre policy. Extant Western political administration is staffed by uninspiring individuals. Attracting intellectuals, as well as people driven by service, could add dynamism to Western leadership. Furthermore, chasing 'effectiveness' and 'customer satisfaction' is not always a winning strategy; it results in a mechanistic approach to management in many crucial spheres, such as science, culture, and education.

Third, it is essential to revert to the original Western liberal idea of ideological pluralism and freedom of opinion. Cultural Marxism reduced Western liberalism to its most radical agenda, in which slogans of diversity and inclusivity became tools to suppress 'incorrect' opinions. Furthermore, the West should embrace genuine cultural diversity in the international realm. It is essential to invoke the ideas of great Western philosophers of history such as Toynbee, Spengler, Braudel, and Huntington, who claimed that the world is composed of different civilizations. The institutions, customs, and habits of these civilizations

assume different approaches to human anthropology, which must be recognised and respected.

Fourth, redistribution of wealth towards the poor and middle classes that took place in the West during the 20th century was a policy-driven process based on the ideas of social justice and social rights. The existence of the two alternative economic poles, in which one (led by the Soviet Union) was radically committed to economic equality, contributed to the rise of the effective welfare state in the West. It also ensured the robustness of Western middle classes. The demise of the Soviet Union and disillusionment with socialism changed this pattern. The redistribution of wealth towards the rich took a staggering global leap, allowing the rich to increase their wealth by 275% between 1979 and 2007, with the poorest increasing their wealth by a mere 18%. Inequality is now on course to return to what it was in 1918. This situation is morally explosive and politically unstable. It dethrones the socially established myth of the economic 'success' of the West.

Finally, historical evidence has shown that the excessive growth of an external proletariat proliferated through the results of war and migration accompanies the decline of hegemonic civilizations. Policies aimed at fostering economic development in poorer areas of the world must be adopted, and jobs must be created. Talented individuals must be encouraged to remain within their countries to lead their states towards development and thereby discourage overall migration. Those countries must be enabled to construct effective nation-states based on institutional patterns of modernity. To that end, the political chaotisation of Africa and the Middle East should cease.

On the power of improvisation: Why is there no hegemon in Central Asia?

Viktoria Akchurina

Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to discuss why establishing hegemony in Central Asia is nearly impossible today. By evaluating today's architecture and process of hegemonic ordering in Central Asia, this paper provides insight into the anthropology of hegemony on the ground. First, the paper evaluates the architecture and infrastructure of hegemonic ordering. Second, it analyses (unintended) societal consequences of hegemonic ordering to capture social sources of power, which – while not counter-hegemonic per se – can undermine the projects' goals.

The paper is based on the premise that the provision of international public goods through connectivity projects is a part of hegemonic ordering. Two case studies are considered: the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation project (CAREC) and the Central Asia South Asia water-sharing project (CASA-1000).

The problem

While Central Asia has often been analysed through the lens of the Great Game, where establishing a hegemony was a matter of political, military, or economic domination, today the region has proven to be one of the most complex, unpredictable, and paradoxical social terrains in the world.

According to mainstream logic, Central Asia's main obstacle to economic development has been its landlocked position. CAREC and CASA-1000 have aimed to restore regional economic connectivity and water-sharing, respectively. However, these projects fostered unintended societal consequences, such as increasing the share of the

shadow economy, bending societal organisation through internal displacement, and contributing to the creation of an identity of resistance across sensitive geographic areas. While these consequences do not represent the processes of contestation as such, they can influence social change and challenge political power.

Main concepts

Hegemony is defined herein as a process of hegemonic ordering. It implies primacy of a project in terms of providing international public goods and socioeconomic order. This definition is derived from the third wave of hegemony studies.

Power as control, as opposed to power as improvisation, has clear sources: military, economic, ideological, and political. Today, no single actor possesses the exclusive monopoly on these sources of power. Power as improvisation (as defined by Tilly [2000] and Katzenstein [2018]) is a power that exists beyond power as control and implies the capacity to exercise influence on social processes, regardless of regional uncertainty. This paper adopts a pragmatic understanding of power, provided by Aron (1965), who defined power as the ability to direct social change.

Policy recommendations

1. *Focus on the social:* Societal processes matter, for they are directly linked to biographies of borders, territories, and survival. While the capacity to re-define social space may seem like a prerequisite for domination, in practice, societies are ready to challenge and divert any grand projects today if such initiatives threaten societies' histories, routines, and survival strategies.
2. *Focus on processes and patterns rather than actors:* While political stakeholders in regions like Central Asia are multiple and often informal, one must identify the social processes, historical patterns, and cross-border practices that may undermine or empower a hegemonic project.

3. *Power as improvisation is more important than power as control*: The capacity to influence social change is becoming one of the most persistent and effective sources of power today. Provision of public goods often undermines its own cause. On one hand, the provision of public goods can be a force that may make a hegemon; on the other hand, people are often ready to relinquish all material and economic benefits for the sake of justice.

Introduction

Central Asia represents a case that challenges the conventional understanding of power as control. While conventionally having been on the Great Game map, Central Asia is now more than just a playground for the world's hegemonies. In practice, it is difficult to map hegemonic powers in the region. While Russia has been the so-called "hegemon by default" (Russo, 2018), the history and negotiation patterns within the Eurasian Union demonstrate the fluid and contingent nature of the so-called 'Russian project', with smaller states often exerting greater influence than larger states¹. China, as a "hegemon by improvisation" (Russo, 2018), has been challenged many times while crafting its influence by a number of social protests and social movements across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (Laruelle, 2018). The US and its seeming military hegemony in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse have been challenged many times by governments and social movements.

This paper suggests that hegemony has become less about dominance on a political chessboard and more about projects aimed at change and development in one way or another, for these projects have the potential to create hegemony of development vision and organisation of economic and social power.

Central Asia is home to several connectivity projects. This paper focuses on two: the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) project and the Central Asia South

¹ The Eurasian Commission's current archives demonstrate that smaller states often possess more negotiating power in that process than larger states.

Asia water-sharing project (CASA-1000). These case studies can shed some light on other global connectivity projects, including the Belt and Road Initiative.

Definition of the policy problem

Case study 1: Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)

Established in 1997, CAREC is sponsored by the Asian Development Bank (ADB)² with the goal of encouraging economic cooperation between Central Asian countries. According to the “CAREC Strategic Framework 2020”, its main goal is to “unlock the landlocked Central Asian economies” and foster development and poverty eradication by supporting non-standard trade (ADB, 2012). The non-standard trade in practice is an informal or shadow economy, which comprises 40–60% of Central Asian economies.

The CAREC institutional framework (Table 1) includes three sets of actors: governments, multilateral institutions, and private actors. CAREC prioritises four areas: transport, trade facilitation, energy, and trade policy. Each of these areas include national and multilateral institution representatives (ADB, 2012). The triple logic of this framework, through diminishing the accountability mechanism of this type of global governance structure, reflects the ‘complex actorship’ that is natural for the region and the wider globalised world, where it is difficult to identify a unitary actor with a concrete foreign or national interest (Kavalski, 2010).

In spite of this diminishing accountability mechanism, this framework does not seek to institutionalise itself in the formal sense; rather, it relies on “sub-regional or corridor-specific projects” while keeping its own institutional framework “flexible and informal” (ADB,

² Along with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, and United Nations Development Programme.

2012, p. 18). Whether the creation of an informal institution over an informal space would make this space more 'legible' and transparent remains to be seen (Scott, 1998).

In support of non-standard trade, this project covers cross-border trade activities that are not reported in foreign trade statistics. Unreported trade is operated through informal bazaar channels. Bazaars, as part of communities' social organisation, involve highly intimate interactions between local people. However, trust is not based on information-sharing related to protection of property rights; instead, it emerges from common memories, sentiments, and moral duties dictated by a traditional hierarchy of social relations (Fukuyama, 1995). The importance of bazaars for the informal political economy of these societies can be exemplified by the fact that bazaars are often the first social structure to suffer from social tensions, including inter-ethnic violence, power redistribution, and Islamist radicalisation.

Furthermore, to understand the potential societal consequences of this project, it is also useful to consider the territories to be connected. For example, Central Asia will be more integrated into the Islamic space (i.e., more closely connected with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East). Considering the sociocultural context of these regions, Central Asia will be opened up to an area of complex politics with distinct power networks, which often bypass those of states and formal institutions.

Case study 2: Central Asia South Asia water-sharing project (CASA-1000)

The Central Asia South Asia water-sharing project (CASA-1000) is part of a regional connectivity project implemented by the World Bank, intended to change the landlocked status of Central Asian countries and open their economic space. Because water has been identified as an 'abundant resource' or 'comparative advantage' in Central Asia, CASA-1000 would help to develop exports of water from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to nearby water-deficient countries, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Water-sharing is the first step, which implies the creation of a common resource pool between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan as water suppliers and Afghanistan and Pakistan as recipient states. Specifically, these new water-sharing schemes suggest connecting the power grids of southern Kyrgyzstan (the Datka power grid) with northern Tajikistan³ (the Khujand power station) to transmit hydro-energy generated by Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan and, from there, to the countries of South Asia (ADB, 2012).

In institutional terms, CASA-1000 is a multilateral framework initiated by the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which puts in place an Inter-Governmental Council supported by the World Bank Group, the Islamic Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, the US State Department, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the Australian Agency for International Development, and other donor communities.

Proceeding with CASA-1000 means proceeding with the Rogun power station. This project's societal consequences promise to be dramatic, for it implies resettlement of the population living in the areas surrounding the Vakhsh River, flooding most of the area: 42,000 people will be internally displaced or 'resettled' to other areas. While technical and economic assessments have been conducted, the potential societal consequences of CASA-1000 have not been fully considered due to a lack of data on the affected communities (Coyne & Bellier, 2014).

The implications of societal displacement include but are not limited to the following processes. First, in Tajikistan, areas of displacement include power domains of the elite opposed to the ruling elite, which is why such displacement can be seen as a means of destroying the elites' social basis through the destruction of existing social networks and patterns of social interaction, habit, and routine. Second, this displacement implies

³ This is easier to do than to connect the power grids in southern Tajikistan with northern Tajikistan due to enclaves and mined zones bordering Uzbekistan in proximity of Isfara.

communities' deprivation from their usual survival strategies. Third, it re-engineers a sense of belonging through destruction of cultural heritage sites and historical memories.

As the two projects are implemented in parallel and have some overlapping operational areas, their consequences include the following:

- Expansion of the shadow economy;
- Internal displacement of populations;
- Contribution to identities of resistance;
- Infringement of survival strategies of impoverished and more vulnerable populations.

Due to these societal consequences, projects of hegemonic ordering undermine their own efficiency and the very idea of the provision of global public good.

Policy options

- Strengthen research and development related to grand connectivity projects. Prior to implementing any grand connectivity project, conduct a thorough analysis of communities on the ground;
- Avoid societal risks and creation of conditions for social trauma and resistance;
- Create a viable social protection system prior to taking any internal displacement measures;
- Draw a fine line between non-standard trade and shadow economies;
- Leave space for the 'unknown': map potential power networks and conduct geopolitical analysis of ideological sources of power;
- Consider collaboration with other regionalisation projects of hegemonic ordering, such as the Eurasian Union, as this is the only project that involves formalisation of grey areas.

Conclusions

Time accelerates. So does social change. While control and domination remain the prerogative of governments, their monopoly on influence, impact, and leadership has been

fading. People matter more than ever; social developments in and around Central Asia are an example of that. While having been considered merely a part of the so-called chessboard of the world's hegemony, the region has been proven to be resilient and unpredictable. Amidst a presumably 'Russian sphere of influence', the region has made successful bedfellows with various powers of the world from the Gulf to the Pacific. Neo-liberal projects have partially resulted in the re-traditionalisation of social practices and identities, whereas seemingly organic Silk Road projects have fostered public distrust. While infrastructure, water, and economic transactions (as part of the survival strategy) appear to be promising instances of empowerment and ordering, they often crumble under the unintended consequences of social realities on the ground.

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Hybrid war and hegemonic power: Policy conclusions

Elinor Sloan

'Hybrid war' is a contested term. For some, it strictly refers to coordinated use of conventional and irregular tools of warfare within the same battlespace. Others argue that hybrid adversaries combine conventional and irregular methods with political, military, economic, social, and informational means. Informational operations – efforts to influence or corrupt adversary information – are especially important. This is an old aspect of warfare, but new tools (e.g., the internet and social media) have elevated its impact and importance.

In the 1990s and 2000s, scholars used the term 'hybrid war' to describe activities carried out by non-state actors – the Chechens against Russia in the 1990s and Hezbollah in the 2006 Israeli war against Lebanon. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, NATO used 'hybrid war' to describe Russian behaviour, opening the term's application to states. The focus here is on the more recent phenomenon (by some accounts) of state-led hybrid war.

There are two key and interrelated characteristics of hybrid war. First, states seek to carry out their objectives without crossing the threshold to open conventional war. As a result, they pursue activities that are amenable to non-detection, non-attribution, and a plausible denial of responsibility. Second, those who wage hybrid war pursue a 'long game' of seeking, below the radar of open conventional war, cumulative tactical successes that add up to a situation where the state has exercised preponderant influence over one or more states.

Is hybrid war a useful means of seeking hegemony? An answer can be found by looking at state behaviour, states' purported use of hybrid war, and whether these efforts have served them well in achieving their goals. We know a state is following a hybrid war strategy if it carries out one or more of the types of activities below:

- It uses conventional (traditional military instruments) and irregular (terrorism, criminal activity, insurgency, guerrilla war, cyber war/digital attacks, special operations forces, and/or unmarked soldiers and proxies) tools of warfare in coordinated fashion within the same battlespace.
- It combines these elements with political, military, economic, social, and/or informational means (i.e., 'political warfare').
- It pursues a series of activities that lie below the threshold to conventional war (also known as 'grey zone' tactics).
- It carries out its activities in the context of a 'masquerade of non-involvement'.

Some have contended that the West is a purveyor of hybrid war. Russia blames the West for fomenting protests in Ukraine and Georgia, ultimately bringing about 'colour revolutions' against Moscow-friendly regimes. For Russia, this was political warfare in the context of a plausible denial of responsibility. Longstanding democracy promotion programmes and the expansion of NATO are also seen as a form of political warfare targeting Moscow's interests. Other examples are NATO's military exercises near Russia's western border since 2014 and its incorporation of non-NATO countries into its exercises. America's use of special operations forces in places like Afghanistan, and the Stuxnet cyberattack against Iranian nuclear facilities, meet the definition of hybrid war tactics, although the latter was not combined with conventional war.

Evidence suggests that Russia is pursuing hybrid war. It coordinated the use of irregular and conventional tools of warfare within the same battlespace in Crimea and Ukraine in 2014, including the use of proxies, unmarked soldiers, special operations forces, computer network attacks and, later, conventional military forces, all while conveying a 'masquerade of non-involvement'. It fomented local pro-Russian demonstrations, engaged in a longstanding information operations campaign along cultural and ethnic lines, deployed military forces on the border with Ukraine in a show of force, and halted gas supplies to Ukraine – all tools of political warfare. Today, Russia uses hybrid war approaches vis-à-vis

Baltic countries, especially information operations, spreading false news, and conducting conventional military activities and exercises close to NATO territory. Russia is careful to pursue these activities in a manner that does not trigger conventional war with NATO.

China is also thought to be engaged in hybrid war, especially within the strategic arena of 'grey zone' tactics that incrementally seek a changed strategic situation via cumulative efforts below the threshold to war. The best-known element is China's progressive building of islands in the South China Sea, now being furnished with military facilities. China carries out extensive cyber espionage efforts against Western governments and companies, and it mixes conventional naval platforms with coast guard assets and a fleet of civilian shipping vessels to conduct maritime operations.

With this short discussion as a backdrop, what are some policy-related conclusions when it comes to great power use of hybrid war?

1. Hybrid war is proving to be a successful approach at the strategic level. The West truly *has* been able to expand its reach eastward through incremental steps, integrating most of Eastern Europe and some of the former Soviet space into NATO; Russia *has* annexed Crimea and is achieving what appears to be its goal of keeping eastern Ukraine in a state of uncertainty and weakness; China *has* created a changed strategic situation in the South China Sea by building infrastructure that enables it to control access to the Strait of Malacca, and it has astutely contested ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea with its maritime militia.
2. At the tactical level, however, hybrid war does not always 'work'. In eastern Ukraine, for example, Russia was able to maintain its actions below the threshold to *major* conventional war, but not to conventional war itself. The weaknesses of local forces meant the Russian military had to intervene using old-fashioned conventional military forces. The value of America and Israel's Stuxnet cyberattack against Iranian nuclear facilities was ultimately short-lived as Iran rebuilt its capabilities, and the West's use of special operations forces in Afghanistan could do little to bring long-term stability to that country. If there is a lesson for powers in seeking hegemony, it is to focus on the more strategic political warfare aspects of hybrid war.

3. Hybrid war requires long-term patience on the part of a country's people and its leaders, attributes that may need to be cultivated. It epitomises Sun Tzu's indirect approach to war whereby objectives are pursued, and the 'battlefield' is prepared, through many means that do not involve the use of armed force. Military force is the last choice.
4. Hybrid war may be too long-term to address critical threats. If it were determined North Korea was on the threshold of launching a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile against the US, for example, America would not be able to afford a patient approach; it would need to engage in a direct, Clausewitzian military strike. The closer one gets to a time-sensitive and critical national security threat, the less applicable or appropriate a hybrid war approach.
5. Hybrid war complicates deterrence. Deterrence – actions to get an opponent *not* to do something – is relatively straight forward when addressing a purely military threat. Superior military power deters weaker military power. The multifaceted nature of hybrid war is such that leaders need to be able to think in multidimensional terms with respect to how to deter hybrid threats. Moreover, there many aspects to deter, and leaders must realise that responding with a tool in kind may not be the best option. For example, the most effective deterrent to a cyberattack might be threatened use of military force.
6. Hybrid war holds the promise of reducing the incidence of lethal force while creating a risk of lethal force. If a country can, for instance, achieve its territorial goals through a campaign of false information over many years with little loss of life, then this is preferable to the use of lethal force. But hybrid war is so nuanced, calculating, and grounded in long-term manoeuvres that it risks the possibility of misunderstood signalling, accidental escalation, and war. The forces unleashed by hybrid war (e.g., cyberattacks) can be difficult to control. Clausewitz noted that war is like an intricate machine with many parts, each in contact with one another; as a result, outcomes cannot be predicted.⁴ That great powers are pursuing hybrid war to achieve their hegemonic goals through measures short of war does not preclude the real possibility of great power war in the future.

⁴ Clausewitz, Carl von. (1976). *On War*, ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press,): 119-120.