

# **FROM 'THEORIES OF HEGEMONY' TO 'HEGEMONY ANALYSIS' IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Andreas Antoniadis

Director, Centre for Global Political Economy (CGPE)  
Lecturer in Global Political Economy  
Department of International Relations  
University of Sussex  
Brighton BN1 9SN, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)1273 872735  
Email: A.A.Antoniadis@sussex.ac.uk

Paper presented at:

49<sup>th</sup> ISA Annual Convention  
Panel: Hegemony, Security, and Defense in IR  
28 March 2008  
San Francisco  
USA

## From 'Theories of Hegemony' to 'Hegemony Analysis' in International Relations

Andreas Antoniadou  
Department of International Relations  
University of Sussex

Despite the centrality of the concept of hegemony to any aspect of the discipline of International Relations (IR), IR seems to lack an 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 downside of this situation became apparent after the terrorist strikes on the World Trade Center, in 2001. 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 new dynamics at work in world politics. Yet, to a significant extent this revived field of hegemony analysis in IR remained rather fragmented and particularistic. No systematic attempt was made to examine how the different approaches to hegemony complement or relate to each other. Thus instead of emerging as a unified field of research, the study of hegemony remained compartmentalised along the traditional dividing lines of the established IR approaches. This paper aims at addressing this problem by examining how the analysis of hegemony in IR could be established as a 'unified' field<sup>1</sup>.

The organisation of the paper is as follows. Firstly, I attempt a cartography of the existing approaches to hegemony in IR. Secondly, I discuss and evaluate two significant attempts to create a comprehensive framework for studying hegemony in world politics. The first was based on an agential understanding of hegemony; the second attempted to complement this agential approach with a structural dimension. The third section discusses the limitations of these two approaches and proposes a new way towards a comprehensive analysis of hegemony in IR.

### **Hegemony in the IR Cage**

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)<sup>2</sup>. The great majority of works that deal with the concept of hegemony share a common element, that can be taken to be the key defining characteristic of the concept of hegemony in IR. That is, the concept of hegemony may imply a great capacity for coercion and/or a great degree of influence or control of 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 of foreign governments or territories. Along these lines, for instance, we

---

<sup>1</sup> A caveat is useful here. In social sciences, the concept of 'theory of hegemony' (in singular) refers to Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) and to approaches that borrow or are inspired by him (see for instance Laclau, 2000). In this paper the concept of 'hegemony' is used to define a field of inquiry of which the Gramscian notion of hegemony is but one part.

<sup>2</sup> The concepts of hegemony and hegemon have a long pedigree in International Relations. Two foundation stones for much IR theorising is Thucydides's *The Peloponnesian War* [1961], which deals with the Athenian hegemony and its implications for the Greek city-state system, and Nicolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1905), which deals with the issue of the hegemon and control of the state.

can distinguish the concept of hegemony from the concept of colonisation (which implies direct, official control). Thus, hegemony differs from any form of relationship that implies direct management or ownership of foreign territories. Consequently, the concept of hegemony does not cover forms of domination such as annexing, occupation or acquisition of foreign territories or populations (among others see Doyle, 1986; Ferguson, 2004?; for a critique see Rapkin, 2005).

#### *Four approaches to hegemony*

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: ch. 1). The factors on which the superiority of the hegemon may lie include geography, natural resources, industrial, financial and in general economic capacity, military capacity and preparedness, population (including 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’. This conventional approach to hegemony has been challenged from two sides in IR.

The neoliberal approach: Firstly, by neoliberalism, as a critique of ‘hegemonic stability theory’ (HST). The neorealist ‘Hegemonic stability theory’ and its advocates supported that an open and liberal world economy requires the existence of a hegemonic or dominant power (Charles Kindleberger, 1973, esp. ch. 14; Stephen Krasner, 1976; for an overview, Gilpin, 1987: 72-80, 85-92). This assumption was challenged by the neoliberal literature on regimes and international institutions developed since the late 1980s. 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 the HST, the IO issue concluded that international regimes have an independent causal affect in world politics (i.e. although they may be a product 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 its international institutions even after the decline or collapse of the hegemon that had created it 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 Gramscian approach: 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: 366, 166??) argued that there are two types of political control: domination that is based on coercion, and hegemony that is based on consent. Hegemony, for Gramsci signifies the process through which the leading group / ruling class of a society transforms its own interests and values into ‘common sense’ for

all the members of this 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, 1993a: 41-42). In Robert Cox's (1993: 61-62) terms '[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 commonsense. As Cox (1993: 52) argues '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'. Thus, hegemony equals the establishment within the sphere of the international of universally accepted values – a commonsense. This Gramscian approach to hegemony came to complement Lenin's analysis on imperialism and Marxist approaches that focused on coercion rather than consent (here one could include Dependency theory).

The radical approach: Finally, a different approach to hegemony, which can be called radical, is taken by those scholars who are inspired by post-structuralism. The works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) are representative here. Both 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). Furthermore, according to Laclau hegemony is a discursive order, i.e. it consists of a set of practices that has 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; 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' (Negri and Hardt, 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 (p. 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.

This paper contends that the above traditional IR framing of the theories of hegemony is not a productive way of thinking of and studying the phenomenon of hegemony in world politics. The main weakness of this framing is that it places more emphasis on established IR theories and their dividing lines and less on the phenomenon of hegemony itself. In this way, for instance, it ignores the overlapping between the neoliberal and Gramscian approaches to hegemony, or between the conventional and the Marxist/Dependency

theory approaches. To address these shortcomings one should move away from using IR theories as the point of departure for studying hegemony. That is, the focus of hegemony analysis in IR should be shifted from the dividing lines prescribed by IR theories to the different natures and operations of the phenomenon of hegemony itself. To do so, we suggest to use as our point of departure three parameters that refer directly to the nature of hegemony: first, the *subject* of hegemony; second, the *conditions of existence and reproduction* of hegemony; and third, the *nature of the movement of power* within hegemony. The first parameter deals with the nature of the subject of hegemony; is it, for instance, a state, a coalition or group of states, a coalition or group of economic or otherwise interests, a specific force of production such as the 'capital' in general or the financial capital in particular? Does hegemony have a subject at all? The second parameter deals with how hegemony is established and/or reproduced. Is it based on material factors such as economic incentives, specific membership advantages, or military force? Is it based on shared, consensual or normative beliefs? If there is no subject of hegemony, no hegemon, then how hegemony is possible, and how is it reproduced? Finally, the third parameter deals with the movement of power within the hegemonic order. Is power something external to the hegemon/hegemony or is it a *vital* element internal to it? Is power a force that is exercised instrumentally by one entity over another, or is it a force that manifests itself 'from within' entities/individuals? Is hegemonic power a force that is moving top-down or bottom-up?

There have already been insightful attempts in IR to move the study of hegemony beyond the dividing lines of IR theories, yet none of these attempts account for all the aforementioned parameters. The following section focuses on two such attempts.

### **Hegemony outside the IR Cage**

#### *Agential approaches*

A first group of approaches have 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. Thus, these approaches, which can be referred to as *agential* (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.

Studying the nature of hegemonic power in international relations, John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan (1990) for instance have distinguished between two forms of hegemonic power; one based on material incentives and one based on substantive beliefs. In this way their analysis brings together the conventional and the Gramscian approaches to Hegemony. In particular, they argue (p. 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 cost for the hegemon (with regard to the commitment of economic and material resources). This consensual dimension of 'hegemonic management' can also explain, according to their analysis, why specific hegemonic orders outlive their hegemons (a key point in neoliberal approaches to hegemony). Therefore, the analysis of this consensual dimension constitutes, for them, a significant factor in understanding the functioning and change of hegemonic systems.

Clearly, Ikenberry and Kupchan's analysis provides us with a way of bringing under a common framework of analysis insights from different IR theories. Their approach, however, is able to account only for approaches that assume the existence of a hegemonic actor. It does not leave any space to bring under the same analytical framework the approaches that do not adopt this assumption and/or that see hegemonic power as operating from within the subject (e.g. the radical approaches). Thus, their framework seems to allow variation only with regard to the second parameter mentioned above (i.e. the factors that affect the existence and reproduction of hegemony), while they keep constant the first parameter (i.e. they take for granted the existence of a hegemon) and do not sufficiently address the third parameter (i.e. the movement of power).

Nonetheless such agential approaches to hegemony have helped hegemony analysis to escape from the confines of the established IR theories. They broke away from the traditional IR theory dividing lines and suggested a direct focus both on the hegemon and its way of rule.

### *Structural approaches*

An insightful attempt to move beyond an agential framework of analysing hegemony has been offered by authors that follow a 'critical realist' analytical approach. Critical Realism (CR) is particularly helpful here because it is based on a 'stratified social ontology'. That is, it differentiates between 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 Patomaki and Wight, 2000). In terms of hegemony analysis, the *empirical* domain could, for instance, refer to the number of soldiers, military bases, and aircraft carriers that a state poses; the *actual* domain could refer to manifested 'structural biases', such as the inequality of payments between men and women in advanced capitalist societies, where, although there are no formal rules establishing this inequality, the latter is apparent when we compare the salaries between these two groups of the population; and the domain of the *real* which refers to 'underlying structures', such as the maximum consumption that a socio-economic and environmental system can afford without collapsing<sup>3</sup>. What is important in this stratified

---

<sup>3</sup> 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'.

ontology is that the subject 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 international hegemon. Thus, a critical realist analytical framework is able to account for variation along the first parameter mentioned above, i.e. the subject of hegemony. A CR framework, thus, 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 approach. Following the stratified 'ontological capacity' of critical realism, he distinguishes between two different types of hegemony. The first type is the agential (or intersubjective) and gives primacy to social actors and their interaction. It thus 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 is structural hegemony and 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<sup>4</sup> 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'.

The theoretical framework proposed by Joseph seems to push hegemony analysis from a unidimensional approach to hegemony that is focusing only on agents to a two-dimensional 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' (ibid.) seems to limit the phenomenon of structural hegemony to the (CR) realm of the real<sup>5</sup>. 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 way gravity has a real impact on material things. Thus, in Joseph's theoretical proposal, the only 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. Similarly, the proposed dichotomy between agential and structural hegemony does not seem to be able to accommodate phenomena such as this of Empire proposed by Hardt and Negri.

Notwithstanding, Joseph's CR approach leads to two significant advancements to the study of hegemony in IR. First, it allows for different *subjects* of hegemony and, second, as a consequence of the first, it allows for an analytical and ontological differentiation

---

<sup>4</sup> Joseph's analysis focuses on domestic rather than world politics.

<sup>5</sup> This realm of the real is what leads Critical Realism to a 'depth ontology' (McAnulla, 2005: 31).

between the hegemon (the agent) and hegemony (the structure). This last point is particularly important for the purposes of this paper, for, a great part of hegemonic power is materialised and operates in the social space that exists in-between the hegemon and the ‘objective’, material limitations of hegemony.

In this regard, it can be argued that Critical Realism opens the way for the third key parameter of hegemony analysis, the movement of power. The main argument here is that we can use this parameter to overcome the limitations of Joseph’s analytical framework. Thus rather than using agents and/or structures as our starting point in hegemony analysis in IR we suggest to use the ‘movement of power’, i.e. where does power come from, where is it targeted to and how does it operate? In this way hegemony analysis may interrogate better the space that lies between agents’ capacity and structural constraints, without ignoring either of these two. The following section approaches hegemony as a movement of power.

*Hegemony as Movement of Power*

To study hegemony as a movement of power, first we must examine the nature of the relationship between power and those who exercise it, objected to it or make it possible. Two issues are of specific importance here: (a) Is power an external characteristic (e.g. weaponry) 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 to its subject, whereas in the second case it is internal/inside to it. (b) Does power aim 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 and ontological differentiations generated by these two questions we can distinguish among four different *movements* of power that correspond to four different types of hegemony in International Relations. Table 1 summarises their characteristics and the remaining of this section elaborates on their nature and relationship to the existing IR scholarship on hegemony.

Table 1. Hegemony as a Movement of Power

	out	in
outside	hegemony is conceptualised as the possession of overwhelming power (in terms of material capabilities) and the instrumental use of this power to secure leadership or dominance in world politics	hegemony is conceptualised as a specific strategy aiming at generating shared beliefs and a commonsense – the aim is to achieve leadership or dominance on the basis of consent rather than coercion
inside	hegemony is conceptualised as a socio-cultural project aiming to generate imitation within world politics, while assuming the existence/possibility of different socio-cultural projects and ways of being	hegemony is conceptualised as a diffused and decentred apparatus of (bio)power aiming at the control and governing of human life from its interior

Thus, the categories ‘inside/outside’ and ‘in/out’ in Table 1 aim at signifying the movement of power within a hegemonic order (i.e. where does power come from, where is it targeted to and in what way). The ‘**outside-out**’ pair point to an instrumental use of power capabilities by one actor over another. Within this context, power is not about



personal beliefs or identity formation. It is a rather ‘outside’ property of both its owner and those who are subjected to it. In this regard, it requires both a clear ‘subject’ (the hegemonic power) and a clear target (the other states or actors within the international system). The approaches that employ this conceptualisation of hegemony employ a traditional one-dimensional concept of power, i.e. power is construed as the ability of A to get B to do something he would not otherwise do it (see Dahl, 1957: 202-203; Lukes, 1974?). Such approaches to hegemony employ a ‘conventional’, top-down and ‘agential’ approach to hegemony. The existence and reproduction of the hegemon / the hegemonic power is based on its ability to maintain its primacy and superiority mainly in terms of material capabilities. Legitimacy does play an important role in this reading, but compared to material capabilities its role is secondary. Moreover, 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, and this period/infrastructure ends/collapses with the decline and collapse of the hegemon. Robert Gilpin’s work on *War and Change in World Politics* (1981), with its focus on hegemonic ascendancy, hegemonic wars, and hegemonic decline is a seminal and representative work of this approach to Hegemony. The same with 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 works and theorists that followed this strand of HST should also be included here. Moreover, much of the contemporary discussion in mainstream IR about the current US hegemony deals with this ‘outside-out’ approach to hegemony (see for instance Mearsheimer, 2001; Ignatieff, 2003; Kagan, 2003; for elaborated discussions on this ‘outside-out’ approach and its limitations in the US case, see also Cox, 2001, 2004; Mann, 2003; Fergusson, 2005; Jervis, 2006). Finally, Marxist approaches that emphasise the imperial nature of the US hegemony could also be included in this approach (see for instance Laffey and Barkawi, 2002).

Similarly to the outside-out, the ‘**outside-in**’ pair points to two clearly defined set of actors (agential hegemony) and to an instrumental, top-down, use of power by one of these actors (the hegemonic power) over the others. Yet, here the target of power is different. The aim is to affect the very self-understanding and self-conceptualisation of those actors subjected to it. Therefore, although instrumentally used by the hegemon, power aims at the ‘inside’ of its target-audience. Within this context, hegemony, more than everything else, is about consent, shared values, preferences and beliefs, in one word, about identity. The reproduction of hegemony is not based on the hegemon’s primacy in terms of material capabilities, but on its ability to make the various players existing within the hegemonic order keep their faith in the set of beliefs, preferences, values and ideas espoused by the hegemon. Consequently, hegemony collapses when those players (or the majority or the most influential among them) cease to believe in and defend these values, and therefore the hegemon has to revert to threats, promises or violence in order to enforce its will. As in the first pair there is also here a significant overlap between the concepts of hegemony and hegemon. 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. The approaches that employ such a conceptualisation of hegemony employ a third dimension view of power, i.e. power is construed as the ability to affect peoples/actors preferences and beliefs (see Lukes, 1974: 21-25). This approach to hegemony has its origins to the writings of Antonio Gramsci and thus it is a central feature of neo-Gramscian IR scholarship (e.g. Cox, 1993; Gill, 1993; Gill and Mittelman, 2001; for an overview Bieler and Morton, 2003). Yet, this reading of hegemony on the basis of consent, shared values and legitimacy is also adopted by some neoliberal scholars. The work of Joseph Nye on soft power is a good example here. For Nye (2003:

74), a hegemon should rule through both hard and soft power. 'Power is the ability to produce the outcomes you want. When someone does something he would otherwise not do but for force or inducement, that's hard power—the use of sticks and carrots. Soft power is the ability to secure those outcomes through attraction rather than coercion. It is the ability to shape what others want'. Thus, although Nye does not equate hegemony to 'soft power', the latter plays a key role in his conceptualisation and definition of hegemony. Thus in terms of movement of power certain aspects of Critical and neoliberal IR scholarship seem to converge.

The boundaries between the above approach and the '**inside-out**' approaches to hegemony are thin and blurred. Both approaches focus on consent, personal values and beliefs. Both are referring to a three-dimensional view of power. Yet, there is a key difference between them. In the 'outside-in' approaches we have a clear set of actors (the hegemon and its 'target audience') and an instrumental use of power by one actor (the hegemon) over the others. Hegemony is achieved through the enforcement of a new commonsense within the sphere of influence or rule of the hegemon. In contrast, the 'inside-out' approach employs a different stance. For the inside-out approach there is no clear pair of actors, neither the relationship/bond between the involved actors is defined and maintained by the use of (three-dimensional) power. In these approaches, hegemony is conceptualised in a way of a community that projects its values to its outer environment, inviting different people/actors to join or follow/imitate its way of being. Yet, this three-dimensional power and energies *are not necessarily targeted* to any specific audience. In this regard, the concept of hegemony, does not signify, as in Gramsci, a system in which a ruling actor attempts to transform its interests into universal values, in order to maintain its rule. The inside-out approach suggest a kind of hegemony that tries to attract and to co-opt but by its very nature it is able to co-exist in harmony in a system with multiple and diverse commonsenses. It does not use power instrumentally to expand itself and enforce its values to its outer environment. Yet, it does do so with those actors that want to become its members. Furthermore, in its effort to influence the structures of world politics it employs a rather conciliatory strategy with its (potential) competitors. Thus, it can be thought of as a hegemony (or a hegemon) that does not behave as such. In many regards, this category seems to describe the way in which many authors think of the European Union. Much of the discussion on 'normative power Europe' (Manners, 2002) and the 'power of attraction' (Munuera, 1994; see also Hill, 2001) seems to endorse this inside-out concept of hegemony. The main difference between this literature and the neoliberal soft-power approach being that the latter refers to a hegemon that behaves assertively, i.e. it aims to spread its values and rule within the sphere of the international and dominate in it. Soft power is conceptualised as part of this assertive hegemonic strategy. On the other hand, in the approach described here, 'normative power' and 'attraction' are not parts of such an assertive, expansionary hegemonic strategy. They are not part of a broader hegemonic plan, but a 'standing-alone' way of hegemony.

Finally, the '**inside-in**' pair points to a fundamentally different understanding of hegemony in comparison to the above categories. Here, hegemony is conceptualised as a diffused and decentred apparatus of power that governs human life from its interior. It is a set of forces that have been diffused into and are reproduced at the level of the subject. Thus, hegemony does not signify a top-down movement of power but a bottom-up one. This conceptualisation of hegemony relates to the concept of biopower and, what Foucault has referred to as, the passage from 'disciplinary' to 'control' societies. Hegemony in this context is not about imposing constraints (or giving incentives) to those subjected to it, but neither is only about influencing their values and preferences.

To paraphrase Rose and Miller (1992: 174), hegemony is about “‘making up’ citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom. Personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise, the more so because most individuals are not merely the subjects of power but play a part in its operations’. In a similar manner, Hardt and Negri (2000: 23-24) argue that hegemony/empire ‘can achieve an effective command over the entire life of the population only when it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord...Biopower thus refers to the situation in which what is directly at stake in power is the production and reproduction of life itself’. These approaches to hegemony are based on the assumption that a fundamental shift has occurred in the very nature of the being and becoming of social life. Paraphrasing Foucault, we could refer to this shift as the passage from ‘disciplinary’ to ‘control’ hegemony. In effect this shift refers to a shift in the mode of reproduction of hegemony. In disciplinary hegemony, the power apparatus that reproduces hegemony was operating through a whole set of intermediating institutions such as the army, the prison, the job and the school. These were ‘time-specific’ institutional mechanisms, in the sense that the participation of the individuals in each of these institutions would have a clear and known-in-advance duration, with a concrete beginning and end. In ‘control hegemony’, the time-concreteness of these institutions, to a great extent, is dissolved. Instead, it is replaced by a lifetime-span involving ever-changing skills, jobs, orientations, selves – a continuous re-invention of one’s self (as Beck and Giddens have put it; see Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994). As Deleuze (1992), argues ‘[i]n the disciplinary societies one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in the societies of control one is never finished with anything--the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation’ (see also Bourdieu, 1998; Zizek, 1999). The most important implication of this shift from discipline to control is that hegemony ceases to operate through intermediary institutions, and starts to operate directly through the subject - it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord (Hardt and Negri, 2000: *ibid*). Therefore, in the approaches that employ this conceptualisation of hegemony there is no ‘head’, no centre, no hegemon. Hegemony has become a condition of existence for the subject. The subject cannot live beyond hegemony. Yet, hegemony is not understood as constant. Change in the nature of hegemony is possible, through resistance at the level of everyday life. Finally, for these approaches, the hegemon (construed as the most powerful actor in the system) and hegemony are two very distinctive phenomena.

Based on the above typology and analysis we can think of hegemony in four different ways: hegemony as the production of *coercion*, the production of *consent*, the production of *attraction* and the production of *life*. These four dimensions are not of course capable of capturing the complexity of the approaches presented above. Yet, they do illuminate their key point of difference. Table 2 attempts to summarise the key characteristics of the afore-analysed four approaches.

**Table 2. A Four-Dimensional Approach to Hegemony**

<b>Coercion</b>	<b>Consent</b>
<p>There is a clear hegemon, in terms of an actor (most times a state) that wields overwhelming power.</p> <p>The concepts of the hegemon and hegemony overlap (or are used interchangeably).</p> <p>There is a clear pair of actors, the hegemon and the ‘others’, that is connected through the use of power by the hegemon over the rest of the actors.</p> <p>One-dimension use of power. Hegemony is based on coercion and material power. Thus power refers mostly to material capabilities, is used instrumentally, and operates ‘top-down’.</p> <p>The existence and reproduction of the hegemon (and its hegemony) depends on its ability to maintain its advantage and primacy in terms of material power and capabilities.</p>	<p>There is a clear hegemon – usually the ‘ruling class’ or a state.</p> <p>The concepts of the hegemon and hegemony overlap but are not synonymous. The term hegemony is most appropriate because the focus is not on what the hegemon is (e.g. her status in terms of military and economic power) but on what hegemony is. In this regard, the hegemon may behave in ways that increase its power/capabilities but undermine its hegemony.</p> <p>There is a clear pair of actors, the hegemon and the ‘others’, that is connected through the use of power by the hegemon over the rest of the actors.</p> <p>Third-dimension use of power. Hegemony is based on consent, and it is defined in terms of the hegemon’s capacity to transform its interest into commonsense. Power refers to the capacity of influencing other actors’ self-understanding and values. It is used instrumentally, and operates ‘top-down’.</p> <p>The existence and reproduction of hegemony depends on the ability of the hegemon to persuade the other members of the system about the appropriateness and desirability of its values and preferences and the legitimacy of its actions.</p>
<b>Attraction</b>	<b>Life</b>
<p>There is a powerful state, or group of states, that wields decisive power. Yet it does not aim to dominate in the international system. By its nature, it can co-exist with other powerful actors.</p> <p>The concepts of the hegemon and hegemony overlap.</p> <p>There is no clear pair of actors that remains connected through the use of power by one actor (the hegemon) over the rest of the actors.</p> <p>Third-dimension use of power. Hegemony is based on consent and co-opt (‘power of attraction’). Power refers to the capacity of influencing other actor’s self-understanding and values. Yet, power is not targeted to a specific audience, and the hegemony it generates can co-exist with other hegemonic projects</p> <p>The existence and reproduction of hegemony depends on the ability of the hegemon to maintain its ‘power of attraction’.</p>	<p>There is no hegemon; no core, head, or centre of hegemony.</p> <p>The concepts of the hegemon (in terms of an actor that wields overwhelming power) and hegemony do not overlap.</p> <p>There is no clear pair of actors that remains connected through the use of power by one actor (the hegemon) over the rest of the actors.</p> <p>Power is construed as bio-power, i.e. the power to produce subjects/subjectivities. It is diffused, decentred and deterritorialised and operates ‘from within’ the subjects.</p> <p>Hegemony is a condition of existence. There is no life beyond hegemony, but specific aspects of hegemony can be resisted and changed. Although it is influenced by her, hegemony does not depend on the existence of the hegemon.</p>

The above approach to hegemony, as movement of power, has a number of important advantages. First, it shifts the focus of hegemony analysis from the limiting and well-separated compartments of IR theories to the phenomenon of hegemony itself. Thus, the point of departure and focus of the analysis is on how hegemony operates and how it is produced and maintained, rather than on the foundational assumptions of the various IR theories. This shift in the focus allows us also to capture and examine the overlapping areas of the different IR theories with regard to the conceptualisation and study of hegemony in world politics. Second, it allows us to account for variation in the intentions of different hegemon (e.g. domination vs. attraction). Thus we are better equipped to capture the different agential dimensions of hegemony. Third, the proposed approach deals with the phenomenon of hegemony as a social *relation* grounded in specific social networks, rather than as a decontextualised phenomenon referring to a unilateral use of power. It also permits us to examine the different natures that this relation can take and the implications that these different natures may have for the various players involved in the hegemonic system. Fourth, studying hegemony as a movement of power allows us to move beyond a limiting dichotomy between agents and structures – agential and structural hegemony. In particular it allows us to overcome the confines of agential approaches without treating structural influences as material/objective forces independent from social relations. It should be acknowledged that the proposed approach is not well-placed to offer much insight on what are these material/objective forces in specific historical periods. It is well-placed however to scrutinise how these forces are actualised (or not) in actor's behaviour. In critical realist parlance then, the movement-of-power approach is well placed to interrogate the 'realm of the actual'.

Until this point, the paper has tried to create an analytical framework able to bring together the main competing approaches to hegemony in IR. The next section attempts to push this analysis further by discussing the nature of the relationship between these different approaches. In doing so we consider the implications of the different approaches in strategic and policy making terms, examining at the same time the compatibility of these implications and the possibility of building a integrative concept of hegemony in IR.

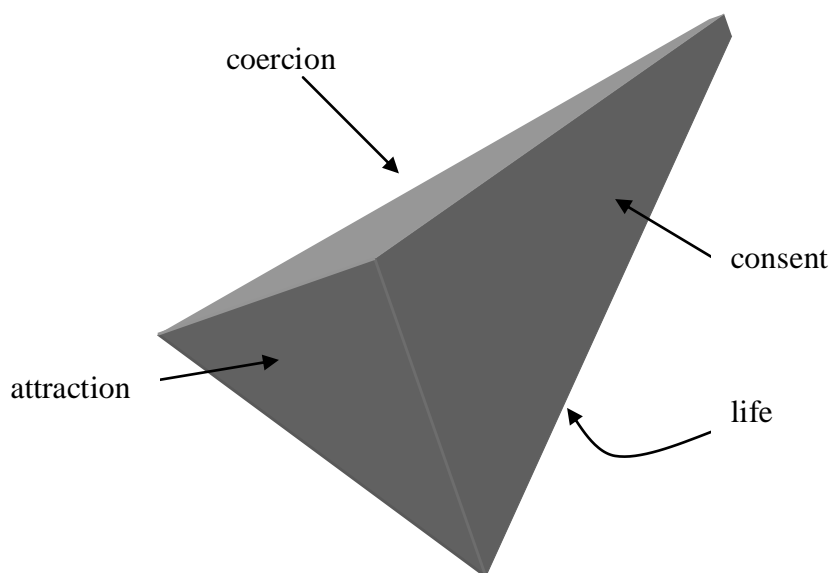
### **Hegemony: Many and/or One?**

The above discussion on the advantages of studying hegemony as a movement of power raises a broader question. Should the proposed approach be treated only as an analytical framework that brings together the different types of hegemony found in IR, or should it be treated as the foundation for a holistic approach to the phenomenon of hegemony. In essence, this is a question on the nature of the relationship between the four types of hegemony, discussed above: are these types mutually exclusive and 'incommensurable' phenomena or could they be treated as interacting parts of a single social phenomenon?

For sure there is good reason to keep the different types of hegemony separate. After all, these different types do not only point to different understandings of hegemony but also to different types of hegemon. For instance, as argued above, 'attraction' and 'coercion' assume very different subjects of hegemony (hegemons). Therefore, keeping the four different aspects of hegemony separate guarantees that we are not losing sight of the complexities and contradictory aspects and manifestations of the phenomenon of hegemony, as well as of the different natures of hegemon found in world politics.

Yet, if we treat the concept of the hegemon not as a solid, unitary actor but as a complex social institution with an unstable and dynamic identity, within which operate groups with different, antagonistic even mutually exclusive projects, strategies and visions, then there might be room for an holistic reading of the phenomenon of hegemony. In such a reading the different types of hegemony would remain distinct, but one could approach and study them as constitutive parts of a wider whole. Thus, for instance, although a certain hegemony may be based on coercion this should not be interpreted as meaning that the hegemon is a solid, unitary actor. There may be significant actors in operation within the hegemonic power who try to change its dominant *coercive* logic and strategies (e.g. from coercion to attraction or consent) while maintaining its hegemonic status. To approach and study hegemony in these terms we need to focus on the relationship and balance between the different hegemonic *movements* operating within each hegemon/hegemony. Following this rationale we could think of hegemony as a four-sided pyramid (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: A Holistic View on Hegemony**



The a-canonical shape of Figure 1 aims to signify the dynamic, antagonistic and ever-changing relations among the different movements of power within a hegemonic order. The size of each of the pyramid's sides as well as its overall shape, are unstable and in constant motion. Furthermore, as in the vast majority of similar analyses that refer to power, the four sides/elements of hegemony should not be treated as independent from each other. They are in constant interaction, and changes that occur at any single side of hegemony affect the overall movement of power, and may lead to changes in the overall nature of hegemony (and the hegemon). For instance, in the hypothetical case of hegemony depicted in Figure 1, a significant increase in the 'outside-out' movement of power (coercion) would disrupt the existing balance between coercion and consent. Arguably, a similar change occurred in the case of the US hegemony in the post 9/11 era. Similarly, should the EU decide to increase its 'outside-in' (consent) and/or 'outside-out' (coercion) power this may have negative repercussions for its 'inside-out' power of attraction. In this framework of analysis the hegemon does not have a stable, solid and

singular hegemonic identity. It is a complex social whole where competing, and many times opposing, agents, projects and visions exist and struggle with each other, and whose identity is not exhausted in its hegemonic identity. It is in this manner, for instance, that we can discuss about both coercion and attraction in the case of US hegemony. For the hegemon US is a complex social entity, certain elements of which can exert an 'inside-out' influence (attraction) that is independent from its current assertive hegemonic role and policies. Thus although attraction could never become the dominant element/movement-of-power in the case of an actor that behaves as hegemon at the global level, it may still constitute a considerable part of the jigsaw of international hegemony.

Another important point here is the place and role of the 'inside-in' movement of power (life). In the holistic approach sketched above, *life* –no matter what is the specific shape of the hegemonic four-sided pyramid– constitutes always the base of the pyramid. It acts as the background against, and on the basis of which the other three movements of power operate. Being dispersed and subjective (in the most fundamental meaning of this term), the 'inside-in' movement has the greatest degree of autonomy in comparison to the other three movements – it is the movement that has the strongest *structural* character. Yet 'life' is not insulated from the other movements. Any changes in the latter do impact on 'life', even if changes in the latter take more time to materialise. Thus significant changes in terms of coercion, consent or attraction within a hegemonic order do gradually have an impact on the production and nature of subjectivities within this order, and these new subjectivities will affect any future hegemonic strategies or orders.

## **REFERENCES**

- Barkawi, Tarak and Laffey, Mark (2002) 'Retrieving the Imperial: Empire and International Relations', *Millennium*, 31 (1): 109-127.
- Beck, Ulrich, Giddens, Anthony and Lash, Scott (eds.) (1994) *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bhaskar, Roy (1994) *Plato Etc: The Problems of Philosophy and their Resolution*, London: Verso.  
*Chaillot Papers* 15/16. Paris: West European Union Institute for Security Studies.
- Bieler, Andreas and Morton, Adam David (2003), 'Theoretical and Methodological Challenges of Neo-Gramscian Perspectives in International Political Economy', *International Gramsci Society Online Article*, available at:  
[http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/resources/online\\_articles/articles/bieler\\_morton.shtml](http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/resources/online_articles/articles/bieler_morton.shtml)  
(21/11/06)
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1998) 'The Essence of Neoliberalism', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December.
- Cox, Michael (2001) 'Whatever Happened to American Decline? International Relations and the New United States Hegemony', *New Political Economy*, 6(3): 311–40.
- Cox, Michael (2004) 'Empire by Denial? Debating US Power', *Security Dialogue*, 35(2): 228–236.

- Cox, Robert (1993) 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: an Essay in Method', in Stephen Gill (ed.) *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 49-66.
- Dahl, Robert (1957) 'The Concept of Power', *Behavioral Science*, 2 (3): 201-15
- Deleuze, Gilles (1988) *Foucault*, London: The Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1992) 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October*, 59, Winter, pp. 3-7.
- Doyle, Michael (1986) *Empires*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press
- Ferguson, Niall (2004) *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, London: Penguin Press.
- Ferguson, Niall (2005) 'The Unconscious Colossus: Limits of (& Alternatives to) American Empire', *Daedalus*, Spring, pp. 18-33.
- Foucault, Michel (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith, London: Tavistock Publications.
- Foucault, Michel (1978) *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I, An Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley, London: Penguin Books.
- Gill, Stephen (ed.) (1993) *Gramsci, Historical Materialism, and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gill, Stephen, (1993a) 'Epistemology, Ontology and the 'Italian School'', in Stephen Gill (ed.) *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 21-48.
- Gill, Stephen and Mittelman James (eds.) (2001) *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilpin, Robert (1981) *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilpin, Robert (1987) *The Political Economy of International Relations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London : Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio (2000) *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hill, Christopher (2001) 'The EU's Capacity for Conflict Prevention', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 6: 315-333.
- Ignatieff, Michael (2003) 'Empire Lite', *Prospect*, no 83, February, pp. 36-43.



- Ikenberry, John and Charles 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): 7-19.
- Joseph, Jonathan (2000) 'A Realist Theory of Hegemony', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30 (2): 179-202.
- Kagan, Robert (2003) *Paradise and Power*, London: Atlantic.
- Keohane, Robert (1984) *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kindleberger, Charles (1973) *The World in Depression, 1929-39*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Krasner, Stephen (1976) 'State Power and the Structure of International Trade', *World Politics*, 28(3): 317-347.
- Krasner, Stephen (ed.) (1983) *International Regimes*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Laclau, Ernesto (1996) 'Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?', in Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*, London: Verso, pp. 36-46.
- Laclau, Ernesto (2000) 'Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logics', in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoy Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, London: Verso.
- Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantal (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London: Verso.
- Lukes, Steven (1974) *Power: A Radical View*, London: MacMillan Press.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo ([1905]) *The Prince*, with an introduction by Henry Cust, London: D. Nutt.
- Mann, Michael (2003) *Incoherent Empire*, London: Verso.
- Manners, Ian (2002) 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40 (2): 235-258.
- McAnulla, Stuart (2005) 'Making Hay with Actualism? The Need for a Realist Concept of Structure', *Politics*, 25 (1): 31-38.
- Mearsheimer, John (2001) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Morgenthau, Hans (1965) *Politics Among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New York: Knopf.

Munuera, Gabriel (1994) 'Preventing Armed Conflict in Europe: Lessons from Recent Experience',

Nye, Joseph (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs..

Patomaki, Heikki and Wight, Colin (2000) 'After Postpositivism? The Promises of CriticalRealism', *International Studies Quarterly*, 44 (2): 213-237

Rapkin, David (2005) 'Empire and its Discontents', *New Political Economy*, 10 (3): 389-411.+?

Raymond Aron (1974) *The Imperial Republic*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Rose, Nikolas and Miller, Peter (1992) 'Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 43 (2): 173-205.

Thucydides ([1961]) *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, translated by Richard Crawley, London: Dent.

Waltz, Kenneth (1959) *Man, the State and War: a Theoretical Analysis*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Zizek, Slavoj (1999) 'You May!', *London Review of Books*, March 18, available at: <http://www.lacan.com/zizek-youmay.htm>