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*Layered Hierarchies and Upward Mobility: What is the Future of
India and China's Power Transitions?*

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Introduction

Power Transition is a theory that seeks to explain why change occurs in the global system.¹ Through a process of augmenting power known as power transition, states can rise rapidly in the global hierarchy. Atop the hierarchy are the great powers and, in some cases, a hegemon dominating influence over the global order; the expected behaviors, rules, and values that govern states within the global hierarchy. In his research, Douglas Lemke made a significant contribution to the theory by extending it

¹ A. F. K Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1958).

to include regional hierarchies that act "conceptually equivalent" to the global hierarchy.² However, Lemke's expansion has been undertheorized as to how the two levels of hierarchies interact. The theory purports that the relationship between the global and regional hierarchies is a one-way street with the global dominating. The rise of China and India poses a threat to the hypotheses as a conflict between the two great powers will inevitably impact the global order and their relative position to the dominant power. It seems undeniable that regional hierarchies can affect the global order when presented with a (theoretical) scenario such as India and China is an indication that the apparent under theorization on how the two levels interact has likely caused scholars to miss other examples of the global order changing as a result of more subtle regional influences. If so, how do regional hierarchies affect the global order?

If regional hierarchies supplement the global hierarchy, then a local power transition that sees upward mobility for a state within the regional hierarchy also increases its relative position in the global hierarchy and share of influence over the global order. In this case, it is predicted that a power shift at the regional level can normatively shift the local order, affecting how other regional states perceive their satisfaction with the global order. Should a state dissatisfied with the global order emerge on top of a regional hierarchy, its influence on the local order can normalize dissatisfaction with the global order.

While Power Transition Theory will serve as the foundational paradigm, the research will also employ constructivist theory to elaborate how the variables of regional hierarchy and global order are related. In particular, the layered hierarchy framework put forth by Coleman is utilized to better conceptualize how upward mobility in a supplemental hierarchy can correspond to influence in the overall organization.³ The goal is, by including a constructivist component, to create a more robust conception of hierarchy that includes not only how actors interact, but also how the structure of the hierarchy distributes benefits. A constructivist framework can take a statistically driven theory like Power Transition and include normative analysis that

² Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Douglas Lemke and Susan Werner, "Power Parity, Commitment to Change, and War," *International Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1996): pp. 235-260.

³ Katharina Coleman, "United Nations Peacekeeping Decisions: Three Hierarchies, Upward Mobility and Institutionalized Inequality among Member States," *Global Society*, 34, no. 3 (2020): pp. 318-334.

will yield new insights on an otherwise well-researched discipline. The research design will use explanatory methods of historical observations of Cold War era in Southeast Asia and the current Middle East with an emphasis on the affairs of Turkey. Content analysis of public documents, including public statements, military strategy, and uncovered internal documents are used to test the validity of the hypotheses. These pieces of evidence re evidence as to aa how a state considered its actions and how that changed as the hierarchies' normative foundations fluctuated. This research has a strong ideational component, meaning much of the data is spoken or written. Moving beyond these steps, the design will also have an exploratory element to determine better what factors should be included when theorizing about the case of India and China. The importance of social content to constructivist theory makes it necessary to conceptualize how different hierarchical structures like bipolarity or multipolarity change how goods are distributed. Also, at the end of the research, a further plausibility probe is included to test viability. The necessary units of analysis for this project are the multitude of hierarchies within the global system and the states that occupy them. The downside of limiting the analysis to states is that it continues the statist bias found in much of IR theory, but it is a necessary limitation to ensure the continued operationalization of Power Transition theory in this context. Lemke and Crabtree have continued to innovate by extending to non-state actors in other studies.⁴

A sample of historical examples of regional and global hierarchies interacting provides the best opportunity for observational analysis to generate data. The regional implications of the Cold War and the so-called domino theory firstly are a past example where dissatisfaction with the global status quo became normalized, but it also had an intensely bipolar world that can be studied. As an homage to Lemke, untangling the Middle East and the rules regional hierarchies use when global powers insert themselves is another choice because global powers interact directly. The actions of Turkey are important as an analogous example to India, also an uneasy ally of the American status quo. Turkey is also relevant because it is possible to see how the state positioned itself in a bipolar and multipolar regional system during the Cold War and more recently. Additionally, the creation of the early Islamic world is a rare case of a challenging regional status quo supplanting the broader order. The choices of global

⁴ Douglas Lemke and Charles Crabtree, "Territorial Contenders in World Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 64, no.2-3 (2020): pp. 518-544.

power shifts that caused a change in the status quo are limited to only the change between Britain and the United States. However, this study affirms Coleman's argument that a sub-hierarchy will not supplant the higher order. Limited to this case, the research would be unable to progress beyond Lemke's work and would be no closer to solving the puzzle India and China pose. Looking for a moment beyond the industrial era, from these observations and simultaneous interpretations it is possible to make some tentative predictions when theorizing the impact of a potential power struggle between India and China.

Literature Review

Power Transition Theory (PTT) was first articulated in A. F. K. Organski's *World Politics* and has continued to be utilized by many international relations (IR) scholars as the theoretical basis of their research for the past six decades.⁵ Though commonly associated with realist theories for its rationalist assumptions, Organski's novel theory fundamentally differed from other realist theories for its rejection of the balance of power concept. Conventional wisdom in IR circles followed the logic that an equal distribution of capabilities stabilized the global order.⁶ In contrast, Organski argued that an equal distribution of capabilities, parity, made war more likely.⁷ Balance of Power had long been the dominant theory of many academics, with its roots dating back to Thucydides in Ancient Greece.⁸ Rejecting the balance of power concept places PTT at odds with many of the most influential IR schools of thought in the twentieth century, including the work of giants Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz. Accordingly, Organski's theory failed to gain much traction at the time of publishing.

While the standoff between the Americans and the Soviets occupied much of IR scholars' attention during the Cold War era (and served as the justification for the

⁵ Organski, *World Politics*. A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980).

Woosang Kim, "Power, Alliance, and Major Wars, 1816-1975," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 33, no. 2 (1989): pp. 255-273.

⁶ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Knopf, 1954). Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading Mass: Addley-Wesley Pub Co., 1979).

⁷ Organski, *World Politics*, p. 281.

⁸ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Baltimore, Md: Penguin Books, 1968).

balance of power theory), it was Organski who predicted that the rise of China would pose the biggest threat to American dominance.⁹ Since the end of the Cold War, predicting China's rise has been PTT's primary claim to fame and one that afforded the theory much more interest from IR students. PTT displays many of the fundamental principles of a good theory; simplicity, generality, parsimony, and, importantly, testable hypothesis. Coupled with the prediction of China, the high-quality theoretical foundations of PTT have afforded it the longevity and attention to generate novel theoretical developments as well as the opportunity to corroborate the theory's hypotheses empirically.

Lemke's discussion expands Organski's global theory to include multiple (regional) hierarchies within the overarching global order.¹⁰ After encouraging albeit limited empirical support from tests on South America,¹¹ and the Middle East,¹² Lemke's theory has been corroborated in the eyes of proponents of PTT as a progressive theoretical shift.¹³ Yet, Lemke's work is vague about the relevance of the regional hierarchies beyond that they exist with limited effect on the global order.¹⁴ Though Lemke has some empirical data to back up his claim that regional struggles have little impact on the global order, there are examples of regional conflicts spilling over and interrupting the global order, such as WW1. Even with empirical support, at face value, this study questions the validity of Lemke's assertion. In particular, it would seem to logically follow that a regional struggle between great powers would necessarily affect the global order according to PTT logic. To surpass a great power regionally also means surpassing them in the global hierarchy.

Looking towards the future, this exact scenario looms large, begging the question, of how can regional struggles, particularly between great powers, affect the

⁹ Organski, *World Politics*, p. 446.

¹⁰ Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*.

Douglas Lemke, "Toward a General Understanding of Parity and War," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 14, no. 2 (1995): pp.1 43-162

Douglas Lemke and Susan Werner, "Power Parity, Commitment to Change, and War," *International Studies Quarterly*, 40, no. 2 (1996): pp. 235-260.

¹¹ Lemke and Werner, "Power Parity, Commitment to Change, and War," pp. 241-256.

¹² Lemke, "Regions of War and Peace," pp. 112-116.

¹³ Jonathan DiCicco and Jack Levy, "Power Shifts and Problem Shifts: The Evolution of Power Transition Theory Research Program," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43, no. 6 (1999): pp. 675-704.

¹⁴ Lemke and Werner, "Commitment to Change," pp. 237.

global order. In one of his most recent publications, Lemke admits that the potential for a regional transition is the India-China dyad could be the exception, though does not elaborate further on how a disturbance transcends its locality towards the global level.¹⁵ All that can be said is that regional hierarchies where great powers have interest "do not operate under normal rules."¹⁶ But what are these rules? First, to answer these questions, an overview of the theory and definitions behind the original PTT is necessary to sharpen the understanding of the global order Lemke built his theory from. Next, the theory can be modified to apply the multiple hierarchies model. With a complete understanding of the theory, it will be easier to tease out and make explicit any shortcomings in the theory. Ultimately this will be useful in testing the validity of the multiple hierarchies theory before moving on to more concrete research.

Power Transition Theory

As Organski puts it, "power transition is a theory that attempts to account for the shifts of power and the causes of conflict among nations."¹⁷ As a direct critique of Balance of Power theories, the defining feature of PTT is the rejection that an equal distribution of capabilities (parity) makes war unlikely, and in fact, makes war more likely.¹⁸ Unlike Balance of Power theories which state the international order is contested under conditions of anarchy,¹⁹ PTT argues states are ordered according to an underlying hierarchy, the structural variable to the theory.²⁰ To account for the shifts, the theory introduces dynamic variables of relative power and degree of satisfaction. A dynamic model that accounts for shifts and conflicts can be created with these three variables in mind.

¹⁵ Ronald Tammen, Douglas Lemke & Jacek Kugler, "Power Transition Theory," *Transresearch Consortium*, (2011): p. 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 11.

¹⁷ A. F. K. Organski, "Power Transition," *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, 12 (1968) p. 415.

¹⁸ DiCicco and Levy, "Power Shifts," p. 681.

Ronald Tammen, "The Organski Legacy: A Fifty-Year Research Program," *International Organization*, 34, no. 4 (2008): pp. 314-332.

Organski and Kugler, "The War Ledger," p. 27.

¹⁹ Waltz, "Theory of International Politics," p. 83.

²⁰ Organski, *World Politics*, pp. 315-316.

Tammen, Lemke & Kugler, "Power Transition," p. 7.

As in many realist theories, power is relative and a key variable under consideration. However, power is not purely a material conception. Unlike other theories, power is the ability of a state to pursue its policy goals.²¹ Yet material factors do play a large part in considering the power of a state. The primary means of augmenting power, according to Organski, is through internal development.²² GDP is a useful though a limited measure of power that has some promise.²³ The idea is that a state's productivity is representative of necessary attributes to maintaining power it possesses like education, technology, or natural resources. Further, a wealthy state can quickly shift its productivity towards security depending on its policy objectives.

Measuring economic output as power is a familiar concept for students of realist schools, but where PTT deviates is the consideration of political variables. These variables include institutional efficiency, political mobilization, diplomatic skills, geographic distance, and population.²⁴ Opening the door to inherently qualitative measures hinders the ability to create a formulaic model of PTT, one which can precisely measure a state's power relative to another's. Nevertheless, relying solely on hard measures of power paints an incomplete picture of the power distribution in the global system. Though there are no examples of studies using PTT to predict the end of the Cold War, it is consistent with the underlying conception of power.²⁵ The collapse of the USSR was brought about through internal decay rather than outward pressures. Institutional inefficiencies and social mobilization to break up the union, coupled with stagnant economic growth relative to its competitors, are critical insights into understanding why the Soviets collapsed to seemingly everyone's surprise.

Again, power is a relative representation of each state's capabilities to reach its policy goals. A more powerful state can use its power to influence a weaker state either by coercion or persuasion to pursue its goals. Power is distributed asymmetrically across the global system after observing differing rates of growth between countries. Organski argues that the spread of industrialization is a crucial explanation for forming

²¹ Ibid, p. 3.

²² Organski, *World Politics*, p. 314.

²³ Organski and Kugler, *The War Ledger*, p. 34.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 30.

²⁵ Lemke, "Continuation of History," p. 27.

the modern global order.²⁶ Industrialization began in Britain and has spread over the next 200 years. At first, only slowly in Europe during the colonial era, then rapidly in the South and East Asia representative of the relevance in modern geopolitics countries in these regions possess. For many years, Britain reaped the benefits of early industrialization and was recognized as the globe's dominant power. With this power, Britain was able to shape a new global order to align with its preferences, for example, rejecting mercantile trade practices for laissez-faire principles.

When a dominant state emerges as it often does according to PTT, it can use its power to create a global order governed by rules and conventions other states will follow. Unlike anarchic theories of IR, PTT argues that the international system is hierarchical and rules-based. This hierarchy orders states according to their relative power capabilities and subjects them to the rules of dominant states. The hierarchy is most stable when one hegemonic state has a preponderance of power, though a winning coalition of states is often necessary.²⁷ It is in the interest of the dominant state to set up a regime that can facilitate the conditions for its continuing wealth, security, and influence.²⁸ By creating the rules and norms that govern international relationships, the dominant state also creates or at least adapts the status quo in its favour. Still, barring the rare occasion that a dominant state reaches hegemonic status, it is necessary to create a status-quo where enough states are satisfied with the conditions to create the *winning coalition*.

The degree of satisfaction is the second dynamic variable and is important because it explains where conflicts arise. But even more powerful, it explains why it does not. Satisfied states trust each other, regardless of the distribution of capabilities.²⁹ Unlike Balance of Power theories, states are not viewed as purely utility maximizers in PTT. Satisfaction in the status quo means a state is content with the order, rules, and norms that the dominant state champions and will cooperate according to its degree of satisfaction, not what may rationally make it better off. Considering satisfaction over

²⁶ Organski, *Power Transition Theory*, p. 415.

²⁷ Ibid.

Organski, *World Politics*.

De Soysa, Oneal, and Park, "Testing Power Transition Theory Using Alternative Measures of National Capabilities," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41, no. 4 (1997): pp. 509-527.

²⁸ Lemke, "Continuation of history," p. 23.

²⁹ Tammen *et al.*, "Power Transition," p. 5.

maximizing utility offers powerful explanations for a phenomenon like democratic peace, the end of the Cold War, cooperation, or the peaceful transition from Britain to the United States as the global leader.³⁰ However, measuring a state's degree of satisfaction may be even more difficult than measuring power. Comparing alliance portfolios has been one method that has continued to be used since its first inception in *The War Ledger*.³¹ Nevertheless, comparing alliance portfolios is flawed in that it could mislead researchers to believe states are satisfied with each other, for example, the USSR and Nazi Germany,³² or dissatisfied, when a vast geographic distance might be a better explanation for the lack of an alliance agreement.

Another method has been measuring arms buildups to measure dissatisfaction.³³ Dissatisfaction occurs when a state feels it would be better without the status quo. Under circumstances where there is broad dissatisfaction with the status quo (i.e., with the rules of the order), the international system will reflect this and behave anarchically. The Soviets, for example, felt they would be better off with communism rather than the status-quo of capitalism, and their dissatisfaction could be measured through the arms buildup from the Cold War. When a dissatisfied state's military expenditure exceeds that of the dominant state, it is, arguably, displaying a strong relative commitment to changing the status quo.

The Soviet arms build-up is relevant because they were in a position to surpass the dominant global power, the United States. A power transition occurs when a state's national power increases to contend with the influence of the system's dominant power. Specifically, 'power transition' refers to the rapid process by which a state develops its potential power to maturity through industrialization.³⁴ At maturity, a state has

³⁰ Lemke, "Continuation of History," p. 27.

³¹ Kim, "Major Wars."

Woosang Kim, "Alliance Transitions and Great Power War" *American Journal of Political Science*, 35, no. 4 (1991): pp. 833-855.

Vesna Danilovic and Joe Clare, "Global Power Transitions and Regional Interests," *International Interactions*, 33, no.3 (2007): pp. 289-304.

³² Tammen *et al.*, "Power Transition," p. 6.

³³ Organski and Kugler, *The War Ledger*.

Lemke and Werner, "Commitment to Change."

³⁴ Organski, "Power Transition," p. 415.

maximized its ability to augment power and will continue to grow much slower, giving newly industrialized nations the chance to catch them in relative power.³⁵

According to PTT, only a few states pose a threat to the global order. These challenges will come from states not yet at maturity rising rapidly in relative power through industrialization. Due to differing growth rates, the spread of industrialization causes sudden spurts that upset the distribution of capabilities. If a dissatisfied state reaches parity with the dominant power through a power transition, then conflict is likely because the dominant state no longer has the power and influence to subdue the challenger.³⁶ Equal capabilities at power parity make war the most likely and will usually be instigated by the rising state, especially when the rising state industrializes rapidly.³⁷ Given that PTT argues power is augmented internally, external intervention from the dominant state, in theory, has little impact on the challenger reaching maturity. A preemptive attack almost certainly guarantees the challenger's dissatisfaction making the dominant power unlikely to instigate conflict.³⁸ In summary, PTT concludes conflict is most likely when a dissatisfied state rapidly reaches parity with the dominant state, and inversely, peace is most likely when one state (or satisfied coalition) has a preponderance of power.

Power Transition: Regional Hierarchies Model

Lemke offers an expansion of PTT to include the concept of regional hierarchies.³⁹ Beneath the overarching global hierarchy, he argues there is a series of overlapping regional/local hierarchies. These regional hierarchies "function in a manner conceptionally equivalent" to the previously described global hierarchy with just a few qualifications.⁴⁰ A state with a preponderance of power in a regional system may alter the status quo of local affairs according to its interests. However, the local status quo must fit within the larger global status quo or deviate to a marginal degree where the

³⁵ Lemke and Werner, "Commitment," p. 246.

³⁶ Organski, *Power Transition*, p. 416.

³⁷ Diccio and Levy, "Power Shifts," p. 687.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*.

Lemke and Werner, "Commitment to Change."

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 237.

dominant state does not care enough to intervene. It is more difficult, on average, for locally dominant states to exert their influence equally across the entire system, as most powers do not possess the same capabilities as the great powers of the global system. Thus, the local system is limited only to the area where states can interact militarily, based on the research from Bueno de Mesquita's loss of strength gradient.⁴¹ PTT is a theory that seeks to explain the cause of war, so limiting a system according to its military range is an appropriate limitation for research purposes, though perhaps incomplete.

A principle that holds true of the local and global application of PTT is that only the most powerful states can interact with the entire system. Because regional hierarchies exist within the global system, powerful states can intervene in systems where they have interests. It is even possible for powerful states to intervene and prevent wars between regional contenders through deterrence and incentives. Under these circumstances, the regional system will not parallel the international system because local contenders cannot act according to their natural opportunity and willingness to alter the status quo. In his initial test of the multiple hierarchies hypotheses, Lemke used the case of South America to prove his argument.⁴² South America was an excellent choice to prove the multiple hierarchies hypotheses because it has had little intervention from the great powers. In subsequent tests on the Middle East and Asia, where great powers do have interests and have interfered, the systems are more erratic and do not (in isolation) reflect the hypotheses of PTT. Global and regional hierarchies can interact, but the strategic importance of the interaction flows one way. Therefore, Lemke assumes regional struggles rarely influence global order.⁴³

Lemke's regional hierarchies discussion adds complexity and generality to the theory, granting it the status of a progressive addition to the research program.⁴⁴ The multiple hierarchies hypothesis aims the logic of PTT, biased towards great powers, at minor powers in order to explain their conflicts. With that said, the theory still has

⁴¹ Lemke and Werner, "Commitment to Change," p. 242.

Lemke, *Regions of War*, p. 74.

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. *The War Trap*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981a): pp. 103-108.

⁴² Lemke and Werner, "Commitment," p. 256.

⁴³ Lemke, *Regions of War*, p. 87. Lemke and Wener, "Commitment," p. 238. Tammen *et al.*, "Power Transition," p. 22.

⁴⁴ DiCicco and Levy, "Power Shifts," p. 692.

implications for understanding the behaviours of the globe's great powers. Especially in an increasingly globalized world, the great powers are situated in different regional and local hierarchies. For example, the United States is isolated in North America, the UK, Germany, and France are neighbours in Europe, and China dominates Southeast Asia. Sandwiched between them all is Russia with its connections to the Middle East. Great powers will compete regionally and globally to shape the status quo in their favour, the same as minor powers. Lemke's theory, simply as a byproduct of its intention to study minor powers, is ambiguous about how regional hierarchies behave when great powers have interests in them, much less when they are embedded directly in them. Yet, there are clues to the "different rules" that govern regional systems acted upon by outside Great powers in the literature that can be pieced together to form some general expectations.

Three Models of Hierarchy

Once again, PTT was created as a critique of the anarchic balance of power theories. Instead of anarchy, Organski proposes the world is ordered into rules-based hierarchies, enforced by leaders. Introducing hierarchy theory has allowed IR scholars to envision a global rather than inter-state system where state sovereignty is a given. Hierarchy supposes a stratified world where actors are vertically differentiated based on their value within the hierarchy.⁴⁵ Adopting a hierarchical model that does not rely on statist assumptions has broadened the application of IR theories. Even today, Lemke has continued to innovate by applying PTT to non-state actors.⁴⁶ Of course, non-realist theories such as the critical theories (Marxism, feminism, post-colonialism, etc.) are especially reliant on hierarchy in formulating their arguments. Therefore, it is understandable that IR scholarship has different and competing theories surrounding hierarchy, just as is the case for anarchic theories like offensive and defensive realism.

⁴⁵ Janice Mattern and Ayse Zarakol. "Review: Hierarchies in World Politics," *International Organization*, 70, no.3 (2016): p. 625. Organski, *World Politics*; Joe Magee and Adam Galinsky, "Power, Propensity to Negotiate, and Moving First in Competitive Interactions," *Personality and Social Psychology*, 30, no. 2 (2007): pp. 200-212.

⁴⁶ Douglas Lemke and Charles Crabtree, "Territorial Contenders in World Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63, no. 2-3 (2020): pp. 518-544.

Perhaps the most popular conception of hierarchy is a logic of trade-offs exemplified by David Lake's concept of Hierarchy in International Relations.⁴⁷ The actor at the top is placed in that position because of its capabilities and stays there by creating legitimacy. The periphery may push the established status quo in a preferred direction, though it must consider the trade-offs of losing out on benefits.⁴⁸ PTT considers the trade-off notion of hierarchy with the inclusion of the satisfaction and power variables. On its own, the trade-off logic of hierarchy does little to explain why actors do anything. A narrow conception of hierarchy does not consider what effects the hierarchical structure itself has on an actor's behaviour. Rather a trade-off conception's strength is understanding the legitimization process behind the hierarchy and pursuit of interest as well as providing a general method for conceiving how actors are ordinarily ranked within the hierarchy (satisfaction and power).⁴⁹

Another avenue of study considers the role of positionality within the hierarchy to understand better how structure can affect outcomes. These scholars conceive hierarchy as organized inequality with socializing effects that condition actor interests and expectations based on its orientation.⁵⁰ Positionality is absolutely the core element to PTT's conception of hierarchy, even more so than trade-offs. Based on where a state is oriented in the hierarchy heavily influences its behaviours and interests, according to PTT. Kugler and Organski write, "actors accept their position in the international order and recognize influence based on differences in the power distribution among nations. This fundamentally different assumption separates power transition from preceding realist models."⁵¹ A state can only be considered dominant or a challenger if it is in that position, both globally and regionally. A state in neither position will have little interest in challenging the status quo themselves because the hierarchy does not afford that opportunity. Positionality is the core of Organski's emphasis on different growth rates across the system and the explanatory principle of when wars occur, parity. In summary, where a state is positioned influences its opportunity and willingness to

⁴⁷ David Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 32.

⁴⁹ Mattern and Zarakol, "Hierarchies in World Politics," p. 635.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 632.

⁵¹ Jacek Kugler and A. F. K. Organski, "The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation." in *The Handbook of War Studies* ed. Manus Midlarsky, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989): p. 172.

challenge the global order.⁵² Additionally, positionality further differentiates PTT from other realist theories. Balance of power theorists such as Mearsheimer contend all states are distrustful and have an interest in maximizing security regardless of position.⁵³ PTT counters that not all states have the same interests. In the contemporary context, America has created the expectation that it will provide security to the international community, which its allies and enemies consider when calculating how they will pursue their interests.

A third model proposes a productive hierarchy. Productive conceptions are the newest direction in IR studies, mostly linked to constructivism. In contrast to the trade-offs logic that studies how actors shape the hierarchy, productive logic studies how the hierarchy shapes the actors.⁵⁴ Hierarchies produce social meanings by categorizing agents and activities, thus setting the boundaries of who/what is in and who/what is out. Weber's *Simulating Sovereignty* details how the natural fact of state sovereignty has evolved, changing the boundaries of acceptable intervention, and consequently altering the preferences of states.⁵⁵

Resources are distributed according to category. For example, an ally *freedom fighter* receives aid while enemy *terrorists* are sanctioned, the attention given to *matters of national security* or the different policies towards *developed* and *developing* countries. The hierarchy gives these categories meaning and socializes the understanding through the actors. Wendt's *Anarchy is What States Make of It* offers one of the most groundbreaking critiques of the international system, arguing that self-help does not follow logically from anarchy.⁵⁶ Wendt argues, these are malleable institutions that have shaped the identities and preferences of states in the international system.⁵⁷ Wendt was not directly discussing hierarchy in his article, though the constructivist sentiment of emerging norms shaping interests is consistent with productive hierarchy. The constructivist

⁵² Lemke and Werner, "Commitment," p. 237.

⁵³ John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security*, 19, no. 3 (1994-1995): p. 10.

⁵⁴ Mattern and Zarakol, "Hierarchies," p. 641.

⁵⁵ Cynthia Weber, *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): p. 93.

⁵⁶ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, 46, no.2 (1992): p. 695.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 399.

undertones to productive hierarchy more closely study immaterial aspects of politics, making empirical evaluations difficult and hampering the internal validity of a researcher's findings. However, a nuanced view of the social world and immaterial forms of power helps weed out the "post hoc, ad hoc qualifications" of context many realist theories are forced to make.⁵⁸ Norms often diffuse at the margins of a hierarchical organization.⁵⁹ Internalized norms are taken for granted as a part of the status quo. Therefore, new emerging norms usually occur as marginal groups try to reframe themselves into a higher position in decision-making. Along these lines, it is understandable how a rising regional power can normalize dissatisfaction from a marginal position in the global order to help its upward mobility. Like the many hierarchies, interests are also stratified. In the case of the Middle East or Southeast Asia, interests will often diverge within coalitions but be united as the recognized alternative to the status quo. The similar *anyone but* electoral politics that occur domestically similarly lead to cooperation between seemingly unaligned actors.

Given that productive conceptions of hierarchy are the new school approach, much of the work focuses on contemporary issues. The field of international organizations has been particularly receptive. A recent issue of *Global Studies* provides a new framework to the growing work of hierarchy studies.⁶⁰ Building from the assumption that "hierarchies are a ubiquitous feature of international politics," Fehl and Freistein describe "social units that are embedded in a larger social environment with which they interact... and stratified in the sense of ranking its members into unequal social positions."⁶¹ Further, the globe is always already stratified. Later in the issue, Coleman outlines an exciting framework of hierarchical organizational decision making, specifically applied to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping.⁶²

Within an organization, there may be many layers of hierarchies. In Coleman's case, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) forms the formal dominant hierarchy

⁵⁸ Robert Keohane and Lisa Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security*, 20, no. 1 (1995): p. 41.

⁵⁹ Ann Towns, "Norms and Social Hierarchies: Understanding International Policy Diffusion 'From Below,'" *International Organization*, 66, no. 2 (2012): pp. 179-209.

⁶⁰ Caroline Fehl and Katja Freistein. "Organizing Global Stratification: How International Organizations (Re)Produce Inequalities in International Society," *Global Studies*, 34, no. 3 (2020): pp. 295-305.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 296.

⁶² Coleman, "United Nations Peacekeeping."

of peacekeeping decision-making. The members of the UNSC are placed in a position of overwhelming influence because of their capabilities to support the mission of the UN. Routinely pointed out as a central feature of hierarchy, the dominant actors must create some sense of satisfaction to create legitimacy.⁶³ Coleman also identifies financial and troop contributions as informal hierarchies that influence UN peacekeeping. Layered hierarchies occur when disadvantaged actors gather the influence to create a new supplemental hierarchy that can precipitate change, but not supplant the dominant hierarchy.⁶⁴ To receive recognition, the supplemental hierarchies must fit within the norms and interests of the dominant hierarchy's actors and will often include the same dominant actors. For example, members of the UNSC also sit atop the financial contribution hierarchy, and in China's case, troop contributions also. These hierarchies work together through the decision-making process, though their influence is arbitrarily skewed in favour of the dominant hierarchy, again mainly based on its capabilities.

Empowered actors may take the opportunity to create a supplemental hierarchy to increase the sphere of its influence. In this way, hierarchies give actors the opportunity for "upward mobility" by increasing the actors' access to political and material resources.⁶⁵ In simple terms, upward mobility is moving towards equality, counteracting the natural tendency of hierarchy to reinforce inequalities. Controlling a hierarchy means possessing the power to categorize (define meanings) and distribute resources (i.e., incentives) that can set the boundaries of the political environment in the empowered actors' favour. While the dominant hierarchy is considered formal because it creates the explicit rules of the organization, the supplemental hierarchies are often informal because they are practice-based and flexible rather than rules-based.⁶⁶ The recent rapid development of international organizations (IOs) has also created opportunities for similar regional organizations, like the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Regional structures that characterize who are the regional players are being formalized. The more formalized the hierarchy, the greater its legitimacy and potential to spread

⁶³ Ibid, p. 320.

Fehl and Freistein, "Organizing Stratification," p. 287.

⁶⁴ Coleman, "UN Peacekeeping," p. 320.

⁶⁵Ibid, p. 324.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

influence. For example, the UNSC is a rigid formalized hierarchy, whereas financial and troop contributions hierarchies may look different depending on how each is defined. Is it all-time contributions, recent contributions, consistent contributions, etc., that influence upward mobility? Within the emerging supplemental hierarchy, these are the types of questions that actors bargain over.

In relation to one another, the emerging hierarchies supplement, not supplant the already established hierarchy. Often, a new hierarchy will directly support the interests of the dominant hierarchy. For example, upward mobility in the financial contribution hierarchy is limited to wealthy countries, many of whom sit on the Security Council. However, some hierarchies may directly challenge the dominant hierarchy more than others. The troop contributions hierarchy is dominated by developing countries that would not immediately be seen as traditionally powerful, such as Nepal and Rwanda. Even though an actor might be disadvantaged in one hierarchy, upward mobility in a supplemental hierarchy means greater relevance within the broader organization and has a limited equalizing effect as the scope of the new hierarchy's influence increases relative to the others. However, Coleman emphasizes that additional hierarchies will primarily reinforce rather than challenge the existing hierarchies, severely limiting the ability to bring actors to equality rather than just a little bit closer.⁶⁷

What does this tangential discussion have to do with PTT or how regional hierarchies affect the global order? Lemke's multiple hierarchies expansion of PTT and Coleman's layered hierarchy framework share many similarities. Most importantly, both conceive the world as already stratified into many different, interacting hierarchies. The supplemental hierarchies that Coleman describes behave similarly to the regional hierarchies described by Lemke, most notably that they are a part of the whole. Further, the weakness of Coleman's theory is that it is static; it assumes that actors are already stratified and have little opportunity to change the existing dominant hierarchy fundamentally. In comparison, PTT's explicit purpose is to understand why change occurs. PTT and Lemke's discussion are limited in how they conceive the interactions between global and regional hierarchies affect the global order, whereas Coleman's framework is meant to understand how the interactions between layered hierarchies affect outcomes.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 321.

It is important to immediately concede that the context behind both models is not the same; Lemke refers to the global world, Coleman's model is directed towards international organizations. However, the *Global Society* special issue aims to promote and flesh out a hierarchy-centred research agenda through engagement with global hierarchies, but IOs are specifically chosen as the subject because of the formality.⁶⁸ Additionally, PTT might be a *progressive* realist theory in that it already considers the metaphysical side of politics (abstract forms of power like political performance, satisfaction). Piecing aspects from the layered hierarchy model into PTT adds robustness by taking into account a more nuanced understanding of how multiple hierarchies work together to shape individual interests, and thus variations in behaviour and outcomes. Doing so while maintaining PTT's ability to explain change through internal augmentation of power will avoid the trap of determinism many productive hierarchy approaches fall into because an actor's capabilities are no longer purely determined by the hierarchy that created it.⁶⁹ But it will also give a better understanding of how regional hierarchies can affect the global order by formalizing their existence and spreading influence.

Advancing a Layered Hierarchy Approach to Power Transition Theory

There is, in fact, much agreement between both models. Both agree that, within a dominant hierarchy, multiple supplemental hierarchies can exist. However, they rarely, if ever, will fundamentally challenge the status quo based both on a lack of capacity and willingness.⁷⁰ Being at the top of a hierarchy reflects an actor's capabilities (i.e., corresponding to the variable of power), though a dominant actor must also legitimize their position (the variable of satisfaction). Creating satisfaction is essential because, as PTT points out, one state rarely has the hegemonic preponderance of power to simply coerce the others. On this note, Coleman points out that rigid formal hierarchies like the UNSC that allow little room for upward mobility and continue to privilege actors at the top do not face challenges from those beneath them.⁷¹ This corresponds to PTT's claim that a preponderance of power is the most stable, but not only because of the hegemon

⁶⁸ Fehl and Freistein, "Organizing Stratification," p. 286.

⁶⁹ Mattern and Zarakol, "Hierarchies," p. 645.

⁷⁰ Coleman, "UN Peacekeeping," p. 321 Lemke and Werner, "Commitment to Change," p. 238.

⁷¹ Coleman, "UN Peacekeeping," p. 324.

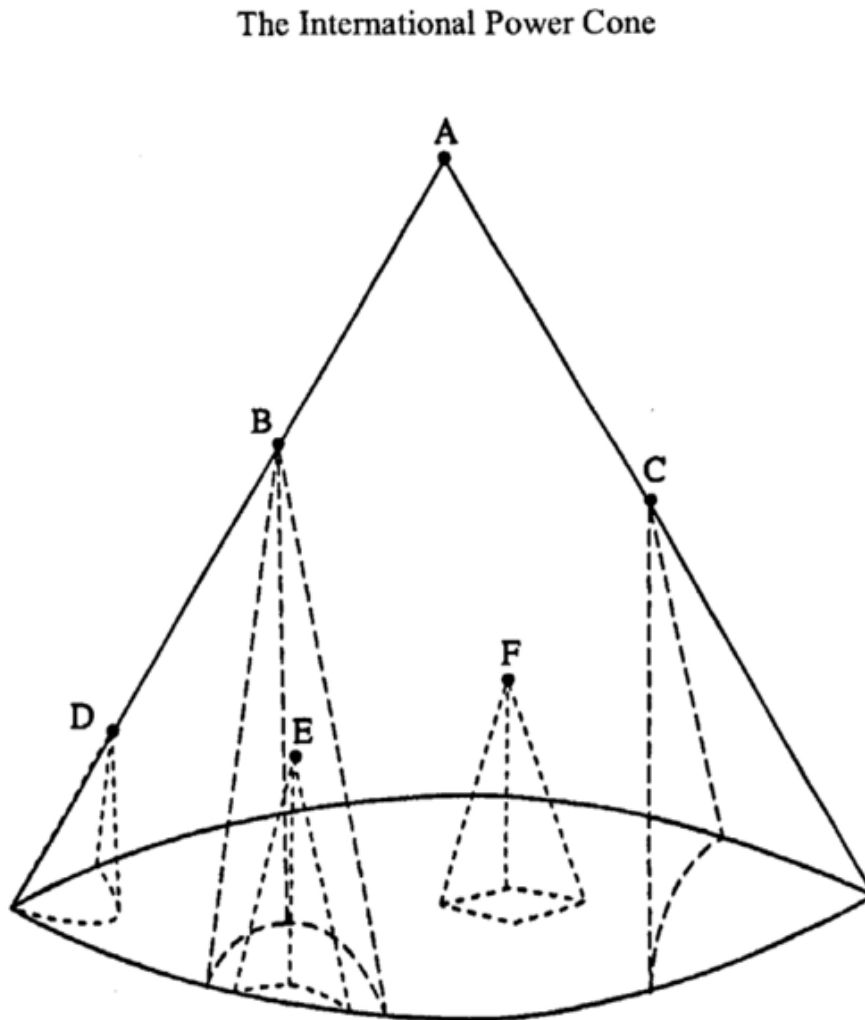
can crush opposition or because the formal *rules* say it should be this way, but also because the social component of hierarchy creates the expectation of futility (categorization of the issue) and normalizes pacifist behaviour (distribution of pressures to maintain the status quo).

Coleman argues that supplemental hierarchies give empowered actors the opportunity for upward mobility by increasing their influence over other hierarchies, giving them a more significant say in the overall process of decision making. As seen through the lens of PTT, states want to spread the sphere of their influence. The more contemporaries a state can influence directly affects its ability to pursue its policy goals; its power. The greater an actor's share of power within a hierarchy determines the degree its preferences will shape the hierarchy through a process of categorization and distribution, therefore setting the hierarchies boundaries. This process is evident at a regional level. Lemke attempts to define a region in terms of military reach. However, this measure is an arbitrary categorization. Theoretically, a region can be as big or as small as desired, embedded within many other hierarchies so long as states can interact, so when does one draw a distinction? Rather than creating a formulaic but arbitrary definition of a region, it would be more accurate to consider the words and signals of actors in a given geographic location to see how they themselves arbitrarily categorize the boundaries of different regions.

An empowered actor may erect a new supplemental hierarchy in its favour, though the layered hierarchy theory would suggest most new hierarchies will not fundamentally challenge the dominant hierarchy. It is likely that actors from the dominant hierarchy are also embedded in supplemental hierarchies, cementing further reproduction of inequalities and limits opportunities for the disadvantaged.⁷² A general recognition of a hierarchy (or region) formalizes the salience of that hierarchy and the opportunity for upward mobility that comes from controlling it. Once more, hierarchies reproduce inequalities, hence sustaining themselves through a process of categorization and distribution. Aside from categorizing the region, the boundaries between a regional and global matter must be drawn.

⁷² Ibid, p. 321.

Lemke's examples of South America and the Middle East regions highlight the difference when applied to PTT. In South America, where the great powers have little presence, the regional status quo has been relatively insulated compared to the Middle East. The line between global and regional is more transparent and consequently has behaved as PTT expects, while the Middle East has used those different rules with a distant global power in the US inserting itself as the region's dominant power. Another example might be to conceive the extent American involvement is tolerated in its regional neighbour, Canada. Compared to Middle Eastern states that must allow infringements on their economic and territorial sovereignty, supposedly a norm found within the institution of the global order, it would be unthinkable at present to have the Americans deploy troops into Canada with hostility. With that said, a democratic Canada also challenges the American order with less frequency than the Middle East's autocrats. In this case, both Lemke and Coleman's models would argue that the American foreign policy in the Middle East is an example of a dominant actor inserting itself in another hierarchy to push it towards reinforcing the status quo. Still, even though all regional hierarchies fit within the overarching global order, there are variations as only the truly most preponderant hegemon could be everywhere at once to enforce its standards. At this point, Lemke's conception of a region being limited to the space actors can interact militarily is more relevant. A solid military capacity might be necessary for entry into regions dominated by a dissatisfied state, but a vast geographic distance would expectedly also affect the capacity for cultural interaction between hierarchies, and the degree global norms are socialized. The *West* refers to a geographic area of like-minded nations and not a random smattering across the map.

Figure 1: The International Power Cone

Source: Lemke, "General Understanding," p. 148.

The letters in this image correspond to the many sub-hierarchies and their position in the international system, where *A* represents the dominant structure that the other systems of varying power potential fit within. In this case, the US would represent the dominant power on top of structure *A*.

So, how can regional struggles affect the global order? As Figure 1 shows, regional hierarchies exist within the overarching global hierarchy, supplementing it as

Coleman's model suggests with an unequal distribution of influence. Also, bringing into account uneven growth rates between regions, regional hierarchies give empowered states committed to changing the opportunity for upward mobility within the global hierarchy with a limited equalizing effect. The differential growth rates between regions embody the recurrent notion that the world is moving from the West to the East in light of Asia's economic miracle during the twentieth-century. This study suggests that struggles at the regional level can affect the global order by normatively shifting the regional status quo, which in turn impacts how regional states perceive the global order. Most regional conflicts indeed have little effect on the global order but when regionally located great powers at parity come into conflict, the opportunity for upward mobility brings a dissatisfied state closer to parity with the dominant global state. In regional hierarchies dominated by a globally dissatisfied state, the expectation would be that norms of dissatisfaction in the global order emanate throughout the other actors, posing a potential challenge to the global order. Yet, creating the opportunity to challenge still depends on PTT's fundamental principles of uneven growth rates and parity.

Regional Hierarchy: The Cold War in Southeast Asia

With the field of International Relations being relatively young, only becoming a truly academic field of research in the early and mid-twentieth century, the Cold War has become a watershed event for IR theory.⁷³ A potential nuclear clash between the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union served as the impetus for the balance of power theories on polarity, nuclear deterrence, and more, especially in the backdrop of the hot wars between great powers that preceded the Cold War standoff. A criticism of IR theory has been the lack of attention it pays to minor powers in the international system and their role in setting the global order, a key consideration from Lemke when formulating the multiple hierarchies theory.⁷⁴ A theory such as the traditional form of PTT as defined by Organski might consider the economic growth of the two superpowers, their arms build-ups, and potentially even alliances to conceptualize how the overarching global order is shaped. For example, the Cuban

⁷³ Lemke, "End of the Cold War," 1997.

⁷⁴ Lemke and Werner, "Commitment to Change," p. 237.

missile crisis occurred when the Soviet Union violated norms and unexpectedly attempted to place nuclear weapons within close range of the Americans as a response to American missile deployments in Italy and Turkey. Conventional scholarship focuses on how such a deployment of weapons changes the relative position of power between the superpowers in setting the global order and how that, in turn, changes a state's willingness to cooperate or not.⁷⁵ A less common consideration is how hosting Soviet weapons changed the standing of Cuba within the Caribbean's regional hierarchies. A theory that encompasses both the global and regional systems is necessary.

Another more intriguing Cold War-era regional system that saw more action is in Southeast Asia. By applying the previously conceived layered hierarchy framework, it is possible to demonstrate how regional leadership can influence minor powers' satisfaction with the status quo by emanating norms of dissatisfaction throughout the hierarchy. The Cold War in Southeast Asia is a good test for the layered hierarchy framework because it encompasses two clearly opposed coalitions at or near parity depending on the specific time. Thus, PTT would expect an increased likelihood of conflict and change.⁷⁶ Indeed, there were many challenges to the global status quo within the hierarchies embedded in Southeast Asia. Analyzing a period where there was a definitive challenge to the status quo is a more straightforward task when examining PTT because it allows the application of theory based on actual empirical observations to explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how. However, analyzing a regional hierarchy where there is a definitive challenge instead of when *nothing* happens also lends itself to a confirmation bias that must be accepted as the trade-off for empirical backing.

In the whole of Asia, the evident dominant power during the Cold War was the Soviet Union. As a preeminent nuclear and military power and the second-largest economy globally, it is a relatively intuitive assertion to place the Soviets as the region's dominant power. After experiencing rapid growth, the Soviet economy reached 58 percent of America's GNP at its economic peak in 1975 but came no closer to reaching

⁷⁵ Robert Jervis, "Realism, Game Theory, and Cooperation," *World Politics*, 40, no. 3 (1988): p. 330.

⁷⁶ Kim Woosang, "Power Transition and Strategic Stability in Southeast Asia," *Asian Perspective*, 21, no.1 (1997): pp. 153-170.

economic parity with the Americans.⁷⁷ However, the Soviet defence effort still outpaced the Americans, ensuring they remained a formidable force globally in terms of PTT's conception of relative power.⁷⁸ The Soviets, like the Americans, worked to spread their political influence across the international system. The Soviets sought to spread influence through directly incorporating neighbouring states into the union, perhaps the ultimate form of regional influence, but their greatest ideological success was exporting communism to China, although it was a success that would have practical consequences.

On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a nation with a rich history and the largest population of any country. The origins of the communist revolution were dissatisfaction with the nationalist's domestic status quo, but success cannot be separated from the material support Mao received from the Soviets. However, the rise of China into one of the world's preeminent states was not solely due to Soviet action. The Soviets were wary that a rising China would form closer Sino-Japanese relations or, worse yet, Sino-American.⁷⁹ China possessed all the intangibles required to augment power internally with a massive population and as yet untapped room for industrial growth. For this reason, Organski predicted that China would be a global superpower long after the Soviets. Nevertheless, even if a powerful China was an inevitability, the social content that would determine exactly what China was in terms of being nationalistic, mercantile, capitalist, and global satisfaction was still undecided pre-1949. An assertive China was not the optimal scenario for the Soviets, who would have to abandon their strong-arm foreign policy. Still, a strong China was not an altogether bad option either. A communist China gave the USSR a powerful and ideologically-aligned neighbour against the United States. For this reason, Stalin gave military training and loans to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the ongoing civil war in exchange for assurances that both countries would work together to counter a resurgent post-war Japan and American interference.

⁷⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "A Comparison of Soviet and U.S. Gross National Products. 1960-1988." (1999): p. 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Manwoo Lee, "Some Reflections on Soviet Influence in East Asia," *Asian Perspective*, 10, no. 2 (1986): p. 256.

As Mao proclaimed the birth of the PRC, the USSR was the first country in the world to recognize its new neighbour.

In terms of a regional application of PTT, a rising China would eventually possess the potential to challenge the USSR at parity for the top position within the regional hierarchy. However, a communist China also had a greater chance of being more satisfied with the Soviets than the opposing American coalition overall. Indeed, the partnership between the countries was founded on shared values in foreign policy of a weak Japan and an American exit from Asia with shared social values like spreading socialism being a secondary reason for cooperation.⁸⁰ As time went on, the warm early relations of the 1940s would cool dramatically as differences of opinion on Vietnam, Korea, territory in Siberia, and strategy for dealing with the Americans began to supersede converging interests. However, the issues that fundamentally broke down Sino-Soviet relations in the 1950s and into the 60s were previously acknowledged as potential issues even before the Soviets began to display outward support for the CCP. Nevertheless, an industrializing China that shared Soviet dissatisfaction with the American status quo would do more to boost the relative power of the Soviets than a staunchly pro-American China.

As China's civil war continued post-WW2, the Soviets directly intervened more than the United States. From a global strategic perspective, their position as the regionally dominant power across Asia and physical neighbor to China, the USSR had an interest in intervening to elevate the positions of insurgent communists. With Mao at the helm of the PRC, it would be almost a sure thing that the Chinese would adhere to the norms emanated from Moscow. Most centrally to the communist movement was the rejection of capitalism and increasingly centralized government. These factors fundamentally oppose an American global order that emphasizes liberal economics. To this end, so long as China remained broadly communist, it would be more likely to conceive itself as better off with the regional status quo proposed by the Soviets than the American-led global order.⁸¹ In fact, it is arguable that China was even more

⁸⁰ Thomas Robinson, "A National Interests Analysis of Sino-Soviet Relation," *International Studies Quarterly*, 11, no. 2 (1967): p. 157.

⁸¹ Ibid.

aggressively anti-American than the Soviets, who were more preoccupied with a physical, instead of a merely ideological, American presence in Korea and Vietnam.

From 1950 to 1964, China grew from almost complete dependence on the Soviets to relative power parity.⁸² The Soviets still possessed a distinct military advantage but the economic growth in China was more significant than other regional economic wonders like Japan. The rapid economic growth China has experienced during the mid-twentieth century to the present is a crucial reason Organski forecasted China would be the larger long-term threat to American dominance because wealth can be quickly turned into military might.⁸³ Despite approaching parity, a major Sino-Soviet conflict would not have been in the interests of the Chinese because knocking down the Soviets would have also meant an increased position of power for the American-Japanese alliance in the region.⁸⁴ Though Sino-Soviet relations certainly became strained as China reached parity, the norm of a communist government (or at least not a capitalist democracy) was enough to assure either side they were *better off* with their neighbour than the alternative. It was not that war was impossible between the two countries. As China reached parity, its ability to push the Soviets on certain issues like territory and supremacy in the southeast of the continent was expected as its position in hierarchical decision-making increased. The difference between the Soviet-Sino issues and the tensions with the American-Japanese alliance is that a war between China and the Soviet Union would have still maintained the status quo regardless, any changes only occurring within it. For example, if either side managed to crush the other in a war, it would have been unlikely they would install a democratic government. Instead, it would be a matter of installing their brand of communist (if regime change was elected in the first place). By contrast, the Americans as evident by their activities in the rest of the continent would have an interest in completely changing the regime's core principles if given the opportunity.

With the rapid increase of the PRC, the normal state of Asia shifted from strict Soviet oversight, including within Chinese affairs, to an arrangement that saw the Soviets focus their influence on Europe and the Middle East and reluctantly concede a

⁸² Ibid., p. 163.

⁸³ Organski, *World Politics*, p. 446.

⁸⁴ Kim, "Southeast Asia," p. 156.

position of dominant influence over Southeast Asia to China. The changing status quo in the region represents China's upward mobility across regional hierarchies embedded in Asia. Even though China would inherit the normalized dissatisfaction against the American order from the Soviets, both governments had conflicting interests that they sought to realize all the same. To do so, it was necessary to spread influence, and a weakened political environment in the south of Asia was an appetizing region to control.

In April 1954, President Eisenhower made the most famous articulation of the so-called domino theory.⁸⁵ It was clear that the Americans feared that if minor powers in Southeast Asia fell to the dissatisfied communist powers, the aftermath could have an effect wherein the entire region ideationally shifts to maintain reasonable security and trade relations for struggling post-war economies.⁸⁶ Domino theory has been criticized as ideological in the post-Cold War era because countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos "fell like dominoes," although most of the threatened nations did not.⁸⁷ However, communist insurgencies persisted across Southeast Asia well into the 1980s in countries like Malaysia, Burma, and the Philippines. Although at face value, domino theory appears to lack evidence, an empirical investigation by Leeson and Dean has found that democratic dominos do fall when their neighbours experience democratic regressions, though on a much smaller scale than articulated by Eisenhower.⁸⁸ Falling dominos only catch about 11 percent of the change experienced by their neighbours. The authors, therefore, concluded that changes within regimes do have a tangible impact on regional counterparts. This notion that neighbouring states will *catch* a certain amount of their regional counterparts' democratic progression/regression exemplifies the argument that norms can emanate across entire hierarchies, though with the understanding that the degree of internalization is more tempered than promulgated by the Eisenhower administration. Furthermore, the domino theory example also places minor powers in the context of intense bipolarity where they are heavily pushed to pick a side. Under

⁸⁵ Dwight Eisenhower, press conference, 7 April 1954.

⁸⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Indochina, Volume XIII*, (Washington: Office of the Historian, 1954): document 716.

⁸⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, "The Domino Theory Revisited: The Southeast Asia Perspective," *War & Society*, 19, no.1 (2001): p. 113.

⁸⁸ Peter Leeson and Andrea Dean, "The Democratic Domino Theory: An Empirical Investigation," *American Journal of Political Science*, 53, no. 3 (2009): pp. 533-551.

multipolarity where there are more alternatives, it is not just the case that democratic progression alone can be studied to understand change as the embedded order is inherently more stratified.

The stark power disadvantage between China and its regional counterparts was huge. While economic data from Cold War-era Asia is spotty, China's GDP in 1960 was reported at \$59 billion in current 2021 USD, powered by a massive population of over half a billion people.⁸⁹ In comparison, the Philippines had a GDP of only \$7.5 billion, and the likes of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Indonesia all had GDPs well under \$3 billion with populations that even combined today do not begin to approach the mass of China.⁹⁰ GDP is, however, an imperfect measurement of a state's power but the two are indeed connected and this example helps to conceptualize the drastic disparity between regional players in Southeast Asia at that time. Whatever measure that could be used to estimate power, the actions of the states in China's proximity demonstrate that these states understood the asymmetries in power and acted accordingly to preserve their standing with the prospective regional hegemon. Especially in the early years following World War II, the Americans were in a clear position of hegemony that allowed them to install what is recognized today as the American liberal international order. According to Woosang Kim's analysis using the Correlates of War capability index, the United States remained the most militarily capable state in Southeast Asia even in 1974 at the Soviet Union's height of power.⁹¹ Despite the capability to act in Southeast Asia, the vital question for minor regional powers was if and how the Americans would use that capability.

Revisiting one of the primary variables in PTT, satisfaction captures a state's feelings towards the status quo and whether they feel better off with the alternative. Being satisfied does not necessarily mean that a state is entirely dazzled by the current arrangement, thus the need to understand how regional powers influence the local hierarchy. The Sino-Soviet relationship is an example of a country rising through a power transition and accepting the status quo by categorizing itself in a manner deemed acceptable by the hierarchy. Though the PRC and the Soviets had

⁸⁹ World Bank National Accounts, and OECD National Accounts data files, "GDP (Current \$US)," (2020).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Kim, "Stability in Southeast Asia," p. 164.

disagreements, their satisfaction with the regional status quo stemmed from categorizing each other as their communist neighbour (otherwise meaning dissatisfaction with the global order). Variations in what the regional order should look like, for instance, the divisions about each state's involvements in North Vietnam and Korea, fit within the hierarchy's communist norm.⁹²

Further to the South, regional competition was between China and the US, rather than the Soviets. Many states were wary of either Chinese or Soviet involvement after watching the bloodshed from wars in Laos and Vietnam but were also skeptical of American commitment in the region or if they wanted help following a recent history of Western colonization. Cambodia employed a strategy that preyed on American domino fears by outwardly threatening to ally with China if they did not receive aid toward Viet and Thai aggression.⁹³ While the Cambodian leader Prince Sihanouk himself was not a communist, he was quoted in 1964 as saying, "someday we will have to accept it because we will be unable to avoid it."⁹⁴ After seemingly accepting the new norm, Sihanouk was deposed six years later, and Cambodia succumbed to the new normal in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge took power with aid from the Chinese Communist Party.

The normalization of communism also occurred in Burma (now Myanmar). The Burmese expressed concerns about Chinese infringement on their sovereignty while suffering several communist insurgencies throughout the 1950s but straddled a line of neutrality over alliance with the United States to avoid tensions with the much closer China.⁹⁵ Due to the geographic advantages of China, the communist presence persisted and strengthened as Burma experienced an economic downturn. Out of necessity and without economic incentives from the American alternative, Burma began to trade with communist states to sell surplus rice while gradually slipping into the communist sphere of influence.⁹⁶ In a similar situation, Thailand also pursued a neutral policy due

⁹² Robinson, "Sino-Soviet Relations," p. 137.

⁹³ Guan, "Southeast Asia Perspective," p. 114.

⁹⁴ as cited in Elizabeth Becker, "Sihanouk and the Saga of the Khmer Rouge," *The Washington Post*, January 28, 1979. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1979/01/28/sihanouk-and-the-saga-of-the-khmer-rouge/3c2883f1-8778-4489-a177-665b4553c9c5/>.

⁹⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, East Asia and the Pacific, Volume XII*, Washington: Office of the Historian, 1953: document 37.

⁹⁶ Guan, "Southeast Asia Perspective," p. 118.

to a noted skepticism of both communist and capitalist blocs.⁹⁷ However, the US showed a more robust commitment towards the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, an organization of states to contain communist expansion in the region created by the American global order.⁹⁸ Bangkok's strong support of SEATO indicated it was in favour of a regional order that subscribed to American norms over the Soviet alternative.

Still, Bangkok was careful not to be overly friendly with the Americans for fear it could backfire due to US inattentiveness in the region and the Thai inability to stave off communist aggression themselves.⁹⁹ Although the Thai state was a domino that did not fall, the quiet dealings with the US, such as becoming the "undercover" base of US operations, are signals that the government was hedging against a reality where communism became the regional norm.¹⁰⁰ Indonesia's government during the 1950s was similarly positioned against the communist bloc and employed its military to quell aggression from potential insurgents. But Indonesia gradually realized that necessity would force the two parties together if the domino theory were correct. In stark contrast to the 1950s, Indonesian President Sukarno even expressed sympathy for communist movements in Vietnam and Laos to US president John F. Kennedy when they met.¹⁰¹

The outlier within the entire region was the Philippines, which remained a steadfast opponent of the communist bloc. However, the Philippines also benefitted from the closest ties with the US and a mutual defence treaty from 1951 (later included in SEATO). By 1960, the Philippines had the largest economy outside of China in Southeast Asia, doubling its immediate neighbours in output.¹⁰² Though it paled in comparison to China or the US, the larger economy of the Philippines is an indication the country's ability to augment power internally, supplemented by external

⁹⁷ Ibid, 115.

⁹⁸ SEATO, "Manila Pact and Pacific Charter," accessed from: Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. President's Office Files. Subjects. SEATO, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/106/JFKPOF-106-017>.

⁹⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Southeast Asia, Volume XIII*, Washington: Office of the Historian, 1963: documents 28-32, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v23/ch1?start=1>.

¹⁰⁰ Guan, "Southeast Asia Perspective," p. 115.

¹⁰¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Policy in Indochina, 1961-1963, vol. XIII*, Washington: Office of the Historian, 1961: document 172, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v23>.

¹⁰² World Bank National Accounts, "GDP (current \$US)."

augmentation through the defense treaty, was greater than that of other regional powers. As a result, the state could better employ its elevated power position to help favourably shape the regional hierarchy.

The domino theory in Southeast Asia exemplifies the idea of emanating norms because every state believed it to be accurate; they would fall like dominos, even without real evidence to support the theory. This encapsulates the intangible side of politics element that this study applies to PTT. Threatened states leveraged the Americans' fears to install themselves as the region's dominant power and quell further communist destabilization of their governments. Many Asian leaders freely spoke about the threat and even inevitability of communism. These are not encouraging words, especially while simultaneously in diplomatic negotiations with the status quo Americans. Eisenhower articulated that the spread of communism was unacceptable, and made quelling the spread a central feature of his administration's foreign policy. States like Thailand that initially sat on the fence ended up needing to be charmed to assure American commitment. Incentives like a leading role in SEATO for a state that otherwise was not in the relative power position to assume such a role are the type of carrots a dominant state can offer that also serve as upward mobility for the recipient minor power. By the same token, it could have been the prominent position of minor powers in decision-making that ultimately led to the American disinterest in SEATO. However, in some instances, like Cambodia or Burma, where offers of American assistance were underwhelming, states chose to subscribe to the norms emanating from the communist bloc and cut ties with the West. The same process occurred between the Soviets and the PRC, where interaction in the more general region of Asia normalized dissatisfaction in a particular area within the larger region. Though the Americans did find support for their liberal status quo in the region, even their closest partners like Thailand expressed concerns about political games— openly criticizing for lack of attention and leaving themselves a potential path for reconciliation with the communist bloc. Foreign relations documents show that American diplomats had to ease Bangkok's anxieties about a lack of military support.¹⁰³ The structure of the local hierarchy impacts the conceptions of its actors. No matter how capable the United States was, the satisfaction of an American status quo in the region would always be tempered by the

¹⁰³ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Southeast Asia, Volume XIII*, Washington: Office of the Historian, 1963. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v23/ch1?start=1>.

perceived lack of support towards allies facing aggression and the geographic advantages a physical presence in the region gave to China's foreign economic and security policies.¹⁰⁴

As Leeson and Dean's study argues, the degree a state *catches* the political changes of its neighbours is likely overstated by domino theory.¹⁰⁵ Yet the growth of the communist bloc certainly had a tangible effect on how states in Southeast Asia categorized their understandings of both capitalist and communist states. In the early 1950s, before China's meteoric rise, the communist vision was a revolutionary ideology that posed a direct threat to the stability of neighbouring regimes and would also hamper any state's involvement in an American global order. Nevertheless, by the 1970s, as the US became increasingly preoccupied with Soviet activity in Europe and as communist governments slowly continued to crop up in the region, the communist movement was increasingly normalized and even seen as a viable alternative due to the economic incentives, as in the case of Burma. Expressions of dissatisfaction with American commitments and fears that states would fall to insurgents preyed on American anxiety (Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Burma). Ultimately this can be seen as minor powers using their leverage to bargain towards a more favourable regional order, despite a lower position within the local hierarchy, by expressing the regionally normalized sentiment of dissatisfaction towards the global order.

Regional Hierarchy- Middle East

The events in the Middle East from the first Gulf War to the present day is a more contemporary example of states augmenting their power to create a more favourable regional status quo. It also illustrates the previously mentioned productive logic of hierarchy: that is, how the hierarchy shapes actors by producing meaning. In particular, this section will pay close attention to the actions of Turkey, which serves as an exception to the rule when trying to understand the long-term regional role of India. Both countries are viewed as critical American allies and key entry points to integrate

¹⁰⁴ Kim, "Southeast Asia Stability."

¹⁰⁵ Leeson and Dean, "Domino Theory," p. 533.

the world into the global order further, held up as bridges from West to East.¹⁰⁶ Due to their central locations and ability to act in numerous regions (in Turkey's case the Balkans, the Caucuses, and the Middle East), both states are local models for further regional integration into the global order as champions of democracy and open markets. However, most importantly, both states act as a counterweight to regional powers, China and Iran, at odds with the United States. Yet, both countries have demonstrated that despite being closely aligned with the American global order, they are not a sure-fire collaborator that will go along with any whim of the Americans and will even be directly at odds with US policy at times.

The Middle East has several major regional powers embedded within it; Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran, and Turkey, with Russia and the US acting as intervening powers. Egypt acted as the local hegemon for most of history, including much of the twentieth century. However, since decolonization and the Islamic Revolution, no power has elevated itself to a level approximating leadership, let alone hegemony (including the United States). This has created a leadership vacuum, setting many of these regional powers into competition with one another, and is one reason why the local hierarchy may look as if it is behaving anarchically, in line with PTT.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, a corollary of the American strategy in the Middle East was to destabilize any one power from reaching a point of hegemony to maintain influence, such as the invasion of Iraq, though the chain reaction has led to the rise of Iran and broad dissatisfaction with the Americans across the region.¹⁰⁸ regional US allies, such as Turkey, were who could put constraints on the exercise of American power, preventing its hegemony.¹⁰⁹ The intense competition between the Middle East's major powers has allowed the minor powers of Qatar, Kuwait, and Syria to push that their interests be considered throughout the decision-making process. The invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the Syrian Civil War are landmark moments that have drawn in many different actors because even the slightest shift can drastically alter the local balance of power.

¹⁰⁶ Ayse Ömur Atmaca, "Turkey-US Relationship: Troubled Partnership in a Troubled World?," eds. Palgrave Macmillan in *Turkish Foreign Policy* (2017): p. 63.

¹⁰⁷ Meliha Benli Altunusik, "Regional Powers in a Transforming Middle East," *IEMeD Conferences* (2014).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Nevertheless, American intervention in the Middle East, while perhaps the primary reason, is not the sole reason for the lack of local leadership. The religious and ethnic context of the Middle East must also be considered. This is not to say that cultural friction within the region was inevitable, but the presence of these differences has certainly hindered leadership opportunities. For instance, although Israel is economically developed and benefits from subscribing to an American-Euro style status-quo, as the religious minority, it is almost unthinkable to see Israel create an order with adequate regional satisfaction that it could achieve the legitimacy of a hegemon. If Israel continues to develop, at a certain point the benefits of aligning with Israel can outweigh the cost of fighting but the ideological disparity will color interactions for centuries or even millennia to come. Secularism is also the minority position in the Middle East. However, it has been Turkey's position since its constitutional introduction in 1928.¹¹⁰ Yet, despite the tradition of secularism, religion has begun to play a more prominent role in Turkish politics since the 1990s when an openly Islamist party was elected to the government. Even more evidence that Turkey has strayed away from secularism is the success of the AKP, which has enjoyed strong support from orthodox Muslims to maintain near-continuous control since its first electoral victory in 2003.¹¹¹ True, the AKP and its leader, Erdogan, are not Islamist but their ability to make Turkey appealing to a broad base of Muslim believers in the Middle East is an important step in cementing Turkish leadership.

It is also exceedingly difficult to foresee a non-Arab state rise to a level of hegemony, which in theory excludes states such as Turkey and Iran. The unfortunate nature of the situation dictates that both states are the most capable (Turkey) and most willing (Iran), as Saudi Arabia appears content to allow the US to dominate. This has led to ineffective regional organization leadership such as the Arab League's mishandling of a Syrian peace deal.¹¹² Turkey cannot overcome the hurdle of suddenly becoming an Arab country. However, due to their relationship with the US and by bringing forth more pressing and widespread issues for the rest of the Middle East, it has a clear path toward leadership.

¹¹⁰ *Constitution of the Republic of Turkey* (1924): Article 2, amended 1928.

¹¹¹ Atmaca, "Turkey-US Relationship," p. 64.

¹¹² Kim Hua Tan and Alirupendi Perudin, "The "Geopolitical" Factor in the Syrian Civil War: A Corpus-Based Thematic Analysis." *Sage Open: Original Research*. (2019): p. 3.

Turkey joined NATO in 1952, formally committing to the American global order. With that said, Turkey joined NATO in a fiercely bi-polar world at a time before it could safely be called with finality, the Cold War. By 1991 and the first Gulf War, the Cold War was ending with the United States asserting its global dominance. However, the end of the Cold War brought with it the end of a significant push factor towards an American-led status quo. With the overarching global order in arguably its most stable form ever, the end of history, a decidedly more multipolar world emerged.¹¹³

The current state of affairs, aside from being a multipolar system, has seen state activity focused on regional affairs, such as increased regional organizations as IOs embed within the global order. Without the push factor of the Soviet Union, the US now must combat freeloading and direct dissent as states normalize and take for granted stability, reverting their concerns to the things most immediately important to them. Things like territorial security, ocean access, infrastructure, and trade agreements require a physical presence, preferably regional, without international spill-in. Likewise, Turkey has often generated its interests based on distinctly regional rather than global concerns in the light of a leaderless local order. In turn, such actions have sometimes placed Turkey at odds with the global status quo, sporadically appearing to be working against the global order favouring regional interests.

Turkey's dissent in 2002 when the state fervently supported the Iranian nuclear program despite being long-time regional competitors came as a surprise. While a nuclear-armed Iran would likely have been destabilizing to the region and against Turkey's economic interest, forging closer ties with Iran has become a necessity for any country wishing to form regional leadership in the Middle East.¹¹⁴ It is intriguing to see a state risk facing a belligerent and nuclear-armed neighbour and the loss of popular support in the global community. Turkey, a supporter of American military activities throughout the 1990s including a formal alignment with Israel, especially needed to work harder to undo reputational damage among Middle Eastern states. Ankara continued to dissent from the global order favouring the regional hierarchy when it condemned the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 and refused to allow its NATO ally to

¹¹³ Moritz Peiper, "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Iranian Nuclear Programme: In Search of a New Middle East Order after the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 12, no. 3 (2013): p. 183.

¹¹⁴ Altunusik, "Transforming Middle East," p. 3.

deploy troops within its borders.¹¹⁵ The deputy chairman of the ruling AKP, boldly addressing critics arguing that the Turkish government would bend to US pressure, stated, "we are not afraid of any force in the world, let alone the United States."¹¹⁶

Against the backdrop of Turkey's actions to garner closer ties with the explicitly dissatisfied Iran, discussions of EU membership began earlier in 1999. By 2004, formal talks towards the accession of EU membership commenced with several established members showing hostility towards Turkey's membership; hesitations, Erdogan claimed, "show a lack of respect for Turkey's democratization process."¹¹⁷ Establishing membership in the global community's preeminent economic bloc would have given Turkey significant benefits such as access to markets, labour, trade, and more. However, closer ties with a sharply Western regional organization could also have damaged Turkey's reputation in the Middle East, notably in Iran, by signalling that Ankara favoured Europe. Ultimately, the decision would be made for Ankara as the EU chastised the state for slow progress on human and democratic rights, denying membership to the EU.¹¹⁸ Being denied entry into the EU was a significant turning point for Turkey. In 2004, the AKP introduced its "zero problems with neighbours" policy to signify its commitment to greater economic interdependence to foster a more prosperous regional neighborhood.¹¹⁹ Special attention was given to bordering Syria, a close ally of Iran with a sizable Kurd population.

Throughout the Cold War, bipolarity split the Middle East into two dyads; The US, Turkey, and Israel pitted against Russia, Iran, and Armenia.¹²⁰ As a result, Turkey had been one of the few regionally located allies of Israel.¹²¹ However, it has appeared that the zero problems policy has been directed towards forging closer relations with the primarily Arab neighbourhood as Ankara has more harshly criticized the Israelis since the turn of the century. In a stunning betrayal of Israel, Turkey received Hamas

¹¹⁵ Richard Bordeaux and Ambreïn Zaman, "Turkey Rejects US Troops Deployment," *Los Angeles Times* (2003).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ David Gow and Helena Smith, "EU Puts Turkey on Long Road to Accession," *The Guardian* (2004).

¹¹⁸ Nicholas Watts, "MEPs Rebuke Turkey over Reform Ahead of Accession Talks," *The Guardian* (2006).

¹¹⁹ Gencer Ozcan, "Policy of Zero Problems with Neighbors," *European Institute of the Mediterranean* (2012).

¹²⁰ Pieper, "Turkish Foreign Policy," p. 187.

¹²¹ Ibid.

leadership in 2005,¹²² a move that NATO members widely condemned, and some grumblers argued that Turkey should withdraw from NATO to¹²³ The logic for Turkey to do so is in part to satisfy the sympathetic Muslim and Arab base Erdogan needs to maintain a leadership which changes how the state considers its interests. However, acceptance of Hamas by these communities can also be connected to the actions of states like Iran which normalizes radicalization regionally. As a major supporter of Hamas, the upward mobility of Iran changed how the hierarchy produced categories of acceptable regimes and distributed benefits. In the end, the secular state of Turkey accepted theocratic Hamas because the hierarchy distributed the benefits of firm domestic support as well as support from a growing Iran.

Tensions with Israel go hand in hand with a warmer friendship with Iran. However, a worsening relationship with Israel also significantly undermines the American effort to subdue the Middle East and integrate it further into the global order. In 2010, the Obama Administration imposed sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program and support of what they considered as terrorist organizations. In a sign of support for its regional competitor, Turkey, Brazil and Iran signed the *Tehran Declaration*. The joint declaration between three of the globe's most important developing nations affirmed the rights of all parties to research and develop nuclear energy, undermining American policy in the region.¹²⁴ Again, under the leadership of Erdogan, Turkey moved away from the American status quo in favour of working with its neighbours to form a new and stabilizing status quo amongst its regional counterparts. Later that same year, Turkey voted against UN Resolution 1929 to impose further sanctions on Iran. This was the first time Turkey had voted against the United States at the UN Security Council since becoming a NATO member in 1952. Brazil was the only other supporter of Tehran.¹²⁵

The year 2011 marked the beginning of a significant transformation in the Middle East's balance of power as the Arab Spring spread throughout the region, destabilizing every nation it touched. As the Middle East's model for democracy, a

¹²² Atmaca, "Turkey-US Relations," p. 69.

¹²³ Pieper, "Turkish Foreign Policy," p. 187.

¹²⁴ Julian Borger. "Text from the Iran-Brazil-Turkey Deal." *The Guardian* (2010).

¹²⁵ UN Security Council, "Security Council Imposes Additional Sanctions on Iran, Voting 12 in Favour to 2 Against, with 1 Abstention," *Meeting Coverage* (2010).

democratic revolution in Turkey would have positioned it as a clear local leader. However, the last decade had damaged the Turkish-American relationship as Turkey continually demonstrated they were not simply a submissive ally. As such, Washington was not in the mood to favour Turkey, offering little in terms of support. The period immediately preceding the Arab Spring is also seen as the height of Iranian-Turkish relations as a pro-democracy push directly contradicted the interests of Tehran.¹²⁶ Turkey has arguably miscalculated its position in the region without either American or Iranian support, and its standing has declined regionally, compounded by the Turkish policy towards the Syrian Civil War.

From the Iranian perspective, Assad's regime has been a steadfast regional ally that must be preserved. With help from an intervening Russia, Iran has successfully backed Assad, saving his regime from the brink of total collapse to, in 2022, a position that appears he will be able to maintain power. Pro-Assad support from Iran and Russia has been direct and unwavering since the conflict began in 2011.¹²⁷ Alternatively, the coalition of forces working against Assad, including the US, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, have mixed interests in the bloody civil war that has made coordinated efforts all but impossible.¹²⁸ The American presence in Syria is preoccupied with crushing radical jihad groups capitalizing on a lack of governance to set up a base of operations.¹²⁹ In contrast, Turkey is a more reluctant participant drawn into conflict by the necessity of its eastern border with Syria. The primary focus in Ankara has been to deny Kurdish autonomy in the region, which has meant supporting dissident groups fighting for the Muslim Brotherhood with arms and supplies. In comparison, the main concern pertaining to the Islamic State (ISIS) is the possibility of attracting further Western intervention. The brutal campaign to maintain power launched by the Assad regime is of some embarrassment for Turkey, which had seriously improved relations with the zero problems policy to the point Ankara felt they could pressure the Syrian government to gradually reform.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Peiper, "Turkish Foreign Policy," p. 188.

¹²⁷ Tan and Perudin, "Syrian Civil War," p. 4

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Eric Clary, "Using the Syrian Civil War to Measure Hierarchy: Regional Power Transition in the Middle East," *Portland State University Dissertations and Theses* (2018).

¹³⁰ Tan and Perudin, "Syrian Civil War," p. 3.

Turkish involvement places Ankara at odds with Tehran while not entirely aligning itself with American policy. Despite being one of the more capable states in the region, Turkey's inability to solve the social puzzle necessary to ascend to hierarchical dominance has hindered its regional relations. It is worth mentioning, however, that the Turkey-Iran relationship has not been destroyed, as Iranian President Rouhani expressed support for Erdogan after a failed coup attempt in 2016.¹³¹ One country in which the civil war has caused a rapprochement of relations with Turkey is Russia. Russia, like Iran, views Syria as an important transit route to send its oil to European buyers and has taken the steps it can, even projecting its military power, to the point where Russia now has a verifiable stake as an actor within the Middle East regional hierarchy.¹³² Some PTT scholars have even projected that a declining Russia will begin to increasingly focus its foreign policy on the Middle East after a decline in relative position globally post-USSR.¹³³ With mutual interests in stabilizing Syria, Russia, Iran, and Turkey agreed to the *Astana Agreement*, supporting the formulation of a monitoring framework that could enforce a ceasefire by establishing de-escalation zones.¹³⁴

With its entry into the Syrian Civil War, Russia cemented itself as the region's preponderant power. Following close behind are Iran and Turkey, approximately at parity.¹³⁵ Iran clearly sides with Russia's desire to alter the status quo in order to keep Western involvement to a minimum, although Turkey remains in an odd purgatory where it is not entirely clear how the state will proceed. Formally an American ally and NATO member, the actions of Turkey, such as its recent purchase of s-400 missiles from Russia against NATO's wishes, have called Ankara's membership in the alliance into question.¹³⁶ In the face of increasingly authoritarian domestic practices that have drawn warnings from the West, Turkey's continued signs of dissatisfaction could be a sign Ankara prefers Russian/Iranian ambivalence over an American status quo.¹³⁷

Once a steadfast, even submissive, ally of the United States and the Western powers in the 1990s, Turkey's membership in the EU would firmly attach it to the

¹³¹ Reuters Staff, "Regional Rival Iran Expresses Support for Turkey After Coup Attempt," *Reuters* (2016).

¹³² Clary, "Power Transition in the Middle East," p. 64.

¹³³ Ibid. Tammen *et al.*, "Power Transition Theory," p. 17.

¹³⁴ "Syrian Civil War: All You Need to Know About the Astana Talks," *Al Jazeera* (2017).

¹³⁵ Clary, "Power Transition in the Middle East," p. 65.

¹³⁶ "Erdogan: Turkey Could Buy More Russian s-400 Missiles Despite US Warnings," *Al Jazeera* (2021).

¹³⁷ Clary, "Power Transition in the Middle East," p. 67.

American status quo. However, being embedded into the omnishambles of the Middle East, the nature of the hierarchy has forced Turkey to change its policy to move in line with regional norms.¹³⁸ Like the states of Southeast Asia, Turkey has leveraged both sides to secure more favourable conditions. However, unlike in Asia, it has made signals that show the state feels it is better off with the alternative.¹³⁹ From a theoretical point of view, in terms of the power balance, one would have expected heightened aggression between Iran and Turkey due to their power parity, especially with the American support of Turkey. However, we have seen the exact opposite where Turkey and Iran have formed closer relations and distanced themselves from the global hegemon. Now that Russia has inserted itself as a dissatisfied preponderant power, it would appear unlikely that Turkey would suddenly turn away from a regional hegemon that has demonstrated a willingness to include Ankara in regional decision-making processes, such as the *Astana Agreement*.¹⁴⁰ The hierarchal structure in the Middle East normalizes dissatisfaction with the global status quo by necessitating an anti-American stance to engage with the region's other major powers, Iran and Russia.¹⁴¹ Such norms stem from the region's defining issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the persistent American intervention. Unlike in Southeast Asia, the US was not invited into the region as a mediator, damaging their legitimacy, because the affected states preferred the status quo which did not involve invading Iraq. Many Middle Eastern states are tacitly pro-American, bearing in mind satisfaction is assuming the status quo is better than the alternatives. However, the central importance of Iran in the region means that forging closer ties with the Americans also means accepting Iranian displeasure. Already annoyed (but still theoretically satisfied) with the American's rendition of regional order, the distribution of hierarchical benefits for Turkey that include sour relations with a key regional contender in Iran can quickly change how the state contends with the logic of trade-offs in the hierarchy. Turkey must ask itself if it is worth it to be close to the US if it means constant tensions with its closer neighbour. The recent history of Turkey shows how these norms of dissatisfaction can emanate through

¹³⁸ Clary, "Power Transition in the Middle East," p. 51

¹³⁹ Tan and Perudin, "Syrian Civil War," p. 3.

¹⁴⁰ Osman Tanrikulu and Birol Yesilada, "Regional Power Transition and the Future of Turkey," *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 13, no. 52 (2016): p. 32.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

a regional hierarchy to flip a country once firmly satisfied with the global order to a quasi-dissatisfied state.

The Future of India and China

Finally, what can PPT tell us about the future of India and China? The future is something political science is ill-equipped to deal with yet formulating a theory that can yield accurate predictions has been sought after to bolster the *science* aspect of the field. Nothing brought forward here will change the fact that political scientists (and international relations students) have been and will continue to be terrible forecasters.¹⁴² The goal here will not be to predict the future, at least not in any specific detail. Instead, the aim is to place India and China in a very specific situation of parity beneath a specific global context that can reasonably be foreseen but is not a sure thing. Using theory and evidence from the earlier cases will not derive predictions, but rather general considerations or hypotheses about the future of the India-China relationship. The real value of this project will be using the layered hierarchy framework in combination with regional PTT in an effort to better conceptualize how regional hierarchies interact or even manipulate the global order.

Ultimately, the question is, *if* China and India reach a state of relative power parity within Asia's regional hierarchy, would they come into conflict including war? And secondly, how would their conflict affect the global order? This section will proceed by listing some key assumptions about the future, namely India-China parity and a bipolar global environment. These assumptions essentially act as the canvas on which theory can be applied to form a framework of possible conclusions. The supplemental character of regional hierarchies to the global order gives states an incentive to promote their position regionally to simultaneously grant upward mobility in global decision-making. Based on theory, there is a strong argument that India (positioned as a swing state in the bi-polar US-China order) will be more heavily influenced by the actions of China within the local hierarchy than external pressures from the United States because regional interests usually involve those things most

¹⁴² Philip Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* (Princeton N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005).

immediately important to a state such as territorial integrity, trade opportunities, and cultural movements. Thus, India is faced with an assortment of pull and push factors towards China to either conform or challenge with or without the help of the United States.

The first assumption about the future, and a necessary one to make PTT applicable, is that India and China reach parity. India has been overshadowed by the growth of China to the point where the mainstream discourse has undervalued the country's prospects as a global leader within 100 years of its decolonization. Like China, India has experienced a *power transition* that has allowed the country to rapidly industrialize to better augment its power. However, as PTT stipulates, there are different growth rates between nations. China had a head start opening its economy to the world in 1978 and averaged about 10 percent average GDP growth per year in the time since.¹⁴³ Still recoiling from decolonization, India did not begin to reform and open its economy until the 1990s averaging 5.5 percent growth in the decade after and about 7 percent since the 2000s.¹⁴⁴ The growth of China has surely been more meteoric than that in India, but growth cannot continue forever and already there are signs that the Chinese economic growth is beginning to slow. Over the past decade, both economies have grown at similar rates, with India even growing faster in 2015 and 2016. Still, the Chinese economy is nearly five times the size, but that gap can quickly shrink. If current trends continue, estimates guess India will be at economic parity with China somewhere between 2050 and 2075.¹⁴⁵

Just as the PTT predicts, both states have been able to turn their economic growth into military power. As it stands today, both rank number two and three in the world in terms of annual military expenditure. However, there is a significant gap between the two, with the larger China, understandably spending more than double that of India in 2019 (\$72.9bn to \$252bn USD).¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, India has, as long as the record shows, spent a considerably higher percentage of its GDP on the military due to conflicts with

¹⁴³ World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Tammen *et al.*, "Power Transition Theory."

Amit Gupta, "US, India, China: Assessing Tri polarity," *China Report*, 42, no.1 (2006): pp. 69-83.

¹⁴⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2019 Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security.

other countries. The most recent data from 2020 shows that India spent a full percentage point more than China (1.7 percent to 2.8 percent)— which is still far less than America's 3.7 percent.¹⁴⁷ In the case of the Americans, one thing that must keep its military leaders up at night is the thought of fighting a protracted land battle with the Chinese in the event of a Taiwanese invasion. The enormous, though aging, population of China means the CCP has a large body of people to draw from to bolster what is already the largest standing military in the world with 2.7 million members.¹⁴⁸ As Russia demonstrated in the Napoleonic and World Wars, even a technological and strategic disadvantage can be overcome if enough human suffering is thrown at the problem. The second largest military in the world is of course India, with the second largest population overall. The interesting difference between India's and China's populations is that India's is much younger and still growing to the point where it will surpass China within this decade according to the UN.¹⁴⁹ The economic aspects aside and not to be understated, what this means is that India is perhaps the only country on earth that could equal China in manpower. On the other hand, it is deeply disturbing that two belligerent states powered by two-fifths of humanity could go head-to-head within this century. Not to mention both possess the ultimate equalizer of nuclear weapons.

The qualitative aspects of power alluded to earlier are hard enough to understand in real-time, let alone project long term. In terms of political efficiency, the ability of either state to facilitate cooperation with the domestic population long-term is uncertain. The CCP is an oppressive government, but at the same time, there is an indication that mainland Chinese fully, even fiercely support their government. Across the border, India's stratified ethnic reality is both a great treasure and the bane of its existence. The Indian government has dealt with repeated insurgencies that threaten its internal legitimacy, particularly in the northeast. On either side of the two-level game, both states must maximize their utility on the diplomatic side of political efficiency. Neither China nor India uses diplomacy in the same way as the US, hesitant to formally

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Martin Armstrong, "The Largest Militaries in the World," *Statista* (2021), <https://www.statista.com/chart/20403/largest-militaries-in-the-world-active-manpower/>.

¹⁴⁹ UN. "Global Issues: Population," <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/population>.

align, but forced into a game of geopolitics to preserve resources and security.¹⁵⁰ China's Three Gorges Dam and the future of water politics between India and China is another wrinkle to this story. India's close ties with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the US would appear to mean the balance of regional ally support favors India long term, but one wonders how firm the support from one of these countries would be on its own if the US did not commit military support if India itself requested assistance. However, Chinese support from regional powers like Russia, North Korea, and Pakistan does not amount to the same levels of either military or economic support as Indian allies.¹⁵¹ With all this said and accepting a large margin for error, it is evident that an assumption of future parity between India and China is reasonable.

The second assumption is that bipolarity between the US and China will intensify as China's rise continues and the US declines. Perhaps it is a bias towards Cold War dyadic thinking that is steeped throughout IR, but China has been anointed as the next challenger to American supremacy.¹⁵² If China is recognized as a challenger, then it follows that they are dissatisfied with the global status quo and would seek to alter it, though it does not follow this includes war just the same as the Cold War. Bipolarity is a necessary assumption because, for the components of Coleman's constructivist framework to function properly, it must be framed with social context. Incentives often exist abstractly as a form of political capital. For instance, despite its name, SEATO had relatively few Southeast Asian countries as members: only Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand. The Philippines and Thailand were the first two of America's closest allies then received a larger share in decision-making over regional order, despite the organization's overall ineffectiveness. In context, it is possible to understand how normative incentives shape layers of hierarchies to either supplement or supplant the global order.

Assuming India and China will reach parity within a bipolar global order gives PTT the necessary social context. Additionally, a great deal has been said about the

¹⁵⁰ David Scott, "The Great Power 'Great Game' between India and China: 'The Logic of Geography'," *Geopolitics*, 13, no.1 (2008): pp. 1-26.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 6.

¹⁵² Evelyn Goh, "Hierarchy and the Role of the United States in Southeast Asian Security Order," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 8 (2008): p. 353.
Gupta, "Tri polarity."

Cold War global order including by those authors referenced here. With greater assurance on how a bipolar global order will function in the future, the global order will be taken as a given so attention can focus on changes in the regional hierarchy. One concession is that framing the future in a bipolar world will sway India towards a side rather than electing to take its own route as a new superpower. However, if bipolarity is seen as a reasonably assumed condition of the future, then it is only logical that India will move towards a side that best protects its interests in the time before it reaches superpower status. Especially seeing the international arena as a bargaining process, breaking off to form a new pole in an intensely bipolar world poses a low return on investment.

Theoretical Sketch

The most important component of PTT is that a challenge to the status quo depends on the variables of relative power and satisfaction. What is understood from Lemke's work is that local hierarchies function in a manner conceptually equivalent to the overarching global hierarchy and that great powers can intervene to alter regional conflicts. The assumption is that power parity between India and China is treated as a given, thus the task becomes understanding how committed to change India will be at parity in order to determine the likelihood of conflict. The second issue to consider is the role of the United States, the global leader for the foreseeable future and currently an Indian ally. The future of the Asian order is contingent on the American presence in the region, especially if China challenges it globally.

Global powers will, at certain times, insert themselves into local orders.¹⁵³ The rule governing whether the dominant power becomes involved understandably depends on if regional events threaten global order. To this end, the US has made its presence felt by signing defense pacts on every continent except Africa (NATO, the Rio Treaty, the Australia, New Zealand, US Security Treaty (ANZUS), and multiple bilateral agreements in Asia). However, to date, no such agreement has been signed with India despite rekindling interest in 2017 to renew the quadrilateral security dialogue with Japan and Australia, centered around rules-based Indo-Pacific security

¹⁵³ Lemke, *Regions of War*.

ostensively, but implicitly looking at countering China.¹⁵⁴ Many of America's most famous foreign policy decisions essentially amount to the state forcibly inserting itself into the regional order. In South Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Syria the US has acted against locally manifesting communist and Islamist movements that were categorized as a threat to global order. For example, it was not the mere presence of disorder or altruism that attracted the Americans to these regions, as Africa has experienced similar violence and disorder that has spread across state borders along with human rights violations under the current order and the US has not intervened.

The US intervention is intuitively most heavy-handed where the status quo is most threatened. Saddam's Iraq threatened the global oil regime and thus the economic status quo as an extension by invading Kuwait in 1991.¹⁵⁵ The claims behind the 2003 intervention that Iraq was exporting terrorism and developing nuclear weapons are unsubstantiated but still offer useful contemplative insights.¹⁵⁶ Firstly, if the US government believed Iraq was proliferating nuclear weapons or exporting terror, then it is evident how an invasion in the Middle East could serve to protect the global status quo, by physically removing the threat. After the first Gulf War, the Ba'athist regime was clearly categorized as an enemy of the status quo, and, following Wendt's logic that "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the Americans than 5 North Korean," a nuclear Iraq could not be tolerated at any cost, especially a state exporting terror in the wake of 9/11.¹⁵⁷ However, the findings that these claims were false have led to speculation of a false flag operation with other intentions, specifically oil and fortifying America's structural position by destabilizing Iraq (even though it has empowered Iran).¹⁵⁸ If it is true that Iraq's WMDs were a false flag, then the invasion shows the softer side of power, in that even the globe's most dominant state cannot simply insert itself into a region without adequate justification for fear of damaging its legitimacy. In Cold War Southeast Asia, the Americans were invited in by states fearful of the North. Still, the bloodshed in Iraq has damaged the American reputation globally

¹⁵⁴ David Envall, "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: Towards an Indo-Pacific Order?," (2019): p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Buzzanco, "How did Iraq and the United States Become Enemies?," *History News: George Washington University* (2003).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security*, 20, no. 1 (1995): p. 73.

¹⁵⁸ Raymond Hinnebusch, "The US Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications," *Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 16, no.3 (2007): pp. 212-213.

which has, in turn, affected other states' understanding of the global order. Is a state better off with the global order if its leader can arbitrarily intervene militarily? Turkey's opposition and subsequent movement from firm satisfaction to apprehensiveness shows that states will move away from the global order if they are ignored in decision-making or if the regional locale offers a better opportunity.

Coleman's framework attempts to understand the problem of how a supplemental hierarchy can offer upward mobility in setting the primary decision-making structure. Whereas PTT leans on the positionality of actors to understand their trade-off calculations and explain how changes occur, the supplemental hierarchy framework considers the relationship between layers of hierarchy and how they use categorization to legitimize the distribution of resources as a means of reproducing hierarchy.¹⁵⁹ The combination of a productive logic of hierarchy with a logic of positionality and trade-offs creates a more robust theory of international hierarchy.¹⁶⁰

The framework is founded on the premise that normative categories influence the distribution of goods that incentivize disadvantaged actors to scheme a new supplemental structure to their benefit. A hierarchy is productive in that it can produce actors and the political environment they operate in. The social construction of borders is one site where constructivist academics have had success advancing their theories.¹⁶¹ The boundaries of a region are one such thing that is produced through regional and global hierarchies. For example, Europe was once at the apex of the global order (in the view of Europe) even though they were aware of other people for millennia. Once colonialism began, it forced the upper echelons of European powers to branch outward for fear of falling behind even if they did not want to. The Americas had always existed as a physical fact, but a society that is unaware cannot act upon it. Likewise, Africa has often been treated as a single region in mainstream dialogue in a way similar to South America. After decolonization, many states remained under the thumb of colonial powers or were too weak to make a consequential difference in the global order. It is my observation that specific regions within Africa have continued to be more formally recognized such as North Africa, the Horn of Africa, West Africa, and so on and that

¹⁵⁹ Coleman, "UN Peacekeeping," p. 319.

¹⁶⁰ Mattern and Zarakol, "Hierarchies in World Politics," p. 643.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 641.

this also coincides with dissatisfied groups and political instability threatening the continuation of the global order. In a continent that was once wholly unthreatening, widespread but particular issues have pressured states outside Africa to accept different regional structures. Formal recognition is one step along a path of upward mobility because it is necessary to hold influence. Asia has also seen its boundaries expanded as Australia continually pressures American allies to include them in regional decision-making as they become ever more economically integrated with other regional players.¹⁶²

What the supplemental hierarchy framework does not allow, albeit an obvious characteristic of hierarchical structures, is a change in the primary structure of order. To put it another way, supplemental hierarchies can facilitate a change *in* the regime but not a change *of* the regime. Lemke also argues that local hierarchies cannot change the global. The expectation is that global powers will intervene to quell the spread of dissatisfaction, such as the US in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, in what the supplemental hierarchies framework sees as bargaining over decision-making capabilities.¹⁶³ The equalizing effect of upward mobility in layered regional hierarchies can uncover a path to fundamentally changing the overarching global order. Dissatisfied regional powers normalize dissatisfaction with global order as an expression of regional approval, as in the case of the spread of communist states in Asia or exporting radical Islamist movements in the Middle East. To rise to a position of global leadership, a state must first be the master of its neighborhood, otherwise, another state is inherently above it. In other words, it would be a contradiction within the theory for a hegemon to reside in a regional order with which it is dissatisfied. So, in a manner conceptually equivalent to the global system, a dissatisfied regional actor can make efforts to normalize its grievances with the status-quo and reward other states that cooperate in the realization of a new one. The Turkey-Iran relationship exemplifies both states converging in protests against the United States, with Turkey moving more in line with the Islamic status-quo in the region preferred by Iran, a rising challenger. Minor regional powers participate in the decision-making process by either cooperating

¹⁶² Frances Mao, "How Dependent is Australia on China?," *BBC News* (2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-52915879>.

¹⁶³ Coleman, "UN Peacekeeping," p. 320.

or rejecting the proposed status-quo, though *cooperation* can be the result of coercion as in the case of Burma.

To this end, a new global order grows from a regional beginning to subsume other regions in the world. One concession is that such a conclusion is based purely on a logical abstraction from a theoretical basis. In fact, the only example is the switch from the British to the American order, which supports Coleman's idea that hierarchy seeks to reproduce itself, noting the clear continuation of British principles during American dominance. However, the transition from British to American hegemony is the sole example of a change of any sort under a truly global order. Yet evident by the impacts of the domino theory of foreign policy, the Americans, the Chinese Communist Party (CPC), and Southeast Asian states clearly believed the communist order posed a credible threat to the status quo. The likes of Mearsheimer argue that a true global hegemon is unlikely today, let alone in the early 19th century.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, there is only truly a sample of one to judge, and its context is so non-analogous to the proposed transition that it has little value. Even though it is an argument based on abstraction, how else would a future state with the means and desire to change the global order go about it? There are physical determinants, but the global order itself amounts to a transnational societal phenomenon of mutually understood norms and behaviors. Like other transnational movements, for example, the spread of Christianity into pagan Europe, the movement begins in a specific place and moves outward. Rejecting a new order can grow from a specific locale and would otherwise only leave the options that the hierarchy cannot fundamentally change or can only change by an instant spontaneous shift, both of which are suspect solutions.

India's Options

To ascend into a position of global leadership, India must first focus on helping to create a regional order in which it feels satisfied. Of course, India could elect not to follow anyone's leadership even if it has the means to do so. The American age is often referred to as "empire by invitation" because the Americans have often been invited into

¹⁶⁴ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, Norton & Company: 2001): p. 1.

regions to provide security, just like in SEATO in Southeast Asia.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, America was born out of a spat with Europe, and expressed fondness for isolationist policies, looking outward only at the behest of their European kin suffering the horrors of two world wars. Similarly, India has a long pacifist history where wars of conquest outside of the Indian subcontinent have been remarkably uncommon.

During the Cold War, India's foreign policy was cemented in a self-help non-alignment approach that was distrustful of outsiders. From here, India has garnered a reputation for being non-committal when working with other states.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the first Gulf War forced India to empty its reserves preemptively fearing a steep rise in oil prices and subsequently causing a revision of international economic policy to fix the onset of a fiscal crisis.¹⁶⁷ Time has restored the international community's trust in India, and closer economic ties help to express intentions of continued cooperation. Today it is accepted that India is a de facto nuclear power whereas in the past it has been a serious point of contention.

The 1998 nuclear tests that damaged Japan-India relations have been forgotten. Now, both states are forging closer bilateral ties due to shared concerns over China's influence in the region in what is speculatively a hedge against stress the American security order will come under in the future.¹⁶⁸ The 2008 *Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation* between the two countries was the first of its kind signed by India with any nation. Positionality means that it is not expected that India would currently be expressing a desire for global leadership, but its industrialization and expanded capacities do coincide with increasing interest in regional decision-making. Additionally, its neighbours have shown new receptiveness by asking India to be included in ASEAN plus six along with Australia and New Zealand (which China vehemently opposed). Modi has been purposefully more willing to engage with the regional and international community, which represents a clear outward shift in foreign

¹⁶⁵ Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952," *Journal of Peace Research*, 23, no. 3 (1986): pp. 263-277.

¹⁶⁶ Sumit Ganguly and Manjeet Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy." *India Review* 8, no. 1 (2009): pp. 4-19.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁸ Yogesh Joshi and Harsh Pant, "Indo-Japanese Strategic Partnership and Power Transition in Asia," *Indian Review* 14, no. 3 (2015): pp. 312-329.

policy.¹⁶⁹ For now, India focuses on the regional order it is embedded within, but his decisions now could allow future Indian leaders to think even grander.

Alternatively, India could seek to forge its own order, creating an Asian multipolarity. However, the assumption that bipolarity between the Americans and the Chinese makes this future unlikely. In Cold War Southeast Asia, the threatened states were not enthralled with either side but elected to become friendly with the US expecting it to better serve their interests. A more analogous example in Turkey shifted away from the American status quo as pull factors from the Cold War subsided and the necessity of cooperation was nullified. It is arguable that the Cold War or an otherwise intensely bipolar environment poisons the order against multipolarity because it sets the cost of branching out too high. Without the military power from being a global hegemon to act unilaterally, India would need to pry allies from China and the US to realize a favorable order. This point is exactly why it was necessary to consider the social context of India-China parity.

The assumption is that India will go through its power transition under bipolarity, and two clear reward structures will emerge as paths to move higher in regional and global decision-making. As either the US or China increases the pressure to pull a potential kingmaker in India to their vision of regional order, taking the more desirable deal, one that could offer a multitude of things like economic incentives, technology, organizational control, territory, and more, is exactly what *upward mobility* seeks to encompass. Along these lines, if regional concerns must come before great power politics, then the deal offered by the regionally embedded China will hold more weight in Indian trade-off calculations. In support, the largest grievance India has with either power is the territorial disputes with China, which close ties with America set on weakening China is best suited to resolve.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, it is appropriate to understand India's options as push and pull factors toward China.

¹⁶⁹ Derek Grossman, "Modi's Foreign Policy Juggling Act," *Foreign Policy* (2021), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/04/modi-india-china-pakistan-geopolitics/>.

¹⁷⁰ Joshi and Pant, "Indo-Japanese Partnership," p. 315.

Pull Factors to China

The geo-economic opportunities for a partnership between Beijing and New Delhi could create a behemoth unlike any ever seen in the world before. The globe's two most populous neighbours, with burgeoning technology sectors and favorable geography, would immediately move the world to the East after centuries of Western dominance. India and China both share long histories of colonial Europe intervening in their affairs, along with other Asian states. Not a pan-Asiatic nationalism as much as an anti-colonial pride exists throughout Asia the same as in other past colonial holdings. Under strong leadership from India and China, Asia could easily replace the West as the dominant force in the international system based on sheer population. Cultural movements like pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism are relatively young, only emerging in the early twentieth century in response to colonial pressures.¹⁷¹ The Arab movements seemingly came from nowhere to now being some of the biggest drivers of the global and regional relationships in the Middle East. The elements of a similar social movement exist in a more limited form in Asia due to immense ethnic diversity, but the same could be said about Africa where a Garveyian "Africa for Africans" has materialized in organizations like ECOWAS, which aims to take personal responsibility for African affairs or the African Union which has become the protectorate of otherwise conflicting parties it feels are unfairly targeted by the international community and the ICC.¹⁷²

Social phenomena that impact policy cannot be understood by a purely realist theory, and so necessitate a productive understanding of hierarchical structure. Shared experiences, and in turn understanding, are an entry point for cooperation. Looking towards the global order, India and China as BRIC members and leaders of the Global South have expressed mutual criticism of Western-dominated international organizations. Both have claimed organizations like the WTO and IMF are in dire need of democratization to further the position of the South.¹⁷³ A mutually agreed upon regional order where China and India can put aside geopolitical differences is a clear

¹⁷¹ Martin Kramer, "Arab Nationalism: Mistaken Identity," *Daedalus*, 122, no. 3 (1993): p. 185.

¹⁷² Oumar Ba, "International Justice and the Postcolonial Condition," *Africa Today*, 63, no. 4 (2017): pp. 45–62.

¹⁷³ Vincent Wei-Cheng Wang, "Chindia or Rivalry? Rising China, Rising India, and Contending Perspectives on India-China Relations," *Politics Faculty Publications and Presentations*, (2011): p. 456.

path to upward mobility in global decision-making, though this means neither would necessarily emerge as the clear regional power and would likely entail concessions that last as long-term grievances.

However, a Sino-Indian entente against the US remains unlikely. Relations between the two can normalize but irritants that impede clear alignment remain.¹⁷⁴ This solution entails pragmatic management of the relationship much like that between Turkey and Iran where neither side actively seeks a conflict. A pacifist India may align with the United States but use its elevated position to deter war in its own neighborhood. In theory, playing either side off the other can lead to upward mobility as India seeks a better deal, but it would also face the same issues as Turkey where perceptions of a lack of commitment can easily damage its standing and risk shunning by two coalitions simultaneously. Alternatively, the most straightforward reason India might become pulled to China is that despite power parity, India simply lacks the will to challenge Beijing and accepts under coercion the terms set out by a committed China.

Push Factors from China

David Scott writes "globalization has not replaced regionalism, nor has geoeconomics replaced geoeconomics... the stakes are high."¹⁷⁵ Scott's view is that India and China will descend into a game of great power politics where each side continues to try and outdo the other. The immediate security threat posed by China to India ultimately supersedes the ability to align, even if both advocated for similar revisions to the global status quo. From a theoretical basis, the push from China is stronger than the pull factors toward it. PTT says they are pre-disposed to conflict, realism points to a security dilemma between growing militaries, and even a liberal point of view would argue that limited ongoing cooperation is the result of functionalism that would be hampered if China decided to challenge a liberal order.¹⁷⁶

France and England are proof sworn enemies can get along, but the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, more recent, is still a point of embarrassment to India. Additionally,

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 463.

¹⁷⁵ Scott, "Great Game," p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

the war did not solve the territorial disputes which have been an ongoing point of contention, recently amounting to violence. In June 2020, there was a border skirmish that killed 20 Indian and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers; the largest confrontation since the 1962 war. Tensions have remained high and once again, in January 2021, there was a minor faceoff resulting in numerous injuries.¹⁷⁷ Aside from territorial disputes between each other, China has also formed a friendship with Pakistan, something that contradicts India's normative expectations and has been perceived as an attempt to encircle and confine India to the Indian ocean. Even in 1998, after nuclear weapons tests, Indian defense minister George Fernandes was quoted saying "China is and is likely to remain the primary security challenge to India in the medium and long-term . . . the potential threat from China is greater than that from Pakistan and any person who is concerned about India's security must agree with that."¹⁷⁸ Thus, the conditions for a security dilemma are exacerbated by both countries' growth through power transition.

India has reflected its disapproval of China's regional policy, especially Beijing's calling card the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), by aligning itself more closely with the Americans. Moreover, the CPC's desire to annex Taiwan put pressure on an American state that has guaranteed regional security to shore up its position. Growing capacities in India mean the US could take more of an *administrative* role in the Indo-Pacific while focusing its own security forces in the South China sea with Japan, mutually fulfilling the American desire to maintain the status quo and Indian desires for upward mobility. New Delhi is already well within the American sphere of influence, with the US recognizing India as a "strategic partner" and supportive of "India's emergence as a leading global power."¹⁷⁹ For now, India remains a democratic state, a normative expectation of the global but not regional order. A democratic backslide would undoubtedly concern the Americans, resulting in downward mobility. The more

¹⁷⁷ Joanna Slater, "Soldiers Injured in Fresh Border Skirmish Between India and China," *The Washington Post* (2011), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/india-china-clash-sikkim/2021/01/25/7d82883c-5edb-11eb-a177-7765f29a9524_story.html.

¹⁷⁸ John Burns, "India's New Defense Chief Sees Chinese Military Threat," *The New York Times* (1998), <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/05/world/india-s-new-defense-chief-sees-chinese-military-threat.html>.

¹⁷⁹ US Office of the Spokesperson, "The United States and India: Deepening our Strategic Partnership," *U.S. Department of State* (2021), <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-india-deepening-our-strategic-partnership/>.

immersed India becomes in discourses of human rights and political freedoms, the more normalized it will become, just like the new idea of India as a nation-state. If India continues to consolidate its young democracy under American influence, a solidified democratic political culture threatened by China's authoritarian norms limits the flexibility of Indian leadership vis a vis China, fearing being punished by voters.

Looking into a Crystal Ball

It is unclear how the future will unfold, especially when the present is also uncertain. As Lemke understood, regions constitute the global system so the two cannot be separated. When great powers intervene from abroad, local hierarchies can appear to act counterintuitively. For example, communist China and capitalist Japan reached power parity in the 1980s yet did not go to war with each other.¹⁸⁰ Puzzling at first glance, the realization is that the Soviets and the Americans essentially booby-trapped the regional system with defense agreements. A state seeking to challenge the regional hegemon would also need to be willing to escalate globally. The dominant hierarchy shows a preference towards its continuity and reproduction, even though its actors seek change. This example shows how the hierarchy has productive value separate from that of its actors.

It is humorous that despite Lemke's theory purporting to shed light on the minor powers of a system, there has been little mention of other future players in Asia. Asia's future is not simply a trilateral clash between the US, China, and India— there are and will be many layers of hierarchical structures beneath their dominance. However, as a meaningful prediction of the triad's future is an impossibility, it hardly seems worthwhile to speculate on what all the others will look like. Russia, Japan, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), both Koreas, and Pakistan are players with diverging interests with a verifiable stake in Asia's future. Each of these states (and organization) has its own policy that changes supplemental local orders. In another project, Lemke's recent work on non-state actors could be connected to the current framework to answer the question of how actors are created through upward mobility through smaller local hierarchies. A key question of this new work has been

¹⁸⁰ Kim, "Strategic Stability," p. 153.

questioning the difference between interstate and civil war; i.e. the boundary between international and domestic politics. Like the boundaries of a region which do have a physical/spatial component, the distinction between different layers largely boils down to social constructs about the way things are. Likewise, Humanitarian intervention debates over national sovereignty versus the responsibility to protect are purely normative discussions. An actor with the capabilities and willingness to either intervene or keep others out is the only physical fact, morality is separate.

However, powerful states with the means to intervene directly rarely do so, even if they want to, for fear of condemnation. Even though it has the capacity to do so, what line would Iran have to cross before America would invade? Has that line changed? Before launching its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, NATO allies accused Putin of waving a false flag to justify the invasion.¹⁸¹ The validity of these claims aside, false flags are a real strategy. Though enemies can see through the charades, the person waving a false flag does not do so because they think nobody will believe them. The productive aspects of a hierarchy impose a sense of just behavior on actors to restrict their actions, which a traditionally realist framework cannot capture because of its focus on coercive power as the primary means of change. A commitment to change is also paramount.

Will the future look like the past? Throughout the Cold War, the US maintained a strong presence in Asia through diplomatic alliances and military deployments despite the proximity to the USSR. At least on paper, the Americans have held the preponderance of power in the region since the end of WWII.¹⁸² However, consecutive presidents were labeled as isolationists for showing signs that America is beginning to resist its role as the global police force and mirror the criticisms of Southeast Asian states during the Cold War.¹⁸³ Just how committed is the United States when it can retreat according to its favorable geography like Britain before them? Asia has experienced rapid economic growth. The issues it faces going forward are geopolitical, effectively nullifying American diplomacy if it does not respond with force to military actions. India and China have both the advantage and disadvantage that they must care

¹⁸¹ BBC Staff, "False Flags: What Are They and When Have They Been Used?" *BBC* (2022), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60434579>.

¹⁸² Goh, "East Asian Security Order," p. 360.

¹⁸³ Richard Haas, "The Age of America First: America's New Foreign Policy Consensus," *Foreign Affairs* (2021), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-09-29/biden-trump-age-america-first>.

because their sovereignty depends on it. As China continues to grow relative to the US, the Taiwan question looms large. In the short term, the US seems willing to defend Taiwan from invasion but will that be true for an indeterminate period with unknown variables? A lackluster response if an invasion does occur could easily shatter the hierarchical structure with the realization the Americans factor less prominently, if at all, into regional security.

With or without the United States, the theoretical framework presented points to a high likelihood of conflict between India and China. Though there is a chance for cooperation, the fact both states already view the other as threatening is not encouraging if relations are predisposed by the power transition to get worse. Even more difficult is to foresee how regional conflict between the two superpowers would affect the global order. Making an honest effort to predict the future would devolve this project from academic to an alternate history story. What the story of India and China does is showcase the supplemental regional hierarchy framework put forth and, in a sense, give the theory something to do. If regional hierarchies supplementing the global order are an opportunity for upward mobility with equalizing effect, then it is also an opportunity for a challenging regional leader to normalize dissatisfaction with the global status quo and, in the end, elevate its position in the global hierarchy. With such an asymmetry of power across the international system, actors in regional subsystems realistically have little chance of affecting the global order as Lemke stipulated. With so few comparable examples of a regional power challenge like India and China, it is difficult to comprehend what the world would be like after a war between the two. A long-term relationship with the US makes a direct regional challenge from India to China less likely than a conflict through China challenging the global status quo. The threat Beijing poses appears too large to not heavily incentivize ongoing cooperation, even considering the manifesting of new diverging interests. Britain and Russia will attest that those major differences can be put aside to face an existential threat. To this end, China would be fighting an uphill battle to normalize its dissatisfaction with the global status quo within the regional hierarchy, ultimately failing to overcome a powerful India-China and supplant the dominant order. Thus, the dominant hierarchy would once again succeed in reproducing itself.

Plausibility Probe: The Creation of the Islamic World

As a potential conflict between India and China does not appear to be progressing towards supplanting the global order and, thus, ultimately failing to normalize dissatisfaction regionally with the global status quo, it is prudent to find another example that can further test the proposed hypothesis. Again, there are relatively few examples of a truly global order; only the Britain and American regimes. For this reason, finding an adequate test of the theory means looking even further into the past. Further probing the plausibility of normalizing dissatisfaction as a path to upward mobility is a necessary step to prove that local hierarchies can supplant the global order. Without an example, the progress of the new framework would be limited because it could not clearly explain or show how the change occurs. An adequate test case requires looking at a region that due to the lack of modern technological advances, behaved similarly to today's closed global order. However, looking beyond the British order poses a significant challenge to the theory, specifically its PTT components. Organski makes clear that the theory applies to industrialized states.¹⁸⁴ In the pre-industrial era, there was little a leader could do to augment the internal power of the state and, instead, heads of state were forced to augment power primarily through alliances and balance of power strategy. Then, it was necessary to placate your allies to stay in power. In the industrial era with modern militaries, the conditions for peace have changed because of the realization of the option to go it alone. Industrialization is important to PTT because it is the explanatory principle behind the vast power differentials in the global order. Organski even makes the point that the scope of his theory going forward was limited to the point where all states have industrialized, at which point "we may need new theories."¹⁸⁵

As such, the ability to apply the proposed framework's explanatory principle of parity is severely limited. However, Organski may be overly critical of his theory. As the Athenians verified in Melos, there were power differentials between states in the pre-industrial era.¹⁸⁶ Sustained periods of peace like the Pax Romana are associated with what could be seen as near-hegemonic powers, just as the role filled by the Americans

¹⁸⁴ Organski and Kugler, *The War Ledger*, pp. 176-177.

¹⁸⁵ Organski, *World Politics*, p. 307.

¹⁸⁶ Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*.

during the Long Peace. Albeit sustained period of peace is not the norm throughout history. After the end of WWII, battle deaths declined to the lowest levels in history.¹⁸⁷ Interstate wars have also declined significantly over the past 150 years, corresponding to British and American dominance.¹⁸⁸ While industrialization explains differing growth rates and therefore introduces the principle of parity, the history of war pre-industrialization does leave the door open that the reason for a conflict was because no group could augment the power on its own to create a stable status quo. In other words, actors jostled about in a state of perpetual parity resulting in long periods of war.

The PTT argued parity creates the conditions for this balance of power thinking. Considering power differences, smaller states are more likely to go along rather than be destroyed, with the Melians being an immediate counterexample. At parity, when there is a higher chance of success, challenging the dominant power becomes an attainable goal. Pre-industrialization, international politics were governed by balance-of-power thinking because the capacity for one actor to move by itself was extremely limited. Therefore, on somewhat shaky but still rational grounds, a preindustrial case can still be observed with the understanding that the conditions of parity are set much lower to the point where actors can be seen as existing in a situation approximating parity. Doing so discredits the explanatory power of parity to testing the framework, but the clear balance of power logic that guided history's actors means a generalization that change was motivated by realist power interest is not inappropriate, and further, a tractable task given poor historical records of economies, militaries and other components of quantitative PTT power. To be clear, power differentials still were very much a factor, but the explanatory power of parity is disadvantaged.

The proposed case is the creation of the Muslim world and the Islamic Caliphate following the life of the Prophet Muhammad up to the end of the first Umayyad dynasty. Islam is closely tied to politics, even more so than its counterparts, Judaism and Christianity.¹⁸⁹ The Caliphate is a unique political entity because of its religious

¹⁸⁷ Max Roser, Joe Hasell, Bastian Herre and Bobbie Macdonald. "War and Peace." *Published online at OurWorldInData.org* (2016), <https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace>.

¹⁸⁸ Szayna *et al.*, "What are Trends in Armed Conflict and What do they Mean for U.S. Defense Policy," *RAND Corporation Arroyo Center* (2017).

¹⁸⁹ Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Caliphate: Political History of the Islamic Empire*, in *The Oxford History of Islam*, eds. Esposito, John L., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): p. 7.

roots, meaning its influence can be studied politically and not only sociologically. From a small militia to one of history's most important empires and social forces, the introduction of Islam drastically changed the status quo in the Middle East and North Africa compared to what had existed before. However, the Caliphate was not a modern state; its stability was contingent on the ability of the Caliph to placate powerful internal actors in a way entirely different from pandering to voters. The Caliphate was a group of associated and allied actors with independent military power that had not yet experienced the national homogenization that occurred because of the Caliphate's long history. The early history of the Caliphate is a story of intense tribal divisions and subdivisions. Without a common national identity, these groups did not view themselves as a unitary actor.¹⁹⁰

As Organski would have argued, most of the Caliph's efforts went towards quelling disputes between tribes and finding new avenues to shore up alliances with local leaders who had their own military power. Considering tribal groups as independent actors, the religious factor serves an important role. Islam independent of the Caliphate is a transnational political movement. "Religion" is a concept created in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: at the time there was no such word nor idea.¹⁹¹ Social science had not yet made the distinction between religion and politics and the actors of the early Muslim world could not have possibly seen any difference. The religious status quo was also the political status quo. From this perspective, the divisions of tribal actors that are still aligned within an Islamic status quo are congruent to modern divisions within a dialogue of human rights (R2P controversy, for example). For this reason, the rise of the Caliphate can be framed as a sort of power transition with Islam supplementing the newly proposed global order. It is not necessary to firmly define the boundaries of the Muslim world as they changed over time but the term applies to those territories and beyond throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and Anatolia that the Islamic empire expanded over.

Before Islam, the Middle East and surrounding areas were dominated by two empires: the Byzantines and the Sasanians. The two empires engaged in war

¹⁹⁰ Roberto Marin-Guzman, "Arab Tribes, the Umayyad Dynasty and the Abbasid Revolution," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 24, no. 4 (2004): p. 58.

¹⁹¹ Brent Nogbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

throughout history as both struggled for domination over the lucrative Orient trade.¹⁹² However, neither controlled the Arabian Peninsula, populated by various monotheist and polytheist tribes. Geography played a key role in political affairs because the arid desert and mountainous terrain made it difficult for a state to exert, much less sustain force into the area. With that said, the Arabian Peninsula still factored prominently in controlling trade so both the Byzantines and Sasanians were involved in local politics as far south as Yemen, seeking to gain alliances.¹⁹³ Although on a much smaller spatial scale, the interventions of the Sasanians and, notably, the Byzantines, using allies in the Axum Kingdom to control affairs on the peninsula, are like the great power interventions in the Middle East throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much like today, the local tribes viewed the intrusions from outsiders with skepticism and would often express open disdain for the Hellenistic and Iranian cultures.¹⁹⁴ Blood ties between different clans meant there was a sense of kinship between tribes on the peninsula, though not enough to centralize as the larger kingdoms and empires had. Groups continued to engage in war against one another. Many of the tribes were nomadic and rejected the landownership proposed by the Byzantines or Sasanians. Being nomadic complicated the ability of the empires to subdue the tribes because they could simply move elsewhere when coerced. It was in the backdrop of the ongoing balancing act between the Byzantines and Sasanians, along with tribal squabbles that the Prophet Muhammad was born.

Muhammad was born in the village of Mecca around 570 CE but his political story began later, around 620 CE when he was invited to the conflict-embroiled town of Yathrib (soon known as Medina) to govern while tensions were sorted out.¹⁹⁵ By this time, Muhammad had already gathered a large following of Believers. The prophet proposed a significant change to the status quo by seeking to bring all the tribes under one Islamic umbrella, extremely important at a time when religion and politics were indistinguishable. Motivated by prophecy and access to commerce, the Believers soon turned towards ousting the prophet's competitors in his home of Mecca. The Believers and Meccans then engaged in a game of balancing by seeking to bring more tribes

¹⁹² Donner, *The Caliphate*, p. 1.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁴ Guzman, "Arab Tribes," p. 57.

¹⁹⁵ Donner, *The Caliphate*, p. 8.

under their influence. By 630 CE, Muhammad had seized Mecca. Now in control of two of the larger towns on the peninsula, the Islamic movement experienced upward mobility across the region as more and more tribes accepted Muhammad's teachings in exchange for political and economic benefits.

Soon after, in 632 CE, Muhammad, a powerful unifying force, died, and without him, many tribes felt they no longer owed allegiance to his successor, Abu Bakr. In a bid to keep their allegiance, Abu Bakr waged the Apostasy Wars, ultimately unifying the entire Arabian Peninsula by 634 CE.¹⁹⁶ However, the Caliphate truly was a patchwork of alliances between the Caliph and distinct tribal groups. Only a few areas, namely Mecca, Medina, and Taif, were directly under the control of the Caliph, and he had to contend with competing confederations of tribes in the North and South.¹⁹⁷ Directly on the borders of both the Sasanians and Byzantines, the tribes continued to work together for a period of rapid expansion even while drawing remarkable attention from both empires. After important defeats of the Byzantines in Syria and the Sasanians in Iraq, the Muslims were free to continue their expansion further into Central Asia and Africa. With control in Africa, the Muslims had access to the lucrative slave trade which resulted in vast amounts of wealth entering the empire.¹⁹⁸

Frontier wars continued for centuries and Islam spread throughout the Near East and Africa. The groups living on the peninsula were truly a community of communities, only establishing converging interests with the introduction of Islam. Before Muhammad, tribal groups already participated in raids against the Byzantines, but also frequently raided one another. Islam appealed to these groups for several reasons including Arabian origins, familiar scripturalist practices, its opposition to the larger empires, and the political and economic incentives from joining a growing alliance of tribal groups. By appealing to fears of a familiar foe and exchanging benefits, Islam, as a political force, was validated and its spokespeople experienced upward mobility.¹⁹⁹ In this way, the Muslims normalized dissatisfaction with the Byzantine and Sasanian great powers as an expression of satisfaction with the regional status quo on

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Guzman, "Arab Tribes," p. 58.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁹⁹ Hamilton Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine under the Umayyad Dynasty," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 12 (1958): p. 223.

the Arabian Peninsula. The early Muslim's dissatisfaction with the Byzantines and Sasanians largely stemmed from seeking to gain further control over the Orient trade, but further developed into jihad, the disapproval and militant effort to subdue non-Muslim actors. However, the Muslims rarely sought to convert the dissenter they conquered; rather, they sought to gain tribute.²⁰⁰ The many raids against Constantinople from 669 CE to 717 CE and conquest in Africa were likewise heavily driven by the economic benefits of access to the sea and trade, drivers of internal power augmentation.

At the time, the Muslims were the minority amongst the tribes they controlled. Like the Persians before them, the primary goal of the Caliph was to gain tribute from smaller tribes but they allowed them to govern themselves and were relatively tolerant of other religions.²⁰¹ The process of Islamization spreading out from the Arabian peninsula was a result of hierarchical structures that favored conversion. The Caliph offered tax incentives and administrative positions to tribal leaders that converted their people to Islam. Conversion also had the added benefit of a greater position in the emerging network of Islamic tribes. As Islam normalized, it increasingly became clear any groups in proximity would be better off supporting the region's dominant actor, the Caliph. In just a few years, the Caliphate had supplanted the previous nomadic status quo, replacing it with Islam, land ownership, and taxes. However, the new Islamic Empire was not a unitary nation-state as it is understood today. It was far more centralized than the tribal mosaic loosely associated by bloodline but was nowhere near the homogenization of today's states. The Caliph was an actor, but his actions were more akin to a sort of international organization with a military force. Within the Caliphate, there were confederacies of competing tribes on the north and south of the peninsula. It was this competition that explains the rapid expansion of the Islamic world; economically driven groups searching for the upper hand within the region and outside world, not the religious ideations of one actor.²⁰² Damascus assumed the position as the dominant actor because of its position as the center of a complicated network.

²⁰⁰ Donner, *The Caliphate*, p. 13.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁰² Guzman, "Arab Tribes," p. 77.

After the first *Fitna*²⁰³ to overthrow the Rashidun Caliphate that led to the beginning of the Sunni-Shia divide, the Umayyad dynasty controlled the Caliphate from 661-750 CE. As the leaders of the Islamic movement, in large part stemming from control over the movement's young institutions and religious sites like the mosque of Damascus, Jerusalem, and Mecca, the Umayyads benefited from the legitimization the Caliphate had already experienced. However, much of the attention was on maintaining the satisfaction of the powerful tribal confederacy in the north and south which were directly responsible for the expansions. While both the tribes of the north and south eagerly accepted Islam, there was still direct competition for economic and political resources between them.²⁰⁴ After the fourth Caliph, Ali, was assassinated and the Umayyads took control, permanent divisions were formed that persist to this day.

The Sunni-Shia and north-south divisions are like the supplemental hierarchies that one would expect to form under the new Islamic *global* order. In the case of the Shia and Sunni, there is a part of the spiritual debate that desires to shape the Caliphate as the Prophet meant it to be. As well, a Caliph who was friendly towards a chief's tribe is a source of upward mobility as they were often incentivized with special privileges like tax exemptions. The expansion of the Islamic world, however, is the result of competition between the north and south tribal confederacies, with the normalization or "Islamization" occurring as a benefit. It was the distinct actions of southern tribes like the Mudar that led to the capture of Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Controlling these territories meant that the southern tribes were completely cut off from trade with the rest of the continent.²⁰⁵ This pressured the southern tribes to move west into Northern Africa. One of the best ways to show that the spread of Islam was driven by economics is that its expansion into Africa closely mirrors the trade routes that already existed, and was not simply a frenzy for territorial expansion or pride. Because the Muslims rarely forced conversions, those that did convert are closely correlated to the trade routes that existed before Islam.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ The *Fitna* refers to civil wars within the Islamic empire.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 58.

²⁰⁶ Michalopolous, Naghavi and Prarolo, "Trade and Geography in the Origins and Spread of Islam," *National Bureau of Economic Research* (2012): p. 7.

As Islam became normalized, tribes that did not convert were then disadvantaged by extra taxes and the loss of merchant opportunities, as well as the loss of the ability to contend with more powerful converted tribes. Especially at the speed Islam became accepted as the status quo, a tribe could quickly find itself isolated by other cooperating groups. The way in which Islam was treated regarding the new status quo is analogous to the way that human rights are treated today. A state that does not adhere to human rights standards is often disadvantaged by tariffs and sanctions leveled by the US, meant to cripple its ability to augment power economically, and thus it must consider its commitment to change. At the same time, there are far fewer examples of military interventions to force adherence than examples of abusive regimes. Rather, the hope is that a winning coalition of states will be satisfied with human rights and make dissent structurally untenable or at least upward mobility. Doing so requires fewer resources than waging war and is less damaging to prospects of cooperation with future challengers. However, states like Saudi Arabia show little adherence to human rights standards yet still maintain a close relationship with the US. The trade-off logic of hierarchy is apparent. Simply put: Is the US better off with or without the Saudis and vice versa? In the case of Islam, Damascus preferred conversion but would leave a tribe to their own means as long as they paid tribute.²⁰⁷ In both cases, there are red lines that could not be crossed without a forceful correction towards the status quo, such as polytheists, a religious deviance that often did lead to forced conversion. The stark changes before and after the early Umayyad Caliphate are a demonstration of a regional power shift between Arab tribes normatively affecting how other regional actors perceived the status quo, and then escalating to greater upward mobility within the broader global order. Early Muslims had to contend with both the Byzantines and Sasanians but rose to push the Byzantines back and entirely subsume the Sasanians. Contemporary Iran is now one of the most fervent adherents of Islam. Perhaps the biggest reason for change in the global order is not due to widespread dissatisfaction but easily facilitated satisfaction. The main issue the previous empires had with controlling the Arabian Peninsula was that the nomadic tribes refused a status quo requiring their settlement. While substantially more integrated than before, which itself represents the normative shift, Damascus' global order offered either enough benefits from trade and political connections or enough impediments that tribes within

²⁰⁷ Donner, *The Caliphate*, p. 13.

its space of influence on mass decided they were better off on the side of on the side of the new status quo. At the same time, new supplemental hierarchies emerged that moved to change the hierarchical structure in favor of their upward mobility. The most dominant of these supplemental hierarchies were the northern and southern confederacy of Tribes, and the Sunni-Shia divide, which was directly over who controls the influence of the Caliphate. Nevertheless, despite the ongoing rivalries and jockeying for position, these supplemental hierarchies did not seek to fundamentally supplant the status quo but reshape it in their favor. While not perfectly analogous to modern politics, the creation of an Islamic status quo in the Middle East is an example of a regional power shift causing a normative change in how other actors perceived the global order.

Conclusion

The problem posed by the future of India and China's power transitions is that it is a regional struggle with the clear potential to spill over into a sweeping power shift in the global order. Where Lemke's theory lacks a clear understanding of how regional systems influence the global status quo, Coleman's layered hierarchy addition helps conceptualize how local hierarchies can act as a springboard for upward mobility across the entire global system. Regional hierarchies function as supplemental organizations to the global order, so upward mobility at the local level also implies upward mobility globally. Power Transition Theory seeks to explain change, which in turn helps sort out the conservative bias towards stagnation apparent in Coleman's framework. At power parity, a supplemental hierarchy can fundamentally supplant the global order to the extent regional structures can promote and normalize discontent with the global order. In this way, regional dissatisfaction can grow outwardly to subsume the previous order as the new dominant actor's position and influence are elevated. The three regional hierarchies studied in Southeast Asia and the Middle East provide the necessary data in terms of polarity, different non-quantitative forms of power, categorization, and distribution to formulate an opinion on how a struggle between India and China might affect global order. Further, the proposed framework also shows how great powers can insert themselves into the local order, shedding more light on the rules of engagement. Finally, the plausibility probe that showed how Islam experienced upward mobility

from the local to global hierarchy displays how normalizing dissatisfaction can lead to a higher overall global position. Though Lemke's intentions were to shed further light on the role of minor powers, the role major powers like the US will play in Asia's future is undeniable because of their material force and signaled commitment. In the end, the deck expectedly appears stacked against China should it pursue a revisionist agenda as the hierarchy will pressure it to reproduce itself rather than be supplanted by a challenging status quo. However, with this framework, the path to upward mobility is clear and would involve placating a potential challenger in India. Even if projections that the US, China, and India all reach parity at the supposed time (which is not likely), the possibilities are endless. What is provided here is a more robust conception of hierarchy that considers the longstanding variable or tradeoffs and positionality, and also how new interests are produced. Though prediction is impossible, this discussion has provided a model that can help explain different routes as these possibilities present themselves and clear evidence that indeed the interaction between the global and regional hierarchies is not of one-way importance.

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