Hegemony and international relations — **Source link**

Andreas Antoniades

Institutions: University of Sussex

Related papers:

- American Ascendancy: Conceptualizing Contemporary Hegemony

- Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory

- Approaches to world order

- Historiographical Investigations in International Relations

- IR Theory, Green Political Theory and Critical Approaches: What Prospects?

Hegemony and international relations

Article (Accepted Version)

HEGEMONY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Andreas Antoniades
Senior Lecturer in Global Political Economy
Department of International Relations
University of Sussex
Brighton BN1 9SN, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1273 872875
Email: A.A.Antoniades@sussex.ac.uk

Abstract

The paper interrogates the current state-of-the-art in hegemony analysis in International Relations (IR). First, I discuss the limitations of using IR theories as a point of departure for analysing the phenomenon of hegemony in world politics. Second, I identify the 'agent-structure problematique' and 'Critical Realism' as two different waves of hegemony theorising and examine their contributions and limitations. Then I offer an outline of how we can move beyond the current state-of-the-art, in order to develop a more comprehensive framework of analysing hegemony. Focusing on the multiple movements of power within a hegemonic order, the paper advances a conceptualisation of hegemony as a complex power ecology – a dynamic order that draws on multiple and conflicting social forces and temporalities, which, in the final analysis, denote an existential battle for determining *desire* and the *meaning of life*.

Key words: Theories of hegemony, hegemonic order, hegemonic power, hegemony, English School, Critical Realism, Gramsci, social change.

Andreas Antoniades is Senior Lecturer in Global Political Economy at the University of Sussex. He has been director of the Sussex Centre for Global Political Economy, and the Athens Centre for International Political Economy. He is currently the convenor of the Global Debt Dynamics Initiative. His work has appeared in the journals British Journal of Politics and International Relations, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Global Society, Review of International Political Economy, Third World Quarterly, Global Policy. His monograph *Producing Globalisation* (Manchester University Press) develops a hegemonic discourse approach to world politics.

HEGEMONY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Despite the centrality of the concept of hegemony to any aspect of the discipline of International Relations (IR), the discipline has not yet managed to come up with a single analytical framework for studying hegemony. As a result there seems to be no way of comparing the characteristics of the different approaches to hegemony, and their implications for world politics' theory and practice. The response to two major world politics events of the 21st century exemplifies these limitations. First, as a result of the 9/11 terrorist strikes and the subsequent US war on terror, issues of hegemony, hegemonic power, benign and malign hegemons, and so on, returned to the top of the IR agenda. Moreover, concepts such as empire and imperial power gained new currency in IR's attempt to make sense of the post 9/11 dynamics at work in world politics. Yet, to a significant extend this revived field of hegemony analysis in IR remained compartmentalised along the traditional dividing lines of the established IR approaches. Similarly, in response to the global economic crisis that was triggered by the US subprime crisis in 2007, there was a new wave of publications on the impact of the crisis on the US hegemony or the ever dominant (or declining) nature of neoliberalism as a hegemonic project. But there were few attempts for cross-fertilisation between the different theories of hegemony in IR.

Addressing this conundrum, this paper attempts to map the state-of-the-art in hegemony analysis in IR and tentatively suggest a way forward. Not so much in the form of advancing one approach to hegemony over the others, but by reflecting on how the current approaches create a single problermatique that may offer fertile ground for the development of a 'unified' field of hegemony analysis in IR. The main thesis of the paper is that the advantage of using the concept of hegemony in IR, is not that it simplifies our analysis and understanding of hegemonic phenomena in world politics, but it offers a way of approaching their complex and multifaceted nature in a non-reductionist way (no matter whether reduction comes from materialist or idealist approaches); and also that we need such a non-reductionist approach in order to understand how hegemonic orders are produced, maintained and change. Thus the paper aspires to open an analytical space that allows us to distinguish among the different forces that define hegemony as a real-world phenomenon in world politics. Our aim is not to offer a check list of the different types of power that define a hegemonic order, but to reflect on how hegemony can be studied in dynamic terms as a social formation that is based on different and often contradictory types of power. In such a reading, hegemony is approached as a contested and disjointed phenomenon that draws from, and is contested at different ontological levels.

The organisation of the paper is as follows. The first section offers a brief mapping of the existing approaches to hegemony in IR. The second section discusses and evaluates approaches that have attempted to move the study of hegemony beyond the confines of the different IR theories. Building on this analysis, the third section outlines an approach for the development of a more comprehensive approach to the study of the phenomenon of hegemony in IR.

Hegemony in the IR Cage

The concepts of hegemony and hegemon have a long pedigree in International Relations. A foundation stone for much IR theorising is Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War* (431 BC), which deals with the Athenian hegemony and its implications for the Greek city-state

system. According to Lebow and Kelly (2001) Thucydides distinguished between 'hegemonia' (legitimated leadership) and 'arckhe' (political control) while in Roman times, hegemonia was translated as 'imperium' to describe the Roman empire[1].

Our aim here is not to engage with this discussion on the origins of hegemony in IR, but to outline the form of compartmentalisation that has dominated the contemporary discussion of hegemony in the discipline. Thus, after a brief discussion on the definition of the concept, the section focuses on four main approaches to hegemony in IR (see also Robinson 2005; Worth 2015). Yet, this reference to Thucydides is important as the lack of the development of a single analytical framework may find part of its sources in the different historical departure points of the concept in the discipline, first in Thucydides and the city-state system in ancient Greece and then in Social Sciences and Gramsci's approach to the phenomenon of hegemony[2].

Contemporary IR research has used the concepts of the hegemon and hegemony to examine and analyse dynamics, strategies, attitudes, entities or properties that focus on, cut across or transcend the traditional three images of world politics, i.e. the individual, the state and the international system (see Waltz 1959). Despite this diversity, the great majority of these works share a common element. That is, the concept of hegemony may imply a great capacity for coercion and/or a great degree of influence or control over the structures of the international system and the international behaviour of its units, but it excludes situations where we have the establishment of relations of direct and official control over foreign governments or territories. This common element can be taken to be the key defining characteristic of the concept of hegemony in IR[3]. This is, for instance, what differentiate the concept of hegemony from the concept of colonisation (which implies direct, official control). Any form of relationship that implies direct management or ownership of foreign territories is beyond the conceptual terrain of hegemony. Consequently, the concept of hegemony does not cover forms of domination such as annexation, occupation or acquisition of foreign territories or populations (among others see Doyle 1986; Lebow and Kelly, 2001; N. Ferguson 2004; Y. H. Ferguson 2008; for a critique see Rapkin 2005).

On this basis, we can distinguish four main approaches to hegemony in IR. The first approach can be termed the *conventional approach*. In most mainstream IR literature the concept of hegemony has conventionally been used to signify a condition of disequilibrium of power in the international system, in which one state becomes so powerful that can exercise leadership in or dominance over the international system (for a classical statement see Gilpin 1981). This state, often referred to as hegemon, hegemonic power or imperial power, has therefore the capacity to exercise fundamental control over the structures of the international system, as well as the (international) behaviour of its constitutive units (see also Doyle 1986, 19–48). The factors on which the superiority of the hegemon may lie include geography, natural resources, economic capacity, military capacity and preparedness, population (both quantitative and qualitative aspects such as education), morale and unity, quality of diplomacy and government, technological innovation etc (Morgenthau 1965). Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990, 287–288) sum up some of these factors by arguing that 'the constitutive elements of hegemonic power include military capabilities; control over raw materials, markets, and capital; and competitive advantages in highly valued good'. In this approach, hegemony is as a top-down, agential phenomenon, where the existence and reproduction of the hegemon / the hegemonic power is based on its ability to maintain its primacy and superiority mainly in terms and through the use of material capabilities. Here, the concepts of the hegemon and hegemony, to a great extent, overlap. Hegemony is the hegemon's period of rule as well as the international infrastructure created by this rule. This period/infrastructure ends/collapses with the decline and collapse of the hegemon. A number of seminal works focus on this aspect of hegemony. For instance,

Robert Gilpin's work on *War and Change in World Politics* (1981), with its focus on hegemonic ascendancy, hegemonic wars, and hegemonic decline, and Paul Kennedy's work on *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987). Stephen Krasner's work on *State Power and the Structure of International Trade* (1976) and all subsequent work and theorists that followed the neorealist strand of Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) could also be included here[4]. This conventional approach to hegemony has been challenged from two sides within IR.

On the one side, by the *neoliberal approach*. The neoliberal literature on regimes and international institutions, developed since the late 1980s, challenged the neorealist HST assumption that an open and liberal world economic order requires the existence of a hegemonic or dominant power (Kindleberger 1973, esp. 288–306; Krasner 1976; for an overview, Gilpin 1987, 72–80, 85–92). A milestone in this regard was the special issue of *International Organization* (IO) on International Regimes, edited by Krasner in 1982 (volume 36, no. 2; later published also as an edited volume; see Krasner 1983). Counter to HST, the IO issue concluded that international regimes have an independent causal effect in world politics (i.e. although they may be products of hegemonic power, they are not reducible to it). This argument was then advanced further by Robert Keohane in his book *After Hegemony* (1984), where he argued that an international system could continue to function through international institutions even after the decline or collapse of the hegemon that had created these institutions in the first place. Thus, according to the neoliberal approach, although a hegemon is a necessary condition for the construction of a hegemony (a specific international order), hegemony itself can outlive the hegemon. In this manner, neoliberalism attempted to shift the focus of analysis from the subject of hegemony (i.e. the hegemon) to the conditions and mechanisms of its operation.

The second challenge to the conventional approach to hegemony came from the Critical IR scholarship and was based on Antonio Gramsci's notion of Hegemony. Gramsci (1971) argued that there are two types of political control: domination that is based on coercion, and hegemony that is based on consent. For the *Gramscian approach*, hegemony signifies the process through which the leading group / ruling class of a society transforms its own interests and values into 'common sense' for all members of society. Along these lines, Neo-Gramscian scholars have argued that in order IR to conceptualise how hegemony operates in the international system, it must move from a state-centric reading of the world system, where social forces are seen through national lens, to a reading of this system as a 'totality' (see Gill 1993, 41–42). As Robert Cox (1993, 61–62) argues '[h]egemony in the international level is…not merely an order among states… World hegemony is describable as a social…an economic…and a political structure… World hegemony…is expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behaviour for states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries – rules which support the dominant mode of production'. The Gramscian approach locates the subject of hegemony not in a powerful state but in transnational social forces that dominate in the mode of production. Without diminishing the importance of material power, and dominance over material resources, it understands hegemony not in terms of coercion, but in terms of consent, shared beliefs and a commonsense[5]. As Cox (1993, 52) puts it 'Gramsci took over from Machiavelli the image of power as a centaur: half man, half beast, a necessary combination of consent and coercion. To the extent that the consensual aspect of power is in the forefront, hegemony prevails. Coercion is always latent but is only applied in marginal, deviant cases'. In this reading, the decline of the hegemon is accompanied by the rise of counter hegemonic projects that come to provide new values, a new commonsense, a new hegemony[6]. This Gramscian approach to hegemony came to

complement more traditional Marxist approaches that focused more on coercion rather than ideology and consent (see also Worth 2015, 63-85).

Finally, drawing mostly from radical political theory, a different approach to hegemony was advanced by post-structuralist IR scholarship. Early poststructural thinkers have focused on how power and universalising discourses are produced and can be challenged in world politics (authors include Richard Ashley, RJB Walker, James Der Derian, Michael Dillon). More recently, the works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) have been influential in this approach, but they are also indicative of the differences found within it. Both these works are inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, but depart on the way they define hegemony and understand its mode of operation. Following Gramsci, Laclau (2000) understands hegemony as the moment that a specific particularity/project acquires a universal signification (see also Laclau 1996). According to Laclau hegemony is a discursive order, i.e. it consists of a set of practices that have acquired an independent dynamic which is not reducible to the social forces that gave birth to it in the first place (see Foucault 1972). Yet, the reproduction of hegemony depends to a great extent on the social forces from which it originates, and most importantly to the capacity of these forces to neutralise or resist, counter-hegemonic projects and forces. Hardt and Negri (2000) on the other hand move from a Foucaultian understanding of discourse to Foucault's and Deleuze's analysis on biopolitics (Foucault 1978; Deleuze 1988; Deleuze 1992). They conceptualise hegemony, or to use their terms, empire, as a new international order that 'becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord' (Hardt and Negri 2000, 24). Thus, empire is a decentred and deterritorialising apparatus of rule that 'regulates social life from its interior' (p.23). It does not influence, control, invest only the economic or the cultural dimension of society but rather the 'social *bios*' itself (Hardt and Negri 2000, 25). Therefore, they do not locate the subject of hegemony in any powerful state or group of states, or factor of production, but directly at the level of the individual.

All the above approaches to hegemony have served the IR discipline well. By using different points of departure and focusing on different aspects of the same phenomenon, they advanced our understanding of the different facets through which hegemony manifests itself in world politics, and the different conditions of existence and change of these facets. But approaching the phenomenon of hegemony through the confines of different IR theories seems to have exhausted its contribution. No single IR theory is able to grasp and offer a comprehensive understanding of, for instance, the nature of the 'US hegemony' and the multiple ontological levels at which this hegemony is reproduced, contested and challenged (or not). Similarly, no theory alone can offer a comprehensive understanding of what is the impact of the global economic crisis on the American hegemony and why. Or, why in 2008/09, the moment when the economic model on which the American hegemony was based momentarily collapsed (through what effectively was its nationalisation), there was nothing there to replace it. For such a comprehensive understanding we need an approach able to synthesise the insights of the different IR theories. We need an approach that overcomes the material/ideational/subjective divides not by neglecting the properties of which these divides consist, but by allowing us to examine how these different properties come together at different levels forming a single hegemonic order.

The attempt to develop such a comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of hegemony, however desirable, may be an elusive target. But the gains, in terms of understanding, from moving towards this direction should not be underestimated. It is this rationale that animates this paper and the argument that we should move away from using IR theories as the point of departure for studying hegemony in world politics. Put differently, the focus

of hegemony analysis in IR should shift from the dividing lines prescribed by IR theories to the different natures and operations of the phenomenon of hegemony itself.

From IR Theories to Hegemony Analysis in IR

There have been several significant attempts to move the study of hegemony beyond the dividing lines of IR theories. This section orders these attempts and discusses their characteristics and limitations. Then the paper develops how we can built on recent theoretical advancements in this field, in order to develop a more comprehensive approach to hegemony analysis.

Agential approaches

A first group of approaches has tried to escape from the confines of traditional IR framing by focusing on the hegemon and the different types of power it uses to maintain its hegemony. Hegemony is thus conceptualised as a relationship between two (groups of) agents, the hegemon and the remaining units/actors of the system. These agential approaches (see also Joseph 2000) bring together and analyse in a comparative way the different forms of power on which hegemonies can be built and maintained, and their implications in policy terms.

For instance, studying the nature of hegemonic power in international relations, John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan (1990) have distinguished between two forms of hegemonic power; one based on material incentives and one based on substantive beliefs. In particular, they argue (1990, 285–286):

> There are two basic ways in which a hegemonic nation can exercise power and secure the acquiescence of other nations. The first is by manipulating *material incentives*. Through threats of punishment or promises of reward, the hegemon alters the political or economic incentives facing other states…The second way…is by altering the *substantive beliefs* of leaders in other nations. Hegemonic control emerges when foreign elites…internalise the norms and value orientations espoused by the hegemon and accept its normative claims about the nature of the international system [the authors refer to this process as socialisation]…These two ways of exercising hegemonic power are mutually reinforcing and frequently difficult to disentangle.

With regard to the policy implications of these two different types of power, Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990, 287) argue that a hegemonic order that is 'built on inducements and threats depends exclusively on the hegemon's control of preponderant material resources'. On the other hand, a hegemony that encourages and promotes socialisation not only makes the running of hegemony easier but can also reduce significantly its operational costs. This consensual dimension of 'hegemonic management' can also explain why specific hegemonic orders outlive their hegemons.

Thus, agential approaches to hegemony analysis, as this developed by Ikenberry and Kupchan, bring under a common analytical framework insights from different IR theories. They allow us to focus simultaneously on both the hegemon and its way of rule, and examine how they determine one another, and consequently the broader hegemonic order that they sustain. Yet, in such an approach, on the one hand the 'hegemonic agency' is defined in a rather singular, statist or otherwise, manner, and on the other hand the role and

nature of hegemonic structures and practices remain rather underdeveloped and succumbed by the process of elite socialisation. Thus, the different ontological levels on which hegemony is reproduced collapse analytically into the agency of the hegemon and its socialisation strategy. In this way our capacity to capture the different ontological layers of a hegemonic order is significantly reduced.

Structural approaches

A number of 'structural approaches' inspired by the English School (Clark 2009; Clark 2011), critical realism (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002), and Gramscian analysis (Joseph 2002; Joseph 2008; Saull 2012) have attempted to cure these weaknesses.

Within the English school, Ian Clark (2009; 2011) has attempted to move the concept of hegemony from a narrow, agential, material understanding based on primacy and the distribution of capabilities within the international system, towards its function as a primary institution of the international society, i.e. a social structure made possible by its legitimisation from the very members of this society. Along these lines he argues (2009, 24) that hegemony:

> does not refer simply to a set of material conditions in which one state is predominant: it is not, in other words, primacy alone. Neither is it something that is unilaterally possessed by the hegemon…Rather, it is a status bestowed by others, and rests on recognition by them…In short, by hegemony is meant an institutionalized practice of special rights and responsibilities conferred on a state with the resources to lead.

In this way, Clark attempts a synthesis between agential and structural approaches by focusing on the social context of legitimacy that defines a hegemonic order. Furthermore, studying different cases of hegemony in international history he demonstrates that there is no single model of hegemony that fits all historical cases. On this basis, he develops a taxonomy of forms of hegemony based on their different social context of legitimacy. In particular, in the modern historical era, he defines the Concert of Europe as a collective hegemony, Pax Britannica as a singular hegemony, and Pax Americana as a coalitional hegemony. Thus, Clark develops a historically informed new hegemony taxonomy, based on the number of hegemonic powers and the international scope of hegemony. The strength of his analytical framework is that it can account for differences both with regard to the nature of the hegemon (singular, collective) and the scope of hegemonic legitimacy (universal or geographically constrained).

Despite these strengths, the proposed framework is not conducive for the development of a comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of hegemony. Its conceptualisation of the hegemon remains narrow and statist. The proposed framework does not pay sufficient emphasis on the different types of power that operate in a hegemonic order and how these inter-relate and sustain this order. Clark solves the problem of 'one model fits all' by creating a new typology of four different models. Yet, the emphasis is on the objective attributes of the different models rather than on how hegemony is reproduced and sustained at different ontological levels and through different practices. Thus, although the proposed focus on hegemony's social context of legitimacy advances the state of the art in hegemony analysis, the way in which this concept is operationalised and scrutinised remains too state-centric, and the complex social play of power that sustains it remains rather beyond analytical scrutiny.

Another attempt to advance hegemony analysis in IR has come from Critical Realism (CR). The latter has attempted to advance the study of hegemony through its 'stratified ontology' approach. In particular, CR differentiates among three different levels or domains of reality: the empirical, the actual and the real (McAnulla 2005, 31; for Bhaskar's original statement see Bhaskar 1994; see also Patomäki and Wight 2000). In terms of hegemony analysis, the domain of the *empirical* would, for instance, refer to objective material capabilities such as aircraft carriers or foreign reserves. The domain of the *actual* would refer to manifested 'structural biases' and the social processes and practices through which these biases are 'actualised'. A good example here is the inequality of pay between men and women (the so called 'gender pay gap') in advanced capitalist societies, where, although there are no formal rules establishing this inequality (rather the opposite is true), the latter becomes apparent when the actual salaries of the two groups are contrasted. Finally, the third ontological stratum is the domain of the *real* which refers to 'objective underlying structures' that exist independent of human cognition and (inter)action. For instance, the maximum consumption that a socio-economic and environmental system can afford without collapsing. As Patomaki and Wight (2000, 223) argue, for CR, '[t]he world is composed not only of events, states of affairs, experiences, impressions, and discourses but also of underlying structures, power, and tendencies that exist, whether or not detected or known through experience and/or discourse. For critical realists this underlying reality provides the conditions of possibility for actual events and perceived and/or experienced phenomena'.

What is important in this stratified ontology is that the source of power in these different domains is, or can be, different. Structural biases for instance may find their origins in historical socio-economic conditions that exceed the power and nature of any contemporary hegemon. Thus, the CR framework can bring together a study of hegemony in terms of a state that poses overwhelming material power, with a study of hegemony where the latter is construed as a diffused and decentred apparatus of power that is 'causally efficacious'. Furthermore, the stratified ontology of critical realism allows us to examine the different factors that affect the existence and reproduction of the different 'types' of hegemonies, no matter whether these are state military power, deterritorialised social networks or market forces, or historically inter-locked patterns of power relations.

Along the above lines, Jonathan Joseph (2000) has attempted to complement the agential approaches to hegemony, with a structural CR approach. Following the stratified 'ontological capacity' of Critical Realism, he distinguishes between two different types of hegemony. The first type, the agential (or intersubjective) hegemony gives primacy to social actors and their interaction. It focuses on group interests, specific political projects, social alliances, and other factors that relate to how social actors achieve dominance through constructing consent. The second type, structural hegemony, gives primacy to a deeper level of social institutionalisation, i.e. to the social mechanisms and structures that allow the social universe of world politics[7] to hang together and be reproduced. Joseph (2000, 191) argues that this typology denotes a 'distinction…between a deeper, structural hegemony which refers to the unity and reproduction of society and its structures and institutions and the agentially based hegemony of specific hegemonic projects', or put differently, 'between hegemony's basic material necessity and various forms of its actualisation through concrete projects and intentional agency' (this thesis is further developed in Joseph 2002; 2008; see also below).

The theoretical framework proposed by Joseph pushes hegemony analysis from a unidimensional approach that is focusing only on agents to a two-dimentional approach

that allows the study of hegemony as both an agential and structural phenomenon. Yet, Joseph's conceptualisation of structure and structural hegemony seems to be rather restricting. His suggestion to conceptualise 'structural hegemony' as 'hegemony's basic material necessity' seems to limit the phenomenon of structural hegemony to the (CR) realm of the real[8]. For critical realists the realm of real is a realm that is not consisted of inter-subjective entities and is not reducible to social interactions, but constitutes an *objective*, extradiscursive reality, 'out-there', that has a *real* and not an intersubjective effect on the way people organise their lives; in the same way that gravity has a real impact on material things. Thus, in Joseph's framework, the main thing beyond agential hegemony seems to be extradiscursive/objective structures. The richness of the space in between these two sets of phenomena is not given enough space or attention.

This CR hegemony analysis has been complemented by works adopting a more structural approach to Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Joseph himself has articulated further his original thesis, by engaging in a more structural reading of Gramsci's concept of 'hegemonic bloc' (Joseph 2008). In this reading, the phenomenon of hegemony consists of two elements: on the one hand the 'historical block', which represents the agential and intersubjective aspects of hegemony, and on the other the 'real material structures' on which these agential aspects of hegemony are grounded, and which is defined in terms of 'processes of production and economic regulation' (2008, 114). Yet, despite this shift to 'processes', the latter continue to be conceptualised as operating in the CR's depth ontology, i.e. the realm of the real. A respective, thoughtful, Gramscian approach is offered by Richard Saull (2012). Here, the agential aspect of hegemony that is represented by the 'historical block', is complemented and structurally conditioned by the objectivity of the processes of the material reproduction of capital, especially in terms of its mode of accumulation. Saull (2012, 330) allows for a more social reading of the structural elements of hegemony, by suggesting that 'the structural logic of capitalist development can be altered through the cumulative impact of investment / production decisions and actions taken at the micro-level of firms'. Nevertheless, the main issue with Joseph's original statement on hegemony seems to remain. The rich social space between agents and objective structures is not given due ontological and analytical consideration. In this sense, this new wave of hegemony analysis in IR, carries on some problems related to the old dualism of structure and agent debate in sociology (Mouzelis 1991, esp. 25–47), that CR attempted to overcome in the first place[9].

Despite these shortcomings, the above approaches have significantly advanced the state-of-the-art of hegemony analysis in IR. The analytical and ontological differentiation between the hegemon (the agent) and hegemony (an order that includes the hegemon as a defining but distinct element), and the emphasis on different ontological layers that impact differently on the conditions of existence of a hegemonic order pave the way for a more comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of hegemony. What is needed now is to complement these approaches with an analytical framework that will allow us to focus on how hegemonic power (i.e. the power that sustains a hegemonic order) is materialised and operates in the ontological space that extends between the hegemon and hegemony's 'basic material necessity'. This is a space that is 'populated' by objective structural elements (and practices) that although they are conditioned/enabled by the 'realm of the real', they are not determined by neither are reducible to it or to hegemony's agential aspects (in the form of a hegemonic power or a hegemonic bloc). Thus, although, the properties of these elements bear a strong resemblance to the properties attributed to structural hegemony by CR, this is still an intersubjective, social space rather than an extradiscursive, extrasocial one. Within this space, the powers and forces that sustain hegemony do not only have different sources and draw from and are manifested in different ontological levels, but are

also expressed through and materialised in practices that exceed the boundaries, purposes and control of any historically specific hegemon and hegemonic order. This approach problematises also the understanding of a unidirectional causality between the 'realm of the real' and this social space, for, even in the longue durée, the latter can also influence and effect the former and the implications, if not also the composition, of its elements.

To capture this social space and analyse its role in the reproduction and change of hegemonic orders, we need to abandon the agent/structure problematique as our point of departure for hegemony analysis in IR. We need to focus on the sources, operations and interaction of the powers that sustain hegemony and make a hegemonic order to hang together. It is through such a study of power that we should bring in and order hegemonic agents and structures, and not vice versa, if we are to pave the way for a more comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of hegemony. Thus rather than using agents and/or structures as our starting point in hegemony analysis we need to focus on the 'movement of power' within a hegemonic order, i.e. where does power come from, where is it targeted to and how does it operate? In this way hegemony analysis could interrogate better the space that lies between agents' capacity and structural constraints, without ignoring either of these two. This would require a new 'analytics of power' for hegemony analysis. Below we attempt a first outline of the direction that this new analytics could take. This is just the beginning of a discussion rather than a conclusive statement.

Towards a movement of power approach

The point of departure for the proposed approach is the diverse movements of power within a hegemonic order. In such a perspective, a hegemonic order is construed as complex social assemble of power. There is no unique source of power, no unique subject or object of power, no unique ontological level at which power operates, no unique temporality in terms of when power was formed, rationalised, instrumentalised. There is a multitude of power movements and temporalities that are enacted by and engage multiple social agents, institutions, practices, structures, rationalities, strategies, identities, desires and memories. Hegemony is the power order that emerges by the intersection and interaction of these movements of powers. Both forcefully (outside-in) and autopoietically (inside-out) these movements of power *constitute* the ontological space that extends between the 'hegemon' and 'hegemony's basic material necessity', historicising in a literal sense both these two phenomena. That is both the prevailing agential elements of a hegemonic order, and the objective structures, limits, materialities, necessities of this order. In this sense, hegemony's basic material necessity may form the 'outside', but it lies, is constituted and is transformed within the hegemony's social space.

In this social space, hegemonic power is enacted and moves in multiple ways. It may instrumentally be used to impose or inspire specific modes of living, or it may (unconsciously) be generated through specific identities, rationalities, desires or practices. It may be enacted as an external property of its subjects, or as something that defines the internal composition, the very identity/living of its subjects/objects (agents, institutions, practices). There are no singular flows or single direction of movement. Multiple top-down movements of power from different departure points interact with multiple bottom-up movements of power emanating from different sources.

Thus, on the one hand we need to focus on the material capabilities involved in the top-down movement of power, and the diverse institutional arrangements and configurations through which these capabilities are mobilised and materialised. 'Naked capabilities' (e.g.

military or monetary power) however do not make up a hegemony. We need to examine how these capabilities are invested in their social context and purposes in order to understand their play and role in the reproduction of a hegemonic order. Similarly, we need to study the top-down movement of power that aims to generate consent and attraction, and to maximise the congruence between on the one hand hegemonic aims and institutional practices and on the other individual and social subjectivities, rationalities and desires. To study this top-down movement of power we need to move beyond a state-centric approach. We need to account for the wider dispersed, decentred and many times (semi-) independent and private set of institutional actors and arrangements through which hegemonic coercion and consent are produced in the political, economic, social and cultural domains both at international and domestic levels.

On the other hand, however, we need to capture and understand bottom-up and autopoietic movements of power. This involves individual or collective agency in the form of establishing, supporting, reproducing, traversing, translating, resisting or corrupting top-down movements of hegemonic power and demands, in what in essence is –however unconscious– an existential battle that determines prior/higher desires and the 'meaning of life'. This existential battle draws from multiple and often conflicting social and temporal points and resources (for instance personal, family, community, religious, gender, national histories, knowledges and lived experiences), that exceed any single hegemonic order. Finally these movements of hegemonic power are grounded in a specific, real, socio-historical context, where, as aforementioned, hegemonic power co-exist with older, contradictory or parallel social structures and practices, that generate frictions and dysfunctionalities; where agents face specific multidimensional constraints and historical contingency; and where 'history' continuously invents new means, challenges and technologies for hegemonic continuity and change.

In analytical terms, a hegemonic order can be thought of as a dynamic equilibrium between multiple movements of power that operate within and across different ontological levels and may follow different temporalities. Addressing two key questions related to hegemonic power, we can develop a four-fold classification of the different types of movement of power in a hegemonic order (see also Antoniades 2008a)[10]: (a) Is power an external characteristic (e.g. nuclear weapons) or something that defines the internal composition of its subject (e.g. identity)? In the first case it can be said that power is something that is external/outside its subject, whereas in the second case it is internal/inside it. (b) Does power aims to change only the external behaviour of its objects or does it aim to affect their internal composition and identity. In the first case power targets the outside of its objects, i.e. their external behaviour, whereas in the second it targets their inner nature. Following the analytical differentiations generated by these questions we can distinguish among four different *movements* of power (see Table 1).

Table 1. Movements of Power in a Hegemonic Order

	out	in
outside	Top-down Instrumental	Top-down Instrumental
inside	Bottom-Up Attraction/Mimetic	Bottom-Up Biopolitical/autopoietic

The top-down movements of power constitute rather instrumental processes that aim either to impose changes in the external behaviour (outside-out) or to influence the very identity formation (outside-in) of social subjects or collectivities. Respectively, bottom-up movements of power refer to power that either is exercised through attraction, generating mimetic processes (inside-out), or that (biopolitically) governs life from within (inside-in) (see Antoniades 2008a). Each of these movements of power may generate its own reverse movements, in the form of resistance. Furthermore, these movements of power take place at different ontological levels. In Critical Realist terms, top-down and bottom-up movements of power struggle both within and across the empirical and the actual domains and these struggles are influenced by and influence the domain of the real. In addition, and equally important, there is no single way in which the aforementioned movements of power are materialised. Thus, both top-down and bottom-up movements of power may be materialised at the different ontological domains through material factors, and/or institutions or practices, and/or ideational and discursive means. The fact that the implications of these movements of power and their struggles exceed the control of their sources, reveals why hegemonic orders are constituted by institutions, practices, rationales and desires that follow different temporalities and may have been initiated in different historical times. Thus, in the proposed approach, a hegemonic order is construed as a complex power ecology that is characterised by different and often conflicting socialities and temporalities that go well-beyond any unidimensional (top-down or bottom-up) or unilinear (in temporal terms) approach to hegemony.

In this complex power ecology, a change of a hegemonic order is as much an issue of social rupture as it is of social repetition (Antoniades 2008). Consequently, abrupt power changes or challenges (e.g. 9/11, or the 'great depression') may not threaten a hegemonic order, so long as the 'horizon of the desirable' in bottom-up movements of power remains unchallenged; and this regardless of any changes in the 'horizon of the possible' (in terms of the hegemony's basic material necessities). To paraphrase Henri Lefebvre (1987, 11) a break with hegemony 'by means of festival—violent or peaceful—cannot endure'. A shift in a hegemonic order requires a shift in the deeper ontological level that relates to human desires and the production of life within this order. Therefore, the change of a hegemonic order is a complex social process where changes in the top-down movement of power, generated by changes in the distribution of capabilities within the system in question, are combined with changes in bottom-up movements of power, generated by the emergence of new dominant rationalities and subjectivities. Moreover, to be sustainable, such a shift should take place through the emergence of a new set of practices that challenge the

rationale and desirability of the existing dominant order, and undermine its effectiveness and legitimacy. Although violent social events (e.g. terrorist strikes, financial crises) may trigger such new practices and rationalities, these events cannot on their own lead to a hegemonic shift. Even if such new practices and rationalities emerge, their sustainability may prove short-lived. As Cooper (2001, 124) notes, the importance of institutionalisation through processes of social repetition is critical here. Therefore a hegemonic change should not be thought of as a single 'sea change' or (violent) social rupture that at once overturn an established social order. Nor it is a process that aims to establish a clearly predefined new order. Rather than being about one 'big change', hegemonic shifts occur through myriad small ruptures that create new openings, and new political spaces, rationalities and dynamics that act upon and transform the prevailing hegemonic order (Antoniades 2008, 422). In this sense, the dispersed and diffused nature of hegemonic orders is both a weakness and a strength for potential challengers, for they defy any effective centralised governance or control (by a single hegemon or otherwise).

Conclusion

International Relations have come a long way in thinking about the phenomenon of hegemony in world politics. Still, the discipline seems to oscillate between the Scylla of competing IR theories and the Charybdis of the agent/structure problem. A number of recent contributions, mostly inspired by Critical Realism and structural readings of Gramsci, have advanced the state of the art in hegemony analysis but did so by rather narrowing down the conceptualisation of the social structure and social space of hegemony. Following up these advances, the paper explored an alternative strategy for developing a comprehensive framework for hegemony analysis. Putting forward the concept of 'movement of power' it attempted to open an analytical space that allows us to approach and study hegemony in dynamic terms as a social formation based on different and often disjointed and contradictory types of power and temporalities. By doing this, it moves the emphasis in the CR inspired turn in hegemony analysis from the 'realm of the real' to the 'realm of the actual', and outlines an analytical strategy on how hegemony can be approached and studied in this framework.

In a period in which we face an increasing number of challenges against traditional ways of being, be that the climate change, violent global economic crises, destabilising inequalities, massive migration, terrorism etc, IR needs to return and reflect on the fundamentals of our global conditions of existence, consider alternatives for securing our (i.e. the planet's) future, and indicate ways in which such social transformations can be achieved. It seems that a better understanding of the phenomenon of hegemony holds the keys for most of these ventures.

REFERENCES

Antoniades, Andreas. 2008. 'Cave! Hic Everyday Life: Repetition, Hegemony and the Social1'. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 10 (3): 412–28. doi:10.1111/j.1467-856X.2008.00328.x.

———. 2008a. 'From 'Theories of Hegemony' to 'Hegemony Analysis' in International Relations'. In: 49th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), March 26 - March 30, San Francisco, USA.

Bhaskar, Roy. 1994. *Plato Etc: The Problems of Philosophy and Their Resolution*. London: Verso.

Bieler, Andreas, and Adam Morton. 2003. 'Theoretical & Methodological Challenges of Neo-Gramscian Perspectives in IPE'. International Gramsci Society Online Article. http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/resources/online_articles/articles/ bieler_morton.shtml.

Buzan, Barry. 2008. 'A Leader Without Followers? The United States in World Politics after Bush'. *International Politics* 45 (5): 554–70. doi:10.1057/ip.2008.21.

Clark, Ian. 2009. 'Bringing Hegemony Back in: The United States and International Order'. *International Affairs* 85 (1): 23–36. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2009.00778.x.

———. 2011. *Hegemony in International Society*. New York: Oxford University Press. http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/academic/pdf/13/9780199556267.pdf.

Cooper, Davina. 2001. 'Against the Current: Social Pathways and the Pursuit of Enduring Change'. *Feminist Legal Studies* 9 (2): 119–48.

Cox, Michael. 2001. 'Whatever Happened to American Decline? International Relations and the New United States Hegemony'. *New Political Economy* 6 (3): 311–40. doi:10.1080/13563460120091333.

———. 2004. 'Empire by Denial? Debating US Power'. *Security Dialogue* 35 (2): 228–36. doi:10.1177/0967010604044981.

Cox, Robert. 1993. 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method'. In *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, edited by Stephen Gill, 49–66. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1988. *Foucault*. London: The Athlone Press.

———. 1992. 'Postscript on the Societies of Control'. October 59.

Doyle, Michael W. 1986. *Empires*. Cornell Studies in Comparative History. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Lebow, Richard, and Kelly, Robert (2001). 'Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States'. *Review of International Studies*, 27(4), 593-609.

Ferguson, Niall. 2003. 'Hegemony or Empire?'. *Foreign Affairs* 82 (5), 154-161.

Ferguson, Niall. 2004. *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. London: Penguin.

Ferguson, Yale H. 2008. 'Approaches to Defining "Empire" and Characterizing United States Influence in the Contemporary World'. *International Studies Perspectives* 9 (3): 272–80.

Foucault, Michel. 1972. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock.

———. 1978. *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1: An Introduction. Translated by Robert Hurley. London: Penguin.

Gill, Stephen. 1993. 'Epistemology, Ontology and the "Italian School"'. In *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, edited by Stephen Gill, 21–48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gill, Stephen, and James Mittelman, eds. 2001. *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1987. *The Political Economy of International Relations*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Hopf, Ted. 2013. 'Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics'. *International Organization* 67 (02): 317–54.

Ikenberry, G. John, and Charles A. Kupchan. 1990. 'Socialization and Hegemonic Power'. *International Organization* 44 (3): 283–315.

Jervis, Robert. 2006. 'The Remaking of a Unipolar World'. The Washington Quarterly 29 (3): 5–19. doi:10.1162/wash.2006.29.3.5.

John Mearsheimer. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Joseph, Jonathan. 2000. 'A Realist Theory of Hegemony'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 30 (2): 179–202.

———. 2002. *Hegemony: A Realist Analysis*. 1 edition. London: Routledge.

———. 2008. 'Hegemony and the Structure-Agency Problem in International Relations: A Scientific Realist Contribution'. *Review of International Studies* 34 (01): 109–28.

Kagan, Robert. 2003. *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. London: Atlantic Books.

Kennedy, Paul. 1987. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000*. London: Fontana Press.

Keohane, Robert O. 1984. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Kindleberger, Charles. 1973. *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Krasner, Stephen D. 1976. 'State Power and the Structure of International Trade'. *World Politics* 28 (3): 317–47. doi:10.2307/2009974.

———. , ed. 1983. *International Regimes*. Cornell Studies in Political Economy. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Laclau, Ernesto. 1996. 'Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?' In *Emancipation(s)*, edited by Ernesto Laclau, 36–46. London: Verso.

———. 2000. 'Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logics'. In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, edited by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. London: Verso.

Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso Books.

Lefebvre, Henri, and Christine Levich. 1987. 'The Everyday and Everydayness'. *Yale French Studies*, no. 73: 7–11.

Mann, Michael. 2003. *Incoherent Empire*. London: Verso Books.

McAnulla, Stuart. 2005. 'Making Hay with Actualism? The Need for a Realist Concept of Structure'. *Politics* 25 (1): 31–38. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9256.2005.00226.x.

McCarthy, Daniel R. 2011. 'The Meaning of Materiality: Reconsidering the Materialism of Gramscian IR'. *Review of International Studies* 37 (03): 1215–34. doi:10.1017/S026021051000077X.

Michael Ignatieff. 2003. 'Empire Lite'. *Prospect Magazine*, February 20. http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/features/empirelite.

Morgenthau, Hans J. 1965. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 3rd edition. Alfred A. Knopf.

Morton, Adam David. 2007. *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy*. London: Pluto Press.

Mouzelis, Nicos P. 1991. *Back to Sociological Theory: Construction of Social Orders*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Patomäki, Heikki, and Colin Wight. 2000. 'After Postpositivism? The Promises of Critical Realism'. *International Studies Quarterly* 44 (2): 213–37. doi:10.1111/0020-8833.00156.

Rapkin, David. 2005. 'Empire and Its Discontents'. *New Political Economy* 10 (3): 389–411.

Robinson, William. 2005. 'Gramsci and Globalisation'. *Critical Review Of International Social And Political Philosophy* 8 (4): 559-574.

Saull, Richard. 2012. 'Rethinking Hegemony: Uneven Development, Historical Blocs, and the World Economic Crisis1'. *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (2): 323–38. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2478.2012.00720.x.

Walker, R.B.J. 1981. 'World Politics and Western Reason: Universalism, Pluralism, Hegemony'. *Alternatives* 7 (2): 195 - 227.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1959. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Worth, Owen. 2015. *Rethinking Hegemony*. London: Palgrave.

ENDNOTES

[1] For a concise overview of historical hegemonies from ancient Greece to the present day see Worth (2015, 19-40).

[2] I owe this point to an anonymous reviewer.

[3] Some authors have argued that this is not an exclusive characteristic of hegemony. For instance N. Ferguson (2003: 160) argues that ' "empire" has never exclusively meant direct rule over foreign territories without any political representation of their inhabitants'. This however does not contest the IR consensus on the key property of the concept of hegemony, i.e. consent.

[4] Moreover, much of the post 9/11 discussion in mainstream IR about the US hegemony employed this conventional approach (see for instance John Mearsheimer 2001; Michael Ignatieff 2003; Kagan 2003; for elaborated discussions on this approach and its limitations in the US case, see also M. Cox 2001; M. Cox 2004; Mann 2003; Y. H. Ferguson 2008; Jervis 2006; Buzan 2008).

[5] For a thoughtful critique of Cox's reading of Gramscian commonsense, see Hopf (2013).

[6] Neo-Gramscian IR scholarship has extended this analysis in different ways (see for instance Gill and Mittelman 2001; Morton 2007; for an overview Bieler 2003).

[7] Joseph's analysis focuses on domestic rather than world politics.

[8] The 'depth ontology' in Critical Realism's lexicon (McAnulla 2005, 31).

[9] Adopting a different angle of critique, McCarthy criticises the very understanding of materiality in neo-Gramscian IR (McCarthy 2011). He argues that the almost exclusive definition of materiality in terms of (social) relations of productions, constraint the capacity of these approaches to account for the different way materiality impacts on different social formations and in general social change.

[10] This classification is fully developed in Antoniades 2008a.