1. Hegemony and the nature of order
- hegemony, nonhegemony, empire

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Hegemony Yes, Empire No in a Kerry Foreign Policy

WASHINGTON – (...) A review of Kerry's positions over his career and presidential campaign strongly suggests the senator would try to take U.S. policy back to the basic "realism" of both former president Bill Clinton and his predecessor George HW Bush, who believed that in order to retain its international dominance Washington must take the interests of other nations, especially its allies, into account to the greatest extent possible before shaking up the global order.

IPS, July 29, 2004
Hegemony or Empire?

- Hegemony
  - the leadership by a single stronger partner of other less strong, but still autonomous partners, undertaken for the mutual benefit of all parties concerned
  - Ex. Delian League
  - ‘Collective Freedom’

- Empire
  - Feudallism, Clientelism, Tribute
  - Colonial empires territorial control (Belgian COngo)
  - core-wide empires.client states
    - (Vichy France)
  - ‘Slavery’
Hegemony: the nature of order

- Hegemony is “a structure of values and understandings about the nature of order that penetrates a whole system of state and non-state entities” (Cox)

  - hegemony = struggle for authority
Hegemonic rivalry in ancient Greece

- Constituents: city-states
- No city-state managed to create a stable empire
- The hegemon decides **who is a friend and who is a foe**; the hegemonic partners follow suit (cf, C Schmitt: friend/foe axis is essence of politics)
- No tribute or tax was paid to Greek hegemons
- Members of the hegemony were moral equals even though they were military subordinate
- Hegemon provides collective good (freedom of trade) but falls short of universal rule.
American hegemony = empire?

The left (Chomsky)  The right (neocons)

US is empire clothed as hegemon  Yes, US is an empire, and we’re proud of it!
Niccoló Macchiavelli

- Any ruler needs persuasion on top of coercion
- Even the ruthless ruler will have to convince his people that his actions are legitimate
Neo-Macchiavellians

- Politics is solely about power;
- The actual ruling elite is too small to rule on its own;
- It therefore must mobilise a cadre from outside its number to organise the stability and flexibility of the power of the existing order;
- To this end, it relies on ‘political formulas’ (war, progress), or comprehensive programmes with a capacity for capturing large audiences, that will make rule acceptable to a much broader part of the population.
Roots of Hegemony

Elitists; Realists  
Elitists – how to ensure rule of elites  
=> Realism

Macchiavelli  <  
Gramscians

– analysis of alliances of winning formulas to dominate state policy in order to define locus of counterhegemony:
The hegemonic trick in both schools

Contamination of universal and particular

Pars pro toto – legitimising state of exceptionalism (to use force)

Co-opting agenda of nonhegemon
Hegemony in Realism

- Constituents: nation-states
- Balance of power provides hegemonic stability in anarchic world: actors will balance against an aspiring hegemon
- Alliances and side payments cement hegemony and acquiesce opponents (Nile: NBI projects)
- Nonhegemonic phases alternate with hegemonic phases
- Equality in hegemony weakens stability
Offensive and Defensive Realism

- Offensive Realism
  Declare **challenge**
  to hegemon or competitors

- Defensive Realism
  'I am not a rogue power
  e.g. Organising conferences;
  joining multilateral organisations

!! This is **not** known as counterhegemony
Antonio Gramsci
(Neo)-Gramscian approach
(Amsterdam, York)

- Constituents: fractions of capital
- Primacy of civil society (consensus) over political society (force)
- Historic blocs whose ‘collective will’ is fostered by intellectual and moral leadership in a context of cultural and political hegemony.

Scale:
- In Gramscian terms, hegemony is a social relation within a state
- Neo-Gramscian analysis focuses on the transnationalisation of fractions of capital (and of the state); syncretisms between statal and societal actors
  - Water companies, food TNCs, banks, insurance companies
  - International New Social Movements, antiglobalism, water rioters
Manufactured compatibility

- Hegemony is the result of the ‘manufactured compatibility between dominant ideas, institutions and manufactured capabilities’.
- ‘Those in control of institutions do not predominantly resort to force since the controlled accept the prevailing power realisation as legitimate. This acquiescence is strengthened if the controllers make concessions to the dominated and express their leadership in terms of a universal general interest.
- Whilst the power relation of hegemonic structures is implicit, the management of power relations in non-hegemonic orders is always at the forefront.’

Burnham (1991)
Who’s talking?

For a Gramscian, Egypt and Ethiopia are not *unitary states* speaking with single voices (as assumed by Realism)

They are the ‘integral state‘: *politicians, academics and newspapers are the voices of a hegemonic bloc*. The discourse of conflict vs. non-conflict; regime vs. counterhegemonic struggle on the Nile crosses hegemonic across identity lines on each side. Each bloc is involved in a war of position to persuade/control a domestic and international audience.
The integral state

- While state apparatuses have a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence and coercion,
- civil society institutions build and maintain the hegemonic common sense (consensus) that allows the population to accept the state’s power as legitimate.
Egypt:
aligning with the hegemonic powers
winners at the global level

- Egypt: Strategic positioning among the ‘winners’ - in multilateral bodies to control water discourse (excluding virtual water), status quo
- Success: ‘The World Bank needs Egypt more than Egypt needs the World Bank’
- Passive revolution to retain access to global rents: *infitah*
Multiple layers of hegemony for mid-level power

- Global level
  - Control of overlay (political formula)
- Regional level
  - Territorial control, identity (unitary state)
- Basin level
  - Resource control
- State level
  - Control of population
Egypt’s hegemonic strategies

- ‘Global’ multilateral institutions
  Basin control/capture; regime formation since 1998, image building

- State internal colonization; symbolic politics incorporation of nomads; repression of opposition

- New mega-project
Gramsci in Egypt

- Swyngedouw: Hydraulic mission as class compromise for internal colonisation (Spain, Turkey, Egypt)

- Combined with repression (slaves; dissenters, insurgents, NGOs) and co-optation (settling nomads, employment creation, symbolism).
Mix of hegemony and empire?

Core-periphery within states, regions:

- Swyngedouw/ Reissner: Hydraulic mission as political formula: *internal* colonisation of water resource (Spain, Turkey, Egypt) ..... *empire*
- Development and welfare: increasing the cake enables ‘Fordist’ class compromise (*concept of control*) between landed class, farmers, construction sector, workers
  ... *hegemony*
The external face of state-level hegemony

Winning political formulas:
- Hydro-development (breadbasket), welfare state
- Radical Islamism, Third-Worldism
- State of war with neighbours (esp. Israel): external enemy

New water policy, new class base
- Nasser: Arab socialism: urban welfare and rural development – fellahin
- Mubarak: liberalisation: return of the pashas; banks, construction, IT

Who thought of Tushka? Mubarak, Min of Housing, Min of Agriculture? Which capital fractions represented in government? Agriculture, industry, construction?
Egypt: the flipside of national hegemony

- Repression and accommodation
- Nationalism; unity (Kopts 2nd rate citizens Muslim Brotherhood can’t be a party)
- Hydraulic control: irrigation bureaucracy
  Local resistance/deviance
  - Nomadism (motion)
  - Protest against 10th of Ramadan City privatisation
  - Rural riots after liberalisation land ownership

[Women mistrusting piped water, refusing to use it]
Regional level

- Egypt: regional diplomacy/interference
  - Nasser: Egypt leader of Arab world => Third World
  - Ideological hegemony
  - Aswan Dam: symbol of power (prowess)

- Turkey: long-term hegemonic strategy?
  - ‘21st century is Turkish century’ (.. Empire?)

Strategic positioning
- Hydro-development (regional resource basket; water tower)
- Strategic alliances
Basin level

- Basin hegemony: regime building
  - Nile Basin Initiative cooperation
  - Control of data (Uganda)
  - Conferences, joint initiatives, side payments
  - Unilateral downstream action, facts on the ground shows who’s boss
  - Taboo on consumptive upstream projects
  - Threats
Different orders within the cake

- Hegemonies (horizontal order)
- Empires (vertical order)
- Non-hegemonic systems (undecided)
  - Dominance without hegemony
  - Hegemonic struggle

All this at each layer and with ripple effects between layers

An example: the recent privatisation of Bolivia’s natural resources, alliance with Venezuela and Cuba and renouncing the War on Drugs has repercussions at national, regional and global levels..
2. Resistance and Counterhegemony

- Can hegemony be abolished?
  - Why is hegemony so rarely opposed?

NB: Not all resistance is counterhegemony

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Challenging hegemony

Who worries about hegemony?

Realists – hegemony is good: worry about instability in nonhegemonic phase
Liberals – hegemony obstructs trade; it should be plus-sum and over time disappear
Radicals – against any hegemony; esp. empire
**Divided by a common language**

*(after C. Hay)*

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<td>Is liberation from power possible? (If not, what point theory?)</td>
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European debate

- Habermas: world undistorted by power and domination is possible
  - the emancipation of civil society could lead to reconstruction of the state and so offer a shift towards non-hegemonic governance

- Foucault: only the *nature* of power displayed can be changed
Direct vs. Indirect power

- Direct power: physical and psychological coercion, persuasion and blackmail
- Indirect power: context/conduct-shaping, e.g. legislative power of government

It is latent and often an unintended consequence.
Bourdieu

- *Naturalization* as tactic of dominant individuals against heretical discourse and symbolic revolution of the dominated.

- Performative utterances i.e. speech acts such securitisation) are effects of *symbolic domination*
Edward Said

- Frustrated with Foucauldian ‘lock-in’

Proposed means of resistance:
- ‘to know’ outside the hegemonic frame
- ‘to write back’ to the hegemonic structure
How to become a hegemon (Gramsci)

☐ A new historic bloc is **not** established by capturing the state but is established through the articulation of `persuasive ideas and arguments which build on and catalyse its political networks and organisations.`

=> concept of control
Foucault

- coercive power (military forces) ↔ 'discursive' power

Trottier gives examples of ‘naturalised’ discourse (with perverse effects):
- Water as a human right
- Water development
- Water war
Foucault and resistance

History is an endlessly repeated play of domination. Humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination.

- Discipline breeds self-discipline.
  ‘... The perfection of power should render its actual exercise unnecessary.’

Ex:
- Even antiglobalists are ‘normalised’ a coalition of diverse interests, mobilized in the spirit of neo-liberal hegemony’s own values of development, democracy, and liberty.

- Normalisation seems inescapable
Hegemonic Knowledge

- Groups of individual actors unite around what Hajer terms ‘storylines’—sets of ideas which, although sometimes highly contested, nevertheless unite actors in a particular way not only of talking and thinking about an issue, but also producing knowledge of an issue.

Virtual water?
## Hegemonic challenge

- **Realism**
  - Hegemonic competitors
    - Rogue States (North Korea)
    - Terrorists (al-Qaeda)
    - Economic competitors (China)
    - Non-free states

- **Gramscian counterhegemonic challenge**
  - Antiglobalists
  - Indigenous
  - Left-wing revolutionaries (Bol, Cuba, Venez)

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Rogue States (North Korea)
Terrorists (al-Qaeda)
Economic competitors (China)
Non-free states
False consciousness?

Q: Why don’t the downtrodden revolt?

Because they are not aware of their true interest, and therefore haven’t become ‘social actors’

A1 ‘thick’ concept of hegemony: false consciousness or: they are fooled or fool themselves (consensual dominance)

A2 ‘thin’: concept of hegemony: naturalisation of social arrangement –

To hegemonise is ‘to subordinate others to oneself by closing off conceptual “openings” and making their dominant position appear simply in accord with Nature, and that things could not be otherwise.’

The role of intellectuals is to uncover hegemonic practice and mobilise them

Q: Why aren’t the oppressed aware of their true interests?

A: Because they are hegemonised (circular)

Or: or quiet compliance while changing own values.
This assumption is *patronising* (James C. Scott)

- Opposition is rarely unified enough to rebel.
- They do rebel, but egemonised overestimate their chances of resisting.
- They cloak their resistance in terms that will sound unthreatening to the power structure (‘they talk up to rulers’)
Forms of resistance

(Day)

- dropping out
- subversion (Parody); deviance
- impairing the social institutions (blockade, destruction)
- prefiguring alternatives
- realisation of alternatives

- Symbolic counterhegemony – hegemony as posture, it feels good to take the side of the underdog.

Laclau: From the classes to the masses

- Primacy of the political: no essentialism – no actor can lay claim to a privileged position in society. Endless chain of identities: Greens, feminists, gays, antiglobalists.

- Identity is outcome of discourse (discursive articulation) on basis of antagonism:
  relation of equivalence between opponents vs. oppressor; when antagonism decreases equivalence will be transformed back into an array of differences
Overthrowing all hegemony?

- Classical Marxism: government / elite rule is not eternal. No rule = no exploitation

↔ Burton: One type of hegemony will simply be replaced by another