The Reconfiguration of Power in a Changing World Order[1]

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Abstract

The concept of power is essential to understand the interactions among States in the international arena. Theorists have focused on describing and quantifying it to determine to what extent it aids States in mitigating the anarchic global order. Power has different characteristics, and its rapid and versatile implementation determines how successful a country can be in times of crisis. This article analyzes the evolution of the concept of power to examine how countries should prepare for future global crises.

Resumen

El concepto de poder es esencial para entender las interacciones que se generan entre los estados en la esfera global. Los teóricos de las relaciones internacionales se han enfocado en describir y cuantificar el término de poder con el propósito de determinar hasta qué punto es efectivo para que los Estados puedan mitigar la anarquía. Asimismo, el poder cuenta con diferentes características y la agilidad con la que se instrumente puede determinar su efectividad en tiempos de crisis. Este artículo examina la evolución del concepto de poder para analizar cómo es que los países se deben preparar ante crisis futuras.

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Introduction

Power is one of the most intricate concepts to define in the study of international relations, and yet, it is the primary variable that continuously determines States' actions. How can we define power? How can we measure it? Does power change to adapt to current circumstances? Should the nature of power be rigid, or should it be fluid? Which type of power should States seek to acquire?

This article aims to analyze the preconceived and accepted notions of power and to describe its evolution to determine the best type that countries should accumulate to safeguard their existence in an anarchic international order. The outcomes of this analysis will provide helpful answers regarding what type of power capability is needed and where the State should focus its investment on addressing unknown threats that may undermine its national security.

The concept of power

How power is acknowledged and accumulated determines the international system's structure and equilibrium. Consequentially, these characteristics impact State's priorities and actions in the global arena. For this reason, international relations specialists have always focused on describing, categorizing, and evaluating different types of power. This section will analyze preconceived notions of power to understand why States have sought to acquire specific types and how these have changed over time.

What is power, and how is it measured?

David Baldwin, in *Paradoxes of Power*, emphasized that the current consensus that exists regarding power is that: 1) it is understood and conceived as a relationship among two or more entities; 2) power is set on different bases; and 3) power is a multidimensional phenomenon that varies depending on its extension, weight, costs, and control.[3] Thus, considering that it is built on comparisons, it may be established that the concept of power is a subjective construction. For this reason, perception and reputation also play an essential role. Given that these perceptions change depending on the historical circumstance, they affect how powerful one State feels compared to the rest.

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[3] David A., Baldwin, *Paradoxes of Power* (New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), p. 3.

This dynamic gives it an evolving nature and a qualitative characteristic that is difficult to measure.

Furthermore, Robert Dahl's also focused his studies on international relations and the role power plays in them.[4] He argued that, regardless of what constitutes power, the important aspect is what can be achieved if used. In other words, if a State exercises its power, does it have the ability to change another country's actions? Will it change its behavior as a defense mechanism to avoid power from a third party being exercised against it? Can this type of power be translated into further influence?[5]

This last question enables us to understand how the fluidity of power at the international level has an effect on the global balance of power. In other words, this helps explain why some countries suffer a decline in their power because their military forces become anachronic. It can also explain how some countries that may not have a large territory or population can still be powerful because of their economic capabilities. Henceforth, conceptions of power may diffuse, be modified, or readjusted according to historical circumstances.

In addition, there are two mechanisms to exercise power. The first one is explicit in the implementation of priorities. The second one is implicit and depends on whether a ountry's persuasive power can make others change their actions.[6] The effectiveness of implicit power is directly associated with a reduction in costs.[7]

The need for power: A Realist perspective

Based on a Hobbesian world order, Realist theorists have focused primarily on the concept of power. They have underscored that power is essential for rational states to survive in an anarchic world.[8] The reason is that according to their vision, power mitigates anarchy and defines its position within the international State of affairs, allowing them to pursue their national interests. Traditionally, power has been defined by territory size, population, and military capabilities. For this reason, States focus their national security

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[4] Robert A., Dahl, *Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

[5] Russett, Bruce, "*Bound to Lead*: *The changing Nature of American power.*" By Joseph Nye Jr (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 27.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 25.

[7] David A. Baldwin, *op. cit.,* pp. 91-93.

[8] Paul, Viotti, and Mark, Kauppi, *International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism, Globalism and Beyond* (Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 1987), p.57.

on increasing their political, economic, and military power to guarantee their survival in the anarchic world order.

Under this Realist view, rational States act defensively and based on self-help. They must constantly compare themselves to other countries to anticipate changes in the world balance of power and, thus, anticipate the likelihood of war. In this context, the accumulation of power becomes a decisive factor in mitigating anarchy by allowing them to balance other countries' power until the *status quo* guarantees their existence.[9]

For this reason, national security depends on developing policies oriented to accumulate different types of power. Based on their perception, this information must be made public, so the other states may anticipate what type of power the other country is accumulating. This anticipation will allow them to invest further in an area needing attention to guarantee adequate preparation for future wars.

For instance, if an arms race is evident; a country is looking to expand its territory through wars; or a nation is benefitting from a technological revolution by increasing its economic capacity, then nations must either seek to invest in those areas or form alliances with the powers that have developed it. Disproportionate growth in military equipment, territory, population, or technological innovation may modify the balance of power by creating tensions. In the long run, this may alter the *status quo* in specific regions or globally. Historically, this lack of equilibrium may lead to war.[10] For this reason, perception plays a vital role in defining defense policies to adequately allocate resources to enhance the accumulation of power *vis a vis* other countries.

Different characteristics of power in response to historical events

1) *Hard Power during the consolidation of States*

Since 1648 nation-states have searched for innovative ways to acquire the power to guarantee their survival in the world with an anarchic state of nature. Power has enabled states not only to defend their borders but also to guarantee economic buoyancy. For this reason, since the Treaty of Westphalia, statesmen have traditionally focused their national

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[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Joseph M., Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation. A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," in David A., Baldwin (Ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism. The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 117-124.

strategies on increasing their state power by maintaining equipped and innovative armed forces to protect the territory and, if possible, expand it to enhance economic growth.

In the 19th Century, the great empires focused on maintaining and expanding their power by overarching their national interests overseas. International prestige and national identity were crucial to redefine borders toward creating new states. The paradox was that Empires engaged in competition and conflict with one another to guarantee their survival. Mearsheimer argues that they had to base their rational decision-making on offensive realist policies by increasing their military capability given the uncertainty of whether, in the future, enemies or allies would have the incentive to use their military force against them to pursue their national interests. This built international tension and complicated collaboration among States, which inevitably led to war.[11]

Therefore, when nation-states were consolidating their identity, it was essential for them to have a defined territory, population, and armed forces that would defend their sovereignty. Furthermore, the country needed international recognition to secure its borders, at least *de jure*; and have political stability to pursue economic growth. These essential characteristics: territory, military force, population, and economic capacity were later named by Nye as *hard power*.[12]

2) *Soft Power in an institutionalized world*

In the aftermath of World War I, leaders like President Woodrow Wilson underscored the importance of collaboration and collective security to avoid the scourge of future wars. The triggering events that had led to the unavoidable beginning of the Great War forced international leaders to reconsider how international peace could be obtained. It was true that acquiring power led to survival in an anarchic global sphere but also increased the risk of war. Something was needed, besides acquiring power *per se*, to mitigate anarchy.

In this context, President Woodrow Wilson proposed to create a global framework where collective security could be maintained and cooperation institutionalized. States supported this new institution, the League of Nations, to establish decision-making

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[11]John, Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: WW Norton and Company, Inc., 2001).

[12] Joseph, Nye, *Bound to Lead,* p. 25.

procedures to reduce uncertainty and enhance collaboration. Unfortunately, the framework failed because it lacked of a mechanism to enforce peace.

After the League of Nations failed, it became evident that world powers had to be willing to use their military force to support collective security. This notion was the foundation on which the United Nations was built. Countries agreed that to maintain peace, they had to address global problems comprehensively, find solutions to grant economic well-being, and institutionalize peace. This could be achieved by deploying armed forces or using their capability to persuade and change other States' behavior. For this reason, the United Nations was created under this premise, where collective security was a pillar of the General Assembly. However, it would also have a Security Council at the center of the decision-making because it required the five countries who had the power of veto to be willing to use military force to defend peace.

The United Nations opened the door for a new type of power to gain importance. As Joseph Nye named it, *soft power* became important because it allowed countries that were not dominant world powers to lead in different arenas through the power of ideology and culture. This type of power enabled States to influence the design of international objectives and thus participate in constructing an international framework that would pursue their national interests. By doing so, States were not only mitigating anarchy but also aligning the world's objectives to their own at a reduced military and economic cost.

Nye establishes that *soft power* is based on culture, political values, and foreign policy.[13] Culture may be used to expand a vision or a historical ideology. It may be divided into a classical culture, such as art, music, and literature, that has predominated throughout history and that is strongly associated with one country and specific movement. Alternatively, it can also be a mass popular culture transmitted via cinema, television, artists, and social media.

Soft power also has proven to be essential to expand influence. The use of this power has an impact, and its implementation has low costs compared with hard power. Furthermore, the area of influence may expand without affecting the current *status quo*. The effectiveness lasts longer, and the implicit influence may also change how an international problem is addressed. In this way, countries with limited economic power

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[13] Joseph, Nye, *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 11.

may play an essential role through culture and social media that may develop rapport with future generations.

Hard and soft powers are different. Thus, the costs of using them vary. While the State exercises hard power exclusively, private entities can implement soft power. Another difference is that hard power has a push factor.[14] In contrast, soft power is a pulling power[15] that has the potential to convince of the need for collaboration to exchange best practices, share information, and pursue the same goals in different regions of the planet.

Therefore, towards the end of the 20th Century, soft power gained predominance against hard power for several reasons: it was accessible to all States; it allowed for a broader and comprehensive international arena; it focused on new global threats and challenges; States had a broader scope of influence; and acquiring soft power was economically accessible to all.

3) Smart Power and its interaction among States

The 9/11 terrorist attacks against a hegemonic power changed the global order. The heightened optimism of the 1990s collapsed at the same speed as the World Trade Center in New York City. A Realist view of international relations re-emerged. Hard power was essential to survive, whereas soft power was secondary.

The world had changed, and al-Qaeda's audacious attack against the remaining Super Power forced States and international institutions to re-evaluate their purpose and rethink their capabilities to stand up to the new emerging global challenges. Furthermore, the traditional concept of anarchy had also changed. States not only had to think of other States, but they had to be aware of new emerging actors with asymmetrical power that could efficiently distraught national security without conventional military power.

Amidst this changing international order, where new challenges and actors kept evolving, another type of power, described by Nye as *smart power*, gained traction. This smart power combined hard and soft power that would change depending on circumstances.[16]

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[14] Joseph, Nye, *The Future of Power* (Philadelphia: Perseus Book Group 2001), p. 20.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.,* p. xiv.

Smart power has proved effective because in a multidimensional world, different interactions, depending on the topic and the international challenge that had to be faced, proved to be solved or tackled at different levels. Depending on the level is the power that is preferred.[17]

For instance, on the first level, which defines the structure of the global order, hard power, particularly military capabilities, is essential. At this level, the polarity of the international structure is determined: unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar. Thus, to preserve a specific polarity, States require military leadership. Therefore, at this level, hard power helps States successfully implement effective dissuasive methods to prevent deploying military force that could lead to using nuclear power.

On the second level, economics and trade are the dominant factors. At this level, soft power is more efficient than hard power. This is because multilateral dynamics are predominant at this level, and different non-State actors participate. However, given the fluidity of this structure, illegal activities take place at this level, where terrorists and transnational organized crime take advantage of the economic structure. For this reason, countries have transitioned to using smart power instead.

On the third level, a multiplicity of actors interacts on diverse topics. This level is amorphous and is defined by exogenous variables such as pandemics and natural disasters. As such, no single type of power has proven effective in quickly responding to and mitigating the devastating effects of such challenges. This creates a void where hard and soft power has difficulty solving the emergent nature of the threat and where smart power is implemented but still has to evolve to respond efficiently to these transnational challenges.

Given this constant interaction among levels, Nye explains that smart power can be defined as resources or behaviors. In other words, smart power combines resources to obtain a particular behavior that is aligned with specific national interests and that, in the end, will provide the expected results.[18] For this reason, smart power is considered part of a strategy, and its effectiveness is measured regarding whether objectives were

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[17] *Ibid.,* p. xv.
[18] *Ibid.,* pp. 5-11.

achieved. These objectives are hard to measure because most constitute qualitative trends, such as ideologies or preferences, that adapt to a specific historical circumstance.

In short, power, whether hard, soft, or smart, is a socially constructed concept. It is based on prestige, authority, and legitimacy. It is hard to quantify, given that most of its characteristics are qualitative, and it is also relative because it depends on the perception of the third party. These characteristics are fluid and thus complicate the definition of power to a single concept. Furthermore, given the multidimensional nature of the global order, it has a changing nature, which continues to evolve to mitigate its original purpose: anarchy.

Power and the multidimensional global challenges

At times, the international system is static. This stability is kept when Empires or States that have the power to change their structure are satisfied with it because it gives stability and thus allows them to invest in other areas besides national security. This specific *status quo* allows for specific political agendas to flourish. The States that sustain it have the hard, soft, and smart power to support and institutionalize them within international organizations.

However, it is important to note that not all States will benefit equally; therefore, not all are comfortable with the *status quo*. In every period in history, other countries will constantly defy the current balance of power and look for ways to increase their power to confront it and eventually change it to their benefit. Nevertheless, until they have enough strength, there will be long periods of peace because there is an overall consensus of how the *status quo* is being maintained.

There are other times when exogenous factors shake the existing international order. States could be attacked by non-State actors with civilian infrastructure. This happened on September 11, 2001, when four civilian aircraft struck, to its core, not only an iconic building but also the values and principles on which the global structure had been built since the end of World War II. This forced States to revisit the foundations on which international institutions had been built, protocols to guarantee collective security, and new collaboration to prevent another attack from happening.

Furthermore, these terrorist attacks forced countries to rethink global institutions' effectiveness. For instance, although the European Union was a successful model

regarding supranational economic cooperation, it had yet to agree on security and defense policies. Realist views and national security objectives were too dangerous to change, which is why State objectives were left to national defense policies with a certain degree of cooperation.

This context permeated, albeit slowly, in national political vision. In 2016, the United Kingdom held a referendum on continued European Union membership. This Brexit movement was one of the clear signals that the world's *status quo*, with its democratic values and liberal economy, where not necessarily fitting every country's needs.

The abovementioned situation also became evident in "Make America Great Again," where the then-candidate Donald Trump was able to group all this sentiment and campaigned against migration, free trade, and the leading role of the United States in world politics. His four years of Presidency significantly impacted global affairs: the withdrawal of the Paris Agreement, the increase of tensions among NATO allies, the implementation of a more restrictive trade policy by withdrawing from the Transpacific Partnership, and the renegotiation of the North America Free Trade Agreement. The result of these policies was disruptive to world politics.

For this reason, traditional United States allies rethought their bilateral relations with the hegemonic power. Others, like Germany and France, occupied the void created by Washington to head international topics and focused on maintaining the post-World War II order. In addition, Russia and China took advantage of this opportunity to advance their national interests further in other geographical areas, such as Latin America and Africa.

In this context of uncertainty, the COVID-19 pandemic was an additional devastating shock to the global system. This exogenous variable threatened the international order by unveiling a (dis)order, given that the major powers had no interest in addressing the pandemic multilaterally. The threat had become so overwhelming that countries preferred to find domestic solutions to this global problem. Time was of the essence; thus, while Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States were facing a severe sanitary crisis, the rest of the world tried to eagerly prepare for this emergency before the first case appeared within their territory. All solutions seemed temporary, ineffective, and politically costly: quarantines, shutdowns, and the closing of borders.

National security was being threatened, and given this unexpected uncertainty, States preferred to face this new challenge alone. Instead of having the most powerful countries leading the way to address this challenge multilaterally, nationalism became a trend.

The World Health Organization, which should have been a *de jure* and *de facto* authority to address the pandemic, had a diminished range of action after the United States relinquished its support.[19] Furthermore, the G7 countries also focused on finding solutions while closing their borders. Therefore, while SARS-CoV-2 kept infecting the world population, international institutions were also affected by the slow actions and lack of consensus from within.

The rest of the countries relied on international collaboration. They organized themselves through COVAX to institutionalize vaccine distribution, establishing that the crisis would not be controlled until all States had access to the vaccines and applied them to their population. However, although this was medically correct, some countries had excess vaccines, while others struggled to acquire enough vaccines even for their medical staff. The pandemic changed the world order, undermined the international response via institutionalized organizations, increased poverty, and widened the gap between countries. In short, it created devastating effects for humanity.

At first, diplomacy focused on distributing protective medical equipment. At the same time, States backed up their pharmaceutical industry to develop medicines and vaccines. It became a matter of national pride. Hard power, in this case, was not a competitive military force but a competitive industry that could develop a vaccine to prevent further deaths and that could elaborate cheap protective personal equipment. The distribution of these resources became a power that gave predominance in a distressed world order. The paradox was that despite the pandemic being a transnational threat, countries opted for a nationalistic solution.

For this reason, the race to develop a vaccine brought back memories of military equipment races that occurred decades ago. This time it was not a race to conquer space but to control and neutralize an invisible enemy that was bringing havoc to humanity.

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[19] Colin, Kahl and Thomas, Wright, *Aftershocks: Pandemic Politics and the End of the Old International Order* (New York: St. Martin´s Press, 2021), p. 13.

Vaccines were used with geopolitical logic and not sanitary efficiency. Vaccine alliances were also judged and determined the leverage in this accommodating balance of power.

Medical reasoning was not a priority in this pandemic (dis)order. Governments had to protect their citizens at any cost, and in many cases, this was by opening the door to new alliances. Some States used this pandemic to increase their world influence with scientific innovation. In Latin America, for instance, Russia and China, with their Sputnik and Sinovac vaccines, increased their role in the continent, leveraging Washington's political influence. This tilted the geopolitical equilibrium in the region. Russia and China could increase their influence to change the existing world order to a tripolar structure by providing a solution to mitigating the pandemic. The aim was to defy unipolarity.

Furthermore, Russia's invasion of Ukraine reflected Moscow's geopolitical objectives to modify the existing *status quo*. It is a constant reminder that State's borders are always at risk, specifically if located within a global power's area of influence. For this reason, hard power, particularly military power, is still essential to safeguard national interests in this anarchic world.

The post-COVID world has unveiled that the world order is in disarray. There is international institutional fatigue, and countries like China and Russia seek to modify the *status quo*. In this erratic scenario, nations are forced to rethink their military capabilities and diplomatic objectives to navigate the anarchy that may be produced in this global realignment. Moreover, other transnational threats will further stress the world's balance of power. This is why states must be prepared to respond rapidly to new challenges and seek alternative sources of adaptative power to defend their national security effectively.

Protean's power adaptability in a world of disarray

In the new post-Covid *status quo*, a new type of power has been displayed. It is not measured in terms of capabilities but in the speed and fluidity on which power can be implemented. Katzenstein and Seybert have described it as *protean power*. They analyzed how some countries, amidst a crisis, have successfully addressed it even when they are not known for their hard, soft, or smart power. This protean power, whose name is based on Proteus, a Greek mythological actor, had the attribute of adaptation. This quality, which cannot be quantifiable, but that effectiveness is evident, can be studied as one of

the reasons certain countries have successfully navigated different international orders and addressed threats in times of distress.[20]

Protean power is creative, innovative, and agile. These capacities facilitate the adaptation and navigation in times of adversity that have allowed States to survive in an anarchic, erratic, and anarchic world.[21] The way and timing in which resources are used may be even more effective than the traditional implementation of hard power. This can answer why some States have survived despite not having a strong hard power or asymmetrically being inferior to other world powers.

In this regard, a current example is Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This was expected to be realized rapidly; however, after more than a year of conflict, Ukraine has effectively defended its territory, despite their apparent asymmetrical military differences. Another example is how certain countries, like New Zealand, controlled the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic with the resources available and how by implementing quarantines, they were able to have the lowest mortality rates in the world without severely affecting their economy.

This type of protean power has great potential in the face of unknown risks and world challenges. Crisis generates uncertainty, mainly when pre-established response protocols are not producing the expected effects. Making a cost-benefit analysis during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is challenging. Therefore, how a State can respond may determine whether the implementation is effective. In this case, to the extent that a country's government may drive through a crisis fluidly, there may be rapid adaptations that can reduce costs. If something innovative is effective, the cost-benefit analysis will constantly change, allowing these adaptations to prosper. The success of this fluid nature of Protean power is that it does not seek to maintain control but to navigate challenging circumstances.[22] In this context, protean power is helpful in the context of a

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[20] Peter J., Katzenstein and Lucia A., Seybert, (Eds.), *Protean Power. Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. xi.

[21] Lucia A., Seybert and Peter J., Katzenstein, "Protean Power and Control Power: Conceptual Analysis" in Peter J., Katzenstein and Lucia A., Seybert, (Eds.), *Protean Power. Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 4.

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

crisis, mainly when circumstances are erratic and unpredictable because it is malleable and reversible.[23]

States must invest in these response mechanisms, mainly because the future world challenges are uncertain and unknown. Currently, countries are focusing on transnational threats, such as criminal organizations, pandemics, and natural disasters. However, there are other uncertain spheres: cyberspace and artificial intelligence. In this case, and considering the changing global *status quo*, countries need to prepare for these multidimensional threats that may generate unimaginable challenges to national security.

Cyberspace is a new warfare arena that has yet to be fully legislated, given that there is still a lack of consensus regarding what constitutes cyberwarfare, what are the sovereign limits within cyberspace, and thus, what is considered to be a proportionate retaliation. Furthermore, the multiplicity of threats that may occur in the cyber arena threatens critical infrastructure and vital supply chains. Thus, traditional and non-traditional international actors may attack countries, at their core, holding hostage national security infrastructure. In these scenarios, the resilient capacity building that States can invest in today, which is affordable and reachable for all, may be focused on having a Protean nature. This will improve their capacity to navigate and respond to the challenges of this type of cyberattack. Moreover, in this sphere, asymmetrical power among countries will not be as broad as in other military sectors. This provides an enhanced level playing field for all countries.

This is also the case with artificial intelligence. This new type of technology may produce many benefits. Still, in areas such as warfare, it can also pose unquantifiable threats, particularly because rogue actors may use the capabilities developed by nations. This disarray can generate voids of power that will be filled by those States capable of developing Artificial Intelligence faster, thus rearranging the current balance of power. Kissinger describes these challenges as dangerous and compares them to the historical context of when nuclear warfare was developed. At that time, as could happen with Artificial Intelligence, the development of nuclear warfare changed how defense policies were defined and how the world was conceived.

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[23] Peter, Katzenstein and Lucia A., Seybert, "Power Complexities and Political Theory," in Peter, Katzenstein and Lucia A., Seybert, (Eds.), *Protean Power. Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 282.

In this scenario, politicians from all countries, big and small, should invest in limiting and deterring any Artificial Intelligence development that could undermine their country's national security. International collaboration to create legal frameworks will be essential to establish limits, mainly because, at the moment, capabilities are challenging to define, thus complicating how the proliferation could be deterred.[24]

Furthermore, Kissinger mentions that "beyond Artificial Intelligence-enabled defense systems lies the most vexing category of capabilities- lethal autonomous weapons systems- generally understood to include systems that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further human intervention."[25] This creates a challenging scenario with destructive capabilities that can affect every country, regardless of how much they have developed their hard, soft, and smart power. For this reason, and in this unknown future, the flexibility of protean power and the capability to adapt to unknown circumstances could be more effective in facing emerging threats.

In short, to the extent that the Westphalian order changes, sovereignty can also be modified. In this context, diplomacy will also have to evolve to find new collaborative mechanisms that may produce predictability, reduce disinformation and uncertainty, and mitigate, under new circumstances beyond geography and population, the dangers that will continue to threaten the essence of national sovereignty.[26] At the same time, each politician will also be obliged to consider their defense policies, the acquisition of capabilities in other virtual spheres, and the adaptability to mobilize and respond with those capabilities to prepare for the future adequately.[27]

Conclusions

Power is perception; it is a generalized constructed notion. Whether power is hard, soft, smart, or protean, its preconceived effectiveness has evolved depending on specific

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[24] Henry, Kissinger; Eric, Schmidt and Daniel, Huttenlogher, *The Age of Artificial Intelligence and our Human Future* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2021), p. 163.
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 164.
[26] *Ibid.,* p. 222.
[27] *Ibid.,* pp. 172-173.

historical events. Given that the concept of power is subjective, each country will perceive it differently, depending on its history, culture, geography, economic capabilities, and relationship with other states.

States have focused on building military capabilities, strengthening institutionalized international cooperation, and developing diplomatic tools to extend their soft power while accumulating hard power to guarantee the prevalence of a State in this changing global order. These types of power must be strengthened by alternating them- smart power-; and by finding new ways to implement them in varied, adaptable ways.

The world has become more erratic, and the risks have multiplied. The reason for this is that the interconnectivity in every aspect of this globalized world has made all countries more vulnerable to transnational challenges, cyberattacks, ransomware, pandemics, and environmental disasters. This is why politicians must continue to focus on how to comprehensively invest in different power capabilities to mitigate the anarchic nature of our current international arena successfully. This must be complemented with international cooperation and by renovating the international framework to broaden norms and decision-making procedures that may help to reduce uncertainty in these rapidly evolving times.

Our current technological and innovative revolution, where cyberspace has become an arena where rogue actors can easily perpetrate attacks and use artificial intelligence to seek their objectives, has modified the traditional warfare scenario. Thus, the capacity that countries have to respond to these challenges will depend on the investments they have made in capabilities and their ability to respond and adapt during a specific crisis.

For this reason, states must reinforce their capacity building to adapt their responses to unknown and erratic challenges. To the extent that they can adapt their capabilities, they can guarantee their survival in this anarchic international order. This technological innovation is expected to modify the balance of power amongst States because access to it will be unrestricted. This level playing field will allow new States to gain power and rebalance their asymmetrical relationship with other countries. Nevertheless, non-State actors will also share a more significant role in world politics by developing technology that will allow them to exploit States' vulnerabilities to their favor.

In short, global challenges will multiply, diversify, and present unexpected scenarios to which States must respond to guarantee their survival rapidly.

The Western Hemisphere has experience working collaboratively to address transnational challenges in an institutionalized way. It is time to re-evaluate State's power capabilities, hard, soft, and smart, and how easily they can use this power, in a Protean way, to adapt during a crisis. This re-examining of current threats and challenges should also be done at a regional level to anticipate crisis; develop coordinated and proactive response teams; share tracing capabilities and results; institutionalize best practices and intelligence, to strengthen and deepen cooperation in this new era.

The extent to which regional response mechanisms can be implemented in an agile, fluid, and innovative way will determine how the hemisphere will effectively dismantle criminal activities in cyberspace and set limits to rogue threats through artificial intelligence. Preparedness is key. Adaptability is essential. The Western Hemisphere should institutionalize rapid and versatile response systems within a collaborative framework to appropriately face new challenges that may disarticulate the current status quo and thus affect how anarchy is mitigated in the upcoming world order.

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