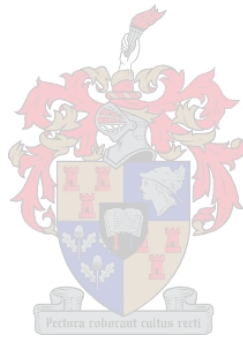# An Exploration of the Role of Soft Power in Hegemony: the USA and China

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Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (International Studies) at the Stellenbosch University
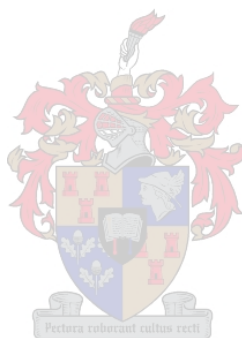
Supervisor: Dr. K. Smith

March 2007

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:………………………..

Date:……………………………..

Abstract

How much emphasis is afforded to the role of soft power has significant implications for the study of hegemony and predictions regarding the future of US hegemony and the rise of China as a hegemon. The fact that much mainstream work (particularly neorealism) continues to neglect the role of soft power in international relations is seen as a disturbing shortcoming.

This study wishes to address this perceived shortcoming by exploring the role of 'soft power' as an integral non-material aspect of hegemony by focusing on the perspectives of selected authors (Cox, Nye, Waltz, Keohane), and applying them to the cases of the United States of America and China. It is contended that there is a need for a shift of emphasis in International Relations (IR)- away from the hard power centric analysis towards a 'soft power' analysis that focuses on ideas. This study further argues that recognising the importance of the role of 'soft power' will result in a more effective analysis and understanding of hegemony in the international system. This is not to disregard 'hard power' as an aspect of hegemony, but rather to emphasise 'soft power' as it is often neglected or underscored by scholars in their analysis of hegemony and power structures within international relations.

The United States of America is a prime example of how 'soft power' can help a state to prevent decline through consensus and alliance formation. The Chinese on the other hand have become increasingly aware of the importance of soft power– whilst the US have recently neglected it as a sustaining capability for hegemony. Thus China is growing and nurturing its 'soft power' capabilities in order to create an image of a benevolent super power, whilst the US is increasingly being perceived as malevolent- which is not conducive to hegemony in the international system. It is argued that if the Chinese can attain ideological dominance within the global structure, they could become the new hegemon.

Opsomming

Hoeveel beklemtoning aan die rol van 'sagte mag' gegee word, het aansienlike implikasies vir die studie van hegemonie en voorspellings oor die toekoms van die VSA se hegemonie en die moontlike hegemoniese groei van Sjina. Een van die vernaamste gebreke in die hoofstroom literatuur (veral neorealisme) is 'n versuim om die rol van sagte mag in hegemonie te bestudeer.

Die studie poog om hierdie oënskynlike tekortkoming aan te spreek deur middel van 'n verkenning van die rol van 'sagte mag' as 'n sentrale nie- materiële aspek van hegemonie. Dit word gedoen deur op die perspektiewe van geselekteerde outeurs (Cox, Nye, Waltz, Keohane) se begrip van die terme te fokus, en dit dan toe te pas op die Verenigde State van Amerika (VSA) en Sjina. Daar word beweer dat daar 'n behoefte is vir 'n verskuiwing in die studie van hegemonie - weg van die 'harde mag' sentristiese analise na 'n 'sagte mag' analise wat fokus op idees. Die studie argumenteer verder dat 'n erkenning van die belangrikheid van 'sagte mag' na 'n meer effektiewe analise en begrip van hegemonie in die internationale stelsel sal lei. Daar word nie beweer dat 'harde mag' 'n onbelangrike aspek van hegmonie is nie, maar eerder dat 'sagte mag' meer beklemtoon moet word omdat dit dikwels deur skrywers negeer word in hul analise van hegemonie enmagsstrukture in internationale betrekkinge.

Die Verenigde State van Amerika is 'n uitstekende voorbeeld van hoe 'sagte mag' state kan help om hul agteruitgang te verhoed deur middel van die vorming van konsensus en die bou van vennootskappe. Die Sjinese, in teenstelling, het ook bewus geword hiervan, terwyl die VSA moontlik vergeet het van die waarde van 'sagte mag' as 'n voorwaarde vir hegemonie. Sjina is dus besig om hul 'sagte mag' vermoëns uit te brei om sodoende 'n beeld van 'n welwillende supermoondheid te skep, terwyl die VSA toenemend gesien word as kwaadwillig, wat nie bevorderlik is vir hul hegemonie of dominansie van die internationale stelsel nie. Daar word beweer dat, indien Sjina ideologiese oorheersing binne die globale struktuur kan bereik, dan kan die land die nuwe hegemoon word.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

According to George H.W. Bush senior, at the end of the 20th century, we were at the threshold of a 'new world order' in international relations. This new world order, according to President Bush, would be "freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace" (Bush, 1990). Ironically, Bush junior saw exactly the opposite come to fruition, exactly to the day, eleven years later, as the twin towers in New York came tumbling down in resistance to this 'new world order' which they helped shape. In this new order, the enemy would no longer be the USSR and its Communist ideology but rather global terrorist movements and Islamic fundamentalists who oppose the values of democracy and human rights as promoted by the United States (US).

The end of the Cold War put an end to the bipolar balance of power between the US and USSR and their allies. The victory by one super power over the other set the precedence for a new strategy of interaction and order among states in the global world structure.

As the dust settled in Berlin, the global world order and all its multitude of role players scrambled to realign themselves within the global structure according to a new multipolar[1] balance of power (Linklater, 1995: 241). States, multinational corporations (MNCs), global civil society and international governmental organisations (IGOs) have all become an integral part of the global restructuring, following the collapse of the iron curtain. This led to a reshuffling of power relations and the structures that upheld them. In focusing on the fluctuations of the balance of power in the world system, the study of hegemony has been an important attempt at

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[1] It can be argued that there is a unipolar balance of power in the current world system, but within this context, multipolar refers to the advent of power from non-state sources that are growing in primacy and importance.

shedding light on the struggle for dominance in an arguably anarchic international system..

Power relations have been a key focus area between scholars for a very long time- albeit between human beings on a micro level or states on a macro level. Man has, through the ages, come to recognise the importance of being able to coerce the weak into following the strong. The need for human beings to control their environment and those within it can be seen as human nature- although many argue that there is no such thing. It is however certain that power, authority and the ability to coerce do create a certain amount of stability and order in an environment, which is in constant fluctuation or anarchy. Order and stability comes at a price and as in all games there are winners and losers. The rules of the game often reflect the needs and agendas of the strong whilst neglecting the plight of the weak. This is true on most levels of analysis from the schoolyard bullies who coerce the weak into giving them lunch money, to the US invading free and sovereign states to nourish their hunger for oil.

Global events since the end of the Cold War – including the USA's unilateral action in Afghanistan and Iraq following the 9/11 terrorist attacks have renewed the priority of the debate which started in the 1970s regarding the USA's hegemonic decline and the possible over extension of its power. This debate was mainly concerned with the real decline of US military supremacy with failures in Vietnam, the Balkans, Somalia and the Middle East (Wallerstein, 2002: 60). The embarrassment and anger which was a product of the devastating terrorist attack by Al Qaeda on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, caused many to question the future of the mighty stars and stripes (Wallerstein, 2002: 60). In addition, US economic power has also been perceived to be waning in the light of a growing trade deficit, with China and other nations playing catch-up, and the costly over extension of the US's military power over the globe (Wallerstein, 2002: 67; Cox, 2002: 58).

Within this debate, many have not only argued in favour of US hegemonic decline, but have also been quick to point to the growing primacy of Chinese trade and economic supremacy in opposition to that of the US. Over the past decade, China has certainly been at the forefront of accelerated GDP growth- with their current rate exceeding 9% (four times the 1978 rate) (CIA World Fact Book, 2006: B). It is

fervently argued by some, mostly based on statistics, that China is set to become the next hegemonic power in light of their unprecedented economic growth over the last 25 years (CIA World Fact Book, 2006: A)

In contrast with the unparalleled economic growth which China has experienced, it is, however, evident in the US's actions, alliances and its role in the international community that power does not only or necessarily reside in 'hard' or tangible spheres, but that soft power can also be an underlying guiding force which influences, attracts and manipulates the actions of others more effectively than material, economic or military hard power. The importance of this kind of 'soft power' is becoming increasingly prevalent in the dawn of growing anti- American sentiments and a progression in ideological tension between the West (US) and the rest of the world.

1.2 Problem Statement, Research Aim and Questions

How much emphasis is afforded to the role of soft power has significant implications for the study of hegemony and predictions regarding the future of US hegemony and the rise of China as a hegemon. The fact that much mainstream work (particularly neorealism) continues to neglect the role of soft power in international relations is seen as a disturbing shortcoming.

This study wishes to address this perceived shortcoming by exploring the role of 'soft power' as an integral non-material sphere of hegemony, by focusing on the perspectives of selected authors (Cox, Nye, Waltz, Keohane), and applying them to the cases of the United States of America and China. It is contended that there is a need for a shift of emphasis in the study of hegemony - away from the hard power centric analysis towards a 'soft power' analysis that focuses on ideas and ideology as coined by Joseph Nye in the early 1990s and elaborated on in his book *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). This study further holds that recognising the importance of the role of 'soft power' will result in a more effective analysis and understanding of hegemony in the international system. This is not to disregard 'hard power' as an aspect of hegemony, but rather to emphasise 'soft

power' as it is often neglected or underscored by scholars in their analysis of hegemony and power structures within international relations.

 The aim of this study is therefore to emphasise the importance of 'soft power' in the analysis of hegemony, arguing for the primacy of non-material factors in establishing hegemony, and showing how important it is to fuse these concepts in the search for a holistic understanding of global power dynamics. In essence, this study seeks to understand and shed light on the impact or effect of soft power on hegemony by indicating this through the comparative case study example of arguably the two core role players (US and China) in the contemporary global political economy.

The following questions arise from this broader research aim:

- Firstly, what are the views of the main theoretical perspectives on the concepts of *hegemony and soft power,* and how do they relate to one another?

- Secondly, what makes the US hegemonic and how does this manifest in its international relations and behaviour?

- Thirdly, what are China's 'soft power' capabilities in contrast to that of the US?

- Lastly, in the light of conclusions drawn about 'soft power' as an enabling component, what are the implications for future hegemonic decline and ascendance?

This study hopes to contribute to and stimulate further research and interest with regards to the 'soft power' aspects of hegemony and the growing primacy of non-material analysis in understanding power on a global level.

While the main rationale of this study is to build on the already existing body of knowledge on hegemony and 'soft power', the conclusions also have broader implications for foreign policy advisors and decision makers. It builds on the current debate in contemporary International Relations on whether states should invest in

international prestige to bolster their position within the world. Most countries have either explicit or implicit foreign policy strategies pertaining to their interaction with others concerning political, economic and social policies. The lessons that are to be learnt in this study can be applied and integrated into these policies- thus strengthening the efficacy of the respective country's interaction with others.

The study of hegemony and 'soft power' gives insight to both strong and weak nations on how to successfully conduct diplomacy and foreign relations with their counterparts. Thus, the study of 'soft power' and hegemony can help nations to better understand what power is, where it resides, how to implement it- and hence harness it more effectively in order to further their national interest and goals more effectively in a changing and competitive global order. This will help us to better understand the dynamics involved between the great powers- with regards to the US/ China and the possibility of either of these states achieving full hegemony in the future.

1.3 Research Methodology

This study is chiefly a qualitative study- using empirical data and borrowed ideas from the greater body of knowledge, which has already been acquired in the fields of International Relations (IR) and Global Political Economy (GPE) (Neuman, 2000: 145). The nature of hegemony and 'soft power' is not easily quantifiable because of its non-material nature. Thus, the analysis of these concepts rather lends itself to a qualitative analysis based on ideas and observations, and which are grounded in theory (Neuman, 2000: 145- 146).

This study will take the form of a descriptive analysis, which reviews the literature on hegemony and 'soft power', developing a thorough conceptualisation of these concepts. Chapter three will explore and contextualise this knowledge through the use of the case study of the US and China. This is done in order to compare the differences and similarities between US and Chinese soft power and hegemony and how this power is manifested. This method helps to draw the distinction between US structural soft power and the growing might of Chinese economic hard power.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

Due to the broad subject matter of this study, it was necessary to focus it in order to complete it within the designated time span and within a practical framework.

As noted earlier, this is a qualitative study and secondary sources of information are relied on instead of primary sources or statistical 'hard data' to build the main arguments. The data is limited to arguably the main authors in their field as they were deemed the most credible sources of information. This is a chiefly a descriptive study which also greatly limits the extent to which new unexplored information will be acquired, yet in the third and fourth chapters some exploration will be done with regards to speculation on the future of the US and China's 'soft power' and hegemony.

The study argues that in contemporary international relations and the global political economy the chief role players are the US and China and this argument also limits the inclusion of other strong role players such as Japan, India and the European Union. The case study of the US and China will also be limited to contemporary evidence from the last 20 years, yet this is not a longitudinal study and thus mainly focuses on the current post Cold War dynamics and not with that of the past, due to time constrains.

Hegemony also has to be limited to the Coxian definition instead of the more localised Gramscian definition of hegemony. In this study Cox's perspective on hegemony chiefly focuses on political, economic and social (ideas) factors as the chief determinants for hegemony. This was done because the level of analysis of the study is on a global level.

The theoretical perspectives which will be implemented are also limited to the Neorealist, Neoliberal, Constructivist and Coxian perspectives as these theoretical frameworks are judged the principal guiding perspectives on hegemony. Adding insights from these generally divergent views should give a thorough and all encompassing indication of the strengths and weaknesses of these perspectives and provides a more holistic picture. Although other perspectives do exist on these

concepts, the scope of this thesis needs to be narrowed due to the extent of the literature on 'soft power' and hegemony..

This study also consciously adopts a state-centric view of international relations, and in focusing on the topic of hegemony, chooses not to take into account other important global actors such as multi- national corporations (MNCs), international governmental organisations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

1.5 Chapter Outline

Having established the broad framework for the study in this chapter, the second chapter constructs a comprehensive conceptualisation of both hegemony and 'soft power'- reviewing the most prevalent literature- to clearly contextualise these concepts within the fields of IR and GPE This conceptualisation will be done by using the Neorealist, Neoliberalist and Constructivist perspectives through the work of, amongst others Kenneth Waltz, Joseph Nye and Alexander Wendt.

Chapter two will also employ Robert Cox's theoretical framework on historical dialectics to indicate the interplay between material, ideas and institutional factors that is imperative to the explanation of international interaction and power relations. As mentioned earlier- the focus falls chiefly on the ideational aspecxt of hegemony as it is deemed to be the principal sphere were 'soft power' resides. Cox's theory on historical dialectics helps us to understand the structure, functions and dynamics of the current international system through his linkage of historical change with ideas- as mutually and reciprocally influencing driving forces (Cox, 1995: 66). It is of great importance to first understand the basic assumptions of Cox's theory before one can build on that with stronger or wider conceptualisations of the key issues. His work is drawn on to create a thorough theoretical background on which to build the argument of this thesis.

The third chapter will implement and use the concepts of both 'soft power' and hegemony within the current international sphere using the US and China as a comparative case study example. Both these countries will be compared according to

the nature and capabilities of their 'soft power'- and how this has a bearing on their hegemonic capabilities. The focal point of this chapter is the contrasting nature of power which resides in both the US and China- with the US arguably wielding more 'soft power' whilst the Chinese are challenging the world with their 'hard power' capabilities. This chapter also serves as a practical application of the theory and concepts of 'soft power' and hegemony (chapter two) which, in conclusion, finds that the US is not necessarily in complete decline whilst concurrently the Chinese are still far from achieving full hegemonic status, yet growing in stature both in soft and hard power spheres.

The fourth and last chapter will conclude by looking at the implications of this analysis has for the future of, not only the US and China's struggle for dominance, but also the role of 'soft power' and hegemony in International Relations.   In understanding 'soft power' as a key component of hegemony, policy makers can better develop and harness their own country's 'soft power' as a means to enhance their their influence in the world system.

Chapter Two

Exploring the Concept of Hegemony

The role of a chief authority or power in the international realm has for a long time been an important field of research for scholars in International Relations, with many scholars differing in their perspectives on this. This chapter will systematically explore these different views by touching on the main theoretical perspectives in IR theory- in order to clearly conceptualise exactly what hegemony and soft power is.

The first section of this chapter will explore hegemony through the lenses of the main theoretical approaches in International Relations: the Neorealist perspective according to Kenneth Waltz, the Neoliberal perspective as represented by Robert Keohane, the Constructivist perspective as used by Alexander Wendt, and lastly Robert Cox's historical and dialectical models will be drawn on. This is done in order to contextualise the theoretical body and to create a holistic picture of how hegemony is perceived by the major "grand" theories in International Relations.

Section two of this chapter will also draw on the same theoretical perspectives in exploring soft power with the only addition being that of Joseph Nye- who first coined the term 'soft power' in his Neo- Liberal approach to global power relations. The chapter will conclude by exploring the relationship between international hegemonic authority and the need for these states to embrace and focus on their soft power capabilities in order to achieve hegemony.

2.1 Neo- Realism and Hegemony

The Neo- Realist perspective is an excellent starting point for the analysis of hegemony as this perspective chiefly focuses on power relations on an international level concerning states and the ordering principles which guide their behaviour. It gives us some analytical tools to predict or forecast changes in the international structure that is an imperative when analysing a concept such as hegemony. This perspective (Neorealism) will draw on Kenneth Waltz's theory by referring to his book *Theory of International Politics* (1979). It is deemed to be the chief study of

the revised realist perspective, and provides an understanding of what this perspective has to add to the hegemony debate in International Relations.

The Neo- Realist perspective according to Waltz (1979:19) rejects reductionist theories- opting rather for a systemic approach in itsanalysis of the international system[2]. Reductionist theories are discarded because they examine the parts or units of the system to understand the whole and its relation to the parts, whilst not analysing the system as a whole. Waltz argues that the system is independent of its units as, although the units form part of the system, they do not determine it (Waltz, 1979: 39). If one applies reductionist theories to the international system one might find that anomalies and incongruencies will become prevalent as generalisations are made from the unit level and applied to the system or structure. Thus the Neo- Realist perspective chiefly focuses on a systemic approach (out side- in) instead of the reductionist process (inside- out) (Keohane, 1984: 25).

The systemic approach thus focuses on international structure as the level of analysis. The key in doing this, according to Waltz (1979: 40), is to clearly indicate the difference between the unitary and systemic levels. If this is confused or incorrectly distinguished from one another- for instance if one defines the structure according to its units and/ or the relation between them, then one could run the risk of not being able to differentiate between changes in the structure and units within the international system. Thus, one could confuse a simple event such as a bombing or a hostage crisis for an event with far-reaching structural implications.

The systemic approach is preferred by Waltz- as it indicates how systems generate behaviour of the units, which operate within them, and how one can then predict or forecast the possible outcomes of the units'' behaviour in the system as a whole (Waltz, 1979: 40). This approach indicates how the structure and units affects one another in a dualist and mutually influencing manner. Thus one can, through the systemic approach, determine the relation of influence between units (chiefly states) and the system as a whole in order to understand where power resides and if it is in fact hegemonic in its manifestation.

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[2] The system refers to the international system as a whole (including units and structure[2]) and the units chiefly refer to states (Waltz, 1979: 18).

Waltz (1979: 51) draws on Kaplan by noting that one can chiefly identify six types of systems in the international milieu: balance of power, loose bi- polar, tight bi- polar, unit veto, universal and hierarchic. Waltz argues that the balance of power system seems to be the most important and prevalent system which we are arguably experiencing in the contemporary world order (Waltz, 1979: 51). He then goes on to further site Kaplan's six rules for interaction in the balance of power system. According to Waltz (1979: 51) these conventions are the chief rules or behavioural options which a state (unit) has when interacting with another within a balance of power system and they are:

- Increase capabilities, but rather negotiate than fight
- Fight rather than pass an opportunity to increase capabilities
- Stop fighting rather than eliminate an essential actor
- Balance an actor or group which tends to assume domination within the system
- Constrain actors who subscribe to supranational organizing principles
- Permit defeated actors to return to the system and treat all actors as acceptable

These are all the basic rules of behaviour or action within a balance of power system. Waltz (1979: 52) however further deconstructs Kaplan's rules of behaviour by introducing three rules instead of six: Act as cheaply[3] as possible to increase capabilities, protect your self against others whilst acting cheaply, and act to maintain the number of units essential to the system. According to Waltz, these rules, if adhered to are cardinal to the success (or hegemonic ascendance) of a state within the international structure.

Waltz gives us some key rules for acting in the international system- on the premise that we are in a balance of power system. He does review Kaplan, however, by noting that (as alluded to earlier) the Balance of Power[4] theory explains the outcome of unit behaviour, but does not account for the reciprocal and mutually influencing effect of

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[3] Acting cheaply refers to maximising capabilities at the lowest cost in terms of financial and human capital or any other form of exertion or expenditure of state energy.
[4] The Balance of Power assumption will be explored in this chapter when looking at 'soft power'.

the system and units (Waltz, 1979: 57). Thus, this theory does not account for how the system influences the unit- it only helps in understanding how the units influences the system.

Waltz builds further on his theory by making some important observations of the system, structure and characteristics thereof. The greatest of these claims are that international politics will always be constant because the international system is chiefly a system of anarchy (Waltz, 1979: 66). He goes on to note that change does take place at the unit level with regards to differentiation of technology, weapons, and alliances (changes in the balance of power), but that this change happens *within* the system and thus does not influence *the system* it self. According to Waltz (1979: 67) these changes account for the variation in political outcomes- not changes in the system. Variation in political outcomes are caused by unit variation and this is where Waltz focuses on the importance of the structure in facilitating the analysis and predictability of unit/ system related events and their reciprocal influence on one another.

Waltz believes that the system as a whole is more important than the parts- as mentioned earlier. This is why he compares systems and not units- to indicate the differences and similarities between them. In comparing one system with another, the key dynamics become palpable and hence facilitate the analysis thereof. He further notes that the structure is also the cause of unit behaviour- not *vice versa*- which makes it cardinal in our analysis of hegemony (Waltz, 1979: 73). He emphasises the fact that units or 'agents' act in response- and according to- the system and structure, because of international socialisation (growing globalisation and interconnectivity) and direct competition for resources, capital and power (Waltz, 1979: 74). Yet Waltz is quick to add that although the structure influences behaviour- it does not determine it (Waltz: 1979: 78). Waltz does seem to indicate that the structure is the main apparent cause for unitary change of capabilities in the world system.

As the structure is of such great importance in the Neo- Realist perspective-, it will now be looked at in more depth. Waltz (1979: 79) argues that in order to understand the difference and relation between system and unit level one must further investigate

the structure- as the structure is the glue that binds system and units together. Control of the structure, in realist terms, *is* hegemony.

Waltz (1979: 73) indicates two chief roles for the structure in the international sphere: Structure creates homogeneous behaviour from multiple unitary inputs, and structure constrains units through rewards and punishment of behaviour. These two meanings indicate how the structure operates and how to account for the dynamics or behaviour within it.

Waltz (1979: 80) ascribes the following characteristics to the international structure[5]:

- permanent whilst units vary (as mentioned earlier)
- distinct from unit behaviour and interactions
- defined according to the arrangement of its parts
- changes in structural arrangement leads to changes in structure itself
- an abstract term thus should be defined in non- material terms[6]
- a combination of units (which behave differently) and in doing so- creates different outcomes
- an arrangement of political institutions
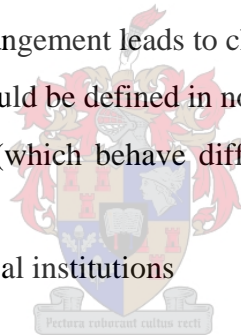
Waltz moves from his definition of structure to indicate the chief 'ordering principles' which guides the formation of units and the relationships of power within the global structure. These ordering principles are based on the assumption that the international system is one of decentralised anarchy (Waltz, 1979: 88). This opens up the possibility of either a hierarchic or a hegemonic system, or that a balance of power between many states- in the absence of a 'real' or tangible international authority can occur. There are many debates on whether the international system is currently under the influence of a hegemonic force or whether a balance of power is in fact occurring in the world structure at the moment. We will return to this issue in the following chapter.

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[5] Throughout this study the above-mentioned definition of structure will be used.
[6] Note that the Neorealists do admit to the need for a non- material approach to hegemony, yet they do not provide an analytical framework for doing this.

The Neorealist perspective, according to Waltz (1979: 90), dictates that in a situation of anarchy- units or states pursue their own 'self interest' in order to situate themselves favourably within the world structure. Thus, the ordering of units within the structure is based on anarchy and self- interest or survival of the fittest in Darwinian terms[7]. Ordering is also, as noted earlier, based on the characteristic of the structure- that guides the strategy, which units follow in their pursuit for power and 'self interest' (Waltz: 1979: 91).

Conforming to structural requirements, according to Waltz (1979: 92) is the best strategy for a state to achieve possible hegemony- thus the structure determines the implicit and explicit outcomes on unit behaviour. In other words, if states want to thrive- they need to adhere to the nature and requirements of the world system and structure.

Another characteristic of Waltz's -Neorealist perspective is its conceptualisation of the 'distribution of capabilities'. Waltz argues that units are, in their purpose, not differentiated from one another, and that unit capabilities are the chief variable in the dissemination of structure (Waltz, 1979: 97; Wendt, 1999: 97). He goes on to explain how the nature of the structure (hegemonic or balance of power) is directly linked to the distribution of the capabilities of units within the structure or world system. Thus, change within the capabilities of units (military, economic, political, social or ideological) precedes change in the structure itself. Yet, changes in the structure also influence unit capabilities and actions retroactively (Waltz, 1979: 97).

This has far reaching implications for the study of hegemony as the control of the structure directly translates into hegemony. Structural control, in the neorealist perspective, is hegemony. A state is judged to be hegemonic if it can transcend the constraints of being a unit- when a state can start influencing the status quo of the structure as a whole. If a state can change the nature of the structure significantly through maximising their capabilities- then they can be judged hegemonic.

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[7] This is contested by the Neo- Liberal School, as we shall explore later in this chapter.

The structure does have some limitations with regard to the influence it can exert on unit behaviour. In stark contrast with that of the Neo- Liberal perspective (which will be explored hereafter), Waltz believes the structure inherently restricts the actions of units because of its nature. He (Waltz, 1979: 102, 106, 108) cites three reasons for this:

- Anarchy creates the incentive for 'self help protection';
- Dependence creates the incentive for exploitation;
- Strategies usually reflect units' drive for personal survival- at the cost of others.

All of these reasons relate back to the realist assumption that the world system is anarchic, thus the only strategy for survival is to be the fittest- in Darwinian terms. This kind of 'dog-eat-dog' strategy is the crux of Neorealist strategy.

In concluding our discussion of the Neorealist perspective, it needs to be stated that the unit- structure relationship is a key theoretical consideration in judging or explaining hegemony or balance of power. Control of the structure and its requirements could be seen as hegemony- this section first has to explore the other perspectives on hegemony before any assumptions and thorough conceptualisations can be made. This chapter merely identifies and conceptualises the key frameworks which will be looked at in chapter three when applying them to the contemporary case study of the US and China. In addition, Waltz will be looked at further when conceptualising 'soft power' in order to build further on the concept of power as an instrument of units' capability to manipulate or change their standing within the world system or structure.

2.2 Neo- Liberalism and Hegemony

The Neoliberal perspective was chiefly conceived and implemented as a critique of the Neorealist perspective. This perspective moves away from the Neorealist preoccupation with the state and its domination, or balance of power, with other states within the system whilst also disregarding other key areas of the realist logic.

Focussing on Robert Keohane's book *After Hegemony* (1984) the Neoliberal perspective will now be analyzed in contrast with that of the Neorealist perspective in order to build on what the Neorealists believe concerning units, systems and the structure. The Neoliberal perspective provides an alternative approach to world order and hegemony to that of the Neorealist perspective- adding concepts such as cooperation, regimes and institutions to our framework for the analysis of hegemony or global domination.

Keohane (1984: 19- 21) notes that there is a close relation between wealth, power and politics concerning hegemony on a global scale. Wealth is a means to power and retroactively power is a means to wealth- whilst politics are the means to power. Thus, Keohane rightfully indicates that economic interests are dependant on political influence (Keohane, 1984: 22). Not debating this, one could according to the Neorealist critique of the liberalists, argue that Neoliberalism focuses excessively on economic theory whilst neglecting the importance of the state and its political functions which differs from the global market or economic institutions.

The Neoliberal perspective argues against the Neorealist when they disagree with them on their assumption of anarchy. Keohane (1984: 7) notes, in his critique of the Neorealist School, that this school of thought wrongfully identifies the effect of anarchy within the world system. He argues in unison with the neorealist- that the system is in anarchy, yet where he differs from them is in how one can explain the multitude of international agreements, regimes and international cooperation on issues such as telecommunication, trade and environmental issues. The Neoliberal school argues that political and economic interdependence is the source of conflict not anarchy, as the realists would choose to believe (Keohane, 1984: 5). They base this belief in liberalist economic theory noting that interconnectedness creates conflict- as limited resources within a system of unlimited demand creates competition for scarce resources (Eatwell and Milgate, 1983: 27, 68). Competition creates conflict.

Keohane (1984: 13) argues that realist assumptions are 'egoist', 'pessimistic' and incorrect in their supposition that all actors are rational and thus act according to self interest and their own goals- irrespective of other units or groups within the system. Many debates have been raging over rational choice and human nature- it is however

not within the limits and scope of this study to engage in this debate but rather to accept the main assumptions of both sides- and to build on this. The Neoliberal School and more specifically the institutionalists within this school do not believe in the concept of self-interest as such, instead they argue for a cooperative system based on shared interest through the implementation of regimes, norms, rules and procedures (Keohane, 1984: 7- 8).

In exploring the neoliberal critique of the Neorealists- the weaknesses of the Neorealist perspective becomes prevalent with regards to their assumptions on anarchy, the state and self-interest. This section will now move away from the critique of the realist school and start honing in on what the Neoliberal School has to add to the conceptualisation of hegemony.

According to Keohane (1984: 31) cooperation is imperative to understanding hegemony. This definition of hegemony focuses on the need for a hegemonic power to facilitate cooperation among all through influencing regimes, rules and procedures. This is widely known as the hegemonic stability theory. It states that a hegemonic power is helpful in facilitating cooperation in an anarchic world, yet it is not a prerequisite for cooperation- as post hegemonic cooperation is also possible. Keohane (1984: 32) provides his requirements for hegemony:

- Control of sufficient raw materials (gold, oil and steel)
- Control of capital sources (banks and financial institutions)
- Control of global markets (inputs and outputs)
- Comparative advantage with regards to production

Note how all of Keohane's requirements are rooted in economics or economic theory. This indicates the bias of the Neoliberalists towards economics and market integration as a key prerequisite for hegemony and domination. This is done on the assumption that, as mentioned earlier, wealth creates power.

A wider definition of hegemony according to Keohane (1984: 45) is that hegemony is consensually perceived and thus not an action of domination but rather a creation of

consent based on regimes and political/ economic interdependence. Furthermore, his definition encompasses the control of markets, consensus among the ruling elites, the ability to deny peripheral states on ideological grounds, and leadership through collective security and cooperation. The ability to deny peripheral states access to rewards on ideological grounds needs to be reiterated as we will look at this more closely when analysing the 'soft power' aspect of hegemony.

According to Keohane (1984: 51) cooperation and regimes is of great importance when looking at hegemony. Cooperation is fashioned through negotiation and policy coordination. If individuals, groups or states implement decisions or act in the global interconnected milieu, they need to share objectives, anticipate other's actions and thus act responsibly and collectively to ensure that others are not harmed by their actions. Keohane uses game theory to indicate how a defection by one party often leads to mutual defection that is not in favour of all parties- whilst mutual compliance gives the highest payoff and mutual gain for both parties (Keohane, 1984: 109). On this assumption, cooperation is imperative to hegemony and survival in the world system. This is in stark contrast with the Neorealist perspective, which follows a more malevolent, and 'egoist' self-serving strategy for domination (Keohane, 1984: 13).

It is argued by Keohane (1984: 57) that regimes are essential in facilitating cooperation. He defines regimes as collectively accepted rules, regulations, norms, and mutual expectations and goals- albeit implicit or explicitly implemented (Keohane, 1984: 57). Thus, regimes are guiding forces for collective action based on shared notions of what the outcome of actions should be. Examples of regimes such as these are the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) /WTO rounds or the Nuclear Non- Proliferation regimes, which are based on shared notions on how trade should be, conducted (GATT) or the legality concerning weapons of mass destruction.

Keohane (1984: 58) provides four key areas in the definition of regimes:

- Principles
- Norms
- Rules

- Decision making procedures

Principles refer to the driving force or rationale behind member actions. This is like the mission statement or purpose of the regime- as they are usually manifested as explicit goals such as free trade, abolishment of nuclear weapons or the elimination of mines in Africa. Norms are more implicit in that they refer to deeper guiding principles or obligations that a member has. Norms are not explicit in their guiding of behaviour; they are less visible than principles and influences actions in an indirect manner. A good example of norms is that of human rights being a norm that guides the sanitation of minefields in Mozambique or Angola.

Rules are more concrete and explicit than norms or principles as they are more unequivocally manifested (much like principles) in a tangible form. Rules are the stipulated criteria for action, for example it is not permissible to distribute or plant land mines. Decision- making procedures are an aspect of regimes, which chiefly focuses on the implementation of principles. The action of practically applying the mission of the regime is what makes decision- making important. This has bearing on the bureaucracy or functioning of the regime and how it translates principles into actions (Keohane, 1984: 58).
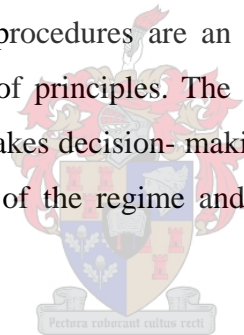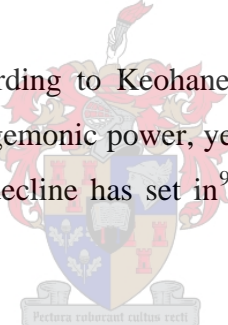
Regimes facilitate cooperation. The advent of regimes, according to Keohane (1984: 59- 60), has given more legitimacy to the behaviour of actors within the world system whilst also ensuring that action is taken on key areas based on mutually accepted self interest. Thus, regimes create blocs or groups that order themselves according to niche interests. These interests are based on shared principles, norms, rules and decision-making processes (Keohane, 1984: 58).

Membership of these regimes is of great importance to most actors as it guarantees access to resources and alliances, which it greter security. Accessibility to regimes is imperative for many as these institutions become a 'soft power' capability which states can harness to further their national interest and/ or possibly ascend to hegemony. Shared values and norms are one of the chief criteria when subscribing to a regime. Countries which harbour weapons of mass destruction (WMD) would not

be members of a regime which encourages nuclear non- proliferation[8] based on the notion (perceived value) that WMDs are taboo.

Shared beliefs, according to Keohane (1984: 111) do give a platform for actors to acts appropriate to the norms and values of their regime- based on rules and principles, yet this also constrains the information acquisition process as information is usually culturally biased. These constraints, Keohane (1984: 111), refer to as bounded rationality. Bounded rationality is the cultural filter or bias that enables a unit to make sense of information through their personal cultural perspective. Within regimes, change at the unit or state level can take place- but only under the condition that units change the manner in which their principles, norms, rules and decision-making (interests) are perceived by others (Keohane, 1984: 132). In changing the manner in which interests are perceived or information is observed, one can establish regime change.

Regimes or shared beliefs, according to Keohane (1984: 182, 183), are based on cooperation in the advent of a hegemonic power, yet these regimes can continue their existence long after hegemonic decline has set in[9]. He cites four examples of such regimes[10]:

- Economic Regimes (GATT)
- Monetary Regimes (Bretton Woods)
- Trade Regimes (Reducing Tariffs)
- Oil Regimes

In concluding this section it should be noted that both the realist and liberal perspectives have now been explored concerning their framework and implications

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[8] The irony is many states such as the US do harbour WMDs, yet they are still involved with regimes opposing this. The question should be how can states legitimise this. The answer is soft power.

[9] Hegemonic rise, saturation and decline will be looked at in the section on Cox and hegemony.

[10] Keohane gives these examples of regimes existing after hegemony. Thus, he assumes that US hegemony is- and has been in decline since before 1984 when he authored *After Hegemony*. The validity of this claim will be evaluated in the third chapter.

for hegemony. The Neoliberal perspective will now be looked at further- focusing on Joseph Nye's work on 'soft power'. Thereafter, the constructivist and Coxian perspective will briefly be explored in order to build and expand on the Neoliberal 'soft power' concepts of international norms and ideas as catalysts for global structural change.

2.3 Soft Power: A Neoliberal Perspective

Hegemony has now been explored with regards to its material and non- material manifestation. As mentioned earlier- this study highlights the non- material aspect of hegemony. This is why, in this section we will look at the concept of 'soft power' as an integral non- material sphere of hegemony and power within the contemporary world system. This section draws on Joseph Nye's book *Soft Power- the Means to Success in World Politics* in order to indicate what exactly 'soft power' is. This section will thereafter briefly explore some linkages between soft power and the Neo-Realist, Constructivists and Coxian perspectives of hegemony whereafter the US and China will be looked at with regards to their hegemonic and 'soft power' capabilities.

Joseph Nye (1990: 154) conceptualises power as the 'ability to do things, control others to do what they would not necessarily do'. In material terms this would require the use of coercion, but in non- material or ideal terms power requires influence. Soft power will now be explored with regards to the changing nature of power, the definition itself, and its sources.

Nye (1990: 154) cites five traditional sources of power:

- Territory
- Natural resources
- Strong economy
- Strong military power
- Political stability

He argues that a shift has been taking place which departs from this traditional view on power and hegemony towards a view which tries to take account of the changes associated with an increasingly complex international system. The advent of the information technology revolution has lead to a reconfiguration of how growth and power is perceived by many. Technology has become the pinnacle of the growth drive for many states as they implement highly efficient communication devices which facilitate greater interdependence between most units in the world system (Nye, 1990: 154, 158).

Nye qualifies his argument for this shift in the view of power by noting that in this modern world system there is a real decline in the importance of military power. He argues in true Neoliberal rhetoric that economic supremacy or power is the true foundation on which power is built (Nye, 1990: 159- 160). He notes that military force does not equate to power as military force is often costly in terms of financing wars and military action. Although strong military force is useful in bargaining- it does not help to build on the economic base of a country and is hence not conducive to increasing *real* power (Nye, 1990: 159- 160).

In a further criticism of the Neorealist perspective, Nye (1990: 156- 157) argues that the state (in realist terms) is declining in importance- as the influence of MNCs grow in stature. This is because of the growing primacy of international trade and markets in the global system through technological innovations such as satellite or fibre optics technology- which spreads the internet to all regions of the world (Nye, 1990: 164- 165).

In indicating this shift in the perception of global or structural power, Nye (1990: 166) provides a list of the new or contemporary guise of power:

- Power is less tangible
- Power is to 'get others to want to do your will'
- Power attracts and influences
- Power is Culture, Ideology through institutions

Furthermore, Nye notes that power is also manifested in the ability to set the agendas of others, determining their preferences- thus controlling the values and norms which guide proceedings and actions of others (Nye, 2004: 5). He goes on to argue that in order to 'get others to do your will' states must attract others on the grounds of shared notions, values, agendas, policies or regimes as was indicated in the previous section. This Nye (2004: 7) labels as 'co-optive' power.

Nye provides three possible sources for soft power which will now be looked at- as these are to be some of the chief variables which are to be explored in chapter three. These sources will be looked at individually (2004: 11- 14):
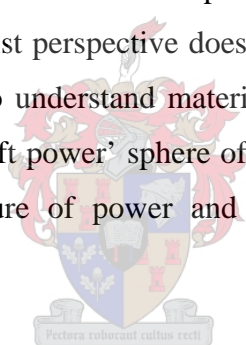
- Culture
- Political Variables
- Foreign Policy

Culture is a chief source of soft power as the acceptance of 'universally accepted values' (Nye, 2004: 11). A state has to make its culture look attractive to others. Other nations must be awed by their practices and beliefs and want to become part of it. Thus, while culture does not equal power, it is a very strong determinant in establishing soft power (Nye, 2004: 12). In other words- the awe which the world experienced in the 2006 Soccer World Cup for the host culture of Germany- did not *per se'* provide Germany with inherent power to conquer other nations or have more bargaining power in the world markets. What it did do was create a feeling of empathy and openness to the culture- which encourages cooperation with other states and/ or groups.

The second variable in establishing the sources of 'soft power' is that of political variables. This variable differs from state to state and focuses on the state and the nature thereof (Nye, 2004: 13). The nature of the state is still an important variable- as with material studies- the defining attributes of a state is what differentiates it from others. The analysis of political variables inevitably has to start with domestic policy as foreign policy is invariably rooted in domestic interests (Du Plessis, 2006: 111). The third variable is that of foreign policy and the character thereof. As mentioned- the foreign policy of a state is invariably linked to domestic policy- thus these two

variables could be clustered, but should be explored independently in order to ensure that there is a clear boundary or distinction between these concepts.

Soft power is very much a Neoliberal concept as it builds on the liberal theory which focuses on cooperation through regimes. This cooperation, it is argued by Nye, is caused by and a result of soft power variables such as culture, political values and foreign policy. It was indicated how soft power is a guiding force which facilitates regime formation and cooperation on a international level. It was found that contemporary soft power is the result of the ever globalising world- which has become more interconnected through technological innovation than ever before (Nye, 1990: 154). Further more it was found that 'soft power' is the power to attract others on the grounds of shared values and norms (Nye, 2004: 6, 7).

The Neorealist perspective could not add to the conceptualisation of 'soft power' as this perspective chiefly focuses on the material sphere of power. Soft power is a non-material concept- hence the realist perspective does not have any real bearing on the term. It is however necessary to understand material or hard power before one can understand the non- material 'soft power' sphere of hegemony. This is done in order to create a more holistic picture of power and domination in the international structure.

With regard to its understanding of soft power, the Constructivist perspective agrees to a certain extent with the Neoliberal and Coxian perspectives. in that non- material factors such as ideas (the amalgamation of culture, norms and values) are regarded as being a principal sphere of power.

2.4 Constructivism and Hegemony

In concluding the section on Neoliberalism it was found that regimes are an integral part of establishing cooperation and 'soft power' capabilities in a chaotic and anarchic global structure. This section will look at what the Constructivist perspective has to add to this- especially concerning the role of ideas and ideology in influencing global power structures and hegemony. Alexander Wendt's book *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) will be drawn on in this section as this book was written in response to Waltz's book *Theory of International Politics* (1984). Wendt's critique

of the Neorealist perspective gives further insight into its weaknesses. Although he does draw on concepts, which were also used by the Neoliberal school, Wendt goes further in explaining other sources of power that are non- material of nature and are thus judged to influence or form part of 'soft power'.

Wendt (1999: 92) states that there is an over emphasis in both the Neorealist and Neoliberal perspectives on material explanations of hegemony and power. He (Wendt, 1999: 92) tries to move from the explanation of power and interest (in material terms) towards an analytical framework that incorporates:

- Identity
- Ideology
- Discourse
- Culture
- Ideas

Wendt (1999: 94- 95) does not disregard the importance of material criteria for hegemony- he does however argue that non- material or 'ideational' factors are instrumental in the creation of material outcomes. The material world consists and is put together by ideas that guide the actions of actors or units within the global system. Wendt (1999: 96) stated it best when he stipulated that the "meaning of power and interests are largely a function of ideas." He touches on a cardinally important point here which is that non material forces such as culture and identity guides- and is influential (a function according to Wendt) in material or physical outcomes such as hegemony, war or discontinuity in the system.

This argument is made as a critique of the Neorealist's preoccupation with inherent and state- centric approach to power and the use of force. Wendt (1999: 98) gains momentum in his critique of the realist perspective- not agreeing with Waltz (1979) on his definition of ordering principles, character of units and distribution of capabilities.

Wendt's critique of the distribution of capabilities will now be looked at because it is judged the chief variable in the Neorealist perspective on structure (Wendt, 1999: 97). The great difference between the neorealist and constructivist perspectives- with regard to the distribution of capabilities- lies at the core of the research question for this study. The Neorealist perspective focuses on inherent and tangible causes for altered capabilities in the world system whilst the constructivist argue that there is a deeper motivation or cause for the change in the behaviour of units or states. The constructivists and Wendt (1999: 99) believe that ideas are the chief driving force which guides the ordering and distribution of capabilities (albeit hegemonic or balance of power).

In expanding on his theory (1999: 111), Wendt elaborates on the relationship between the material and 'ideational' spheres of power. He argues that these two concepts are mutually influencing and interdependent of one another such as the mind (non-material) and the body (material) akin to 'artesian dualism' or other dualist philosophies (Wendt, 1999: 111-112, 135). Material and non- material forces are enmeshed.

Wendt further reviews the Neorealist and the Neoliberal theories regarding national interest. National interest is but an idea he argues- brought on by the need of individuals (who also have their own interests and ideas) to facilitate a position of power or esteem within the world system as well as in their local constituencies (Wendt, 1999: 114). Interests are ideas (Wendt 1999: 115). Thus if interest are ideas then the ordering or distribution of ideas[11] should be the key to the distribution or order of power within the world system (Wendt, 1999: 135). The importance of brute force or material force is superseded by the ideas that guide them.

In this study, it is argued that ideas and soft power are synonymous as they are both non- material facets of power in the world order. We will look at this causal link and its effect on hegemony- where after 'soft power' will be contextualized as an integral aspect or cog in the greater wheel of hegemony.

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[11] Possibly through regimes- in Neoliberal terms.

Lastly, Robert Cox's theoretical framework- which incorporates many facets of both the realist, liberal and constructivist perspectives- will be looked at as he expands further on the conceptualisation of hegemony and power structures.

2.5 Cox and Hegemony

In this section, Robert Cox's theoretical framework of Historical Dialectics will be looked at as a possible explanation of the 'soft power' sphere of hegemony and global power structures. He incorporates many facets of the Neorealists, Neoliberalists and constructivists whilst also drawing on Gramsci and Polanyi in the construction of his theoretical framework. Cox's work on hegemony and power in international relations is arguably the most influential to date. His amalgamation of concepts over a wide variety of theoretical perspectives into one framework- has afforded him much deserved acclaim. In his book *Approaches to World order* (1996) he looks at the current world system and is discontinuities.

First, before Cox's theoretical framework is explored, some concepts which he deems to be important when looking at hegemony will now be explored. He chiefly cites Gramsci and Machiavelli in his work on hegemony- adding the global level to that of Gramsci's theory that is very much rooted in the local or national level of analysis- whilst also contextualising hegemony within the global structure through his own models which will be explored. Cox also draws distinction between hard or material power and soft power or the power of attraction when he quotes Gramsci that hegemony is like the centaur: 'half man and half beast' (Cox, 1996: 127). This indicates Cox's reasoning that power has two sides: that of coercion and that of consent. He argues that if consent or 'soft power' is effectively applied then coercion is not necessary to enforce hegemony (Cox, 1996: 127). This is the assumption ofhegemony which will chiefly be worked with further in the study.

Cox constructs a multi-tiered approach to analysing and understanding the change and flux within the world system. He creates a model which he names the historical dialectics model that will be looked at now with regards to its analytical and forecasting capacities pertaining to global dominance or the advent of hegemony. Cox uses critical theory to explain and make sense of discontinuity and flux within the

'new world order' (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 86). This is done in order to understand change- especially with regards to structural change as used by the Neorealists.

These two spheres or poles of influence (hard power and soft power) are the chief forces which influence change on a global level. Cox (1996: 56; Bieler and Morton, 2004: 87)) cites Gramci- to demonstrate how hegemony is based on common accepted consent and based on non- material sources instead of material factors. He also notes- in strict Marxist terms- that change in state structures and production modes lead to greater structural change and thus a reconfiguration of economic, political and social structures (Cox, 1996: 54). To further explain this he gives us his model of historical dialectics.

Cox's dialectics model (Cox, 1996: 10) consists of three spheres of influence, with Cox (1996: 98) arguing that the dynamics between these three spheres is determined by historical influences, which is why we will look at the historical framework in conjunction with the dialectical model and (see Diagram 2.1).
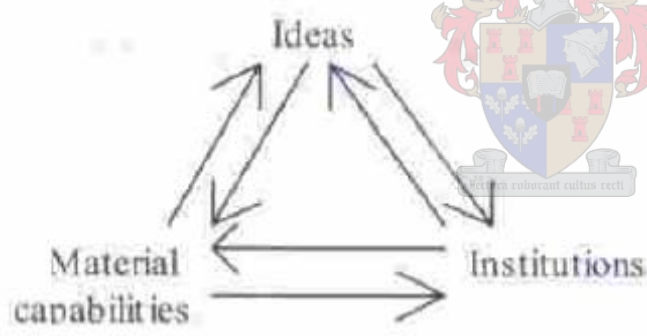

Diagram 2.1
Source: Bieler and Morton (2004: 88)

The dialectics model is built on the assumption that hegemony is based on ideas-which is mutually supported and manifested in the material and institutional spheres (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 86).Cox gives two spheres of ideas in his framework. First, he (1996: 98) identifies ideas as inter- subjective meanings, meanings which are shared by a collective- based on shared notions of culture/ norms and the nature of social relations. Cox's definition of ideas fits well into the Neoliberal notion of regimes, as cultural breeding grounds for cooperation, and the Constructivist notion of

ideas- being the driving force behind international and systemic behaviour (Cox, 1996: 98).

His second definition of ideas explores the ideological sphere of ideas as they pertain to 'collective images of social order for different groups' (Cox, 1996: 99). This refers to the creation of shared ideologies or notions of what is good/ bad or right/ wrong in a system where cultural differentiation is the order of the day. Cox gives us the concept of collective ideas- which focuses on creating shared ideas and goals which facilitate collective action; and the ideological sphere- that centres on creating legitimacy through shared or mutual acceptance of moral codes.

The material sphere, according to Cox (1996: 98) is concerned with hard power elements and is very much grounded in the Neorealist perspective which focuses on technology, natural resources and inherent power, whereas the ideas sphere is in stark contrast with this. The material sphere does not fall into the scope of this thesis- yet it is important to see how the material and non- material merge together and influence one another mutually.

Cox's last sphere in his dialectic model is the institutional sphere. Cox (1996: 99) notes that institutions are formal manifestations of ideas- that reflect the current global power dynamics- whilst also stabilising and affording legitimacy to the order which it creates. The institutional sphere is mutually influenced and upheld by the ideas and material spheres (Cox, 1996: 99). Thus, through the use of institutions, states or especially hegemonic powers can propagate their agendas (ideas) and create mass consent (regimes) in order to limit or negate conflict or material action. Cox adds that institutions uphold 'universal' or hegemonic norms and rules in order to support the dominant mode of production- currently capitalist (Cox, 1996: 137). This is 'soft power' or as Bieler and Morton (2004: 87) calls it, 'option moulding'.

Cox also constructs a historical model- as the forces in his dialectic model are influenced by the effect of history on them- as mentioned earlier. His historical model also consists of three spheres of influence (see Diagram 2.2).
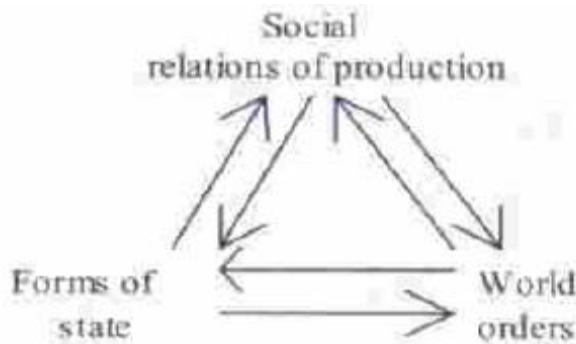
Diagram 2.2
Source: Bieler and Morton (2004: 88)

According to Cox the social relations of production is the 'mechanism of hegemony' or the foundation of power in the world system (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 89). Arguing from the Marxist perspective, Cox notes that the historical nature of the social relations of production is important to understanding the contemporary division of labour (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 89). The change in production relations directly influences the nature of social relations (or social forces according to Cox) as -in a capitalist mode of production-the distribution of production capacities are linked to power and wealth for those at the core, whilst it also locks peripheral actors into a system of exploitation by the core or global bourgeoisie classes (Cox, 1996: 105). These social forces first manifest at the domestic level- and while states are directly influential in the configuration of these forces, the state is also influenced by these forces on an international level (Cox, 1996: 105). This brings us to the second sphere of Cox's historical model, namely, forms of states.

As mentioned earlier- the state is the chief influence in the formation of domestic social forces. In a globalising world which is slowly become borderless as a result of the information technology revolution- social forces can not be contained within state boundaries (Cox, 1996: 105). Just as social forces are determined by the state- so also does social forces determine the nature or actions of the state (Cox, 1996: 90). This is true because the state also consists of human beings- which manage it. People are social forces and part of the policy formation structures (state). Thus the form of state is guided and guides social relations.

Hegemonic world orders is the last level or sphere in Cox's historical model which influences the configuration of the dialectical spheres. This is the final level of purveyance for social forces. The global hegemonic order, according to Cox (1996: 93) is achieved through the expansion of social forces on a global level. Thus social cohesion and hegemony must first be consolidated on a national level before it can be applied on a global level.

Cox also gives us a definition and criteria for achieving hegemony- which is helpful in the analysis of power structures. True to Gramsci, Cox adds- to the neorealist definition of military and resource maximisation (hard power criteria) and the neoliberal definition that is preoccupied with the economic aspect of hegemony- the concept of ideas (socio- political) as a determining factor for hegemony (Cox, 1996: 56). Cox amalgamates the chief sources of hegemony into the one. He gives the material (hard power) source which is chiefly based on the neorealist notion of balance of power through military capabilities. Furthermore he accepts the liberal emphasis on the economic sphere of hegemony, whilst he reiterates the importance of ideas- in upholding hegemony. Thus the chief factors or determinants for hegemony which this study will subscribe to are economic, socio- political (soft power and ideas) and material (hard power) factors.
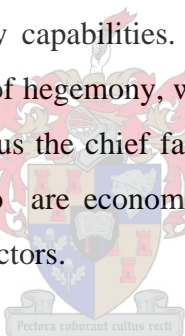
This was a brief description of Cox's historical dialectical framework. It should have become evident how Cox draws on the Neorealist, Neoliberal, Constructivist and even World Systems Theory perspectives in the formation of his model. His model has great analytical capabilities- which in conjunction with the three other perspectives enable us to develop a holistic perspective of the international system and how hegemony operates in it.

2.6 Concluding Remarks on Hegemony and 'Soft Power'

Some theoretical perspectives on hegemony have now been looked at in order to better understand how authors from differing perspectives make sense of the global world order and the domination thereof through hegemony. In summary these

perspectives brought a holistic picture of hegemony to the table- which enables the analysis of current trends to follow in the third chapter.

It was indicated how the Neorealists looked at the unit, system and structure in order to explain the distribution of capabilities of states in their natural drive for domination or a balance of power between one another. It was shown that state or units' capabilities are paramount to their domination of the structure through supremacy of political, military, economic and ideational capacities. In other words the Neorealist School gives a model which allows for the analysis of power by focusing on maximising the economic and military output which is generated. Full control of these spheres of power is regarded as hegemony from this perspective.

The Neoliberal School was then looked at in order to indicate the inefficiencies of the neorealist school whilst adding the importance of facilitating economic cooperation as the chief tool for actors or states to achieve hegemony and legitimacy in the world system. This perspective provided evidence that hegemony not only resides in hard power spheres (military and economic) but that regimes- which are based on mutual values and consent- are also cardinal to the establishment, and more importantly the sustainability, of single state hegemony within the global structure.
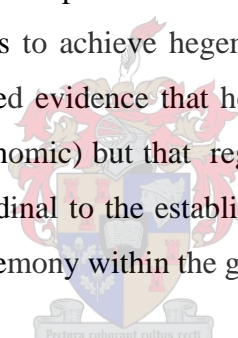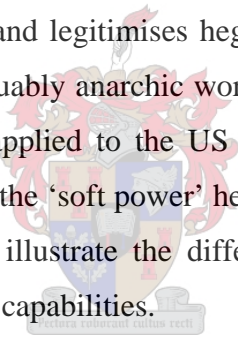
The constructivists added to the liberal argument by adding the importance of ideas in facilitating change and hegemony. This perspective- although only explored superfically- helped to clarify the need for including a non- material approach towards power and hegemony. This approach proved that non- material factors such as ideas, culture and language are paramount to the continuance of the material sphere (military and economic) of hegemony.

The last theoretical perspective was that of Robert Cox- which amalgamated the three prior schools into one comprehensive framework for understanding (and forecasting) power fluctuations in the modern world system. Cox drew on a multitude of theoretical perspectives – including all of those used in this study to create a more holistic theoretical approach which indicates the reciprocal influence of material (military and economic) and non- material (ideas and institutions) factors on one another.

This study will build on the theoretical assumptions which were made through out this chapter, which will serve as a theoretical framework for the analysis of the US and China's power in the contemporary world system. The use of Neorealism helped us to understand the structure of the worlds system with regards to the anarchic nature thereof. The Neoliberal perspective was implemented to indicate the short comings of the neorealist approach and to indicate the importance of cooperation instead of conflict. The Constructivists built on the conceptualisation of power and hegemony by adding the concept of ideas- which Cox contextualised within his comprehensive framework that incorporated and amalgamated all of the theoretical perspectives into one holistic understanding.

This chapter indicated the importance of 'soft power' as an important (and often over looked) factor or enabling sphere of hegemony or domination on a global level. It was found that 'soft power 'enables and legitimises hegemony and is thus imperative in establishing dominance in an arguably anarchic world order. In the next chapter this theoretical information will be applied to the US and China- using a comparative method in which we will explore the 'soft power' hegemonic capabilities of these two super powers. This will better illustrate the difference in the manifestation their respective of hard and soft power capabilities.

Chapter Three

The United States and China: a Comparative Case Study in Hegemony

This section will build on the theoretical platform which was laid out in chapter two- implementing the concepts as they were used by the respective authors of the selected approaches to International Relations. The case study of the US and China is deemed to be a very good example and indication of how power differs in its manifestation between states in the international system. This is also the rationale behind choosing both the US and China as a comparative case study as this methodology clearly contrasts the non- material and structural nature of US 'soft power' with that of the unmistakable growing primacy of Chinese economic 'hard power'. This section will first explore the nature of US hegemony- with the chief focus falling on its 'soft power' characteristics and capabilities and thereafter look at the Peoples Republic of China (China) adhering to the same criteria.

3.1 US Hegemony

The first part of this chapter will focus on the United States of America and its slow evolution and rise to hegemony which it has achieved during the 20th century. The ascendance of the US to hegemony in the 1970s has been well documented with most authors agreeing that the US did achieve primacy or full hegemony (or hegemonic maturity) circa the 1970s. The nature of US primacy is further explored with regards to contesting theories about whether the US fell into decline after the 1970, whether they stagnated and hence did not decline- or whether they are ready to ascend to hegemony for a second time. The issue of unipolarity vs. multipolarity is also to be explored as this is also an imperative in understanding the nature of US hegemony and primacy in the world system- especially with regards to the fragmentation of power and hence the US and other actors' position in the world structure. The section on US hegemony will end by looking at the US's 'soft power' capabilities as it was shown in chapter two that these factors are cardinal and central to upholding and facilitating hegemony within the greater international structure.

3.1.1 Rise to Hegemony: The Ascendance of the Eagle

Immanuel Wallerstein (2002: 60) argues that the ascension of US hegemony started in 1873 with the then world recession. He notes that the US, already at this early stage, controlled the greatest share of world markets, achieved internal political stability and hegemony (in Gramscian terms) and by the 1910s, was the largest producer of steel and automobiles- surpassing Germany. If these factors did not mean that the US was hegemonic- then they definitely heralded the start or ascension to primacy in the international system or structure. As early as the 1930s the US was encountering an ideological adversary in the guise of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi socialist party- this gave impetus for the US to spread their neoliberal ideology as a counter force to that of Hitler's Nazi movement. The drive to counter the Nazi ideology was largely implemented by the US's Office of Wartime Information- which was the chief (and arguably the first) US body that dealt with shaping a positive US image through Hollywood movies and the press[12] (Nye, 2004: 102). Upon disposing of Hitler and his Nazi ideology the US was faced with a new, and equally resilient, rival in the Communist Soviet Union.

It could be argued that US hegemonic ascendance came from the victory of the 2nd World War. The world experienced an a phase of economic stagnation economic[13] since the start of the 20th century and this was accompanied by two unprecedented World Wars- which claimed millions of human lives and arguably caused a crippling global economic depression in the late 1920's and early 1930's (Shannon, 1996: 125). The US could exploit the post World War scenario because of the relative geographic isolation which they experienced during the World Wars- the wars were fought in Europe and thus the US never lost infrastructure during these wars. The US, who

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[12] This was one of the earliest real 'soft power' investments the US made.

[13] The Russian economist Kondratieff (hence the name of the cycle) stumbled unto one of the greatest economical phenomenon's of the 20th century when he discovered a cyclical tendency of rising and falling general price levels (Shannon, 1996: 117). The Kondratieff cycle indicates how fluctuations take on average 50 years (40- 60 years) to repeat itself from an A phase- which signifies economic growth to economic stagnation or a B phase (Chase- Dunn and Grimes, 1995: 405).

were almost structurally unscathed by the wars except for the Pearl Harbour incident, capitalised on the destruction left by the 2nd World War in Europe and Japan and seized the moment to ascend to hegemony just as an economic growth phase initiated in the mid 1940s (Wallerstein, 2002: 61).

US ascendance was encouraged by efficient domestic and foreign policy implementation and ample resources and capital to fuel their industrialisation effort. Most of the European nations were structurally and economically laid to waste during the two World Wars and these states had to be rebuilt. This gave the US the opportunity to export large amounts of necessary goods to Europe and Japan to not only reconstruct the war torn areas- but also fuel it own domestic industrial drive (Wallerstein, 2002: 62). Hence the US economy soon produced at a higher rate and more efficiently than any other economy, the Dollar became the main global currency and US financial services were indeed hegemonic (Guyatt, 2000: 2, 6; Wittkopf, Kegley and Scott, 2003: 204).

A further important aspect of US ascendance, and its unique hegemonic character, is the creation of institutions and regimes (from the liberal perspective) like the United Nations after the Second World War. The UN would serve as a global and international watch dog against future world wars and instability in the system and was built on the Wilsonian ideals of neo- liberal, democratic and capitalist practice which would become the corner stone of the modern and post modern western civilization- and arguably the rest of the world system (Goh, 2003: 79; Nye, 2003: 67). The US had a great influence in the creation of the UN charter and their agendas as a hegemonic power could, and did, easily transform the UN ideology and structure into what they believed it should be (Albright, 1995: 125). US hegemony was reinforced through the ideological control of the formal interstate system which was embodied by the United Nations and all its affiliated bodies thereafter.

A further event which bolstered the US hegemonic position was the advent of 'soft power' institutions which, true to the constructivist perspective, upholds and facilitates hegemony. The Bretton Woods system or 'Liberal International Economic Order' (LIEO) was to become the cornerstone of US hegemony- focussing all economic power on the US (Wittkopf, Kegley and Scott, 2003: 201). From a

neoliberal perspective this is essentially what caused the US to excel in the international system as they created a system which benefited themselves the most- on their terms and based on their values, principles and codes.

The US had successfully ascended to hegemony, yet peace and stability was still arguably not the *status quo* in the international system as proxy conflicts in the Cold War continued to be fought in peripheral zones such as Africa, South- America and East- Asia. The neoliberal, democratic and capitalist ideology was not the only ideology in the world system although propagated by the US hegemonic state. Social-communism in Russia and China strongly opposed the US's neoliberal agenda and this became the basis of the Cold War stand off. This created a bipolar balance of power within the world system with the US and Russia balancing each other's power successfully- yet the US still had a superior economy and as a result thereof a superior military and they were still considered hegemonic until the 1970s (Kupchan, 1999: 20)

The war in Vietnam- which was another proxy war- signified a turning point for US hegemony. The Vietnam War cost the US government dearly with regards to its economic, military and political power expenditure. Despite the US's influence in the global economy, it was unable to prevent the devastating effects resulting from the economic stagnation[14] as well as the OPEC oil crisis (Cox, 2002: 56). The pressure on the US economy in conjunction with strong internal and external opposition to the war was hard felt by the US government- which inevitably caused many to doubt the strength or authenticity of so called US hegemony.

The US did try to retain their ideological hold on the international system-implementing a multitude of programs which would bolster image through enhancing their public diplomacy[15]. The United States Information Agency (USIA) came into being soon after the Bretton Woods system and its chief function was to increase US 'soft power' ever since (Wittkopf, Kegley and Scott, 2003: 139). This agency used

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[14] Referring to negative price levels which adversely affect economic performance of the system as a whole.

[15] Public diplomacy can, according to Wittkopf, Kegley and Scott (2003: 139), be normatively refered to as propaganda on an international level.

various methods to spread US values throughout the world, ensuring that the US was perceived as benign and thus a legitimate and justified hegemonic power (Wittkopf, Kegley and Scott, 2003: 139).

The decades dating up to the 1970- and possibly stretching up to the 1990's were dominated by the Neorealist school of thought- concerned with balance of power, military capabilities and essentially hard power variables. The theoretical domination of the neorealist perspective ons was followed by what became known asa the inter-paradigm debate, where different theories competed for pre-eminence. The post 1970 US hegemonic character will now be evaluated according to this multi tiered approach in order to incorporate the Neoliberal, Constructivist and Coxian perspectives. In doing so we will explore whether US hegemony fell into decline, stagnated or whether it successfully negated or 'cheated' the inevitable decline of it supremacy in order to ascend to new hegemony.

3.1.2 Decline vs. Stagnation vs. Neo- Ascension

There are some conflicting perspectives in International Relations as to the nature of US power since their alleged decline in the 1970s with regards to their economic, military and socio- political capabilities. Certain authors like Huntington staunchly defend the decline of US hegemony since the 1970s citing hard power data to indicate exactly this. Others such as Wallerstein note that since the 1970s there has not been the real decline which many where expecting- instead they argue for a stagnation in US primacy with no real ascendance or decline in US primacy. The last approach is the school which predicts a rejuvenation or reinvention of US hegemony – which is set to re-ascend to global primacy. This school is referred to as the new ascension perspective and is mainly concerned with the changing nature of power and the growing primacy of 'soft power' in legitimising hegemonic leadership (or domination in realist terms). These perspectives will now be looked at from a historical perspective- in order to weigh the validity of the perspectives as they pertain directly to the nature of US hegemony and how it relates to Chinese power.

Decline

According to Bieler and Morton (2004: 94) the world system and more importantly the global structure experienced fundamental change in the 1970s. They argue that the shift in internationalised production- into an all encompassing globalised capitalist world structure came to completion and hence in Coxian terms led to the advent of new social forces on a global level that has been unprecedented in the past. This, coupled with the decline of the state in its primacy as chief actor, the growing importance of international organisations, regimes and multinational corporations- have had far reaching implications for the evaluation and manifestation of state capabilities within the new structure (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 94). Nye (1990: 170) agrees with this argument adding that this change in the nature of the global structure led to a diffusion of power – hence changing the manner in which power should be perceived.

The shift in the structure is believed to be linked to the change from a unipolar balance of power towards a multi-polar system- which consists of a multitude of actors and states that have significant influence within the international and global system (Linklater, 1995: 241). It is not entirely clear when this transition occurred- yet with the end of the Cold War some scholars like Samuel Huntington argue for a more equally dispersed power configuration- with one super power (US) and a few major powers balancing the its might. This Huntington refers to as a uni-multipolar system (Huntington, 1999: 35). The advent of this fragmentation, not only gave precedence to a new multi tiered approach to analyse the newly fragmented balance of power in the global structure, but also warranted a re- evaluation of power structures and configurations in general within the modern world system.

As noted earlier the decline of US hegemony has been propagated by many since the early 1970s- with many of these authors arguing from a realist 'hard power' centric perspective. Decline of 'hard power' capabilities does however not necessarily mean total holistic decline as chapter two indicated the importance of 'soft power' variables in the analysis and explanation of hegemony. Decline should then be evaluated, not only from a 'hard power' vantage point- but also from a 'soft power' perspective- in

order to create a more encapsulating and holistic analysis of the foundations of hegemony and power.

Some argue that the US went into decline after or during the 1970s. Wallerstein, for example, (2002) contends that the US is definitely in decline because of economic, military and socio- political incongruence. As early as the 1970s the US has been experiencing economic decline with a growing budget deficit, lack of growth impetus in their domestic markets and constant military intervention (Cox, 2002: 58). The US trade deficit is still a pressing issue for policy makers as the gap is widening between US imports and exports- especially *vis- a vis* its greatest rival to hegemony: the Chinese (Jisi, 2005: 2). According to Blum (2003: 253) the US also experiences debt problems and low saving rates which puts additional strain on the US economic performance and primacy of its economy.

As noted earlier, the 1970s was a turbulent decade for the global economy with the advent of the OPEC oil crisis and the global economy experiencing a negative economic downturn. Furthermore the global system or structure is once again- in the early 21st century- experiencing immense pressure on the global oil markets with the oil price looming dangerously close to $100 a barrel of crude oil- indicative of the structural pressure and decline of the US economy and its protecting regimes. This lack of US economic performance, or pressure on the US economy, could and can be attributed to structural restraints instead of US decline as they are externally (structurally) caused by the nature of the capitalist world system which is conducive to fluctuations of world markets and commodity prices, yet this is experienced by all units within the system. Thus the US economy is arguably not in *real* decline when compared to its rivals in the system- as the entire system is currently experiencing a declin.

Wallerstein propagates that US military decline has been taking place since the Vietnam War- not only was the Vietnam war unsuccessful and ended in a mutually hurting stalemate- but some also argue that the intervention in the Balkans (mid 1990s) Somalia (1993) and the current War on Terrorism and the war in Iraq (Middle East) (2003- ?) signifies the futility and lack of US military influence and hegemony (Wallerstein, 2002: 60, 63; Cox, 2002: 58). The current war against terrorism could

also lead to further decline as the US is currently investing in the region of $437 billion in military spending- to counter an invisible, non- traditional[16] and arguably unconquerable adversary in the guise of Al Qaeda (Jisi, 2005: 2; Blum, 2003: 254). This is the highest amount of capital spent by any country on their military budget- spending 40% of the total global military expenditure (Cox, 2002: 63).

The lack of US economic and military success has had far reaching and undesirable effects on the socio- political well being of the US eagle- as failed military intervention is not only a strain on economic performance but also adversely influences the efficacy of US political influence (soft power) and unconstructively tarnishes the US's image (soft power) in the global eye. US soft power decline is propagated by many scholars who believe that the growing anti-US sentiment is fundamental to the decline of US attractiveness.

Historically, the first source of US unattractiveness is a matter of perspective as some could argue for the advent of anti- US sentiments since their ascension to hegemony. It could also be argued that the US has been experiencing anti American sentiments since their unsuccessful military interventions in Vietnam, the Balkans, Somalia and the current war against terrorism (Wallerstein, 2002: 63). The US did however have some legitimacy in their Cold War campaigns- as they were ideologically opposed to the Communist regime with the Neoliberal agenda giving justification to their interventionist strategies and actions (Wallerstein, 2002: 65). The collapse of the Cold War and the Communist Ideology which was its foundation- heralded a new challenge for US ideological hegemony and legitimacy- as they did not have any antagonist or 'evil' against which they could balance their power. It did however not take the Bush (senior) administration long to find a new ideological opponent in the predominantly Islamic Middle East (Wallerstein, 2002: 66).

The 11th of September 2001 reiterated the ideological opposition which was growing in tension until its breaking point on that fateful day. This new threat was however unlike any the US has ever faced- as this was the first non- material threat to US security (Nye, 2004: 1). The shift from conventional military (hard power) warfare

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[16] Due to the fact that terrorist movements such as Al Qaeda are not localised within a defined state boundary. These movements function across borders.

towards a non state affiliated enemy which does not have any accountability or physical domain in which they are held responsible for their actions- came as a surprise to the US (Blum, 2003: 254). This posed new challenges to the US policy makers. The US answered with a swift and decisive offensive against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, following it up with the lingering liberation (invasion) of Iraq.

This led to a mass resurgence of anti US sentiment all over the globe. The GALLUP International poll and the Euro- barometer have all shown quantitative data which indicates a growing anti- US sentiment in response to US unilateralism and interventionist policies (Nye, 2004: 1). In addition, US popularity in Indonesia declined from 75% in 2000 (before September 11) to a 80% disapproval rating in 2004- with the war in Iraq still with no end in sight and possible conflicts with Iran and North Korea still looming in the future (Zakaria, 2004: 47). Goh (2003: 80) argues that the increased aggression, in hard power terms, which the US has been applying to their post 9/11 international relations have negatively affected their 'soft power' capabilities and this is visible in their growing unattractiveness and unpopularity in the international realm.

Goh (2003: 89) argues that the US's reaction to the September 11 attacks severely destabilised their 'soft power' capabilities as they not only lost a significant amount of influence over other actors within the system- but this also cost the US many alliances due to the incongruence in their actions and policies. To explain: US 'soft power' is very much built on regimes [17]which uphold shared values and codes within the system and are based on mutual acceptance. The US was very much a champion and father of this system and most of the regimes which are paramount to it (having been instrumental in the creation and sustenance of these values through formal institutional means). Yet with the US's retort to 9/11 they have found that they are losing alliances in the light of (Goh, 2003: 84- 85, 90):

- inconsistent military targets (why did the US not invade North Korea which proclaimed to have WMD capabilities)

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[17] As indicated in chapter 2

- growing unilateralism which adversely affects consensus building (e.g. not signing the Kyoto protocol and invading Iraq with no UN support)
- refusing to submit to UN war crimes tribunals
- allies fear retribution by those who are aligned against the US (which are growing in number)

The decline of US hegemony (soft power) can also be attributed to the 'blow back' or adverse reaction which was forced through military intervention in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Goh, 2003: 82). 'Blowback' as a term, within this context, refers strictly to the advent of malevolent reaction by terrorist movements to the *actions* of the perceived aggressors (US)- and most importantly not the ideas which they propagate but rather their physical actions (Goh, 2003: 82). Thus, according to Goh, terrorist and fundamentalist reaction and anti US sentiment which is causal to it- does not stem from the deficiency of shared ideas between the US and the terrorist- but rather from the direct policy and military influence which the US is exerting in the Middle East and the rest of the world. This suggests that the US is experiencing a decline in 'soft power' in the light of their opting for hard power influence – which adversely affects 'soft power' capabilities and hence the ability to influence others within the international system.
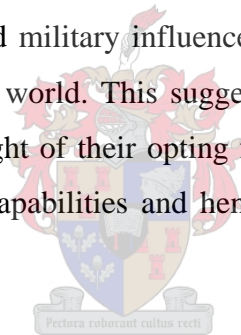
The US is alienating the world through the use of 'hard power'. It needs to reinvigorate its 'soft power' capabilities in order to stem the avalanche of anti US sentiment which is growing in momentum against them. The US has lost a great amount of legitimacy in the eyes of the world- in the light of their military interventionist policies and actions. Legitimacy is imperative to the advent and sustenance of global hegemony. This does, however, indicate decline in 'soft power' for the US- yet the damage is not irreparable.

Samuel Huntington is a staunch advocator of US decline- focusing on differentiation between cultures (or civilisations) as the main cause for conflict within the system (Huntington, 1993: 22). Huntington (1999: 36- 37) provides a list of US policies and actions which he argues are the cause for the growing anti- US sentiment and thus the decline in US 'soft power':

- pressurises states to conform to US values (overtly and covertly)

- prevents and controls other nations' military capabilities

- enforces US law and propagates US values in other states

- applies sanctions based on the US's notion of what is right or wrong

- promotes economic liberalism- contradicting this by also promoting US MNCs' interest above that of other countries' MNCs

- shapes agendas and influence leadership in IGOs (UN, WTO, IMF, etc.)

- intervene in sovereign states (Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Somalia, Balkans, etc.)

- force economic policies on sovereign states (Structural Adjustment Programmes)

- military expansionism and the labelling of states as 'rogue' or evil based on US values

These are all actions and policy manoeuvres which indicate the growing need for the US to flex its muscles in the world system- with total disregard for the legitimacy of their actions. This damages the perception that the US is a benign hegemonic power- in addition to tarnishing the US's ability to wield 'soft power' in the future- as they are not deemed to be a legitimate hegemonic force due to their waning popularity.
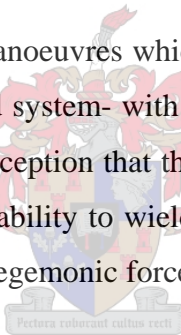
Although some aspects of US decline could be explained in realist terms as being structurally induced, there is a great body of convincing evidence which suggests that the US have in fact, since the 1970s, been experiencing some degree of hegemonic decline both in hard and soft power spheres. This does, however, not account for the fact that, three decades later, the US is still in a position which is (if not full hegemony) at least something resembling a leader or chief authority in the international system. Hence the advent of the stagnation and neo- hegemony schools of thought.

Stagnation

The stagnation school of thought is chiefly concerned with the changing nature of the world system and the manner in which this alters the way that units interact with one another. The main argument qualifying this is that although decline has been proclaimed by many with regards to both hard and soft power variables- this does not account for the continued primacy of the US in the world system. Nye argues that the world is currently experiencing military hegemony (USA), economic multipolarity (USA, China, EU, India and Japan) and also socio- political multipolarity(Nye, 2003: 65).

This is indicative of the complexity and multi facetted nature of the concept of hegemony- as full hegemony would refer to hegemony on all levels- whilst one must be able to differentiate between the spheres within hegemony as identified by Cox (economic, military, political and social hegemony). In other words one could opt to argue for a stagnating hegemony in the US's case- decline in some spheres such as 'soft power' leads to an ascendance of 'hard power' spheres. This balancing act could hardly be perceived as hegemony- yet seems to have enabled the US to stay afloat in the turbulent world system.
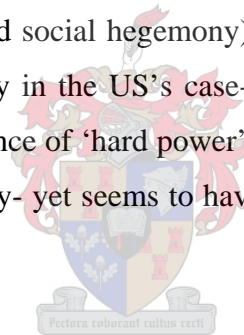
Nye (1990: 170) also argues that the change in power and how we perceive it is closely linked to the change in the global structure and the diffusion of power which was a product thereof. The change towards multipolarity has also further exacerbated the anomalies and dichotomies which surround power and hegemony. Joffe (1997: 23) also adds to this, noting that military power is being replaced in its primacy by economic factors as a driving force for development, and ideological factors as an enabling and legitimising sphere of hegemony. Thus conventional studies might suggest US decline, whilst a multi tiered approach does indicate a far more complex guise of US power- which is seemingly linked to structural change and not a real change in the US's capabilities.

Further arguments which propagate US hegemonic stagnation are made by Keohane, who suggest that the growth in multilateralism and regimes are indicative of the decline of US hegemony and primacy- as an attempt to attain legitimacy for their

leadership in the advent of their arguable decline (Keohane, 1984: 181, 244). He argues that in full hegemony there is no need for regimes and multilateral interaction as the hegemonic power is in control of all key institutions and domains of power within the world system (Keohane, 1984: 181). Thus as the US loses its hegemonic grip on its foes- they plug the holes with regimes and consensus building- in order to stay afloat. Hence the stagnating affects on US hegemony[18]. These actions underline in the importance of soft power in both establishing and maintaining hegemony.

Neo- Ascension

Some authors go further by arguing for a new ascension of US hegemony- in stark contrast with the decline school of thought. On a normative level one could easily argue for US hegemony in a system which is evidently and seemingly still under a substantial amount of US influence and authority. Yet it is imperative to delve deeper into the nature of US power- in order to better understand their policies and actions; and to predict or forecast the possibility of neo ascension to hegemony. It is however important to note that stagnation does not qualify for neo ascension- as stagnation refers to a decline (or lack of ascendance) in some spheres whilst there is ascendance in other spheres- with no growth or decline in real terms. Neo ascension refers to a new rise to full hegemony with regards to all spheres. This would require primacy on economic, military and socio- political spheres- and must incorporate all criteria as prescribed by the neorealist School with regards to military capabilities, the neoliberal School referring to all the economic factors and regime formation; and the Constructivist / Cox perspective which emphasises the importance of ideas and 'soft variables' in the analysis of US hegemony.

In the past and still in some circles, US military capabilities have been the chief variable in the analysis of US hegemony and power. Nye (2003: 65) believes that the US is still in a hegemonic position with regards to their military capabilities across the globe- with technologically superior equipment and also as mentioned earlier- the

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[18] Yet this does not account for the tendency of the US to engage in unilateral diplomacy. One might be correct to argue that the US is lacking a coherent foreign policy strategy for engaging with other states- acting on an *ad hoc* base- whilst addressing issues unilaterally or multilaterally as they arise.

biggest expenditure on this – in the world. Thus with regards to military hegemony the US can still be judged hegemonic- yet this power is debatably being challenged and balanced by China, India, Pakistan, European Union, Russia, and other alliances which are poled against the US due to ideological, economic and political indiscrepancies. The lack of military resolve in Vietnam, Balkans, Somalia and Iraq does however suggest that the US is not in full hegemony with regards to it military- as they have yet to experience a resounding military victory in since the 1970s. Thus it would be very optimistic and slightly naïve to suggest that the US is experiencing military hegemony- not to mention neo- ascension within this sphere.

In the economic sphere of hegemony the US is experiencing increasing challenges- yet it remains very strong (as in the case of their military capabilities). Cox (2002: 61) notes that the US is still very much in control of the global economy as 65% of the top 80 MNCs in the world are owned by the US. This means that the US wields great bargaining power when engaging with others surrounding economic issues- as the US has great interest in their MNCs performing well. The multipolar nature of the structure has meant that states are often marginalised with the advent of MNCs and private capital which circumvents the state in a globalised economy. Thus states, with the US being no exception, have started to focus on enabling MNCs in order to bolster their own economic performance whilst this also gives prestige (soft power) to the nation which can claim to be the host of a Microsoft or a Google.

Blum (2003: 252) observes that the key driving force behind US economic primacy is their emphasis on innovation in science and technology as a driving force for growth. This enables US businesses to outstrip their opponents based on creating superior quality goods at lower prices or creating goods which render old technology useless- such as the advent of the personal computer- which rendered the old typewriter useless. This type of knowledge based innovation is key to establishing US primacy in the global markets- as some say 'knowledge is power' and the distribution thereof determines the winners or losers (Keohane, 1984: 245). This knowledge is the driving force behind US economic hegemony and more importantly the reinvigoration of its economy which could facilitate re- ascension to hegemony.

The US is also in control of institutional spheres of the global economy such as the IMF and World Bank which enables them to set the terms of trade according to their needs- thus assisting them to 'liberalise' untouched markets under the auspices of 'free trade' (Blum, 2003: 257). In controlling these institutions the US has a physical realm in which they can propagate their agendas and ideas- thus formalising their primacy in world markets (Blum, 2003: 245). The institutional sphere of US economic strength can be perceived as 'soft power' as the influence which they wield within these structures are immense and far reaching- whilst also enabling and 'legitimising' their behaviour (Blum, 2003: 246).

US economic prominence is also closely linked to regimes- which alike to institutions- legitimise US actions through creating consensus and cooperation on the *status quo* of how business is conducted. These regimes formalise interaction especially with regards to trade, monetary and economic issues whilst they are mostly based on US values and needs- hence benefiting itself the most (Keohane, 2003: 139). Keohane (1984: 139) argues that this is however beneficial to the system and all units within it- noting that stable oil prices are a product of US patronage in the system. This statement was however made in 1984- whilst current tendencies in the oil price indicates that the US is waning in it control of oil prices[19].

The US economy is judged by Nye (2003:65) to not be hegemonic- with the advent of a more multipolar trade system at the moment- as the EU, Japan and of course China are growing in strength *vis a vis* the US. Thus it would also not be fair to assume that the US could re-ascend to economic primacy as in the post World War II days. The power of US hegemony is however still very much entrenched in institutional spheres- which allows them to act freely and justify their actions accordingly - yet not in a full hegemonic or dominating manner.

On the ideational levels the US seems to have the most primacy or strength within the system- at the moment. Goh (2003: 80) notesthat US power resides in:

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[19] It could also be that high oil prices are in fact beneficial to US economic performance.

- US values and cultural appeal

- The perception that US hegemony is benign

- US actions/ power is legitimate based on consent

These are all 'soft power' variables which Goh indicates. These variables are imperative to the re- ascendance of US hegemony as it is these factors which form the base of US primacy. It was however indicated that anti- US sentiments and US unilateral diplomacy severely retarded US 'soft power'. This is why the next section is wholly devoted to exploring the nature of US hegemony exclusively with regards to its 'soft power' capabilities.

It is argued that the US is not in the process of new ascension- in the light of discrepancies with regards to all the spheres of hegemony. Yet the US still exerts much influence in the world system which is inexplicable- unless one explores the 'soft power' capabilities which serve to attract, legitimise and enable US hegemony. This is why in the next section we will look at the current nature of US 'soft power'- having indicated that it has declined in real terms, it is still important to explore the nature of US 'soft power' in order to predict or forecast the future of the US and how it will behave.
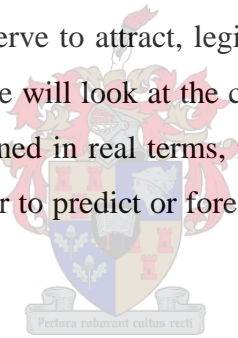
3.1.3 US Soft Power: Us or Me?

Up to now this chapter has chiefly looked at the US with regards to its ascendance to hegemony, where after it focused on the different perspectives there are on US hegemony since the argued structural change in the 1970s. The true nature of US 'soft power' has been alluded to at many stages of this study- and now the US's 'soft power' capabilities will be explored with regards to its current guise. The rationale for this section is to prove that US 'soft power' is the chief enabling factor- which either halted US decline, or halted US ascension in order for the US to still be in an arguably hegemonic position. This is done to answer the question of 'what makes the US hegemonic'.

To answer the question of what makes the US hegemonic, one must first seek to answer the question of 'how the US gets away with it'. Wallerstein (2002: 66) argues that the US gets away with their interventionist and dominating behaviour through the creation of alliances and regimes. US actions can only be justified or called legitimate if others agree to it- exactly as in the case of state sovereignty. This is chiefly done through careful foreign policy formulation and the implementation of regimes and international institutions which uphold this. The exact manner in which US 'soft power' is attained through setting the agendas in international realm, so the US also keeps others from allying against them in order to retain the position of authority (Joffe, 1997: 16). Thus, as Joffe (1997: 23) notes, US 'soft power has the ability to both attract (pull) and repel (push) depending on the context and manner in which it is implemented- or made to be perceived by the rest of the world.

The creation of regimes helps to facilitate cooperation and consensus in a self help system (as have been proven in chapter 2), whilst this creates interdependence among all involved with these agreements (Joffe, 1997: 25). If a state could control the agendas of these structural modes of interaction (regimes) - for instance being able to set the terms of trade, then it could very well be considered hegemonic- as they are in control of the system and how it functions. US 'soft power' enables them to control the mode of interaction within the structure through control of regimes and their agendas (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 94). Some refer to this as embedded liberalism- the entrenchment of the US values of free trade and the capitalist modes of production within regimes and other formal international governmental organisations such as the UN, IMF and World Bank (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 94).

Joseph Nye (2004.B: 1) notes that the advent of the information technology (IT) revolution has been a great opportunity for the US to further monopolise its ideological agenda within this realm. The advent of the internet, satellites, fibre optics and global connectivity has made it easy for not only states but all peoples of the world to share information and more importantly ideas (Nye, 1990: 164- 165). The US has a great opportunity to harness the free flow of information through their ideological filters- in order to create a better picture of them within the world's eye. This is also then a source of US 'soft power' as the US is arguably at the pinnacle of the information technology revolution with Microsoft, Google and many other key

companies in this sector pleading their alliance to the eagle in addition to the US hosting the most sites of any country in the world (Nye, 2004.A: 34). This also links back to the earlier statements made about the power of knowledge- and how the allocation and control of this knowledge relates back to primacy and structural power (hegemony).

There are also a multitude of non- political and non economic sources of 'soft power' which are just as important as regimes and international organisations. Nye (2004.A: 33) provides further sources of US 'soft power' which he deems to be important in attracting others to the US culture:

- 50% of top 500 MNCs are parented from the US
- the US has the most immigrants in the world (6 times that of the nearest rival)
- the US is the number one exporter of films
- the US has an estimated 1, 6 million foreign students
- the US publishes the most books in the world

These few bullets are just some of the factors that make other nations- and more importantly other people (from different cultures) feel attracted to the US and the values (ideas) which these factors purvey. In addition US music and films purvey in a provocative fashion, US values whilst making them attractive and luring to foreign peoples (Nye, 2004.A: 47, 51). This makes the US seem benign and 'good' in the eyes of the world- in contradiction to how war (hard power) makes the US look malign and thus unattractive.

To come back to the question of 'what makes the US hegemonic' – it has become prevalent that for perhaps even three decades the US has 'cheated' hegemonic decline through careful alliance forming in the guise of regimes and international organisations. The US was saved by the fact that they were focusing on 'us' and not 'me'. Thus consensus makes the US hegemonic. Yet at the moment- in the light of growing US unilateralism- the US seems to be focusing on the 'US' (me) and not on 'us' as in their alliances. Thus the US's 'soft power' seems to be waning under the pressure of crumbling alliances- due to over investment and reliance on 'hard power'

capabilities to reach the ends which they could reach if 'soft power' was implemented instead.

We have now looked at arguably the strongest role player in the current global structure with regards to their 'soft power' capabilities. Next China will be looked at, using the same criteria. It will then be judged whether the Chinese do in fact have the capabilities to achieve hegemony in the contemporary world order.

3.2 Chinese Hegemony?

Although it is still fairly evident that China is not currently hegemonic, this country was chosen to form a contrast with the US- with regards to the manifestation or guise of their differing types of power. This section will explore the nature of Chinese power- chiefly with regards to its 'soft power' capabilities- which it is argued are cardinally important to the ascendance or challenge of US hegemony. Thereafter this section will briefly look at the possibility of Chinese hegemonic ascendance in the 21st century.

3.2.1. A Historical Background

The history of China will now be looked at briefly in order to indicate the foundation on which this unique and proud nation is built. Initially, the focus will chiefly be on the most important historical events of the 20th century in Chinese history- chiefly implementing the Neorealist approach. There after section 3.2.2 will explore the Chinese 'soft power' capabilities from a liberal and constructivist perspective- and thus evaluate their ability to draw others unto them selves in the contemporary world system. This is done in order to ultimately indicate the chief differences between the US 'soft power' capabilities and the Chinese's growing economic primacy- which translates into essentially 'hard power' capabilities.

Chinese history is a rich tapestry of cultural brilliance in almost all fields of civilisation: art, philosophy, medicine, religion, law and order. The Chinese civilisation has existed proudly for three thousand years- and has been considered to

by many to be an 'advanced' civilisation or nation- respected by many for this (Gill and Huang, 2006: 17). The Chinese have not been conquered since the Mongol-Ming- Manchu era's when they were annexed by the great Mongol empire of Genghis Khan (Wilkenson, 1999: 160). In the 15th century Zheng He (a Chinese admiral) started a glorious sea voyage- which enabled China to establish diplomatic ties with many nations across the globe and in East Asia (Gill and Huang, 2006: 18). This gave the Chinese great power in the perception that they where a superior race with regards to technology and 'civilisation'.

The Chinese have stayed generally culturally homogenous, due to lack of cultural absorption in the advent of conquest, with 91, 9 % being Han Chinese. This creates internal cohesion as there is seemingly no real cultural resistance from within Chinese borders- excluding the Tiananmen Square incident, which will be looked at later with regards to its effect on Chinese 'soft power' and arguably Tibet's struggle for independence (CIA World Fact Book, 2006: A). The Chinese do have a certain amount of internal cultural hegemony- which has the possibility to transcend borders in order to achieve global hegemony.

The Chinese have yet to achieve full global hegemony in their prosperous and far dating history- hence the analysis will begin with the 1970s and the advent of great global and structural change (arguably towards a globalised information age). The end of the Second World War saw Mao Zedong take over the reigns of China in a revolution which toppled the then Chinese government. Mao installed a rigorous regime based on Social Communism which arguably still lasts to this day, yet with the demise of Mao in 1976 the Chinese saw an opportunity to lift themselves from the economic doldrums which were caused by the structural turbulence of the 1970s and the almost 30 years of communist style economic practices (Van Ness, 2001: 12).

Deng Xiaoping followed Mao as leader of the CCP in 1978, and immediately introduced great reform and transformation of the Chinese state (Van Ness, 2001: 12). With the advent of Deng's leadership- China sought to incorporate the rest of the world (chiefly the West) into their political and more importantly their economic spheres. This however required great structural change for the Chinese as their economy was dwindling in the milieu of the global economic decline in the 1970s.

Thus the Chinese embarked on what could only be perceived as the greatest economic miracle of all time- through the use of technological and macro economic reform and innovation (Hale and Hale, 2003: 36).

Economic transformation of China during the 1980s and 1990s saw unprecedented economic growth for China in the world economy and in the East Asian region- based on disciplined macro economic policy and practice (Krugman, 2000: 172). According to Bijian (2005: 1) the Chinese economy has been experiencing an average growth in GDP of 9, 4 % since reform was implemented by Deng in 1978. Bijian goes further to indicate that China is now the third largest proponent of foreign trade, and one of the most lucrative states for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the world- as they have low cost/ high quality labour which ensures low production cost whilst upholding high quality levels (Bijian, 2005: 1). This exceptional growth has heralded great development for the Chinese state- on a level which has not been seen in the contemporary history.

This strategy was chiefly based on state controlled liberalisation of markets and increased low cost production (Friedberg, 2005: 29). The centrally planned opening of markets allowed foreign capital to enter China freely, yet the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) still exerted and exerts pressure on labour movements to ensure a lucrative FDI atmosphere. The essentially communist approach to the capitalist mode of production has clearly worked for China- as they successfully dispersed ownership between the state and private ownership. In 2003 it was recorded that 45% of the Chinese economic output came from the private sector, somewhat dwarfing the 37% which originated from state owned corporate ventures (Hale and Hale, 2003: 40).

The advent of new (capitalist) modes of production - leads to the creation of new social forces (Wilkenson, 1999: 162). The advent of this new capitalist mode of production within China has lead to a heightened awareness of the Chinese population with regards to freedom, democracy and human rights (Neoliberal values which accompany the capitalist mode of production). This was encapsulated by the Tiananmen Square debacle in 1987- which saw thousands of Chinese students protesting the poor human rights record of the Chinese government (Mahbubani, 2005: 3). This event did not reflect well on the Chinese government embarrassing

them as they failed to disperse the protest peacefully- the entire world observing this on CNN and global news networks (Mahbubani, 1993: 12).

The great Chinese transformation- although chiefly economic- also took place on a political level with great care being taken by the Chinese elites to reform the CCP (Mahbubani, 2005: 3). This ultimately enabled the Chinese economic drive- through creating structures which could uphold the capitalist system within their borders whilst still adhering to the Communist mode of political rule. The focus in the CCP also started to fall on gaining legitimacy by eliminating corruption and thus focusing more on the nation's well being instead of personal or party well being (Mahbubani, 2005: 3).

Although the Chinese have seen some considerable transformation since the 1970's with regards to their economic and political spheres- they have yet to grow in hard power military capacity. Christenson (2001: 11) notes that Chinese military capabilities are yet to reach threatening levels- as they are still inferior to US military capabilities, in addition to the fact that they have not been able (or willing) to wage a war with their adversaries in Taiwan. The Chinese also have considerable external disputes within its region with a multitude of countries such as: Nepal, Taiwan, Turkestan, Japan, India, Vietnam and Indonesia (Wilkenson, 1999: 163). The fact that these disputes remain unresolved could give some indication as to the Chinese's unwillingness to turn to 'hard power' in addressing conflicts within the greater South East Asian region. This reluctance to resort to military action- could either suggest that the Chinese are not strong enough in the 'hard power' capabilities, or/and that they are opting for a more 'soft power' diplomatic answer to the dilemmas of their region. It is argued that the reason for this could be both.

3.2.2 Does the Dragon Possess 'Soft Power'?

The growing primacy of the Chinese Dragon has now been looked at with regards to its own structural change (within Chinese borders) that led them to reinvent their economy. This section will now move from this departing point to explore the 'soft power' aspects of China- evaluating the possibilities of Chinese ascendance to full global hegemony. In exploring Chinese 'soft power' it should become clear that-

although they do in fact possess significant 'soft power' capabilities- they do not have enough structural or entrenched 'soft power' which allows a power to be hegemonic and thus able to control the system and all actors within it.

On a normative level the Chinese do posses a significant amount of 'soft power' which is arguably growing (in contrast to US soft power arguably declining) as the Chinese culture becomes more open to others. Nye (2004: 88) lists a few aspects of Chinese 'soft power' which are all factors that help Chinese culture and values to become more acceptable and attractive to other cultures:

- Nobel Prize for literature (Gao Xingjian)
- Films win prestigious international prizes (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon)
- Sport stars are becoming more prevalent (Yao Ming- basket ball star)
- Diaspora very strong throughout world (2.4 Million in US)
- In addition Hale and Hale (2003: 37) notes that space travel was also achieved with the Shenzou 5 shuttle

Gill and Huang's (2006: 19) quote of Chinese president Hu Jintao- indicates best how the Chinese approach soft power noting that: 'The Chinese culture belongs not only to the Chinese but also to the rest of the world…' This indicates the Chinese eagerness to attract other (non- Chinese people) to their culture and world view. Thus the Chinese culture is becoming more attractive and accessible than 10 or 20 years ago.

One of the chief carriers of culture is language. The key to cultural purveyance of the system and structure is word of mouth, and that is language. It is also fairly evident that the Chinese have realised this as they are currently investing in the region of $200 Million through the Chinese National Office of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language- to enhance and increase the amount of foreigners speaking Chinese (Gill and Huang, 2006: 18). This is also evident in the creation of many centres which encourage this, such as the Centre for Chinese Studies in Stellenbosch (South Africa). In enabling others to speak your language you open up their minds to concepts from a Chinese perspective- this then enables others to have cultural empathy which attracts and draws others to your cause. An indication of the growing attractiveness of the

Chinese culture is evident in the growing number of foreign scholars who visit Chinese learning institutions (three times that of the last decade), whilst the US have been experiencing a negative trend with regards to this (numbers down by 2, 4% in last decade) (Gill and Huang, 2006: 18)[20].

Chinese 'soft power' does not only reside in the cultural/ language sphere. The Chinese economy (business communities and trade agreements) is arguably their greatest source of attraction for others[21] (Kaplan, 2005: 1). The unprecedented economic growth which China has been experiencing for almost 25 years has provided great FDI opportunities for foreign investors. This has essentially put China back on the world map as the capitalist mode of production, in conjunction with strong communist state control of labour, creates an environment that is conducive to a low in put/ high output economics. This combination leads to inflated profits for foreign investors, the prospect of which lures many to China.

The paradoxical Chinese model of capitalism/ communism has had some in uproar due to human rights issues amongst others[22], yet others seem to be attracted to this. China is increasingly growing its alliances with many developing and under developed nations- in order to build shared values and consensus on the *status quo*. China has become increasingly important in balancing US trade/ economic interests- through providing an alternative to US lead SAPs and relief programs (which are often inefficient). The recent move by both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to knock on Chinese doors for aid instead of the IMF- is indicative of this (Gill and Huang, 2006: 20). China is also increasing its strategic alliances with India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA), Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Laos, Iran and North Korea in order to build consensus and attract others to its cause (Gill and Huang, 2006: 20).

On the diplomatic front China seems to be strengthening its portfolio through implementing a foreign policy which encourages Chinese socio- economic growth on

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[20] This does indicate a shift in cultural attractiveness (soft power) from the US towards the Chinese.

[21] This is argued from a Neoliberal perspective as markets could also be perceived as an area where shared values and norms are experienced

[22] The problems of the Chinese system will be looked at later.

the domestic front whilst creating stability and cohesion on the international level (Gill and Huang, 2006: 21). The Chinese have recently started to implement international aid programs- in order further enhance global stability whilst increasing their perception as a benign alternative to the US. The Chinese have set aside $1.1 billion for aid in 2006- which does indicate a great willingness to alleviate poverty and suffering on an international level (if not domestically) (Gill and Huang, 2006: 23).

China is also increasing its membership of international institutions and organisations to further bolster their image and power within the global structure. They are currently taking a leading role in the ASEAN region as a member of the WTO, UN Security Council and many other regional and international institutions (Gill and Huang, 2006: 22; Hale and Hale, 2003: 41). Thus, the Chinese are growing their capabilities concerning the institutional or formal manifestation of relations between states. This serves to increase their ability to set, or at least influence, the agenda within these structures.

Within the Neoliberal and Coxian paradigms, hegemony and 'soft power' depend on consensus and cooperation. Hegemony does not depend purely on coercion but also on the acceptance of all (or most) actors in the system on the grounds of shared values, principles, codes, etc. The advent of regimes is of great importance in ascending and upholding global hegemony. Chinese regimes are not plentiful as most globally recognised regimes chiefly find their origins in the US. It is however important to explore Chinese membership to the US sponsored regimes as this has direct bearing on US/ China relations.

As mentioned in the section on US hegemony, the US needs partners and allies to legitimise and give meaning to their foreign policy actions and regimes which uphold their dominant neoliberal agenda. China is arguably the most important ally on which the US should (and does) count (Jisi, 2005: 1). With the US losing a lot of support since its aggressive interventions in the Middle East- it has become even more important for them to gain influential allies such as China in order to counter the

declining trend of its regimes- especially with regards to WMD's and free trade (Lampton, 2003: 40).

Chinese membership of US regimes is an imperative to the US with regards to counterterrorism, non- proliferation, Middle East and the trade/ finance sphere (Jisi, 2005: 1). Chinese partisanship to these regimes gives the impression of a benign power which wants to cooperate in global politics without the need to rely on unilateralism or dubious politics to achieve positive outcomes for all actors. The Chinese seem to be fervently promoting multilateralism under the auspices of creating global and more importantly- regional stability as a foundation for development (Malik, 2002: 254; Bijian, 2005: 1-2). This increases Chinese attractiveness and thus their ability to influence others without having to resort to coercion, but rather through cooperation and the implementation of its 'soft power' capabilities.

3.2.3. Chinese Dominance of the 21st Century?

The key sources of Chinese 'soft power' have now been looked at. Now the possibility of Chinese hegemonic ascendance will be explored briefly- in order to evaluate the possibility of the Chinese dragon to transform its unprecedented economic growth in to 'hard power' hegemony *and* ideational or ideological control of the structure. To be able to evaluate or forecast possible Chinese hegemonic ascension one must explore their strategy for the future. The Chinese have given some indication that they are in fact following a strategic trajectory which could have them ascend to hegemonic dominance in the 21st century.

The Chinese strategy or 'grand strategy' as some refer to it- is chiefly centred on slowly building their economic capacity and capabilities in order to gain regional dominance whilst also balancing US interests in a benign manner (Christenson, 2001: 13). Jisi (2005: 5) also observed that the Chinese are not forcing their capabilities but that they are rather opting for a prolonged ascension to possible hegemony. Thus China is not acting with great urgency with regards to their power and how it manifests in the world system. The emphasis, for possibly the next 20- 30 years, seems to fall on developing their soft power capabilities on a sturdy economic

platform (Christenson, 2001: 13). This can, however, only transpire if China can eradicate the large scale development problems which they still share with most of the developing and third world countries.

Bijian (2005: 2) notes that development of key institutions and spheres is an imperative to the ascension and well being of the Chinese dragon. He lists four areas which are found wanting with regards to Chinese development and possible hegemonic ascendance:

- industrialisation without social upheaval
- a peaceful pursuit of energy and resources (e.g. oil and steel)
- stable democratisation[23]
- regional integration and cohesion before they can be hegemonic on an international or global level

These are all problems that are consistent with a country which has had to balance a capitalist mode of production with a centrally planned communist political system. The anomalies which arise from this paradoxical marriage of capitalism and communism has had some adverse effects on Chinese society and structures, yet at he same time it has allowed the Chinese to outstrip all their opponents on the economic playing field at thus grow at unprecedented levels for the last 25 years (Mahbubani, 2005: 3).

The Chinese also face some further hurdles in their path to hegemony as they are the most populous country in the world (1, 3 billion people) - yet they are facing large scale poverty due to the lack of effective distribution of wealth and capital (Bijian, 2005: 1; Mahbubani, 2005: 3). The disparity of income between the 'haves' and the 'have- nots' are so great in China that development of social capital should be a great focus point for Chinese decision makers- if they want to develop their country in a sustainable manner. The gap between the rich and the poor creates animosity and lack of domestic cohesion-thus retarding China's ability to achieve internal hegemony.

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[23] Although some might argue that democracy is not a prerequisite for economic growth (Friedberg, 2005: 29).

A further barrier to Chinese global primacy is the fact they lack a coherent agenda with regard to their actions or behaviour within the world system (Gill and Huang, 2006: 26). The Chinese seem to be engaging selectively with units and states within the system without overtly being biased to any single cause or bloc. This is not necessarily a problem, yet they engage with the US on trade and finance issues while at the same time strengthening diplomatic ties with a known miscreant of international relations- Robert Mugabe (authoritarian leader of Zimbabwe). Playing the field on both sides could be dangerous as this has a negative effect on alliance or consensus building. This lack of coherence with regards to their policies does indicate an erratic and unstable foreign policy making or diplomatic machinery which could affect Chinese alliances and their power to attract.

Within the Coxian model the Chinese seem to have hegemonic tendencies with regards to the economic sphere- and could very well become the chief authority or hegemonic actor within this particular sphere. On the material 'hard power' level the Chinese are still found wanting due to the increase in US 'hard power' as well as the US's superior technology with regards to this. The Chinese should be able to convert economic might into military capabilities, and achieve hegemony in this sphere, if they opted to do so. Yet as have been noted this could diminish 'soft power'.
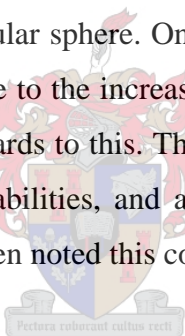
The last level or sphere of hegemony is that of ideas. It is argued that this is the sphere where the Chinese should focus on enhancing- as this is the sphere which mainly centres on non- material 'soft power' capabilities. It has been noted that the Chinese are growing these capabilities, yet they are still over- shadowed by the great cultural appeal of the US values of democracy, freedom and human rights. Thus Chinese hegemonic ascendance depends on their ability in the future to attract others to their culture, language, values and practices whilst also upholding the material and economic spheres through formal international institutions. This can be done- and the Chinese seem to know exactly how: 'bide our time, build our capabilities' (Chinese proverb). Joseph Nye, the man who first coined the term 'soft power' also resonates this point noting that 'soft power' is not something that happens over night, but takes time to implement and reap the rewards (Nye, 2004.A: 99).

This chapter explored the capabilities of both the US and China- chiefly looking at their 'soft power' or non- material capabilities in achieving hegemony. Chapter four will briefly revisit the key issues concerning this study and evaluate the future of hegemony- with regards to arguably the chief role players (US and China) in the contemporary world system or structure.
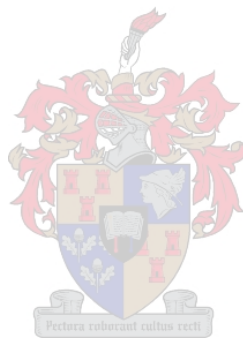
Chapter Four
Conclusion

4.1 Summary

This study focused on creating a theoretical base on which the analysis of the US and China's capabilities could be tested. Chapter three saw the application of selected theoretical approaches to hegemony, focusing in particular on its non- material 'soft power' aspect. This section will briefly revisit the key findings of this study- in order to clarify and summarise the bulk of this study into a more manageable and easy accessible form.

The study chiefly focused on the effect of 'soft power' on the advent and more importantly the sustenance of hegemony or structural dominance at a global level. This causal effect was emphasised and practically indicated- by implementing a comparative case study methodology- which was deemed to best serve as an application of the theory provided by International Relations scholars.

The Neorealist perspective provided an effective framework for the analysis of global power relations- focusing on the relations between unit (chiefly states), systems and the structure which encompasses all within it. This perspective focused excessively on hard power- whilst possibly alluding to the non- material sphere of hegemony in some instances. One does have to understand hard power in order to understand what 'soft power' is. The Neorealist perspective also brought strategies for hegemony to the table- yet these were preoccupied with balancing power within an anarchic structure. This called for a strategy of self interest and power maximisation- in order to stay afloat (survive) in a self help global atmosphere. This preoccupation with the zero-sum (hard power centric) game in international politics is the chief downfall of this theory- hence a demand for the Neoliberal approach to further our understanding of hegemony and its 'soft power' realm.

The Neoliberal approach emphasised the need for consensus and alliance building through the creation of regimes and institutions. In stark contrast with the realist

perspective the liberal perspective propagates cooperation instead of defection (in the realist egoist paradigm) as the chief strategy for achieving hegemony or dominance. It was found that this strategy does lend itself to a more non-material (soft power) approach to hegemony. Cooperation is better than conflict. The Neoliberal perspective reasoned in unison with the Constructivist theory which was explored. Thus the Constructivists also helped in conceptualising hegemony in non- material terms- adding that the non- material is always the base and foundation which up holds the material and tangible hard power sphere. Robert Cox's historical and dialectical models help to contextualise the body of theory into one manageable and all encompassing work- which emphasised the need for a distinction between material, ideas and institutional spheres of the globalised world.

Joseph Nye's term 'soft power' was explored, as it is the chief aspect which is almost synonymous with non- material power. It was found that 'soft power' attracts and legitimises actions whilst building alliances and consensus. It was found that 'soft power' is a more peaceful alternative to the zero- sum strategy of the realists- that focuses excessively on hard power capabilities. Thus the 'soft power' of attraction creates uniform behaviour far better than force in 'hard power' terms.

The next chapter served as a practical application of the theory of 'soft power' and hegemony. Both in the cases on the US and China it was indicated *what* their respective 'soft power' capabilities are and *how* this will be influential in their future possible ascension to hegemony. It was found that although the US has massive 'soft power' capabilities (coupled with massive hard power abilities) they are in fact experiencing some real decline with regards to their attractiveness in the international realm. The growing anti- US sentiment- in response to their unilateral and 'hard power approach to international relations has tarnished the ability of its non- material influence, arguably helped the US cheat decline since the 1970s.

On the other hand it was found that the Chinese are engaging their international counterparts more effectively with regards to cultural exchange awareness. The growing attractiveness of China, in addition to their unprecedented economic growth- has lead to an ascendance or growth tendency with regards to Chinese 'soft power' and attractiveness to the international community. Thus it could very well be argued

that the US is in relative decline- especially with regards to the growing Chinese dragon.

There is however one discrepancy which inevitably drives a stake into the spoke of this analysis. In illustrating US 'soft power' decline and Chinese growth- the study has not accounted for the fact that the US is still arguably hegemonic and in control of the system through the control and maintenance of the Neoliberal ideology and agenda within the global structure. Regimes and international organisations all have entrenched Neoliberal values which propagate freedom, democracy and liberalisation of markets. It is argued that this is the core of the US' hegemonic capabilities (as they are the authors of these values) and hence enables the US to perform hard power activities such as the war in Iraq- without any legal base or sufficient allies.

In conclusion, this study has tried to show that hegemony- especially material or 'hard power' hegemony- can only occur in cases where it is built on a sturdy non-material and 'soft power' foundation. The United States of America is a prime example of how 'soft power' can help a state to prevent decline through consensus and alliance formation. The Chinese on the other hand have noticed this – whilst the US possibly forgot the value of soft power' as a sustaining capability for hegemony. Thus China is growing and nurturing its 'soft power' capabilities in order to create an image of a benevolent super power, whilst the US are increasingly being perceived as malevolent- which is not conducive to hegemony or dominance in the international system.

It would then not be inconceivable that- as (or if) the US continues to lose control of their 'soft power' capabilities, they will probably be overshadowed by the Chinese dragon in (or more probably after) the next 20- 30 years. This is a mere forecast and not a prediction, but if the Chinese ideology could become the dominant one- then they can become hegemonic.

4.2 Recommendations for Future Research

This study has chiefly focussed on the effect of 'soft power' in establishing and up holding hegemony within a globalised and internationalised world system. As some of the questions were answered- more questions arose from them. Due to the limited scope of this study these questions could not be addressed hence the need to recommend these questions for future research in the International Relations fields of research.

In exploring the 'soft power' aspect of hegemony it should be fairly evident that the material component of hegemony was not focused on extensively. It is argued that the material sphere of hegemony has been over emphasised and hence does not warrant extensive research in an era which has seen far more prominence of the non- material debate. The ideas sphere (as in this study) and the institutional sphere are still generally uncharted waters- and thus beckon for further investigation.

Furthermore this study could have employed statistical and quantitative methods, yet it is argued that the finding would probably be the same. The numbers approach to a non- material subject such as 'soft power' seems to this author to be ineffectual, yet it is recommended that some quantitative research be done on US and Chinese diasporas, cultural exchange, democratic practise, privatisation of markets and the growing attractiveness of its culture. In quantifying these variables some interesting data should be found especially with regards to how these variables pertain back to enabling and sustaining hegemony.

It is also recommended that the Constructivist approach should be further incorporated into the debate on 'soft power' especially with regards to its insights on the role of language, culture and ideas.

4.3 Conclusion

This study has focused on the effect of 'soft power' on hegemony. In a contemporary world system which is arguably in fluctuation and discontinuity- it is of cardinal importance to have some theoretical framework for the dynamic analysis of global power fluctuations. The growing global paranoia with regards to the US led war in Iraq and the rising oil prices, coupled with the unprecedented economic growth in East Asia (China) has further emphasised the need to study the great nations of our globe with regards to their capabilities to influence the structure.

The chief findings of this study are that the effect of 'soft power' on hegemony is great. 'Soft power' was found to establish, up hold and maintain hegemony- where as 'hard power' has the opposite effect. This was illustrated by the comparative case study of the US and China- which both harness 'soft power' capabilities.

This study has shown that appearances are of great importance in international politics and interaction. States have a responsibility to enhance and nurture their 'soft power' capabilities- lest they become unattractive in the eyes of their adversaries. A lack of 'soft power' can be severely detrimental to the well being of all countries big and small- thus success in the international political game depends on establishing an ideological base for regimes and international institutions which uphold shared values and goals. It is argued that this is the most effective strategy for achieving prominence in a competitive global structure.

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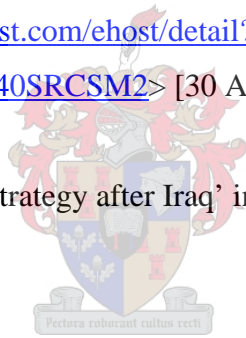
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