

Hegemonic-Order Theory: A Field-Theoretic Account

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Abstract: This paper outlines a field-theoretic variation of hegemonic-order theory— one inspired primarily by the work of Pierre Bourdieu. We argue that hegemony derives from the possession of a plurality of meta-capital in world politics; hegemons exercise "a power over other species of power, and particularly over their rate of exchange...." Recasting conventional hegemonic-order theories along these lines carries with it at least three advantages: it helps bridge the differences between realist and neoGramscian approaches to hegemony, it provides scaffolding for exploring the workings of hegemony and hegemonic ordering across different scales, and it better addresses the fact that hegemonic powers are enabled and constrained by international order itself. After reviewing some of the major variants of hegemonic-order theory, we explore Bourdieu's understanding of hegemony and cognate concepts. We then elaborate on our fieldtheoretic approach, with examples drawn from the American foreign relations and the Roman Empire. Finally, we provide a longer illustrative sketch in the form of a discussion of Roman ordering and its *longue durée* influence on social, political, and cultural fields in world politics.

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Many hold that hegemons—preeminent powers that exercise a leadership role in international systems—establish order in line with their own preferences. They see hegemons as international quasi-states, able to use their preponderant economic and military power to take on some of the functions in world politics that governments perform in domestic politics (see Butt, 2013: 578-90). In most approaches, the order remains largely inert until the system faces a power transition. Dominant powers either successfully adjust the order to accommodate rising powers, or the system sees a power-

transition war.

Such hegemonic-stability and power-transition accounts generally neglect theorizing about how, first, power politics of hegemony operate at multiple levels of political life and, second, international order *itself* structures emergent hegemony. Building on work by Julian Go (2008; 2012), we develop a practice-turn, field-theoretic account of hegemony. In it, hegemony derives from the possession of a plurality of *meta-capital* in world politics. Hegemons exercise “a power over other species of power, and particularly over their rate of exchange...” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 114). This meta-capital stems from highly asymmetric military and economic capabilities; hegemons achieve preponderance in military and economic *fields*, and this enables them to shape and even create other fields—such as, in the contemporary era, diplomacy, finance, and sports. They influence what counts as salient capital—performances and goods—within these fields, and the exchange rates of different capital across them.

But this ordering has its limits. Hegemons cannot completely restructure international order; they emerge in preexisting social fields, and rarely, if ever, enjoy a sufficient preponderance of meta-capital to rewrite those fields entirely. For example, aspects of international order beyond their control may facilitate or undermine imperial modes of control (Go 2008, 2012; MacDonald, 2009). Moreover, past hegemons may exert influence on relevant fields long after they disappear. A trip to the Washington mall or a walk past the British Museum serve as reminders that—more than a millennium after the fall of Rome—Roman cultural capital remains a symbolic prop for imperial and great-power politics.

A field-theoretic account of hegemony provides more than a means to incorporate longer-term dynamics of order and ordering. It also:

- *Suggests a way to bridge different conceptualizations of hegemony*, such as realist ones and Gramscian accounts of cultural preponderance.
- *Establishes scaffolding for relating macrolevel, mesolevel, and microlevel dimensions of hegemony*. These dynamics operate directly among polities—such as the United States and Canada—but also in mesolevel and microlevel settings. States, non-state actors, and individuals, for example, “struggle to accumulate and monopolize different kinds of capital” (Swartz, 1996: 79) within and across specific institutions of international order—such as the United Nations (Pouliot,

2016)—in ways that potentially reproduce, mutate, and challenge macrolevel hegemonic-order processes (cf. Bourdieu, 1986b: 47).

- *Extends practice-turn theorizing.* English-School (Clark, 2009), network-relational (Nexon and Wright, 2007), and relational-contracting (Lake, 2009) approaches all developed variants of hegemonic-order theory. Given its theoretical and historical importance, practice theories should offer takes on hegemony.

We review major variants of hegemonic-order theory. We then elaborate key conceptual vocabulary—especially fields, capital, and the nature of the state as the holder of meta-capital. We next recode hegemonic-order theories; throughout, we illustrate our claims with examples from two major cases commonly deployed in hegemonic-order theories: the post-war American United States and the Roman Empire. After, we expand upon the Roman illustrations to highlight both hegemonic ‘scaling’ dynamics and how polities may shape fields after their preponderance ends—and even after they cease to exist. Finally, we offer some concluding remarks.

Hegemonic-Order Theory

“Hegemonic-order theory” include, at a minimum, hegemonic-stability and power-transition theories. Such approaches converge on the same basic propositions:¹

- Enduring cycles of the rise and decline of hegemonic powers constitute world politics. Many see hierarchies of capabilities—with one superordinate actor at the top—as the most common system-wide equilibrium in international relations.
- Preeminent powers order relations among subordinate polities—this makes them hegemons. They establish rules of the game, provide impure public, club, and private goods—such as security and trading systems; allocate status and prestige; and even shape ‘domestic’ politics in subordinate polities.
- Change derives from shifts in relative economic and military capabilities; uneven economic growth operates as a fundamental source of transformation.

¹For aspects of the following, see Gilpin, 1981; Ikenberry, 2001, 2005 and 2011; Keohane, 1980; Lake, 1993; Lemke, 2002; Nexon, 2009: chapter 2; Nexon and Wright, 2007; Oatley, 2015; Pedersen, 2002; Yuan-kang, 2012; Zhang, 2015.

- Emerging powers that are satisfied with the general parameters of the order take ‘status quo’ orientations. Those that are dissatisfied—that want more territory, greater status, or different rules of the game—push revisionist agendas. If the incumbent hegemon fails to accommodate them, they become increasingly likely to challenge the hegemon and the order.
- System-wide wars result from power transitions involving revisionist challengers. The dominant power launches a preventive war, or the challenger initiates a conflict. These wars drive major alterations in international order.

Notable additional dynamics include hegemonic overextension. Sometimes the preeminent power expands beyond its “loss of strength gradient” and thus expends more blood and treasure in further domination than it gains from extracting new resources (Hui, 2004 and 2005). This degrades its hegemonic position (Chapman, McDonald et al. 2015; Haynes, 2015; MacDonald and Parent, 2011; Wohlforth, 2014). For example, the Spanish Monarchy impoverished Castile by diverting resources from its most productive sectors toward military efforts (Nexon, 2009: chapter 6).

Hegemonic-order scholarship varies with respect to how much it *theorizes* international order. Classic hegemonic-stability theories focus on how preeminent powers foster open-trade regimes (Keohane, 1980; Kindleberger, 1973; Ruggie, 1982).² Contemporary variants understand features of hegemonic orders more expansively—as including security relations, broader proscriptive and prescriptive norms, the allocation of status and prestige, control of territory, and even the basic constitutive rules that define international personhood (see Butt, 2013; Gilpin, 1981; Krahmman, 2005; McDonald, 2015; Nexon and Wright, 2007). Some catalog features of different hegemonic orders (Kupchan, 2014). Others focus on particular sources of variation. Ikenberry (2001 and 2011) examines differences involving institutionalization, provision of voice opportunities to subordinate actors, and generally how much the superordinate power commits to mechanisms of self-restraint.

Hegemonic-order theories agree that leading powers use their capabilities to structure international politics—often in a decisive juncture resulting from major-power wars. They study a wide variety of political formations, ranging from universal empires to unipolar systems composed of nominally

² Accounts of American hegemony stress Washington’s pivotal role in establishing the International Monetary Fund, the institutions that became the World Bank, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade system—and later the World Trade Organization.

sovereign states (Gilpin, 1981; Kupchan, 2014). They usually adopt a baseline realism: military and economic capabilities undergird other dimensions of international order (Ikenberry, 2014: 6-7). They differ on the degree that great-power concerts and other arrangements can generate relatively durable orders, but most see hegemonic systems as hierarchical, and thus—to some degree—comparable to domestic ones (Butt, 2013; Lake, 2009).

Another major strand of work borrows from Gramsci (see Gill, 1993; Appledorn, 2002) Most closely associated with Cox (1987), neo-Gramscian accounts of hegemony involve “a structural concept of power wherein the constitution of a stable order is the result of a manufactured compatibility between dominant ideas, institutions and material capabilities” (Burnham, 1991: 75). The state takes a backseat to the structure of social production, and its dominant classes. Thus, the post-war period created “the conditions for a hegemony of transnational capital by restructuring production and finance within forms of state and securing interests of new social forces at the level of world order through institutions in the global political economy” (Bieler and Morton, 2001: 24).

Some combine Gramscian understandings of hegemony with state-centric hegemonic-order theories (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990). Certainly, hegemonic-order theorists now generally emphasize “ideological hegemony”—or something similar—as sustaining hegemony. Some influential concepts in hegemonic-order theory even point to connections between more Marxist and more state-centric work on hegemony. For example, Nye’s (2004, x) notion of “soft power”—the “ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion of payments”—resembles processes of commodity fetishism (see Bially Mattern, 2005). The cultural products of the Roman empire—such as body armor, baths, royal courts, silver cauldrons—or of the United States—such as rock music, hip hop, blue jeans, bowling allies, hamburgers—become independent sources of attraction because they come to ‘stand in’ for power and prosperity.³

English-School and hierarchy-centric scholars offer their own variants of hegemonic-order theory.

³ Roman soft power derived from elite culture and American soft power derives from consumer culture. Indeed, in neo-Gramscian reckonings, the latter is both product and vector of post-war capitalism. Per Murdock (2006: 10): “The ‘soft power’ exercised by consumer cultures’ ‘ability to entice and attract’ played a pivotal role in” the “battle to globalize the American Way.” The generation of soft power entails the kind of “manufactured compatibility” stressed in neo-Gramscian theories of hegemony.

Hegemony has a long pedigree in the English-School theory (for example, Watson, 1992), but work by Clark (2009) and Mendelsohn (2009) stress that, like the balance of power, hegemony may constitute an institution of international society, with—in rough terms—the legitimacy of any given hegemon contingent upon the degree that it upholds other aspects of international society.

Hierarchy-centric approaches to international leadership are more heterogeneous. Lake (2009) argues that the United States has created a zone of hierarchy in world politics; states accept American leadership so long as they view its overall benefits as exceeding the costs of returning to anarchy. Lake (2009: 168) contends that otherwise puzzling behavior, such as provision of troops to American military operations, amounts to a form of “symbolic obeisance”: a way of signaling by subordinate states that they recognize the legitimacy of Washington’s writ. Butt (2013: 582) explicitly argues that hegemonic spheres are hierarchic, rather than anarchic, and links regional peace to the impartial exercise of hegemonic leadership.

Indeed, hegemonic-order theories generally wrestle with the dynamics of socio-cultural hierarchies (cf. Volgy and Mayhall, 1995; Wohlforth, 2009). This ranges from accounts that see status immobility as driving attempts to overturn international order (Ward, 2013) to studies of the various strategies that states use to pursue status and prestige within existing international orders (Larson and Shevchenko, 2010). These contributions share a recognition that, even though hegemons shape the terms of status and prestige, status hierarchies do not simply mirror stratifications of military and economic power. It follows that a number of different actors and processes may contribute to the emergent structuring of hierarchical orders in world politics.

Hegemony, Fields, Capital, and the State

We derive our approach from the work of Bourdieu, as well as applications and extensions of his analytical frameworks. This hardly exhausts practice-turn international-relations theory (see Bueger and Gadinger, 2015), but it provides a solid foundation for recoding hegemonic-order theory. Indeed, Go (2008 and 2012) has already laid critical groundwork for our efforts in his work on empire, hegemony, and global fields. Nonetheless, we face a number of challenges. Bourdieu rarely uses the term “hegemony” in his scholarship. His ideas cannot be applied to the task without modifications. Still, Bourdieusian concepts—of habitus, fields, capital, meta-capital, and the state—all point towards

implicit theories of hegemony, and also provide infrastructure for a practice-theoretic take on hegemonic-order theories.

Key Concepts

For Bourdieu, *habitus* bridges macro- and microlevel processes. In essence, hegemonic social structures sediment in—and mark—bodies; primary socialization produces an individual's habitus. Habitus refers to habits of the head and heart, as well as the bodily comportment of individuals. More technically still, the “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisation” produces that individual's repertoire of practices (Bourdieu, 1977: 78). Note that some neuroscience supports Bourdieu's reading of the foundations for action. Ann Greybiel (1998: 120) shows how “action repertoires” are stored in the brain in “chunks” of “integrated memory representation that can be selected as a whole and executed with minimal attentional involvement” (see Hopf, 2017).

With respect to macrolevel dynamics, structural realism has systems of interaction, linguistic-turn theory has discursive configurations, and relational theory has social networks. *Fields* capture the same impulse in Bourdieu-derived practice-turn theories. Fields are delimited spheres of social action; they entail specific ‘rules of the game.’ that shape how actors relate to one another as they jockey for power, status, and influence. Bourdieu (1991: 230) describes fields in terms of “a set of objective power relations imposed on all those who enter the field, relations which are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even to direct interactions between agents.” Position within a field depends on the accumulation of *field-relevant capital*. In essence, the more field-relevant capital participants hold, the more dominant their place in a field's social hierarchy (Berling, 2012: 45).

Bourdieu (1986b: 81) defines *capital* as “accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated’ embodied form which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.” Capital comes in three basic forms (or ‘*species*’): *economic capital*, which is pretty much what it sounds like; *social capital*, the resources generated by network ties to individuals and institutional sites (see Portes, 1998); and *cultural capital*. Cultural capital may take the form of specific material tokens of higher or lower cultural standing—such as expensive works of art or, among states, highly-esteemed archeological sites. But it may also refer to the knowledge of prestigious cultural codes—philosophy, arts, and so forth—as well

as one's habitus, which in this sense take the form of *embodied* cultural capital. In a French setting, examples include *sang froid*, slowness of gestures, mastery of cutlery and turn-taking in conversation. Indeed, all forms of capital include both tangible assets and embodied performances.⁴

Forms of capital also have *subspecies*: specific varieties of their general kind. In the contemporary period, subspecies of economic capital include currency, ownership of businesses, government bonds, derivatives and other financial instruments, and so forth. The relative value—or even existence—of subspecies of capital varies across time and space. This variation might result from the coordinated efforts of actors and institutions to enhance the value of their own particular stocks of capital. It might also result from any number of other—intended and unintended—processes.

Thus, fields are defined by the species of capital that confer status, prestige, and power within them. For example, what makes the economic field *distinct* from the cultural field? Different forms of field-relevant capital determine power relations within each of them. However, just as distinctive subspecies of capital have different 'exchange rates' *within* each field, so may forms of capital in one field be used to 'purchase' field-relevant capital in another one. For example, wealthy individuals may seek to accumulate cultural capital—by endowing arts centers, patronizing artists, or acquiring cultural knowledge via education—in order to enhance their standing in cultural fields.⁵

There are, in principle, as many forms of capital as there are social fields, and as many fields as there are distinct spheres of social life with their own power relations. Thus, analysis of any field requires identifying its specific forms of key capital, such as what constitutes military capital—its subspecies, its performances—in the military field (see Mérand, 2008; Pouliot and Mérand, 2013). In the political field, political capital—the ability to attract allies—proves critical; scholars analyze diplomatic fields

⁴ Bourdieu (1986a: 206) mentions other forms of capital. For example, body capital refers to physical frames that fit beauty ideals. He always stresses how such capital is first and foremost raw material. A beautiful body cannot be put to work in the fashion industry before it has received the right habitus (C. Neumann 2017). Body capital is enhanced and made convertible to economic capital by an infusion of cultural capital. This follows the formula [(habitus) (culture)] + field = practice (Bourdieu 1986a: 101).

⁵ Bourdieusian accounts of inequality often focus on how individuals and social groups may use differences among fields to reinforce their overall social standing. 'Old money' may deploy their superior position in the cultural field to diminish the standing of the nouveau riche—while 'new money' may seek to marry into the old aristocracy so that their descendants have access to its cultural capital. The bourgeoisie may develop mechanisms to restrict access to prestigious educational institutions—and with it, to cultural and social capital—in order to maintain their position in the economic field.

within specific international organizations in term of the nature and distribution of diplomatic capital (Adler-Nissen, 2008).

Indeed, we can identify various professional fields—that of academia, finance, or journalism—as well as fields associated with specific social spaces—that of a high school, a drama club, or a lacrosse team. Thus, fields may nest with one another, overlap, or hardly interact. Moreover, fields may appear at any scale—in neighborhoods, municipalities, or countries—and traverse other social and political boundaries—localities, ethnic groups, or sovereign states (Go and Krause, 2016).

Power relations within fields manifest in two, albeit closely related, ways. First, *the patterns of relations among agents*: the power that a particular participant in the field enjoys relative to other participants. These are putatively measurable and graphable structures of social dominance. They capture position within the field (contrast with Lake, 2009; Nexon and Wright, 2007). Second, *the rules of the game and participants' 'feel' for when and how to apply them*. This involves Bourdieu's emphasis on habits, dispositions, and embodiment. It relates to understandings of practices as competent performances (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot, 2014) inasmuch as, for example, foreign-policy officials enjoy tacit and explicit knowledge of how to comport themselves in diplomatic settings.

Bourdieu's bodily focus suggests how disposition *perpetuates* hegemony in the broad sense of the term. Those whose dispositions reflect a better feel for the rules of game gain advantages over others; the latter often find themselves forced to learn, and adapt to, the game and its rules. For example, in 1904 Japanese diplomats ventured to New Hampshire for negotiations concerning the Russian-Japanese War. They appeared in full court attire, and thus seemed completely out of place among their western counterparts. Japanese diplomats have used Western clothes ever since. That is, they learned, and adopted, markers of embodied diplomatic capital found in the field of European diplomacy (Suganami, 1984).

In sum, “field exhibit certain logics.... of competition for capital; of particular capitals being valued more than others; of which form of capital transfers to another form and their conversion rates... that are not entirely reducible to other social logics” (Go and Krause, 2016: 10). The issue of conversion rates requires special attention, as it takes us into the domain of *symbolic capital, meta-capital*, and the state.

The rate of exchange among different species (and subspecies) of capital matters is crucial for power politics within, and among, fields. One way that power operates involves rendering a form of capital relevant—or irrelevant to—a field. Thus, an actor’s position in the “security field” (Bigo, 2013) might be boosted by linking it to one in the cultural field, such that they can then dismiss rival claims about how to secure the state. Williams (2007: 116) argues that, during the Bush Presidency, neoconservatives did this by transforming political conflict into cultural conflict: “opposition to American foreign policy (or at least to the foreign policies that neoconservatives support) can be cast as part of a larger and longer struggle over whether one values America itself.”⁶

The relative value of species and subspecies of capital provides a social-constructionist gloss on traditional concerns about the fungibility of power resources (Baldwin, 1989; Guzzini, 1993). Some forms of capital—such as currency—may prove more inherently fungible than others. But, to a significant degree, variation in the rate of exchange among species and subspecies of capital stems from socially and historically contingent processes. An important mechanism by which particular forms of capital—whether in the form of resources or performances—becomes highly salient for position within a field involves its conversion into symbolic capital.

Bourdieu (2015: 191) defines symbolic capital as: “the form of capital that is born from the relationship between any particular kind of capital and those agents socialized in such a way as to be familiar with and acknowledge this kind of capital.” Capital can become symbolic capital through processes of fetishization, as we noted in our discussion of soft power. But broader dynamics may operate. The key is that certain species and subspecies of capital—whether goods, performances, or both—become infused with specifically ideological meaning that renders them particularly valuable (Zhang, 2004: 7). Some examples include the political standing that came from holding the title of “bishop” in Mediaeval Europe, or how fluency in French in nineteenth-century Europe marked high status across many different fields: scientific, cultural, and diplomatic.

⁶ Given the importance of American cultural capital to questions of contemporary hegemony, this observation has relevance not only for the United States, but also for the question of American hegemony.

The capacity to set the rate of exchange among kinds of capital—within and across fields—and, more broadly, to structure fields themselves, is itself a form of capital: meta-capital. Bourdieu associates meta-capital strongly with the state.⁷ The state “has the ability to impose in universal fashion, on the scale of a certain territorial foundation, principles of vision and division, symbolic forms, principles of classification” (Bourdieu, 2015: 165). The “different forms of accumulation of military, economic and symbolic capital are interdependent and form a whole, and it is this totalization that makes for the specificity of the state.” Indeed, the “accumulation of different kinds of capital by the same central power generates a kind of meta-capital, that is, a capital with the particular property of exercising power over capital” (Bourdieu, 2015: 197).

The state is the ‘central bank’ of the society that it calls into being, in the sense that it sets the exchange rates between different forms of capital, and forms the locus for struggles between the different fields that it spawns. As Coudry (2003: 667) argues:

The state acts directly on the infrastructure of all fields: it is “the site of struggles, whose stake is the setting of the rules that govern the different social games (fields) and in particular, the rules of reproduction of those games”.... [T]he state influences the hierarchical relationship or “exchange rate” between the fundamental types of capital at stake in each individual field (for example, economic versus cultural capital)...” As to the scope of this power, it presumably includes... influence over what counts as “symbolic capital” in each particular field. “[S]ymbolic capital”... means any type of capital (economic, cultural, and so on) that happens to be legitimated or prestigious in a particular field. But the concept of meta-capital introduces the possibility that definitions of prestige within specific fields may be determined by influences outside those fields, specifically the state’s meta-capital.

⁷ As Sending (2015: 127) reminds us, however, “we should be attentive not so much to whether an actor represents a state or some other type of actor, but rather to the shared registers within which any type of actor can possibly succeed in claiming competence on what is to be governed, how, and why.” The history of a field determines authority structures within it, and states have the power to fold non-state agents into a state agent and make them contribute to American hegemony; Sending’s example concerns how Cold War demography work by the Rockefeller Foundation became folded into American hegemonic policies.

Thus, Bourdieu evolved a characteristic body-oriented take on hegemony. His concept of the state as a “central bank of symbolic credit” (1996: 376)—a wielder of meta-capital—directs our attention to the nature of hegemonic power in world politics.

Scaling up Fields and Forms of Capital

These analytics provide multiple ways to cut into hegemonic-order theory. Bourdieu’s own work enjoys an affinity with neo-Gramscian approaches. Bourdieu-inflected practice-turn scholars highlight this connection. Pouliot and Mérand (2012: 38) argue that, when it comes to “doxa, the ‘common sense’ that indicates an unspoken submission to everyday life” and “reinforces the status quo that benefits dominant actors,” Bourdieu “is quite close to other thinkers... especially... neo-Gramscian analysis of hegemony.” Moreover, international-relations scholars find Bourdieu useful in developing their own accounts of hegemony that *de-center* the state. Adler-Nissen (2012: 9) invokes Bigo on a “field of European ‘insecurity professionals’... with a high degree of hegemony over European security knowledge.” McNamara (2015) argues for the European Union as a source of seemingly banal everyday symbols and practices that generate political authority at the European level.

Studying embodiment and disposition in relatively bounded social settings provides a straightforward way of bringing hegemony into the study of practices. These experience-near approaches (Jackson and Nexon, 2013: 556-8) focus on either specific hegemonic relations—among say professionals and diplomats—or the microlevel-translation of regional and global power relations among states into specific organizational and local settings (see Adler-Nissen, 2016; Bueger, 2015; Neumann, 2002 and 2012; Pouliot 2010, 2011, and 2016).

Indeed, most influential uses of Bourdieu in international-relations scholarship focus on clearly identifiable institutional contexts (Leander, 2005), and communities of professionals and experts (Bigo, 2013; Matthijs and McNamara, 2015). Because there is no *ex ante* way to identify a field, relatively bounded settings provide good candidates for closer research; they provide nodes from which to trace how field effects spread and taper off. This is how we may establish where a field ends. Bourdieu (1996: 132) sees the limit of a field is the point where the effects of its actors and institutions cannot be found: “For example, the absence of such effects leads us to doubt that organizations within a particular city, administrative region or (in the United States) state, constitute a field.”

How do we deploy the concepts of field, capital, and meta-capital beyond localized—or, at least, national—settings (Neumann, 2013)? Indeed, *all* practice-oriented theories face challenges when ‘scaling up’ to macrolevel processes (Nexon and Pouliot, 2013: 344). Bourdieu cannot help us here: he maintains a territorial focus in determining the social space constituted by the state—state-building amounts to a bounded social process. However, Bourdieu (2015: 161) does point us in the direction of more macrolevel analysis; as he notes, at “the level of relations between states you find the same problems that you find within the state.”

The straightforward answer, then, is to allow for the possibility of fields at scales familiar to analysts of world politics. Scholars study fields that operate within and among international organizations, transnational professions, and the like. We simply recognize the empirical likelihood of regional, interstate, and global fields of various kinds.⁸ As Go (2008: 209) argues:

[T]hinking of the global environment as a field alerts analysts to features of the global space that might be otherwise overlooked. It orients analysts to multidimensional objective configurations of positions and the subjective dimensions that serve as the “rules of the game” and as cultural or symbolic capital (rather than just “norms” or taken-for-granted models). It also orients analysts to processes and mechanisms that might be elided in existing approaches. By highlighting conflict and strategy, it maintains that actors’ “moves” are driven by the accumulation of various capitals while recognizing that the strategies they pursue are dependent upon the particular configuration of the field and the content of capitals available at any given point in the “game.” It also stresses that fields enable capitals to be convertible to each other, which is partially why actors might struggle for a variety of capitals rather than only a single type.

Similarly, we can incorporate power resources, capabilities, and performances generally associated with macrolevel international-relations frameworks. Bourdieu, as noted above, already refers to military

⁸ Methodologically, however, we come up against a challenge here, for with no equivalent of the state in evidence, there is no default delineation of a field (Bucholz, 2016). This challenge should not be exaggerated, though, for even where national fields are concerned, it is an empirical question where they end. The key is to trace effects by, first, analyzing the field in question in relation to the general social field, second, mapping relations between actor positions and, third, analyzing the dispositions of field actors (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 105).

capital. This opens up the possibility of regional, interstate, and global military fields with, for example, aerospace and nuclear subfields. We might add economic fields at these scales, with, say, financial, trade, and other subfields. In many contexts, these fields might intersect with, say, global fields of great-power competition. The point here is not to specify the scope and domain of *all* relevant fields and capital *ex ante*, but to stress that a field-theoretic approach can take up rather traditional concerns in the study of state-centric hegemonic-order theory—including the texture of international orders themselves.

Hegemonic-Order Theory Recast

Hegemonic-order theories build from this basic analogy: *hegemons are to international order as states are to domestic order*. As Lemke (2002: 22) notes, “Relations within power transition theory’s power hierarchy are not anarchical... power transition describes international behavior as falling into established patterns or international orders enforceable by the dominant power.” Gilpin (1981: 230 and 228) argues that hegemonic orders involve “similarities in control mechanisms of domestic systems and international systems.” Hegemons are international quasi-states, able to use their *preponderant* economic and military power to take on some of the functions that governments perform in domestic politics.

We simply extend this analogy. Viewing hegemonic powers as international quasi-states implies that hegemons possess meta-capital by virtue (at least) of their dominant positions in international—whether global or regional—economic and military fields. To the extent that their possession of military and economic capital renders hegemons *like* states, it does so by translating into a privileged position in the “field of power.” Hegemons possess a plurality of meta-capital and therefore shape—deliberately or inadvertently—fields from the global to the microlevel; influence the exchange rate of different kinds of capital within and across fields; and ‘infuse’ specific kinds of capital—generated from objects, relations, and performance—with symbolic significance. So-called “soft power” resolves as—often, but not always, cultural—capital that obtains such symbolic significance in particular fields.

Does stressing the significance of military and economic capital in generating meta-capital contravene practice-turn sensibilities (compare McCourt, 2016).⁹ In some respects, it reflects a straightforward

⁹ However, it is consistent with Bourdieu’s own treatment of economic capital and of the coercive capacity of the state.

recoding of conventional hegemonic-order theories. However, we think it a reasonable empirical wager. The weight of research suggests that some degree of preponderance in military and economic fields is historically associated with hegemonic ordering. This was certainly the case for Roman hegemony, and it remains true for more recent American hegemony. This might derive from the objective fungibility of military and economic capital; it might also reflect a deep historical structuring of international fields to render those forms of capital of high symbolic value. Regardless, our framework allows for either possibility—or both.¹⁰

Hegemons rarely possess anything close to the monopoly on either meta-capital or underlying capital—military and economic, among others—that Bourdieu assigns to the state. Hegemons typically face more rivals than, in principle, national-states do in domestic fields. How hegemons shape and transform order depends very much on preexisting global fields (Go, 2008), the ongoing contention and cooperation of other states—and even potentially a wide variety of non-state actors and forces (Berling, 2012). Hegemons make and shape fields, but not entirely as they please.

Moreover, hegemonic meta-capital does not always operate through conscious agency. Roman leaders had no way of knowing that north of the Baltic Sea, everyday utensils were being molded after Roman models, or that ownership of Roman weapons yielded considerable cultural capital, already in the first and second centuries AD; at that time, Romans even lacked knowledge about the existence of such a place (Shetelig and Falk, 1937: 198). At present, states often pursue deliberate policies of promoting their cultural capital (Castillo, 2005; Heng, 2010; Otmazgin, 2008; Saunders, 2013). But, as already noted, some of the value of American cultural capital derives from a process similar to that of commodity fetishism, in which tokens—and performances—of American culture become conflated with its economic and military standing. Moreover, the spread of American consumer culture—and its various markers—involved the activities of corporations and businesses whose overseas penetration was facilitated by Washington’s economic and military might (Kuisel, 2000).

If world politics is characterized by complex hierarchies—a wide variety of discrete and overlapping patterns of super-and subordination that operate among and across states—then we can think of those hierarchies in terms of fields—global or otherwise (Barder, 2016; Donnelly, 2015; Mattern and

¹⁰ It could also turn out that conventional accounts downplay the underlying importance of other forms of capital in establishing a hegemonic position in some, or many, fields.

Zarakol, 2016). Hegemons use their superior position in global, or regional, military and economic fields—the meta-capital that their outsized capabilities provide them with—to create, shape, and shove other fields—each of which involve patterns of super- and subordination derived from possession of field-relevant capital. That is, they shape international order.

There are (at least) as many hierarchies in world politics as there are fields; processes of differentiation—some involving American hegemonic ordering—proliferate the number of fields (Buzan and Albert, 2010). For example, there exist many economic fields that operate at global levels—such as those of finance, petroleum, and high-tech manufacturing. Consider global finance. At the microlevel, we examine these fields in terms of the various professionals and practices that constitute them. But as we scale up our analysis, we find a hierarchy of cities and states in terms of dominance of financial markets—one both cause and consequence of American hegemonic ordering (Fichtner 2016; Norrlof 2010; Oatley, Winecoff et al. 2013). This, in turn, provides field-relevant capital for the kind of aggregate “economic field” associated with hegemonic-stability and power-transition theory—that is, rankings of states in an international hierarchy of economic resources. In this way, we can subsume hegemony within a broader understanding of hierarchies in world politics.

Legitimation and Status

For Bourdieu, the social struggle that takes pride of place at the present historical juncture is the one between what he calls economic capital and cultural capital.¹¹ Bourdieu’s concern dovetails nicely with work by international-relations scholars on hegemony (see Nye, 2004). Economic capital does not map directly onto military preponderance, but it does capture the material thrust of realist hegemony theory. Cultural capital—all the resources that accrue from knowledge production, expertise, verbal skill and aesthetic judgment—is the stuff that Gramscian hegemony is made from.

Hegemonic-order theories stress that preeminent powers allocate status and prestige. This process proves crucial to power-transition dynamics; states often become revisionist because they desire greater status than the order affords them. Scholars examine various ways that dominant powers may

¹¹ Witness, for example, the way he transforms Weber’s classic definition of the state by stating that ‘the state is an X (to be determined) which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical and *symbolic* violence over a definite territory and over the totality of the corresponding population (Bourdieu, 1994: 3).

accommodate status-seeking states and how those states may find alternative means of enhancing their status (Larson and Shevchenko, 2010; Volgy and Mayhall, 1995; Ward, 2013; Wohlforth, 2009). But the logic of status allocation remains decoupled from the theoretical infrastructure of hegemonic-stability and power-transition theory.

A field approach integrates the two via the field-capital-hierarchy nexus. More specifically, status in a *particular field* is a function of holding field-relevant capital—and, for some, having control over the terms of exchange among different forms of capital. Something like generalized status has to do with the terms of exchange *among* fields—or social stratification related to fields of fields. The process by which particular forms of capital become symbolic matters a great deal.

Hegemons—whether deliberately, inadvertently, or some combination of the two—play a major role here. When hegemons allocate status and prestige, what they do is endow certain kinds of performances, resources, and relations with symbolic importance. Roman examples include naming a barbarian leader a Friend of Rome or declaring a *foedus* with a certain barbarian group (Heather, 2001). In the contemporary international military field, specific subspecies of military capital—such as aircraft carriers—take on significance for position well beyond the capabilities that many countries derive from them. This is not because Americans hold a meeting and designate aircraft carriers as symbolic capital, but rather because of the longstanding role of aircraft carriers in the hegemon’s practices of power projection and its global presence (see Eyre and Suchman, 1996).

Consider also American security agreements. They not only enhance the military capital of many partner states—both directly and indirectly (Cooley and Nexon, 2013)—but also involves various bargains that help constitute exchange rates across different forms of capital. What is an important geopolitical position worth in market access, economic aid, and so on? What are contributions to American uses of force worth? In turn, what kinds of assets shape a state’s value in international military and security fields such that the hegemon assigns different levels of priority to the relevant relationships?

Indeed, a field-theoretic stresses the role of cooperation and contention. States, as well as other actors, may jockey for position by seeking to accumulate field-relevant capital, such as Olympic medals, United Nations Security Council seats, overseas bases, alliances, trade agreements. That capital often

implicates a number of fields simultaneously. But states and other actors may also try to alter the terms of exchange within and among fields through a variety of strategies, and using a variety of different instruments—such as those derived from military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural capital (Adler-Nissen, 2014; Goddard and Nexon, 2016; Towns, 2009; Zarakol, 2011). A field-oriented approach therefore provides a unified analytic for tackling not just hegemony, but also the politics of international order, as well as the process whereby a hegemon structure emergent international order.

Scaling Hegemonic Politics

A focus on micropolitics, as we noted earlier, provides the most intuitive way to cash out practice-turn approaches to hegemony. That is, for example, how America's hegemonic position operates via the habitus, and practices of individuals operating in diplomatic, commercial, academic, and other more localized settings. This raises the question of how we may link analyses of hegemony on the micro-, meso- and macrolevels.

These levels of analysis are not fully autonomous. Dynamics in localized contexts may implicate the macropolitics of hegemony. And the macrolevel dynamics of hegemony and hegemonic orders certainly plays out in those settings (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot, 2014; Pouliot, 2010; Pouliot, 2016). This is not just a matter of practices in international organizations producing policy outcomes that implicate hegemonic order. For instance, to the extent that there exists a transnational field of journalism (Christin, 2016: 214), it often becomes a site of power-political struggle in which private journalists, state-sponsored journalists, and direct agents of the state operate. The apparent 'weaponization' of Wikileaks by Russian intelligence—in an effort to, at minimum, undermine the legitimacy of the American political system and, at maximum, facilitate the election of Donald Trump—illustrates how struggles within a particular field may combine with the politics of hegemony in ways that elude conventional hegemonic-order theories (see Shane, Mazzetti, and Goldman 2017).

These macrolevel and microlevel dimensions of the politics of hegemony converge in more orthodox ways. They do so when they involve fields created—or structured—by a hegemonic power or a dominant coalition of actors. Consider the study of how the United States, or its agents, exercise power over the disposition and position of individuals beyond its borders—what Ikenberry and

Kupchan (1990) call “hegemonic socialization.” Instead of treating such socialization as simply transmitting bundles of values, we might also consider how it structures the habitus of non-American diplomats, military personnel, and organizations.

Indeed, with respect to the mesolevel, Washington maintains a web of institutions and practices that contribute to these dynamics. These include Department of Defense education and training programs, defense-institution building programs, joint military exercises, routinized bilateral consultations (Kreiger, Souma et al. 2015), and Department of Energy programs that train foreign counterparts in nuclear security procedures. Some of these vectors of hegemony are more diffuse—and less centered on Washington. They operate through for example, international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Bank. While global governmentality approaches often stress disciplining effects on states (Neumann and Sending 2010), we can extend macrolevel analysis by delving into the microlevel and mesolevel questions of how hegemonic socialization shapes the habitus of individual actors or, say, ministries of foreign affairs. As traditional Bourdieusian fields are often mesolevel phenomena—changes within which are neither fully attributable to overarching structures nor to the interaction of independently constituted actors—field analysis provides one way of cutting into such phenomena (Sending 2015: 27-28).

Moreover, these kinds of institutional sites and fields are part of the *infrastructure* of American hegemony. When they work as intended, they themselves serve as important sources of capital—social, military, economic, and so forth—that contribute to U.S. power and influence. It takes perpetual work on the international order to maintain hegemony, and such activities influence hegemons themselves.

First, the capital generated on the mesolevel often depends on the interpersonal and inter-organizational relationships embodied on the microlevel. Like any other kind of jointly-produced capital—such as in alliances—the capital generated within the institutions and organizations that make up the mesolevel of hegemony creates interdependencies between ‘stronger’ and ‘weaker’ powers. Second, it also enhances field-relevant capital for other participants. This may take the form of voting rights in multilateral forums, to social capital derived from routine interactions among states, to the ability to generate symbolic capital via field-relevant performances.

Consider democratic institutions and performance as a form of symbolic capital. Despite hypocrisy on this front, for much of the post-war period the United States routinely pointed to having a democratic government as an important attribute for international standing. It issues regular reports on respect for liberal-democratic rights, and often—if sometimes opportunistically—invokes violations of those rights as justifications for slowing or suspending assistance (Meernik, Krueger et al. 1998).¹²

Through such processes, Washington rendered the performance of democracy a form of capital that shapes position in a number of distinctive global fields. Georgia, under Mikheil Saakashvili, exploited this to enhance its leverage in Washington—it positioned itself as a ‘success story’ for the Bush Administration’s freedom agenda in an effort to make itself a critical asset for the United States (Cooley and Nexon 2016). While such actions qualify as a deliberate effort to make “democracy” a source of relevant capital in various international fields, the effects of these efforts are strong enough that many autocratic regimes ‘ape’ democratic processes and procedures for reasons of domestic and international legitimacy (Cooley 2015).

These examples illustrate how a field-theoretic hegemonic-order theory opens up dynamics at the macrolevel and microlevel. They raise questions about how fields, dispositions, and practices at different levels potentially interact. The backgrounds of officials in the Georgian government—many of whom were western-educated and cultivated ties with western policymakers—provided them with social and cultural capital that they used to help garner military and economic capital from the United States in the form of aid and training. Georgia also ‘plugged into’ a variety of institutional fields of defense cooperation that further enhanced its status with Washington (Cooley and Nexon 2016).

Overall, then, we have a story about a hegemon shaping international fields in ways that shaped how the leadership of a small state pursued domestic and foreign policy goals, which in turn allowed that state to influence the policies of that hegemonic power. These dynamics take place at multiple levels of analysis and scale upwards and downwards. For example, Romans knew that new barbarian leaders usually came from established royal lines; when possible, they not only boosted certain candidates, but

¹² The effects of the 2016 US election on these dynamics bear watching, both in terms of how Trump’s election may directly shape the symbolic value of liberal democracy, and also whether changes in American policy lead to important field effects.

also saw to it that young members came to reside within the Empire, so that they could be placed in power if a vacuum opened up. When Arminius of Teutoberg Forest fame became leader of the Cherusci in AD 6, the Romans not only strongly backed his father-in-law and his brother, but also, once they had conquered Arminius, saw to it that his wife, who carried their unborn child, escaped and settled in Ravenna, whence he could be mobilized as a potential Germanic leader if the occasion arose (Todd 1992: 85). By the sixth century, Byzantium had routinized a practice of keeping a member of suzerain royal families in Constantinople, not only as a potential hostage, but also as possible new ruler in case an opening emerged (Chrysos 1992, 35).

Insofar as this kind of mesolevel infrastructure diffuses competencies, relationships, and material capital, it may even contribute to transformations in hegemonic orders. Consider the creation of alternative international institutions by China, Russia, and other states. These could facilitate exit from various aspects of “liberal international order” and therefore amount to the creation of alternative fields—with different symbolic capital and terms of exchange (Barma, Chiozza et al. 2009). Change may also come from within, as participants use the infrastructure of American hegemony and liberal order in ways that erode Washington’s meta-capital.

Finally, at all these levels of aggregation we find non-state actors—media, advocacy groups, corporations—and broader processes at work in constituting fields, symbolic capital, and terms of exchange. Just as a field-theoretical approach may assist us in integrating different forms of power and dimensions of hierarchy into hegemonic-order theory, it should also facilitate locating these actors and processes into a shared analytic.

An Illustration: Roman Hegemonic Ordering

The micro- and mesolevel practices of the Roman Empire, as well as its continuous afterglow in Western history, provide key examples of how a Bourdieusian approach to hegemony continuity may complement conventional hegemonic-order theory. It also allows us to discuss cross-scale and cross-field dynamics. During the fourth century A.D., Rome built an “international” order, in the sense that its very existence structured its environment. To its southeast, the Parthian Empire formed as a rival. To its north and northeast, tribal polities sought to inhabit its border zones in order to raid and trade—and congealed in ever larger alliances to raid more efficiently. In doing so, they transformed themselves

on Roman models, most pronouncedly by becoming ‘peoples’ (*gens*) under kings and so recognizable as ‘proper’ polities in a Roman hegemonic optic. Political institutions, most obviously in the form of law, were also taken over (Wirth 1997; Wormald 2003).

We find hegemonic socialization across different scales in clear evidence. “In the late fourth century it becomes difficult to identify holders of the most senior military posts who were certainly not Germans” (Todd 1992: 60), but this elite group remained well integrated. The masses, however, proved slower to socialize:

Military units stationed along the frontiers, the *limitanei*, turned into a sort of home guard, composed of local recruits, primarily the sons of soldiers. Since these were the least Romanized portions of the Empire’s population, these frontier units became increasingly indistinguishable from the barbarians against whom they were to be defending the borders (Geary 2002: 91).

The arrival of two sizeable groups of barbarians on Roman soil in 375-380, and then 405-408, further hampered socialization. As a result, agriculture—the key tax base of the empire—in these areas suffered. As productivity diminished, tax revenue could no longer pay for the upkeep of a Roman army capable of maintaining social and ‘international’ order—particularly regarding imperial-barbarian relations along the north-western border (Heather 2005; Ward-Perkins 2005).¹³ With large swaths of the empire settled by barbarians who did not pay taxes, and with others deserted by people fleeing increased taxation, Rome could no longer afford adequate levels of military vigilance. In turn, barbarians proved able to increase pressure on the landed gentry and their villas.

Thus, villa owners—who, as a landed gentry, made up the backbone of the Roman social order locally—rather than appealing to increasingly unreliable central authorities for military protection sought local accommodations with barbarian kings and under-kings. The economic and military power of the imperial core over its provinces decreased further. Parallel to this, Roman cultural capital withered. What was the point in erecting statues of emperors or building new baths for the public when the status of benefactor declined in meaning locally, and no central officials would see the symbolic power on display? The meaning and even relevance of Roman identity or *Romanitas* declined.

¹³ However, without the threat posed by the rise of Parthia, the decline in tax revenues could have been somewhat offset by moving soldiers from the eastern to the north-western border.

As Geary (1988) notes, while it is true that barbarians were being Romanized, it is also true that Rome was being barbarized. In Bourdieu's terms, when economic capital was no longer being converted to cultural capital at the same scale, hegemony declined. That is, a decline in hegemonic economic and military capital on the macro level translated into declining cultural capital on the mesolevel (landed gentry) and microlevel (individuals), which translated back to further decline in hegemonic capital on the macrolevel.

The lessening of tax income (economic capital) and authoritative cultural standards (cultural capital) changed international order; Roman hegemony faded. Field-theoretic accounts of the importance of changing international order—in both social and political terms—allow for factoring in cultural dynamics. They account more fully for the interplay between these and economic and political factors than can traditional hegemonic-order theories.

Such erosion did not eliminate the importance of Roman trappings as a source of, among other things, symbolic capital: that is, the importance of memorized Roman international order for subsequent attempts at building and sustaining hegemony in Europe. Roman hegemony maintained a post-mortem—or simulated—presence in the West. The new international order that emerged was constituted by polities that developed along emulated Roman lines. Although effective control by Roman authorities over the Western part of the empire tapered off during the fifth century, it seems that, for a number of both citizens and invading barbarians, the presence of the Empire was still being felt (Wickham 2009). In the year 800, Charlemagne decided to stage not only an *imitatio imperii*—which Franks had been doing since the fifth century—but also a *translatio imperii*, and had himself crowned emperor. The imagined Roman order provided a prop for strengthening Carolingian hegemony from the English Channel in the West to the Pontic steppe in the East.

Hundreds of years later, the European renaissance not only emphasized Greek culture, but also an imagined Roman social and political international order. American eighteenth and nineteenth-century state builders followed suit. With the second wave of European imperialism in the 19th century, Roman order once again became a prop. This is an ongoing story. Almost every European—in the broad sense—contender for hegemony cultivated and deployed cultural capital modeled after Rome. At the extreme, Dandeleit (2014, 3) argues:

The revival and imitation of the memory, texts, cultural forms, intellectual accomplishments, and political aspirations of the Roman Empire animated imperial pursuit and distinguished Western Europe from any other part of the early modern world. [T]he widespread dissemination of imperial literacy, political, and aesthetic ideals deriving from ancient Roman precedents created a common political culture and ambition throughout Western Europe that provided the broad foundation for the first global empires of Spain, Portugal, France, and Britain.

Whether or not the revival of the cultural capital of Rome *explains* European imperialism, its persistent influence is undeniable. To this, one may add the effects of the afterglow of Byzantium, the Roman Empire's Eastern and surviving part. In the two centuries leading up to its fall in 1453, Byzantium was, arguably, commanding respect from its neighbours first and foremost for its cultural capital, as opposed to its economic and military capitals, which were seriously depleted. After its fall, the Russian Empire considered itself, at least from the 19th century onwards, (Poe 2001, Kalb 2008) the inheritor of the Eastern Roman Empire and thus Moscow as the “Third Rome”. This idea is now being resuscitated by Russian nationalists, which means that Roman *translatio imperii* is cultural capital in use as we speak (Neumann 2017).

Indeed, Roman cultural capital—in republican, imperial, or both guises—*continues to have symbolic purchase in the fields of great-power and imperial politics* more than 1500 years after the fall of Rome. This is obvious from monumental buildings, to the titles of rulers, to military iconography. While the Roman legacy is always reinvented and reconstituted, this is a remarkably long period of time for a past hegemon to influence international order—although one might also compare Chinese dynasties, or Egyptian ones. A field-theoretical approach to hegemony, with its focus on the whole gamut of types of capital at stake in hegemonic ordering, may catch this analytically.

Conclusion: Beyond Hegemonic ‘Blank Slates’

Hegemonic-order frameworks provide, perhaps, the most venerable approach to systemic change in international relations. We attempted to expand its analytical purchase by recasting in field-theoretic terms drawn from prominent practice approaches. Along the way, we stressed a critical implication of

a field-theoretical account of hegemony: that hegemons emerge in preexisting fields and often lack sufficient meta-capital to restructure them completely. This insight stands at the center of Go's (2008, 202 and 223) "global fields" approach, which seeks to explain why British hegemony manifested as formal empire, while post-war American hegemony "tended toward the *informal* mode" of control.

Go (2008, 223) does not connect hegemony to meta-capital, but his analysis implies it: "unlike the British... the United States entered a field fully populated by allied sovereigns and their respective empires." The United States therefore used "preexisting imperial networks to accrue economic and security capital." Moreover, "unlike Britain, the United States entered a field wherein anti-colonial nationalism had proliferated around the globe." Theorizing explicitly about hegemons as possessing some—but far from unlimited—meta-capital allows us to see them as both shaped by, and shapers of, international order. It also facilitates treating international order not as a hodgepodge of rules and norms, distributions of material power, and modes of production (compare Gilpin 1981). We can view all of these through the lens of field theory, whose concepts of field, capital and meta-capital incorporate existing insights into a single heuristic.

This stress on causal interdependencies and constitutive relationships between hegemons and fields implies an important break from mainline hegemonic-order theories. These approaches tend to stress hegemonic war as a kind of "field clearing" event—a critical rupture—that allows hegemons to remake international order in their own image. While victory in major-power war obviously opens up space for structuring international order, these theories struggle with the continuity that we *also* observe during power transitions. Neither do they venture much beyond the macrolevel of explanation, nor about changes outside of the dynamics of power transitions (cf. Buzan and Lawson 2013; Nexon 2009). This is particularly noticeable regarding the downstream effects of hegemony, which may remain in evidence for centuries, or even millennia.

Treating states not simply as competing for economic and political resources—or capital—but also as embedded in social orders from which, for example, they can draw cultural capital, may account for greater variation in hegemonic orders. Cultural capital furnishes additional power resources for forging and maintaining—or challenging—hegemony. The notion of symbolic capital helps link different forms of capital into a common rubric for understanding power political competition. Alternatively, and as displayed in the short discussion of the Roman Empire, changes in international order may

deplete cultural capital and weaken hegemony. But even after their collapse, empires and hegemons may still remain part of the fields that make up subsequent international orders, and so be used as symbolic capital in the forging of new hegemonies. Field theory can add therefore much needed insights into how hegemons cobble together their own international orders.

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