

Beyond State and Hegemony: International Orders as Anarchic Meta-Fields

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This paper extends a Bourdieusian practice-based approach to a novel understanding of international orders as “Anarchic Meta-Fields” (AMFs). It first explores the metatheoretical advantages inherent in Field Theory’s expansion toward questions of order, considering the position of Bourdieu at the intersection of Weberian, Durkheimian, and Marxist social theory. It then increases the analytical breadth of preceding “imperial” and “hegemonic” applications of Bourdieu’s framework through two disaggregations—of order and realist notions of hegemony, and realist and neo-Gramscian forms of the same. In a first, Hobbesian turn, the international social space is subsequently conceptualized as an “AMF” created by outward rather than inward projections of power and practice by state nobilities; variations within this global AMF are identified as “subfields”. The openness of Bourdieu’s framework is then argued to allow for the widest range of international orders based on specific configurations of multidimensionally defined capital, and varying forms of doxic practice. The framework is illustrated through an application to the Cold War order as a composite social space, consisting of the global AMF itself, and four distinct, yet heteronomous subfields. The paper concludes with a proposed conceptual and empirical research agenda.

Este artículo amplía uno de los enfoques bourdieusianos, basado en la práctica, hacia una nueva comprensión de los órdenes internacionales como «metacampos anárquicos» (AMF, por sus siglas en inglés). El artículo estudia, en primer lugar, las ventajas metateóricas inherentes a la expansión de la teoría de campos hacia cuestiones de orden, considerando la posición de Bourdieu en la intersección de la teoría social weberiana, durkheimiana y marxista. A continuación, el artículo incrementa la amplitud analítica de las anteriores aplicaciones «imperiales» y «hegemónicas» existentes en el marco de Bourdieu a través de dos desagregaciones: de orden y nociones realistas de hegemonía, así como formas realistas y neogramscianas de la misma. En un primer giro hobbesiano, el espacio social internacional se conceptualiza, en consecuencia, como un «metacampo anárquico» creado por proyecciones hacia fuera en lugar de por proyecciones hacia dentro de poder y práctica por parte de noblezas estatales. Las variaciones existentes dentro de este AMF global se identifican como «subcampos». A continuación, argumentamos que la apertura del marco bourdieusiano permite la existencia del mayor rango de órdenes internacionales basadas en configuraciones específicas de capital definido de forma multidimensional, así como de diversas formas de práctica doxa. El marco de trabajo se ilustra a través de la aplicación al orden de la Guerra Fría como un espacio social compuesto, que consiste en el propio AMF global y cuatro subcampos distintos, pero heterónomos. El artículo concluye con una propuesta de agenda de investigación tanto conceptual como empírica.

Cet article applique l’approche fondée sur la pratique bourdieusienne à une nouvelle perception des ordres internationaux comme «méta-champs anarchiques» (MCA). D’abord, il examine les avantages méta-théoriques inhérents au prolongement théorique de ce champ vers les questions d’ordre, en envisageant la position de Bourdieu comme étant à l’intersection des théories sociales webérienne, durkheimienne et marxiste. Il élargit ensuite le champ de l’analyse des applications «impériales» et «hégémoniques» antérieures du cadre de Bourdieu à l’aide de deux ventilations : par notions d’ordre et de réalisme de l’hégémonie d’une part, et par ses formes réalistes et néo-gramsciennes d’autre part. Conformément à la philosophie de Thomas Hobbes, l’espace social international se conceptualise en premier lieu comme «méta-champ anarchique», qui trouve son origine dans des projections vers l’extérieur, plutôt que l’intérieur, de la puissance et des pratiques de la noblesse étatique, tandis que les variations au sein de ce MCA sont qualifiées de «sous-champs». Dans un deuxième temps, l’ouverture du cadre bourdieusien permettrait l’avènement d’un éventail plus large d’ordres internationaux, grâce aux configurations spécifiques du capital défini selon plusieurs dimensions et diverses formes de pratiques connexes. Pour illustrer ce cadre, il est appliqué à l’ordre de la guerre froide, espace social composite, qui regroupe le MCA mondial lui-même et quatre sous-champs distincts, bien qu’hétéronomes. Pour conclure, l’article propose un programme de recherche conceptuel et empirique.

Introduction

The question of “international order” has long been at the heart of international relations (IR) theorizing; and the related debates have, in recent years, been rekindled by the ongoing crisis of its current—liberal—manifestation, with liberals (Fukuyama 2014; Nye 2017, 16; Deudney and Ikenberry 2018; Ikenberry 2020), realists (Layne 2018;

Mearsheimer 2019; Porter 2020), critical theorists (Cox 1999; Kaldor 2000; Hardt and Negri 2001; Pasha and Murphy 2002; Jahn, 2018, 2019), and adherents of via media approaches (Sørensen 2011; Acharya, 2017, 2018; Buzan and Schouenborg 2018; Cooley and Nexon 2020) each providing their very different perspectives on what is perhaps the central global political phenomenon of our age. This rekindling has taken place in parallel with—but largely separate from—a newer “turn” in the discipline: one centered on a focus on *practice*, sourced in no small part from sociological scholarship. Seldom have these two developments merged to produce comprehensive, methodologically underbuilt, transhistorically applicable practice-based accounts of international order writ large.

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Since entering IR's disciplinary canon, the "practice turn"—also referred to as "International Practice Theory" (IPT)—has only partially and fragmentarily engaged with these macro-perspective questions of IR:¹ Analyses by its various manifestations have usually focused on the smaller scale than the *systemic*, directing their attention toward mapping and conceptualizing practice within transnational groups and individual issue areas rather than the global inter-state social space. This remains a rather curious omission since, as pointed out by Bueger and Gadinger (2014, 66), IPT "does not prescribe a scale in time or space" and "does not necessarily entail to study all the complexity of practice". This scalability in time and space and a refusal to accept levels-of-analysis as ontologically given and neatly separable—for instance, into the "domestic" and the "international" (Adler and Pouliot 2011, 8; Adler-Nissen 2012, 4; Bueger and Gadinger 2015, 66)—makes the prevalent omission of grand questions rather glaring. A focus on the largest-scale phenomena in the discipline—including international order—thus becomes an inviting, as yet under-explored possibility.

Bourdieu's field-theoretic approach is one exception to this rule, as a praxeological approach that, after having been operationalized at smaller scales, has recently intersected with the grand questions of international order, notably in work on *empire* and *hegemony*. Working within International Historical Sociology, Go has, for example, conceptualized both the British and American Empires—their rise and decline—as shaping "global fields", or "arena[s] of struggle in which actors compete for a variety of valued resources, that is, different species of "capital" that are potentially convertible to each other" (Go 2008, 206; see also Go 2013, 2020). Both material changes in these fields—economic regression—and ideational shifts—the emergence of anti-colonialism—lay at the basis of hegemonic decline. Building on this, Nexon and Neumann (2018) have, for their part, used Field Theory as a more conceptually driven pathway toward bridging the gaps between what are referred to as IR's "Hegemonic-Order Theories"—realist and neo-Gramscian approaches to hegemony—by tying the concept to Bourdieu's notion of the state as the sole possessor of "meta-capital": the ability to set the terms of exchange between the other forms of capital that may be of relevance in the global field. The rise and fall of hegemons is thus defined in terms of their continued detention of such meta-capital.

Go's and Nexon and Neumann's moves are significant, in that they introduce Bourdieu's field-theoretic framework and his multi-faceted view of power-as-capital—and hegemony as a store of "meta-capital"—into the macro realm of inter-state relations, over and above more established applications of IPT to transnational interaction or single issue areas. They do, however, come with a limitation that invites further development: Field Theory is only applied to formal empires—as in the Roman and British cases—or combined realist/neo-Gramscian hegemonies—as in the post-Cold War American case. The limitation is an important one: thus circumscribed, any approach to the international would not be able to grasp the periods of order *between* and *outside* of empire under more diffuse forms of ordering, as during the bipolar Cold War, in pre-Concert

Europe (Luard 1992), Renaissance Italy (Mattingly 1988, 47–103), or Classical Greece before Athenian or Spartan hegemony (Little 2007). Neither would it be able to posit possible nonhegemonic, yet ordered futures, with its implicit, binary assumption that either disorder or an alternative—Chinese?—hegemony would result from a US defeat in the defining strategic rivalry of our age.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive view of the widest possible range of international orders through an adapted field-theoretic framework. To that end, a first section will engage with the limitations of Nexon and Neumann's, and, to a lesser extent, Go's applications considering both IR theory and Bourdieusian sociology, and explore the possibility and advantages of expanding it to account for order in a greater range of configurations. In a Hobbesian move departing from their top-down approach, a subsequent section will develop this framework from the bottom up, starting with Bourdieu's conceptualization of the state: The international will be redefined as an *Anarchic Meta-Field* (AMF) composed of sovereign, yet highly entangled states, where encounters of state power and practice maintain varying hierarchical and stable forms of "international order". Section three will then see a brief empirical application of this broadened Bourdieusian framework onto the bipolar Cold War order. The paper will conclude with reflections on a possible field-theoretic research agenda on international order, broadly defined.

Bourdieu, Beyond Realist Hegemony

Bourdieu's Field Theory first entered IR during the 1980s, in one of the seminal texts of the nascent post-positivist challenge to neorealism (Ashley 1984). Over the following decades, it gradually generated several research programs which, as in much of the discipline's "practice turn", were mainly directed toward transnational forms of interaction, or, more occasionally, the study of issue-specific international practice: Representative examples include Bigo and the Paris School's transdisciplinary approach to "(in)securitization" (Bigo, 1996, 2002; Bigo et al. 2007; Bigo and McCluskey 2018), as well as an extensive body of work on a wide range of practices, mostly within epistemic and professional communities (Yves Dezalay and Garth 2002; Pouliot, 2008, 2010), and international and supranational norms and institutions (Mérand 2010; Berling 2012; Adler-Nissen 2014; Goetze 2017; Svendsen and Adler-Nissen 2019; Svendsen 2020; for an application to Russia's historic relations with the West, see also Neumann and Pouliot 2011).

But, as strongly suggested by Adler-Nissen's (2012) edited volume and its restatements of a wide range of concepts central to IR, Bourdieu's potential contribution to the discipline may have remained underutilized, especially when it comes to conceptual engagements with questions long seen as that mainstream's purview. The Bourdieusian approach remains a niche: an albeit prominent expression within one of IR's proliferating "turns", whose effects, according to Beale and Bettiza (2021, 334), have largely remained outside the disciplinary mainstream.

This is a surprising limitation. Bourdieu's framework brings several potential metatheoretical advantages to the study of the "grand" questions of IR, thanks to its position at the intersection of the Marxist, Durkheimian, and Weberian foundations of social theory:² a highly

¹ According to Bueger and Gadinger (2014, 21–58), entered IR's disciplinary canon in five distinct guises: the praxeology of Pierre Bourdieu, communities of practice, narrative approaches, and actor-network theory, and Pierre Boltanski's pragmatic sociology. While distinct, the research programmes driven by these approaches were based on several shared core commitments: a concern with process and evolution, an assumed close link between knowledge and action as collective processes, the view of practices as carriers of materiality, a requirement to apprehend multiplicity, and a performative ontology.

² As pointed out by Pouliot and Mérand (2012, 25; see also Mérand and Pouliot 2008; Swartz 2022), Bourdieu's framework combines Marx's concern with domination and conflict over human needs, Durkheim's concern with symbolic

developed theory of practice, a sophisticated relational ontology, and a deeply reflexive epistemology (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Pouliot and Mérand 2012, 26–32). The result is a widely acknowledged ability to bridge established fissures of social theory like the agential and the structural, objectivism and interpretivism, theory and practice, levels-of-analysis, among others (Bigo 2011, 235–38; Costa and Murphy 2015). Building on this ability, Nexon and Neumann’s intervention in particular has demonstrated the potential contribution of Bourdieusian sociology to grand issues of order by spanning realist and neo-Gramscian conceptualizations of hegemony and empire, and establishing a scaffolding relating micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis (Nexon and Neumann 2018, 663–64).

There is, however, no a priori reason why the application of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework should be limited to hegemonic or imperial orders. Field Theory’s complex, multifaceted social-theoretical pedigree and its meta-theoretical advantages should open the way toward applying its conceptually sophisticated perspective to a much broader array of possible international configurations. As “thinking tools” (Leander 2008), their concepts are open-ended, aimed at making sense of practice as thickly contextualized within a wide range of temporally and spatially bounded social universes. With this holism and flexibility reinforced by a critical awareness of the assumptions undergirding social orders’ sources of stability—and instability—it may, in fact, prove in many ways superior to established accounts of historic, present, and future international orders.

Following from this, I make three initial points below. Firstly, contra Nexon and Neumann’s and Go’s “imperial” approaches, Bourdieusian sociology allows for a disaggregation of “order”, and “hegemony” in the materialist, realist sense of the term within its over-arching framework. Secondly, this also opens the path toward a conceptually coherent disaggregation of *realist* (material) and *neo-Gramscian* (ideational) notions of hegemony, which are *not* necessarily commensurate. Thirdly, with “order” and two types of “hegemony” thus disaggregated, Bourdieusian praxeology provides an unparalleled ability to “travel” in between the distinct social universes previously conceptualized by separate theories of IR, grasping their inherent logics while simultaneously maintaining a *critical* sensitivity to their inherent—and potentially unstable—assumptions.

First Disaggregation: Order and Realist Hegemony

My first disaggregation is one between order and *material*, *realist* conceptualizations of hegemony/empire. The temptation to collapse these two notions into one when applying Bourdieu’s field-theoretic framework to the International emerges from a variety of factors, including his acknowledgment of the hierarchical nature of social orders, and the important role played by the state in ordering modern societies in Bourdieu’s framework: a centralized form of ordering which is then deemed to occur at the inter-state level by Nexon and Neumann (2018, 671).

And yet, neither of these imply a necessary limitation of Bourdieu’s framework to imperial and hegemonic orders in the materialist, realist sense. To start with, rather than there being an either/or, all-or-nothing choice between anarchy and hierarchy-as-hegemony, hierarchy comes in different *degrees*—as argued by Lake (1996): From empire—when anarchy is, in effect, overridden—over hegemony—when

there is, indeed, a single, dominant power within an anarchic system—and the multipolar, more perfectly anarchic orders described by the likes of structural realism. It would therefore be premature to collapse the notion of hierarchy into material hegemony or empire alone, and assume that Bourdieu’s concern for hierarchy would preclude associating it with more diffuse forms of ordering. That such material ordering can be more diffuse than hegemony is also implied by much of IR theory: Order can co-exist with dispersed distributions of power without the involvement of state-hegemons, as inferred by post-hegemonic versions of liberal institutionalism (Keohane 1984; Keohane and Nye 2012), multipolar, structural iterations of realism (Waltz 1979; Layne 1993), and more diffuse constructivist or English school scenarios for nonhegemonic international orders (Kupchan 2012; Womack 2014; Acharya 2018; Buzan and Schouenborg 2018). The realist hegemonic-order perspective captures only a very limited range within a much broader universe of configurations.

Apart from these general IR points—that anarchy and hierarchy do *not* pose a binary choice, and that order has been conceptualized within more diffuse configurations of material power within the IR canon—Bourdieu’s flexible framework itself does *not* posit a view of social *order* that requires a central ordering entity, like the state, or, loosely transposed into the international realm, a hegemon (or hegemonic coalition). To Bourdieu, the state may indeed be a feature of *modern* social orders, but it is not necessary for social order writ large to exist. Statehood is ontologically subordinate to other elements in his conceptual framework—fields, practices, habitus, capital, and doxa. As evidenced by his classic foundational work on the sources of practice, Bourdieu could perfectly account for ordered social spaces in pre-modern societies with scant reference to statehood: There, mutually reinforcing alignments of power and practice, fields, and habitus could emerge from any number of mechanisms, of which *imposition or regulation* by a singular higher authority would be only one (Bourdieu 1977, 159–97). Envisaging the same in “second-order societies” (Buzan 2004, xvii–xviii) or “anarchical societies” (Bull 2012)—which, incidentally, were directly compared to pre-modern societies (Bull 2012, 57–62)—should therefore be possible. In short, *order and material hegemony are distinct phenomena both in IR and in Field Theory, and there is, therefore, no a priori need to collapse them into one.*

Second Disaggregation: Realist and Neo-Gramscian Hegemonies

Once one moves away from the need for an ordering, quasi-state hegemon, another disaggregation is made possible: namely, between realist (material) and neo-Gramscian (ideational) notions of hegemony, which Nexon and Neumann (2018, 671–74) also collapse through their linkage to Bourdieu’s modern state, with its concentrated forms of *both* material and symbolic forms of power. In this view, hegemons are materially dominant, while they also maintain the symbolic legitimacy behind their material dominance in more unpremeditated—doxic—ways, leading to misrecognitions of their power—and the rules upholding it—by themselves, and most of those in lesser positions.

But collapsing power’s material and neo-Gramscian aspects put an unnecessary limitation on Bourdieu’s (1986, 1989) flexible and multidimensional notion of “capital”, and his purposeful disaggregation of the latter into various—economic, social, cultural, symbolic (...)—types. This potentially analytically fruitful multidimensionality is unnecessarily hemmed in when linking all these forms

forms and methodological holism, and Weber’s preoccupation with the cognitive dimensions of structuring principles in a uniquely coherent way.

of capital to one single actor or group of actors through a combined realist/neo-Gramscian view of hegemony. Bourdieu's own abstract approach to fields as "force fields", which can take manifold objective configurations between "dominant"—not commensurate with realist notions of unified "hegemony"—and "dominated", opens up many more configurations than those implied by a coincidence of realist and neo-Gramscian hegemonic distributions of capital (Bourdieu 1998, 40). A coherent *material-cum-symbolic* hegemony is not needed in this framework: Merely, an unequal distribution of capital within the field and the assumptions needed to reify it for actors in various positions within it.

There is, therefore, no need to collapse the critical, neo-Gramscian aspects of Bourdieu's thought into realist versions of Hegemonic-Order Theory: The former is perfectly compatible with more diffuse permutations of material power. *Materially* diffuse yet unequal orders—where (meta-)capital is *not* concentrated in one single hegemon or hegemonic coalition—can still be hegemonic *in the Gramscian sense of the word*, their stability ensured by pervasive, taken-for-granted assumptions. And, conversely, materially hegemonic orders can lack neo-Gramscian forms of hegemony, their continuity reliant to a greater degree on the application of *raw, material* power by a hegemon.

Bourdieu Travels through Space

The above-mentioned disaggregations—between order and realist hegemony on the one hand, and realist and neo-Gramscian forms of hegemony on the other—make it possible to expand Field Theory's analytical breadth, and fully tap into what is perhaps the most important advantage of Bourdieu's theory of practice over mainstream *rationalist*, or *critical* approaches to international order: his refusal to subject ordered practice to pre-set, universal, and transhistorical laws (Adler-Nissen 2012, 8). Instead of being universally "rational", Bourdieu's agents act according to a vague "feel for the game" (Maton 2014, 53), based on conditions specific to a given social space. Beyond a few *formal* postulations—above all, that social spaces are marked by fields with openly defined, relational hierarchies and struggles over multidimensionally defined power-as-capital—Bourdieu's "thinking tools" remain agnostic on the substantive logics of social action, which always remain field-specific (Pouliot and Mérand 2012, 32): How exactly these forms of capital are socially defined and assigned; the doxic assumptions naturalizing accepted practice; the habitus or pre-dispositions of agents. And this enables a wide range of synchronic directions of inquiry on international orders, without many of the biases proffered by established theories of IR.

Field Theory is therefore not just able to capture orders that are materially hegemonic or diffuse, that function according to material or ideational forms of hegemony: It can also capture the widest possible range of "logics" governing practice within those orders by dropping the substantive a priori assumptions often made by rationalist theories about social behavior: In Wendtian terms, it can equally comfortably understand Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian cultures of anarchy (Wendt 1999, 246–312), and much beyond. And it can do so while combining an analytical open-endedness with a well-developed commitment to both social-scientific method and an extreme reflexivity, giving it an edge over established via media approaches to order—which often lack the critical sensitivity to struggle (Bigo 2011, 234)—and those versions of critical theory focused on one specific—economic, gendered, or racial—as opposed to openly

defined, intersectional forms of inequality particular to a given social space. In the next section, the basic framework of this opened-up, Bourdieusian approach to "international order" will be introduced, starting with Bourdieu's notion of the state and its implications for how we view power-as-capital and doxic assumptions within "international order", before moving to its practical application onto the Cold War.

Outlining the AMF

My bottom-up Bourdieusian reconstruction of the "international" will proceed in three stages: It will start by reconceptualizing the sovereign state's position as part of an AMF, reconstructed from the bottom-up, in a Hobbesian vein. It will then elucidate two social elements that shape ordered practices within the AMF: The element of power—interpreted as Bourdieu's multidimensional *capital*—and the element of misrecognition or taken-for-granted assumption—upheld by "doxa" within the field-theoretic context. This will be followed by an empirical case study briefly applying the framework to the AMF at the height of the Cold War. The conclusion will then explore avenues for further development and research, including the addition of a dynamic element of crisis and historic change to what, in this paper, will be a largely *structural* focus.

The State, and the AMF

As stated earlier, rather than being defined by an overarching hegemon, the AMF is conceptualized here from the bottom up, starting from Bourdieu's notion of the modern state: Drawing on authors including Elias and Tilly, his account of its genesis is linked with the problem of integrating and coordinating a growing number of increasingly differentiated, specialized fields through the concentration of various forms of capital and meta-capital within the state (Bourdieu 2014, 166–69, 190–205, 309–11). As a resulting meta-field—or *field of fields*—the state's bureaucratically enshrined issuance of symbolic and other forms of capital then enables the projection of power and meaning, and the shaping of practice *within* a territorially delimited jurisdiction by a "state nobility" (Bourdieu 2014, 182–85).³ The modern state thus becomes "the principal producer of instruments of construction of social reality" (Bourdieu 2014, 168), its own practices upheld as self-evident by deep-seated assumptions rather than a higher intervening authority as the "end term of an infinite regression" (Bourdieu 2014, 208).

Bourdieu's own work says very little about the international sphere (Cohen 2018). While the existence of ordered social spaces beyond the control of any single state has already been acknowledged in the study of *transnational* fields by scholars including Dezalay and adherents of the Paris School of Security Studies (Y. Dezalay and Garth 1996, 311–18; Bigo 1996, 2011, C.A.S.E. Collective 2006, 457–60; 249; Go and Krause 2016; Cohen 2018), little has been said about the *international* as such—that is, the practices governing the interactions *between* states rather than *across* state boundaries. And yet, Schmitz and Witte (2020) have suggested that acknowledging the existence of such an *international* global social space is essential in view of the heteronomy

³ Bourdieu (1998, 40–41) defines the field as "...a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies."

of Bourdieu's fields: They seldom exist in "pure" form, but tend to intersect and interact with others. Coupled with his widely acknowledged ontological transcendence of levels-of-analysis, the introduction of a global, *international* social space as a "field of power and meaning" (A. Schmitz and Witte 2020, 90–91) would address a curious omission: Few would argue that the state nobilities dominating the state as a meta-field are not embedded in the structures and macro-practices of high politics that make up the global, inter-state social space. Acknowledging the existence of this social space in addition to the transnational fields that mark out lower-level politics is an important adjustment.

Bourdieu's view of the state as a meta-field of both power-political competition and structured practice *shaped by and shaping* national fields (Bourdieu 2014, 216–19) can therefore be turned on its head by focusing on state nobilities' *outward* rather than *inward* interactions with power and meaning. These interactions result from encounters with their state-elite peers within an *inter-state* social space distinct from the transnational because of those elites' position within sovereign states with a presumed exclusive authority over their territories and populations. In transnational fields, agents interact horizontally—across borders—and vertically—with their own states and state nobilities; in the inter-state social space, the state nobilities can, by contrast, be seen to operate horizontally, as *assumed* sovereign equals, in the absence of any higher authority. The resulting AMF—a meta-field itself composed of meta-field states—entails its own exchanges of power, assumptions of meaning, and forms of ordered practice⁴ albeit shaped in an environment of competing sovereignties, unlike in lower-level transnational fields: a Bourdieusian counterpart to Buzan's "second-order society" (Buzan 2004, xvii–xviii), or Bull's "anarchical society" (Bull 2012), where struggles for power and meaning, and its associated practices, are shaped *in the absence of an over-arching, definitive authority*.⁵

States are thus doubly entangled: On the one hand, through the interactions of their state nobilities with the many substate fields, which they help to coordinate, and, on the other hand, through their high-politics interactions with their state-elite counterparts, which lie at the basis of the AMF. This acknowledged deep entanglement emerges from Bourdieu's transcendence of "objective" levels of analysis, and conforms to his acceptance of fields as heteronomous (Deer 2014, 121; Cohen 2018; Schmidt-Wellenburg and Bernhard 2020, 83). Substate fields, the state as a meta-field, and the AMF each have their own autonomous logics of power and meaning, but nevertheless influence each other, among others, through the unifying interaction of state elites: Bourdieu's framework will acknowledge the role of elite habitus (Haugaard 2008; Maton 2014; Costa and Murphy 2015)—the historically, socially constructed dispositions that govern their practices—in *shaping* and *being*

shaped by "games" played within their domestic societies, within their states, *and within the international sphere*.

Bourdieu also views fields—and meta-fields—flexibly, as vaguely defined by the extent to which arrangements of power and meaning influence a particular, relational logic of social reality (Swartz 1998, 121). This methodological flexibility of the fields as a "thinking tool" leaves the scholar great leeway in identifying diverging relational logics *within* overarching fields or meta-fields, enabling a further fine-tuning of the AMF: through the identification of geographically or thematically defined subfields alongside an order-encompassing, *global* AMF (for an application to imperial social spaces, see Steinmetz 2016). This "open architecture" of Bourdieu's praxeology allows for the maximization of synchronic analysis of social realities by also looking for variations in their logic: The AMF can thus be supplemented by subfields, where its workings deviate through regional or issue-specific relations of power and meaning, providing for finer-grained understandings of both its global manifestations, and thematic, or regional deviations.

Capital, Doxa, and the Structure of the AMF

This takes my argument from Bourdieu's conceptual toolbox toward the conceptualization of relations of power and meaning within the AMF itself. To Bourdieu, all fields—and, by implication, the AMF proposed above—regulate the distribution and exchange of *power*—conceptualized as various forms of "capital" specific to the field—according to taken-for-granted *rules of the game* (Swartz 1998; Thomson 2014, 66–67). These distributions of capital and doxa will be mutually reinforcing: The latter will ensure the invisibility of a field's existing political economies of power, and hence, the legitimacy of the order itself, by fostering "forms of cognition with practical implications that do not recognize the conditions of their own production" within agents'—in this case, state elites'—habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 164; Deer 2014, 117). Within the AMF, Bourdieu's notions of "capital" and "doxa" can be seen to loosely correspond to realist IR's fixation on the more material manifestations of *power*, and critical theory on its enabling *Gramscian-hegemonic assumptions* (Jackson 2016). Both can exist in an almost infinite number of configurations while adding value to any analysis of international order through their openness and flexibility.

To start with, any field—including the AMF—will have its own distributions *and forms of* capital specific to its social context (Bourdieu 1986; Guzzini 2012, 80–81), and international orders are no different in that regard. Bourdieu commonly identifies four main forms of relational capital—economic, social, cultural, symbolic—all of which are open to the widest range of socially constructed, substantive, and field-specific manifestations. Any given AMF—and associated international orders—will see economic capital distributed unevenly, according to specific practices, among its states; these states will obtain social capital by entertaining alliances, fostering commercial links, etc.) according to similarly particular ways of doing; they will retain cultural capital through a varying ability to influence cultural preferences—broadly defined—throughout the AMF; and their symbolic capital will depend on markers of status and prestige specific to the given social space they inhabit.

More space would allow for a further refinement of these fundamental types of capital toward the specificities of the AMF, but even in their primordial form, they provide a much superior understanding of power and positionality than the mainly material fixations of mainstream realism. Nevertheless, the addition of *military* capital (Mérand 2010)

⁴For an extensive example of such "ordered practice" in the "high politics" of diplomacy, see Pouliot (2010).

⁵The ontological subordination of states to other elements in Bourdieu's framework must be stressed here. Bourdieu was certainly reluctant to grant collective actors—like classes and the state—*independent* ontological status (Wacquant 2013). Instead, as a (meta-)field, the state is generated by a complex *relational* social reality emerging from interacting elite *agents*, their habitus or dispositions, their relative *power* (or "capital"), and the assumptions (or "doxa") shaping unquestioned practices within it. This suggests an ability to conceptualise forms of political organisation that might deviate from the modern, Western Weberian state—with its monopoly of legitimate violence—something clearly implied by Bourdieu's extensive engagements with the genesis of the modern state, and his view of sociology as "constituting the present as a particular case and locating it in the universe of possible cases" (Bourdieu 2014, 87).

would perhaps be the one form of power that may be inescapable within the current framework's anarchic logic. Indeed, most of Bourdieu's theorizing has taken place below the state, which, in its modern incarnations, is assumed to maintain a Weberian monopoly over the "capital of physical force" (Bourdieu, Loic, and Farage 1994, 5). In an anarchic environment—where, by definition, no such monopoly can exist—the struggle over positionality would, by contrast, have to allow for an element of violence, and the type of capital associated with its practical application.

Contrary to *hegemonic* field-theoretic approaches to order, there is no requirement that these forms of power be managed centrally within the AMF through concentrated "meta-capital"—with one, central imperial or hegemonic authority endowed with the ability to set the "terms of exchange" between their different forms. Instead, the *doxa* specific to a given order normalize that order's particular political economies of power: They ensure the taken-for-grantedness, the "misrecognition", of the arbitrariness of the most fundamental rules constituting and governing prevalent definitions, configurations, and exchanges of capital as reified, as "going without saying". *Doxa* can govern interactions in bipolar configurations—as between the two superpowers during the Cold War—or normalize certain practices in more diffuse distributions of power. At actor-level (in the case of the AMF, state elites), they will ensure that agents will "know their place", and that they, quasi-automatically, do not question the position they have been accorded according to the prevailing "rules of the game" (Bourdieu 1977, 167; Swartz 1998, 95–116; Maton 2014, 56–59). They will also ensure that certain practices prevalent within the AMF are taken for granted as well, performed as evident, as emerging from a common-sense understanding of "appropriate" action.

These *doxa* will seldom exist in ideal-type form. Firstly, they will be at a constant risk of decay, leading to potential transformations of any field, including the AMF—a dynamic process which I will briefly touch upon in the conclusion for development in a subsequent paper (Bourdieu 1977, 167–68; Qadir 2015). Secondly—and more importantly, in view of this paper's *structural* focus, their operation will also be shaped by the permeable and therefore heteronomous nature of the AMF and its subfields. As pointed out by Bourdieu, fields' and subfields' logics can flow into each other as agents play overlapping games in interconnected fields with *doxic* practices that can, and do, overrule or cancel each other out. The result will be the occasional inconsistencies—and hypocrisies—that form part and parcel of a heteronomous international order and its agents' "cleft" habitus (Bennett 2007, 201–5), as, eventually, "two truths coexist, with more or less difficulty, in the agents themselves" (Bourdieu 2004, 25). Struggles over capital and position in one subfield may thus come to affect struggles and cancel out the "rules of the game" in another: as when state nobilities engage in—illegal—wars of distraction in an effort to maintain their domestic position and regime security, or when liberal state elites, which would otherwise be expected to promote democracy in one subfield end up tolerating dictatorships because of the competitive logic in another.

The next section will illustrate the above framework through its brief application to international order during the final years of the Cold War (1980–1985). Ideally, a full-length analysis would use the mixed methodologies suggested in the broader Bourdieusian historical and sociological literature (Gorski 2013a; Steinmetz 2018), for instance, by relying on archival research regarding the "enacted practices" of the state nobilities of that era

(Pouliot and Mérand 2012, 49), by devising multiple correspondence analyses for their various forms of capital (Crossley 2008), or by following the three-level model applied by Bourdieu himself (Grenfell 2008b); at this illustrative stage, however, it will mostly rely on a praxeological reading of the secondary literature for the task—providing a "grand sweep" overview of the Cold War order. This reading will involve locating capital—in its various aforementioned forms—and *doxic* practice within the AMF at first, along with the habitus of the various state elites—especially, but not exclusively, those of the two superpowers. Divergences from the overall configurations of power and practice within the AMF are also identified, generating four "subfields"—superpower, liberal, socialist, and non-aligned—as are these subfields' heteronomous entanglements, and the resulting inconsistencies and hypocrisies. The section will end with a brief consideration of the reasons for the order's demise before moving on to this paper's conclusions.

The Cold War as a Composite Social Space

While not hegemonic, at its height, the Cold War order was, most definitely, an *order* where power and practice combined to shape the international social space into a relatively well-defined, global AMF. Dominated by a confrontation between two superpowers and shaped by the legacies of an earlier colonial order and two World Wars, the global AMF was centered on a highly unequal distribution of capital, and a "thin" set of practices constituting the basics of Cold War high politics. Four subfields were generated by practices born of three different configurations of power: bipolar—between the superpowers—*hegemonic*—between the superpowers and their subalterns—and *diffuse*—between non-aligned states resisting superpower domination, and the superpowers themselves. The specific *doxic* practices associated with these configurations resulted, respectively, in a superpower, liberal, socialist, and non-aligned subfield within the all-encompassing global AMF.

The Global AMF

That global AMF's thin set of *doxic* practices included, among others, such foundations of modern international intercourse as sovereignty and territoriality, Western-style diplomacy, international law, and nationalism: In first instance, *all* state elites subscribed to these as natural, taken-for-granted ways to conduct the business of "high politics", as imposed as conditions of membership of the global AMF. Sovereign, territorial statehood, a certain diplomatic practice sourced from the European tradition, a measure of respect for international law, and allegiance to one's state were upheld by the collective symbolic violence that came with being shamed as "uncivilized"; their acceptance was, in fact, a nonnegotiable precondition of participation in the AMF, and state elites' ability to interact with their peers (Aalberts 2014; Buzan 2017). This legacy also meant that, globally at least, "the West" enjoyed a considerable advantage in most, if not all, forms of capital: This was an order that had been shaped over centuries by *its* elites and their extractive, imperial, capitalist political economy, and attendant enlightenment habitus.

The two superpowers now at the pinnacle of this order—and its competitive logic—were both outgrowths of that West. One was a settler-colonial state whose elites had, since the eighteenth century, developed a historically conditioned exceptionalist habitus based on liberalism (Tomes 2014); the other was a Eurasian territorial empire that

had entered Western modernity as a latecomer, and whose elites had, since 1917, adhered to practices grounded in a divergent—Marxist-Leninist, socialist—interpretation of that Western Enlightenment (Moran 1985). Both of these superpowers had taken over the fundamental practices that marked out the Western-imposed “standard of civilization” within the global AMF. They had remained preponderant at the end of World War Two, their economic and military capital far outweighing that of their closest peers, including the former colonial powers. While the US’ liberal doxa did make it insensitive to many of the global AMF’s “legacy” inequalities, both superpowers had also helped modify that global AMF through their opposition to the *formal* practice of *colonialism*, superseded by the latter half of the Cold War by a universally applied right to *self-determination* (Rubinstein 1988; Ryan 2000; McKenna 2017). Most colonial powers had, in the process, lost their empires and been subsumed in the US-dominated, liberal subfield; at the same time, the vast majority of states within the global AMF were former colonies, with elites whose habitus now had to adapt to a skewed distribution of capital, and incorporate practices not of their making.

In this unequal environment, states with a wide array of habitus coalesced around four distinct subfields. First, the two superpowers themselves, who, through their bipolar interactions, created a quite distinct superpower subfield, regulating their order-defining struggle over capital through a discreet set of specially adapted practices. Those same superpowers then dominated a number of smaller states—including, on the liberal side, the former colonial powers—within their part-hegemonic liberal and socialist subfields, where they imposed order through a monopoly on “meta-capital” in the ways described by Nexon and Neumann. In a much more diffuse non-aligned subfield, finally, state elites defined themselves against superpower competition and membership of either of these part-hegemonic subfields, not least thanks to forms of habitus forged after decades of colonialism, resulting in a set of doxic practices aimed at a very different set of themes than those seen elsewhere, based on an avoidance of the logic of superpower competition and a reduction in the inequalities of the global AMF.

The Superpower Subfield

The global AMF was dominated by the bipolar competition between the two superpowers, over all forms of capital; their elites’ habitus were shaped by quite divergent historical trajectories, related but conflicted ideological outlooks, and domestic conditions. Beyond the basic practices constituting “civilized” international intercourse within the global AMF, their doxa therefore diverged considerably. In the United States, the habitus of policymaking elites was marked by the liberal principles long encapsulated in its constitution, its “manifest destiny” projected onto the global stage in a project elaborated during World War Two by its foreign-policy and academic elites (Wertheim 2020). The Soviet leadership’s habitus, by contrast, was grounded in the revolutionary Marxist-Leninism of the top-heavy, democratically centralist Communist Party—although its historically shaped dispositions toward the International could be traced back even further, to Tsarist Russia (Rubinstein 1988, 3–38; Neumann and Pouliot 2011).

This brought cultural and symbolic capital into their confrontation. Most obviously, they competed over capital in its military and economic forms, through arms races and economic competition; but beyond this entanglement with “hard” power-political struggle, they also vied to set

the benchmarks of *cultural* probity—broadly defined—by presenting their own versions of the Enlightenment’s “standard of civilization”. And their confrontation also had a symbolic aspect in attempts to define universal signifiers of prestige and legitimacy—indeed, the very foundations of a good life—in their own, and other societies. Seen in terms of Bourdieu’s multidimensional notion of “capital”, post-Cold War debates as to whether their struggle was primarily power-political or ideological (e.g., Kramer 1999; Wohlforth 2000) thus missed a fundamental point: namely, that superpower competition could not be separated into a simple power-ideology binary.

Soon after World War Two, a very roughly “bipolar” distribution had ensured that neither superpower could obtain a *global* monopoly on meta-capital, and thereby impose its ideologically particular vision of order onto the global AMF as a whole—aided not least by the presence of nuclear weapons in each of the superpowers’ arsenals (Gaddis 1994, 105–18; Kennedy 2017, 429–37). The superpower subfield⁶ emerged from these inconclusive struggles over power: There, contestation occurred according to a number of shared doxic practices that emerged from and regulated their competitive relationship. Doxa specific to the superpower subfield could, for instance, be seen in specific adaptations to established practices carried over from the pre-World War Two era, which became largely taken-for-granted from the 1960s onward: the shift in diplomacy and great power management toward superpower summitry (Andersen and Farrell 1996; Dunn 1996; Spohr and Reynolds 2016); the effective abolition of direct great power war in favor of conventional and nuclear deterrence in core spheres-of-influence, and proxy conflicts in the peripheries (Crockatt 1994; Archer 2002, 549–89; Stone 2012); the management of the strategic balance through an at times incongruous combination of nuclear and conventional arms races, and arms control—among others (Glynn 1992; Green 2020).

The Liberal and Socialist Subfields

The superpowers’ divergent fundamental, universalist assumptions on the nature and purpose of social action were most clearly realized in “their” two separate liberal and socialist subfields, where they shaped both the political economy of capital and doxic practice through their meta-capital, much in Go’s and Nexon and Neumann’s hegemonic vein. On the liberal side, one found a taken-for-granted adherence to the familiar Kantian triad of democracy and human rights as primarily *political* rights (Ikenberry 2012, 128–30), to free trade between free markets (Ruggie 1982; Cerny 2008; Centeno and Cohen 2012), and to the international rule of law (Ikenberry 2012, 125–26): practices aiming for historical progress toward affluence and perpetual peace that, after the US’ failed attempt to turn them into the bedrock of a genuinely *global* post-WW2 order, had either been side-lined—as in the notable case of UN-based multilateralism—or confined to “the Free World” (Schlesinger 1967; Ikenberry 2012, 115–55). The Soviet Union’s Marxist-Leninist counterpart was based on one-party “dictatorships of the proletariat”—or “People’s Democracies”—and the privileging of *social* entitlements over political rights (Przetacznik 1977; Dean 1980), *state-planned* trade between centrally planned economies (Holzman, 1974, 2019; Smith 1979), and a class-based view of international laws and institutions normatively *subordinated to the requirements of universal, revolutionary progress*

⁶See also the “Inter-Imperial Field” suggested by Go (2020, 148).

toward the ultimate goal of peaceful abundance under *Communism* (Glos 1982; Lambelet 1989).

Through their control of meta-capital within their respective subfields, American and Soviet state elites thus set the terms of exchange of military, economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital according to their respective doxa. They ensured the military defenses of their respective client states and regimes; played a central role in providing the public goods necessary to uphold the free-market and socialist economies; led their respective alliances; shaped regional cultural standards; and conveyed and withdrew signifiers of prestige and legitimacy (see Beloff 1978; Lavigne 1983; Cooper and Zycher 1989; Moodie 1989; Vernengo 2021). Meanwhile, they also ensured their own doxic practices would predominate within their subfields on their own terms, through both material and symbolic disciplining practices—albeit not consistently, as argued below.

The Non-Aligned Subfield

In addition, as a result of decolonization, an increasing number of states in the Global South were marked by their position at the bottom of the global AMF's hierarchy, and a habitus shaped by at times centuries of colonialism; the elite agents within this subfield had to navigate between the requirements of their overwhelmingly newly created states—often with weakly defined domestic fields haphazardly adapted to modernity—and the competitive nature of the global AMF (Tassin 2006; Schaufelbuehl et al. 2015). As a result, they were faced with the choice between alignment or non-alignment with either of these superpowers.

Those who did choose—or were pressured into—*alignment* generally strived to adopt at least the appearance of a subordination to the doxic practices of their chosen superpower; but an explicit choice for non-alignment by many of these elites—in addition to those of a handful of “older” states—developed a non-aligned subfield that, while heteronomously entangled with the others, was marked by its own set of practices—some of which were expressly directed *against* both the hegemonic aspirations of the two superpowers and the potential excesses of their global confrontations. While several states—and, more specifically, statespersons—did play a major role in its structuring, this non-aligned subfield was distinguished by a diffuse distribution of capital and meta-capital, and elites whose overwhelmingly post-colonial habitus interacted to generate a distinct set of practices challenging the legacy economic inequalities of the global AMF—albeit not its skewed, doxic “standards of civilization”.

The subfield and its practices emerged from a process that had its beginnings at the very start of decolonization, in a number of meetings that followed the Bandung conference in 1955 (Acharya 2016; Pham and Shilliam 2016), and led to the creation of a specific, loosely structured Non-Aligned Movement at its core in 1961 (Willets 1978; Čavoški 2014; Dinkel 2019, 84–131;). The subfield comprised newly decolonized states of all sizes—from India and Indonesia to Ghana and Cape Verde—with a wide variety of political regimes, alongside more established Marxist polities—like China⁷ and Yugoslavia—which had

⁷ It should be noted here that the non-aligned *subfield* is not entirely commensurate with the *movement*. The People's Republic of China is an important special case in that regard: not formally aligned with either superpower after exiting the socialist subfield following its break with the USSR, it nevertheless remained outside the Non-Aligned Movement while supporting the postcolonial and antihegemonic practices of the movement itself from its distinctly Maoist perspective (Liu and Fan 2021).

refused to join or had left the Soviet-led socialist subfield. Over the decades, its quite de-centered doxic practices beyond a general commitment to non-alignment had come to include a reinforced adherence to “sovereignty” and “self-determination” in a world where both concepts were threatened by the logic of superpower competition, a commitment to a changed global informational and economic order, and to disarmament: In that sense, the states in this subfield were oft-neglected participants, in their own right, in the power struggles of the Cold War (Gopal 1991, 56–58; Dinkel 2019, 190–226).

Heteronomy during the Cold War

As mentioned above, the global AMF and its subfields were heteronomous: Their workings were partially interlocked, among others through the “cleft habitus” of many agents, leading to incongruous and even hypocritical practices. The superpowers' role in propounding a number of ideologically undergirded, universalist doxa—realized within their “showcase” liberal and socialist subfields—often clashed with the requirements of strategic competition emanating from the bipolar superpower subfield. Fears of defection therefore led the United States to support dictatorships, and covertly overthrow democratically elected governments in the “free world”. The necessities of bipolar competition could barely justify the former (D.F. Schmitz 2006, 1–8), but the stigma associated with the latter—blatant violations of doxa central to its own liberal ideology or the global AMF—kept antidemocratic subversion in the shadows, in Europe, and beyond (O'Rourke 2018, 51–53; Poznansky 2020, 55–66). The Soviet Union—with its relatively smaller supply of nonmilitary forms of capital—was more forthright in its violent disciplining interventions in its part-hegemonic subfield, in Hungary 1956, and, especially, after Czechoslovakia 1968: Its revolutionary ideology allowed for much more of these openly disciplining practices to be performed, and explicitly justified through, for instance, the Brezhnev doctrine (Mitchell 1972; Jones 1990, 78–111; Ouimet 2003).

The Cold War battlegrounds of the global South were much more likely to be the object of violent—overt and covert—superpower contention (Allison and Williams 1990, 2–3; McMahon 2013, 6–7). For the superpowers, this meant often seeing their specific liberal or socialist doxa being overruled by the requirements of competition, with both behaving illiberally—in the American case—or imperialistically—in the Soviet case, against their core ideological commitments, as they attempted—and succeeded in—swinging non-aligned states into “their” part-hegemonic subfield through persuasion or coercion: foreign aid, proxy wars, covert, and overt interventions (Westad 2005). The non-aligned subfield's heteronomy partly emerged from these pressures: the contradiction between third-world states striving for real independence and their confrontations with the incentives and pressures of superpower competition. Many “non-aligned” states thus gave in to the logic of bipolar competition by aligning with one of the superpowers—albeit not necessarily in a formal alliance—or adopted practices from either the liberal and socialist subfields rather than the “third way” propounded by the movement (Rajan 1980; Frangonikolopoulos 1995, 68–72; Schaufelbuehl et al. 2015, 908–10; Dinkel 2019, 229–33).

Conclusion

The preceding can only be seen as a brief sketch—hemmed in by limitations of space, but it nevertheless demon-

strates Field Theory's potential to analyze the structure of international orders in ways that combine Bourdieu's open-ended and multidimensional accounts of *power* with a concern for identifying their *misrecognitions*. Inequalities in various forms of power are accounted for, as are the doxa that normalize them both within the global AMF and its various subfields, without a necessary reliance on realist *hegemony* alone. The global AMF itself is a composite social space; bipolarity, not material hegemony, shapes the superpower subfield; and the non-aligned subfield is distinctly diffuse in its logics of power; only the liberal and socialist subfields are hegemonic both in the realist and neo-Gramscian sense. Nevertheless, all of them are ordered, and incorporate taken-for-granted, doxic practices that reify these political economies of capital. In their divergent logics, these subfields' practices also distantly resonate with various IR theories: realist—in the superpower subfield; hegemonic—in the liberal and socialist subfields; and critical-postcolonial, in the non-aligned subfield. Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus "travels" through all these empirically, yet presents a critical, agonistic picture of the Cold War order that incorporates inequality, domination, and resistance.

The illustrative nature of the above framework most obviously calls for further synchronic conceptual development and application. This might involve a much-expanded and finer-grained mapping of any given international order, not least its current liberal manifestation. Its ongoing crisis could thus be subjected to analyses that distinguish between thematic and regional subfields of various configurations, combining a multidimensional, positional view of capital and its attendant struggles with a critical search for misrecognition. Through the notion of heteronomy, it could also explore the multiple entanglements of subfields and fields at various scales—local, regional, subnational, transnational, global—that mark out "heterarchic" (Belmonte and Cerny 2021) governance in the contemporary world order; it could also deploy the open-endedness of Field Theory to incorporate non-Weberian forms of political organization into accounts of international order, for instance, through the notion of "global assemblages" (Abrahamsen and Williams 2014).

Bourdieuian Field Theory's previously remarked parallels to Carrian classical realism (Pouliot and Mérand 2012, 25) and its well-documented combination of realist and critical elements (Howe 1994; Linklater 2001; Molloy 2021) could form another vector for further theoretical exploration. Like Carr and other classical realists, Bourdieu's view of the social is marked by recurring struggles over field-specific forms of power, with the "sublimated essence of the universal" only emerging from "the often merciless clash between particular interests" (Bourdieu, as quoted in Grenfell 2008a, 166); the move away from realist hegemony and the creation of an anarchic environment in which state elites compete for status provide further potential points of contact with more diffuse versions of the paradigm. A "field-theoretic realism" could thus combine realism's traditional preoccupation with power and interest with Field Theory's multidimensional, sociological view of power-as-capital, and its critical sensitivity to the hypocrisies emanating from misrecognition to provide a novel interpretation of that tradition.

It was not in the scope of this paper to conceptualize its framework dynamically, enabling it, for instance, to examine the historic processes that led to the Cold War AMF's collapse: This would require a separate, dedicated paper theorizing *change*. But such a *dynamic, diachronic* development of this framework is one that would also hold much promise.

It would open the way for Bourdieu's field-theoretic view to conceive of the rise and fall of international orders past and present by combining its sophisticated view of *power* and *practice* with an overview of those orders' doxic misrecognitions, and their emergence, crises, and eventual collapse. More speculatively or even prescriptively, such a dynamic view could provide alternative post-liberal futures *not* confined to the emergence of a different hegemon, or to the assumption of chaos in the absence thereof—as often implied by viewpoints based on the collapse of hegemony and order.

Indeed, against the widespread misperceptions of Field Theory's inherently structural, reproductive nature, Bourdieu's sociology is indeed able to conceptualize social change and transformation (Gorski 2013b; Yang 2014): He himself referred to "symbolic revolutions" (Bourdieu 2018), where "doxic eruptions" (Qadir 2015, 157–60) moved doxa from the "universe of the undiscussed" to the "universe of discourse" (Bourdieu 1977, 167–69) in potentially transformative disruptions of social reality (Koch 2020, 7–9). The allure of such a dynamic framework is that it would remain useful "without any explicit theory of history" (Burawoy 2022, 111). As a consequence, humanity—and its orders—would not necessarily be seen to progress (contra liberalism); while ubiquitous, power struggles would be seen to occur in very different socio-cultural contexts, over very different definitions of "power", and would therefore not be reduced to "more of the same" (contra realism); and the overthrow of orders by the less powerful—while potentially facilitated by scholarly work revealing their arbitrariness—would *not* necessarily result in more emancipatory modes of practice (contra much of critical theory—see Bigo 2011, fn. 5; Cronin 1996, 77–79).

Such an open-ended view of history would merely add to Bourdieu's most important potential contribution to IR: his framework's ability to capture the widest range of social configurations. Its complexity and flexibility are also its strengths; they potentially enable the uncovering of a wide variety of ordering logics—and, why not, cosmologies—and historical periods on their own terms. And they do so without the assumptions of universal rationality or historical directionality that come with most established theories of IR, but with a great measure of critical awareness of the inequalities and assumptions underlying all orders. Taking it beyond the established realms of practice theory, toward grand questions of international order and its transformations could open new avenues toward a more holistic understanding of its workings; and in these times of crisis, such understandings are needed more than ever.

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