Empire, Hegemony, Hyperpower?

By Adrian Rafał Szumowski[*]

Empire and Hegemony are among the crucial notions of science of international relations. Many scholars were investigating those concepts, and attempted to define them and estimate whether they retain explanatory value in contemporary situations of accelerated evolution of international system. Within the system governed by anarchy, those two prepositions were considered partial resolution to destructive tendencies generated within the international environment. Albeit those resolutions, it seems similar, their application required different conditions in order to become effective. Every mentioned above system is a complex and adequate answer to challenge posed by different set of features and variables generated by particular iteration of international system. The question remains: preconditions to occurrence of which system will be generated by late-Westphalian and subsequent generation of international environment? Contemporary iteration projects many individual characteristics, with regard to complexity, globalization and historical acceleration. One of the possible solutions to this issue is the recently introduced concept of Hyperpower, which could be positioned as a system in between those mentioned above. However its creation embraces new quality of international relations not yet encountered during course of history. This paper will be dedicated to the investigation of this concept and its usefulness for scientific analysis of contemporary international relations. Hyperpower embraces geopolitics and transnational in equal measures. It is product of a so-called "virtualization of state" and encompasses tools for effective interaction in both spheres of international environment. It is a generally much more passive system than mentioned above. Its activation consumes astounding amount of resources. Therefore, its primary application is in most cases passive, strictly limited to the shaping of the perception of remaining elements of international system.

Keywords: *Hyperpower, Hegemony, Empire, late-Westphalian international environment*

Introduction

One of the fundamental tenets of the Westphalian international environment is the notion of sovereignty (Pietraś 2008, pp. 57–74, Kondrakiewicz 2008, pp. 249–271, Panas 2014, pp. 51–68). It is still unclear its exact definition, but the entirety of the academic community associated with international relations agree that it is inseparably connected with statehood, thus each international actor is equipped in similar quantity and quality of this asset. However, as it was proven since the beginning of the 20th century, nation states tend to differ when it comes to their place and role within the framework. The differences between the size and modes

[*]Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS), Poland.

of operations within the community of nation states drive the development of a third debate on international relations, between the neorealists and neoliberals (Nye 1988, pp. 235–251). Although both sides were basing their argument on a different assumption, the role of the surrounding environment was understood as the dominant factor which shape and form internal structures and its functions.

Therefore different strata of nation states were identified and examined. However, the main research objective of this paper is the investigation of the top stratum of the actors, mostly derived from the nation states category. During history, in most cases a stratum was occupied by a singular entity, which was labeled differently: either "Empire" or "Hegemony". The next question is aimed at the identification of differences between those terms, supplemented with the clarification of conditions which promotes coalescence and development of certain forms of a political entity overarching an entire international system. The final question will be in addressing the future of this structure: whether the future, post-Westphalian international environment will require a similar institution.

One of the possibilities only recently developed is the concept of a "Hyperpower". At first glance it strongly resembles the notion of a superpower, relating mainly to a specific category of the extremely potent state (Fox, 1944). However, this idea defines a new quality of international environment, introducing a different set of constructs and fulfilling a different set of functions rather than classical, Westphalian international institutions. The analysis will focus on three variables: national component, transnational component and functions. First, it is the role of the national component, which is the nation-state, one of the most potent examples of category of superpower or world power. Nowadays, the role of the center of a Hyperpower is strongly gripped by the United States of America. Second, it is the role of the transnational component in the form of a network of transnational connections between the Hyperpower's center and other elements of the international environment. Third, it is also the function of the Hyperpower in the international environment, as well as its role and contribution to the transformation of the Westphalian international environment into the next-generation international environment.

Two research hypotheses will be subjected to verification. The first will refer to the nature of a Hyperpower, which in its structure includes the construction of a complete balance between the tools of shaping international geopolitical reality and shaping transnational social reality. The second relates to the basic mechanism of the functioning of the Hyperpower in the international reality. Unlike the previous forms, it is clearly passive, shaping the perception of other participants in international relations rather than actively formatting actual international relations. To supplement those hypotheses will be the determination of whether any of mentioned entities will be attractive enough to be recreated within the framework of the post-Westphalian international environment. This assessment will be based on the scenario method, as their need to be based on relatively low level of certainty.

The structure of paper will be composed of four, connected parts. The first part will embrace the nature of the evolution of the international relations system which could be labeled as late-Westphalian. Particularly important will be issues of continuity and change, which are recreating and reforming paths for the future

development and modifying probabilities of future recreation of known forms of the international system central hub. The second part will be dedicated to the first period of development of International Relations, when is the highest authority in the global environment that was labeled as an "Empire". This node was based on two-layered foundations: overwhelming military advantage over remaining international actors. The second is universal and not questioned for its legitimacy as an Empire. The title may be confusing as it was used several times during history, with varied composition, which in turned disrupted clear definitions. The third part will embrace the second period of development of international relations, when the highest authority was labeled as a "Hegemony". This concept was created within the situation where it is not possible to acquire military superiority over remaining elements of the system, but the mantle of Hegemony is achieved only by a set of skills and capabilities. Those who excel among rivals will be granted this post. In other words, this place is given temporarily and conditionality, and an actor which starts to decay as a wielder of Hegemony, will be tested and eventually replaced in a contest known as a *Hegemonic War* (Gilpin 1988, pp. 591–613). The last part will be dedicated to defining and analyzing the concept of Hyperpower, which according to assumptions pointed out in this paper, will replace both above mentioned forms as a central hub for the international system. In this part of the structure, the particularity and functions of a Hyperpower will be discussed. The paper will be summarized with a few remarks invested in the future prospects for Hyperpower developent.

International Environment: Change and Continuity

Since the last decade of the 20th century, international relations scholars have been engaged in debates concerning the growing urgency of redefinition of the scope, structures and functions of the international environment. This situation was created mainly thanks to changes occurring within the deep undercurrents of civilization – so called megatrends (Balcerowicz 2002, pp. 85–118).[1] Observed changes embrace transition from the classical form of the international environment known as Westphalian (Gross 1948, pp. 20–41), existing since 1648. The predominant feature is dualism, present in every aspect of social relations, such as between national and international laws (Beaulac 2004, pp. 181–213). As the next generation of the international environment is taking shape, this dualism is slowly modified to the point where both orders will overlap and interpenetrate themselves. A manifestation of this phenomenon may be the emergence of numerous, ephemeral forms of political and social organizations functioning at the intersection of both spheres. The rea of

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[1]The term was introduced to science of international relations by John Naisbitt. Currently, it is used to describe universal tendencies that shape the international order at the highest social level (civilization). Different researchers identify and name different megatrends: J. Naisbitt distinguishes 10 of them, P. Kennedy - 7, National Defense Council report (Global Trends 2015) - 7, H. McRae - 5; M. Perczyński - 4, and J. Pajestka - 2. On the other hand, B. Balcerowicz distinguished 6 megatrends: globalization, IT revolution, uneven demographic explosion, threats to the natural environment, systemic transformation - in the economic (capitalism) and political (democratization) domains - and also the clash of civilizations.

activity of those actors – both formal and semi-formal – will be a number of mechanisms, legal, political and social, enabling external interference in the national constitutional order (European Parliament, 2020).

The classical Westphalian international environment is fixed on three basic foundations. First and foremost is in the structure of the international community stemming from the nation state, as a single actor (Giddens 1986, pp. 216–220), a category with undisputed power in two important dimensions. One is the undisputed supremacy within the geopolitical sphere of international relations, represented by skillful and effective application of military assets. In fact, some commentators claim that a nation state is an army framed with the government.[2] It was used directly in the Kingdom of Prussia in the 18th century, but it could be extended toward all nation states. Representatives of this category, whenever it was recognized by others, is known predominantly for its force of arms. The other is social legitimacy, basing not only on rational and political association, but also emotional investments in forming bonds between the nation and individual citizens. This process was greatly improved by the French Revolution, especially due to surging demands for manpower (Forrest 2003, pp. 8–32). In consequence, connecting the military power with social legitimacy created the cornerstone for international relations, from which other forms of international community stem: non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations and international organizations. However, their existence and well-being was completely dependent on the collective will of the nation-state.

The second issue is the split within the global entity due to the omnipotence of a nation-state, which could be described as a dichotomy between what is within the borders of a nation-state and what is beyond them (Cerny 2010, pp. 64–84). Former space is associated with pacification, order, hierarchy and non-violent modes of communication. The latter on the other hand is associated with chaos, disorder, anarchy, and modes of communication supplemented with violence, in the form of wars and coercion. Between those spheres, there is a national border, sealed and protected, and carefully designed and constantly watched by government agencies located on both sides. At the peak of the Westphalian international environment, people, goods and information were carefully examined and permitted by issuing various documents to access internal, national space. However, this permission was quite frequently limited or canceled entirely (Shaw 2011, pp. 331–348).

The third issue is that the institutions are responsible for managing and maintaining cohesion of the whole system. Those are, embracing various sets of mechanisms, stretching from international law to the concert of powers. The most important of those is the balance of power, which could be understood as an internal mechanism which requires every rise of certain nations to be countered by other entities or coalitions of them (Sheehan, 1996). It was particularly visible during the Napoleonic Wars, when a sudden rise is the prominence of the French Empire triggered the creation of seven coalitions, which eventually arrested this ascendancy and dispersed this excess of power between remaining actors of the European international subsystem. What those institutions have in common is the fact that they are constructed according to three important principles. First and

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[2]"Where some states have an army, the Prussian Army has a state" quote attributed to Voltaire.

foremost, they are dedicated only to support relations between nation-states. At the core of every institution lies a presumption that establishing fully-developed intrastate relations is extremely burdensome, especially when it comes to mutual distrust and cultural differences. Therefore, they were responsible for tackling those obstacles; for instance, with application of diplomacy (Berridge 2015). Second, despite limiting role of violence within their framework, violence in itself was also considered to be a viable institution for the international system, particularly in the form of war, at least until 1945, when it was eventually banned (United Nations n.d., article 2.4). Third, despite the beneficial impact on national performance, there is no compulsion to participate within them. The sovereignty, the ultimate right of any nation-state to participate in any form of international cooperation, was the most important principle— it allowed the nation state to opt-out of every initiative that defied their objectives.

This construction has slowly evolved since the second half of the 20th century. The primary driver of this change was the complex network of the above-mentioned civilizational megatrends. In this particular perspective, two separate megatrends could be identified: demographics and technology. Formerly rough shapes of the quantitative parameters of International Environment, they primarily depend on the number of people present within the system. The latter are designs of the qualitative parameters of the international environment. Both of them are to some extent intertwined, like in the issue of literacy (UIS Data Centre 2015), which assess the capacity of individuals and social groups to efficiently operate contemporary technology. When it comes to change and continuity, which stirred the debate about the need to redesign international relations, there could be observed three fundamental changes which are being unfolded within the human civilization, stemming from changes within those megatrends. First and foremost is the reversal of demographic explosion (United Nations Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). This means that an influx of new society members is getting severely limited. In the case of developed nations, it is limited only to immigration, which could be, in time, limited by spread of this effect to the entire world. The main consequence is developing sensitivity of nation states to loss, especially connected with battle casualties and collateral damages. Second, is the societal diversification on the scale of globe and on a scale of individual nations. This phenomenon occurred because of *national awakening* identified and is described by Brzeziński (2012), which is focused primarily on the activity of national and sub-national entities within the framework of international relations. This in turn makes mobilization of national assets much more difficult and challenging. The third factor is a drastic rise in accessibility of advanced technologies of data processing and communication, not only among various national agencies, but also within the societies and individuals (Cooper 2008). This means that in the geopolitical social space, dominated by nation states, is supplemented with transnational social space (Pietraś 2013, pp. 93–113), which empowers non-state entities which became equal to nation states, at least to an extent.

Those changes are causing and accelerating the deterioration of institutions of the Westphalian international environment. The question is, what will replace them?

This paper limits the scope of its investigation only toward possible paths of evolution of the central hub of international relations, which stems between the Pre-Westphalian concept of Empire and the Westphalian concept of Hegemony. However, due to the uniqueness of the constantly designed and constructed international environment and in order is to offer possible solution of new quality, features associated with both notions will be combined – that is, Hyperpower.

Pre-Westphalian: Empire: Law and Military

Chronologically, first in those concepts is the concept of a central hub for international relations within an Empire. However, that is cause for a challenge, because it was used for some many cases within the framework of history and political sciences, thus the term has become distorted and, to some extent, biased. Therefore, before there could be a full analysis of the term, there is a need to clarify the definitions. First of all, it needs to be made clear that during the history of political institutions, an "empire" was used frequently to describe various political entities. Stretching from the Summer and Assyrian Empire, through Roman, Chinese and Byzantine Empires, the Aztec and Inca Empires, Indian Empire, British, French, Spanish or Russian Empires to recently, the investigated idea of the American Empire. One important feature must be stated: empire is used in at least three separate meanings.

First of those is the understanding of an Empire as a particularly strong entity of political nature and expansive tendencies.[3] It may be observed primarily in the opening phases of the pre-Westphalian international environment when proto-political entities were longing for more assets and prestige. However, lack of management skills and uniquely recognized procedures usually prevented the establishment of more coherent entities. Most visible and known could be Persian Empire, Athenian Empire[4] or Empire of Alexander the Great.

The second way to explain the term is through the application of the socioeconomic context of the 19th century, when developed economies of Western Europe sought new markets and resources to feed industrial and military complex which they found in colonies. This issue was particularly interesting for followers of the Marxism theory of international relations (Czaputowicz 2008, pp. 140–176). Within this subcategory, we can identify colonial empires of Great Britain (both of them),[5] France, Netherlands, Spain and Portugal.

The third possible application of Empire is in cultural or universal terms. This entity was applied only twice in history. One of those examples was the Roman Empire, which existed between 27 BC and 476 AD (Diamond 2011, pp. 12–13) and the Chinese Empire, which existed between 2070 BC and 1911 AD (Li 2002, pp. 321–333). Only this strand of Empires will be subjected to analysis within this

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[3]The greatest of them was Persian Empire ruled by Achamenid Dynasty.
[4]Officially labeled as a Delian League. This organization was closest to transformation into unified Actor between 454–404 BC.
[5]First British Colonial Empire (1707–1783) was focused on North America. Second British Colonial Empire (1783–1945) was constructed in Asia and Africa.

paper, mainly because only those entities were functioning as a central hub for international system.

Both entities, despite few obvious differences, display three identical features when it comes to their internal mechanisms. First and foremost it is that they encompass the whole known world. Beyond their limits lies only territories deemed not worth of conquering. In most cases the imperial borders were leaning on barren and inhospitable lands, with only scarce human settlements, devoid of serious political structures. In most cases, those people were called barbarians, which is a term designated to determined lower social and cultural status when compared to imperial subjects. But the primary designate of Empire is that it politically embraces the whole international system, and does not leave any significant entity beyond its framework. This is also a distinction from Aztec and Inca Empires of Latin America. Since their establishment and constitution as a dominant political faction in their respective International Relations Systems was coupled with the arrival of expeditions from Europe. This meant that, albeit fragile and distant, a connection was coined to the region of space beyond their military reach; Thus conquering the whole known world became purely impossible, and the influence of a newly-discovered part of the globe became their undoing (Leon 1998).

The second feature is closely connected with the former one. It is the fact that a universal Empire has at its disposal overwhelming military advantages over remaining political elements in the international environment. However, despite obvious connotations, those capabilities are not associated with skills and technologies, but – what could be seen in history of Chinese Empire – associated with the capacity to recreate military capabilities, suffering even catastrophic damages in quantitative and qualitative dimensions (all the while still being able to conduct military operations). These elements lie at the foundation for imperial success in the pre-Westphalian international environment. The armed forces of the pre-Westphalian Empire were makers of a long line of triumphs and victories, defeating every enemy within, as well as without. In fact, in too many cases, the application of a military force was the primary and sole response of an imperial government. Even defeat on a battlefield, as happened to Rome in Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD (Seidman 2014, pp. 94–114) or Mongol conquest of China in 1279 AD (Dardess 1978, pp. 6–11), which were particularly humiliating, did not deplete Empires of their resources, allowing them to resume daily operations within a considerable schedule.

The third feature of an Empire is its legitimacy. It was recognized by every entity within its framework as a value in itself, not only entitled to undertake certain activities (even against national interests of them), but also as a beneficial factor which needs to be supported in existence. This legitimacy was clearly visible in the years after its collapse in continuous attempts to revive it in some form and shape. The primarily factor of legitimacy is the acceptance of structures and mechanisms of imperial provenience, particularly those engaged in developing a communication network (postal institutions, universal language) (Ramsay 1925, pp. 60–74), and law: the internal and international and institutions responsible for conflict management and prevention (Rajak 1981, pp. 65–81). What is particularly evident is the level of integration that both of these Empires enabled application of

physical violence, in most cases in a form of armed forces incursions, such as quelling the rebellions.

The notion of Empire was so popular that that idea of reviving an Empire shined throughout history. It was undertaken in every historical epoch, mainly in Europe, but recently also on other continents, such as Latin America.[6] However, none of them were successful, mainly due to the reasons which will be mentioned in next paragraph. What needs to be addressed in this place is the chance of successful reintroduction of Empire to post-Westphalian international environment, especially, that from time to time scholars tend to associate the term Empire with particular nation states, such as the United States (Lundestad 1986, pp. 263–277). However, the direct recreation of a classical Empire, even in a refurbished state, is hardly likely. It is due to three features of contemporary international relations. First of all, there is very little probability of creating such overwhelming military advantage, as is necessary to the existence of a proper Empire, particularly in a dimension of vulnerability of losses (Rohn 2016). In fact, classical Empires were able to recreate themselves on a brink of complete collapse, regaining operational capabilities within a brief period of time.[7] In the case of the United States, there could be observed a developed vulnerability to losses, as well as within their own manpower[8] as collateral damage to the opposition forces (Robinson 2006) and civilian casualties. A vulnerability which could cause complete change of national objectives and abandoning whole swaths of space of particular value to this nation state. Second, the classical imperial structure of government does not possess an analytical capacity suited to manage contemporary issues, which are much more diversified in any imaginable dimension and much more turmoil, especially when it comes to slow but steady joining two spaces of policy: national and international, which creates new and ephemeral forms, which are created in droves only for short period of time. The complexity of the contemporary international environment is supplemented with growing transnational social space (Bilecen et al. 2015, pp. 244–256) which provides classical statehood capacities to smaller entities, even single individuals. The third feature is the collapse of legitimacy within the international environment. This was caused by the diversification and fracturing of existing international structures and a growing cacophony of voices and actions based on different and often contradicting cultures. Therefore, the possibility of unison acceptance and compliance with universal authority is insignificant.

Summarizing, Empires were a very potent and durable hub in the international environment. It was the longest existing though, inspiring constant attempts to reinstate some form of imperial rule. However none of them were successful. In the future, what could be projected in terms of changes within the international environment will not create conditions which should be more favorable to this kind of actor. Therefore this is not the construction which could be implemented.

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[6]Empire of Brazil (1822–1889).

[7]It was particular evident during Punic War, when Rome between disaster in Battle of Cannae (216 BC) and decisive victory in Battle of Zama (202 BC). Complete recovery of military capabilities in 14 years.

[8]In Vietnam War United States deemed crippling losses at level of 58,281 military casualties and 303.644 wounded.

Westphalian: Hegemony: Functionality

The second construction which was designed and tested within the framework of the global international system was Hegemony. It was associated with the second generation of the international environment, which is labeled "Westphalian", and as well has at least two separate meanings. First, which is associated with the Chinese School of International Relations, and resembles the Empire in the manner of unifying brutal strength with cultural legitimacy. What differentiates it from Empire is totalitarianism of the term. Hegemony is entitled and encouraged to enact complete control over any social activity, and severely punishing any disobedience. Thus Hegemony resembles the Western notion of totalitarianism (Mosher, 2000). Articulation of this assumption was one of the primary concerns within the negotiations between the US and China in the 1970s (Yafeng, 2006). The second understanding of the notion stems from research conducted by George Modelski and his long cycle theory. In this context, Hegemony may be understood as a function of power distribution within the international system. In this case, Hegemony is a set of functions assigned to the actor which displayed the greatest potential and skill of application of those assets within the international relation. What was more important, in most cases, was acquiring the mantle of Hegemony heavily relied on innovation. For instance, in case of Great Britain, their supremacy relied on creating a credible and extremely effective financial system (Rutterford and Sotiropoulos 2016, pp. 919–945).

The Hegemony which will be analyzed within the framework of this paper is wrapped around the Modelski Concept. It is very different from the concept of an Empire, and among actors analyzed within this paper, it could even be seen as opposition to the Empire. It could be perceived within analyzing of particularly evident features of Hegemony. First and foremost the feature of Hegemony is that it is intricately temporary. It is designated even within the Modelski Theory, which embraces the idea of decay and collapse of Hegemony whenever distribution of power in international environment changes, mainly due to technological progress. Therefore Hegemony is in most cases elusive and limited attribute of nation state. In comparison, during the four centuries of the Roman Empire, there were at least five cycles of Hegemony, which benefitted four states recognized as Hegemony.[9] Accompanying the change is a *Hegemonic War*, which can be defined as a particular war embracing a significant portion of the international system, serving to achieve extended objectives, even aiming at an internal transfiguration of participants and was approaching the intensity described by ideal of *clausewitzean ideal war* (Gülboy 2015, pp. 7–22).

The second feature of Hegemony was a narrow margin of military supremacy. There is a need to underline that it was created within a system of geopolitical entities possessing similar capabilities to effectively resist external military pressures. Therefore, every edge that the Hegemony may possess was not as significant or permanent as an Empire was. Furthermore, the difference of power potential and resources were not significant, which meant that the resilience of Hegemony was

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[9]According to George Modelski and David Kondratieff, those nations were: Portugal, Netherlands, United Kingdom (twice) and United States.

much less noticeable during the epoch of Empires. The more cooperative stance of operation was adopted. Hegemony very rarely decided to operate individually. Instead, its function was pronounced in igniting cooperative activities, for instance in a form of multilateral conferences or alliances. It was essential to acquire resources in order to boost Hegemony capacities in order to obtain a mutual goal. The best example is the series of anti-French coalitions formed in year between 1789–1815 and the Triple Entente (focused around Hegemony) and Triple Alliance (focused around contender) (Conybeare and Sandler 1990, pp. 1197–1206).

The third issue of Hegemony is that the only legitimacy it possessed was based on its efficiency. When an Empire was recognized legally as a central entity by remaining participants of the international system, Hegemony is recognized only because it is useful to remaining elements of the international system. Because of the diversification of the structure of actors means that meeting the expectations of all other nation states is extremely hard, if impossible. Without a military edge to quell discontent actors, means that there is significant minority of nation states that are discontent with Hegemony and its performance. Furthermore, this aggregation of contenders and dissidents is constantly fluctuating. For instance, during the Napoleonic Wars, France was the primary contender for Britain's Hegemony, whereas a hundred years later, its place was occupied by Germany. That means, Hegemony, contrary to Empire, was forced to manage rivals located within the system, not only on the peripheries.

The notion of Hegemony was characteristic to the Westphalian international environment, which originated in the European international subsystem. Not surprisingly, there were no non-European nation states which acquired this title. The last nation state bearing the mantle of Hegemony is the United States. The question arises whether it will be last in the line of Hegemonies, or whether it will be replaced by the next successor, for instance China (Roy 2020, pp. 101–117), after a protracted hegemonic war. This question is still open as it addresses prospects and forecasts into the future which is still to happen and being verified. However, expanding evolutionary tendencies of continuity and change labeled as late-Westphalian international environment, and drawn into the post-Westphalian international environment, there is need to mention that despite probability to repeat hegemonic cycle at least one more time are bigger than recreation of Empire, but are low enough to justify seeking for new kind of institution to replace Hegemony. There are three main reasons to justify this statement. First and foremost is a diversification and specialization of international actors, which limits in terms of quantity and quality of available resources. Despite absolute gain in terms of national capabilities, the sheer size and complexity of international relations, coupled with the drastic rise of costs of application of classical tools of power (limitation of available manpower to be the most important cause of this situation) meant that Hegemony will be more limited than it was in the past. The second feature is the rise of transnational social space, which requires a completely different set of capacities to operate and manage efficiently. With translating additional sectors of social activity, means that the managing of international relations will require serious redefinition of a managing hub. The third feature which limits the probability of resurgence of this kind of actors effectiveness is

resurgence of non-European entities. This means that unofficial community of interests and values shared by Europeans and a community of understanding of international systems is effectively broken. Therefore an internal complexity of a central hub need to be bolstered beyond capacity of singular actor.

Summarizing, Hegemony was very flexible, but a temporary central hub for the international environment. It was subjected to constant cycles of decay and renewal intersected with major crises labeled as the *Hegemonic War*. However this does not mean that this post was attractive enough for international actors to compete for its occupation. In the future, what could be projected in terms of changes within the international environment, will not create conditions which should be more favorable to this kind of actor. Therefore this will not be the construction which could be implemented.

Post-Westphalian: Hyperpower: Unification of Geopolitical and Transnational Space

Why this concept and not the others? Before further considerations, this question needs to be answered. With the advent of contemporary turbulent phases of international relations, there could be identified numerous concepts aiming at defining and explaining observed changes in structures and functions of the international system. Due to extended investigation, Hyperpower was chosen as a lead motive for this paper. There are three reasons to support these choices. First and foremost is that Hyperpower embraces elements of change and continuity, which reflects evolution of the contemporary international environment. On the one hand, there is clearly a visible resemblance to notion of superpower, which has been extensively exploited by scholars in the second half of the 20th century. On the other, change in prefixes indicates that this concept was refurbished and redesigned in order to suit contemporary needs. The second reason is the prefix "hyper-" which is commonly understood as a modifier of a greater magnitude than suggested by prefix "super-". Therefore, this suggests that previous ideas are developed and supplemented with new qualities in structures, capabilities and functions. Furthermore, a new, more potent prefix suggests amplification of capabilities of Hyperpower, compared to former generations, in terms of enhancing range of influence and quality of implementing those influences. And finally, the notion embraces also the noun "Power", which is commonly associated with the capacity to operate in an international system with the constant resistance of other elements of a system as well as a system itself. Therefore, Hyperpower could be understood as a next stage of evolution of international actors, equipped with new means of overcoming resistance while pursuing its own objectives.

Most scientists dealing with the issue of defining the term Hyperpower, emphasize two dimensions of the phenomenon. First, it is its quantitative nature. There is still debate in the scientific community as to whether the United States meets the requirements for holding this position in the international system (Kondrakiewicz 2015, pp. 219–241). Most of them are variables of quantitative nature, which are visible mainly in the economic and military spheres. Second, it is

also its role in international relations, which is derivative of functions fulfilled by the United States for the rest of the global community. There could be identified at least two opposing opinions. On the one hand, there is a statement made by Bacevich (2008), who sees the United States of America as a threat to stability and world peace. On the other extreme, the concepts of Salvatore Babones and George Friedmann can be pointed out, who emphasize the need to play the role of a global power in order to effectively protect national interests and a favorable balance of power in the international environment.

Most Western scholars seem to agree that Hyperpower is based on the conjunction of the three spheres of activity of the subject in the international environment. First, there are military capabilities.[10] Paradoxically, what distinguishes the military capabilities of the Hyperpower is not the extremely effective ability to use military force, but a sufficiently developed potential in this field that, even defeat on the battlefield, can contribute to the achievement of political goals set in the government's strategy. Second, it is also an economic position. In most cases, this dimension is understood as exercising political control over a significant segment of the global economy, most often expressed as a percentage of gross global production. However, as in the previous point, the economic dimension of Hyperpower is visible above all in qualitative participation in the world economy, and also by drawing on the so-called hegemonic rent,[11] i.e., additional income generated from managing the world economy.

Third, it is the realm of culture. The sphere of culture should be divided into two sub-spheres. The first relates to the legitimacy of a superpower as a norm-creating entity shaping the principles and mechanisms regulating international reality. The second is undoubtedly the cultural mimicry of the lifestyle of a Hyperpower society. This mimicry covers three basic ranges. Firstly, it is the sphere of values and philosophical and, to some extent, religious systems, which are internalized into the international and transnational space, and thus recombined within individual political units, partially resembling them, but in most cases leading to grotesque effects. Secondly, it is the sphere of codes of higher culture, or rather the tools necessary for their effective reading. In the case of a Hyperpower, this knowledge is more widely distributed, which makes it possible to read and internalize the message on a much larger scale within the mimicry of lifestyle. Third, it is also a question of popular culture, related to issues such as fashion, entertainment and consumer behavior. It is an element of culture almost completely devoid of a national context, it is extremely easy to decode and mimicry, but in practice its reproduction is related to the perception of the source of mass culture.

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[10]The entire operation was carried out between January 17th and February 28th, 1991. Operation *Desert Storm* officially ended on November 30th, 1995.

[11]The concept is quite vague and defined differently by various scholars. In most cases hegemonic rent means additional profits obtained by exercising the function of a hegemony. Although in the scientific community there can be met various dimensions of the above rent, ranging from the political domination of the system, which means the possibility of initiation and implementation of complex political projects.

In the context of considerations on the subject of Hyperpower, the key becomes the answer to the question about the nature of the subject corresponding to the Hyperpower criterion, and more specifically with regard to the continuity of the internal category of the state. Paradoxically, it can be said that Hyperpower is a category that is located above the state and between Hegemony and Empire. As a result, it is deprived of a large part of mechanisms supporting expansion to the limits of the known world. On the other hand, its position and internal mechanisms distinguish a country belonging to this category from others, even the largest. In essence, the Hyperpower is the whole system in which the superpower is located, but it goes beyond its own borders and reaches almost every corner of the Earth, using formal and informal networks of transnational connections, supported by state and non-state participants in international relations. Unlike an Empire, which is able to operate in an active phase in an international environment, a Hyperpower is mostly a passive entity, the activation of which consumes enormous amounts of resources and, as a process, is rarely successful. In the case of the Hyperpower of the United States, its activation has happened twice in contemporary history. For the first time, during the United Nations' intervention during the war in Korea in 1950-1953 (Stueck 2002). The second time happened during the First Gulf War in 1990-1991, with dual operations: Desert Shield,[12] and Desert Storm (Tanner 2007, pp. 81–106).[13] Unlike a Hegemony, which is based on military and economic foundations based on recognition of those acts by other entities through acts of violence in an international system, Hyperpower relies on non-military features, such as international law, regimes, traditions and habits, but also intertwining epistemic networks of non-state entities, which according to basic assumptions of science on international relations are independent of state entities. Therefore, while Hegemony can be clearly distinguished from other entities present within the system, in the case of Hyperpower those lines are blurred and undefined. The best example maybe the very nuanced and complex Sino-American relation. On the one hand, The People's Republic of China is considered as a political and military rival to the United States, but due to extensive nature and structures of Hyperpower, is unable to pursue certain objectives, like full support for Russia in the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, due to consequences posed not only by the United States

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[12]This operation was a response to the occupation of Kuwait by the Iraqi army (August 2nd-4th, 1991).

[13]Main difference between military operations conducted by Hegemony and Hyperpower, could be differentiated by three different elements. First of all, Hyperpower military operations are multinational by definition in order to be successful. Every time, even for United States, unilateral military operations are undertaken are economical and normative burden which overwhelms its capacities. For a state of lesser capacities, punishment could be destructive. Second of all, Hyperpower military operations contrary to Hegemony, embraces significant and equal civilian component. Features such as international law (UN Security Council resolutions), humanitarian affairs, appealing to public opinion and other forms, currently associated with hybrid warfare are equally important to achieve eventual success. And third of all, military operations are long term activities, which do not end with peace treaties. Crucial element is to construct political settlement which will reintegrate participants of this conflict in existing Hyperpower structures, even as challengers to its central hub. Failure to design this solution is the foundation of near constant turbulence. Summing up, Hegemony is focusing primarily on achieving contemporary compliance with its demands, while Hyperpower aims at restoring functionality of conflict-affected sectors for International System.

themselves, but also secondary elements of Hyperpower, with the normative power elements particularly.

As a result, the existence of Hyperpower is made possible by carrying out complex and sophisticated political and military operations efficiently and effectively without overburdening the nation – a state located in the center of the Hyperpower. Despite this, in most of the remaining cases, the United States did not make efforts to mobilize a majority, if not every connection of this system, as was the case in pointed campaigns in Latin America, such as in Panama (Tanner 2007, pp. 41–60). Either their efforts ended in failure, a spectacular example of which was the Second Gulf War, started in 2003,[14] or they were unable to effectively use the accumulated potential, which was the case with the Vietnam War in 1955-1975 (Summers 1995, Rothgeb 1993). Thus, Hyperpower in most instances remains passive, as its activation requires additional portions of resources, skills of central government and reception of other actors of the international community.

The potential of a Hyperpower can be projected within the contemporary international environment in three major ways: sanction, coordination, and indoctrination. The first feature is typical of historical systems. It assumes the possibility of assessing the activity of other entities and taking action in the event of their inadmissibility in order to compel those entities to adapt a desired course of action. However, unlike the previous ones which were relying predominantly on plain and obvious coercion, the application of sanctions requires different strategies and tools, sometimes more subtle and less obvious. Hyperpower acts rather as a hemostat (Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN 1983),[15] concerned with the unending quest to balance a simultaneously deteriorating and developing system. In the context of the application of sanctions by a Hyperpower depends on the efficient functioning of the network of transnational connections, which are the bypassing classical tools available to a superpower.

The second level of power projection is the coordination of various activities and initiatives which take place within the contemporary international system. This is a derivative of the shift along the axis of authority that shapes the quantum field of the manifestation of power in the late-Westphalian international environment. As a result, the role of the central actor of the Hyperpower is changing. From a center that gives orders - and forces obedience - the Hyperpower becomes a center for harmonizing international activities and initiatives. This function arises from the theory of "benign hegemony" coined and developed by Catley (1997, pp. 377–399). In its context, arising from the theory of hegemony, the United States stands out from the historical powers with two features: gentleness and self-limitation (Kupchan 1998, p. 46), especially in the dimension of the use of means of violence. However, most analysts of the phenomenon point out that this feature of the

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[14]Despite designating the international forces occupying Iraq after 2003 as a coalition, it was disproportionately smaller and therefore more asymmetric than the corresponding coalition formed in 1990. The largest nations, apart from the United States, are Great Britain (second-tier power) as well as Poland and Spain (medium-sized nations).

[15]According to the dictionary a homeostat is: "a cybernetic machine constituting a system composed of a series of regulators imitating homeostasis". On the other hand, homeostasis is: "the ability of a living organism to maintain a relatively constant state of equilibrium, for example blood composition or temperature, through appropriate coordination and regulation of life processes".

United States appeared only in the last thirty years, marked by a high degree of pacification of the international environment (Kupchan 1998, p. 41).

The third feature of the Hyperpower system is the indoctrination of the subordinate participants of the system, which means virtually any other international actor. This mechanism is based predominantly on Ian Manners' idea of *Normative Power* (Manners 2002, pp. 235–258). According to the theory of Modelski and Thompson (1996), the Hegemony displays the possibility of binding norms and values of the entire global system towards its own national interests and perspectives. As the hegemonic system evolves into a Hyperpower, this capacity only gains importance and is consequently developed. This particular mechanism is related to the evolution of the environment and a thorough reconfiguration and expansion of the critical infrastructure network (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2013), which is the main soft power projection channel and is almost exclusively responsible for the application of sanctions and shaping the preferences of the normative power application. In the current configuration, it utilizes extensive channels of expressing respect and legitimacy, and is displayed in conjunction with a rather specific system of sanctions, primarily in the social dimension, with particular emphasis on the most effective of the entire range, i.e., name and shame, which assumes ridiculing the trespasser (Lenz 2013, pp. 214–215, Braithwaite and Drahos 2002, pp. 269–288).

Summarizing, Hyperpower is a relatively new and untested concept for a central hub in the international environment. It reflects the duality of the contemporary international system between geopolitical and transnational social spaces. But it is not as active as both mentioned above, therefore it will be more difficult to spot and analyze its activity. It will rather influence perception of other participants and create opportunities, rather than actively operating into international relations.

Conclusion

Summarizing the considerations about the nature of Hyperpower, it needs to be mentioned that this construction is derived from both former centers of the international system: Empire and Hegemony. This communion is supplemented and altered with changes stemming from changes within two civilization megatrends: demographic and technological. That means that Hyperpower is a new quality in international relations. However, what is important, is that the system presents two serious challenges for researchers. First, it is not completed, despite the fact that it was first constructed in 1945 – willingly and unwillingly. Its primary features are still fluent enough to be reconstructed. Other parts are being constantly added to framework offering new capabilities which must be analyzed, like Internet surveillance and big data analysis. Second, it is predominantly passive, especially compared to Empire and Hegemony, thus empirical data to analyze it is scarce. The research need to be done basing on indirect approach and diversified sources.

Having said that, the biggest novelty of Hyperpower is the fact that it is constructed with the capacity to operate within the geopolitical and transnational

social spaces. Therefore, despite association with the United States, it is extending in every direction beyond its borders. It is constructed from various semi-independent entities such as transnational corporations and non-governmental organizations, sharing objectives and responsibilities and supplementing their function in the international system. However, only rarely are they operating in unison to achieve clear and visible objectives. In most cases this system is shaping a perception of other members of the international community. These three basic functions are the main focus of the concept of Hyperpower: sanction, coordination and indoctrination. Despite their flaws, among three mentioned actors – Empire, Hegemony and Hyperpower – the latter is the most probable to manage the international system in the post-Westphalian iteration.

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