



When Hierarchy Shattered: Turkey's post-2013 Crisis with the US-led Order

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FOREWORD

This project aims to explain the crisis experienced in Turkish-American relations after 2013 with a relatively new hierarchy approach in International Relations. After 2013, relations between Turkey and the US relations have witnessed numerous crises: the extradition of the Gulen Organization's leader, the court case of Halkbank Assistant General Manager Hakan Atilla in New York, economic sanctions applied by the United States to Turkey, sanctions towards the Halkbank, the US' ongoing military aid to PYD, the Syrian branch of the PKK, discrediting the image of the Turkish government at the international level and, most importantly, and tensions centered around S-400 and the F-35. Those problems may trigger two intriguing questions. Why Turkey does not comply with the demands and rules of the US and its hierarchical order? Why Turkey, once a loyal ally in this order, prefers to increase its autonomy?

In the context of the project, first, a comprehensive literature review on the hierarchy theory will be made and some hypotheses will be created from this literature around the question 'when do the secondary states challenge their hierarchical order'. These hypotheses are divided into three categories at the system, state and individual levels, and it is debated which dynamics at each level led the secondary states to challenging behavior. After providing a short description of the relationship of Turkey with the US in the period after 2013, it will be explained why this Turkish-American crisis provides a good case in understanding the challenge of the secondary states in hierarchical orders.

In the second stage, nine different hypotheses compiled from readings on the hierarchy theory are adapted to the individual case of Turkey. Through these nine hypotheses, Turkey's post-2013 crisis with the US-led order are explained. Some Dynamics in system, state and individual levels can explain the crisis (ie Turkey's challenge to the rules and dictates of the US-led order) some others provide answer to why Turkey continues to remain in the US hierarchy.

In the conclusion, the contributions of the study to the theory and the understanding of the case are summarized and some suggestions are made about the future studies.



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ABSTRACT

This project aims to explain the crisis Turkish-American relations experienced after 2013 through the lenses of the hierarchical approach, which is relatively new in International Relations theories.

For the first time in the relations of the two countries after the Second World War, there is a crisis that has been escalating and eventually leading to an unspoken proxy war (in Syria). Although the aforementioned crisis has been studied through the concept of "shift of axis", it has not been integrated into the theoretical literature within the discipline of International Relations. Moreover, the "shift of axis" analysis is often used before, and therefore it is far from offering an explanation peculiar to the post-2013 crisis.

Although Turkey gained two important assets (security umbrella and prosperity brought by liberal economy) in exchange for concessions about its own sovereignty (American military bases and American influence in Turkish foreign policy), why Turkey pursues a political choice that pushes the limits of the contract between Ankara and Washington? The main argument of the project is that Russia has broken the US monopoly of military intervention (Georgia, Ukraine and Syria) in the region where Turkey is located and this has a fundamental effect on the hierarchical relationship between Turkey and the United States. The fact that the region around Turkey is the region where two military hierarchies compete and Russia does not pose a direct threat to Turkey unlike the Cold War period has two implications for Turkey: 1. Ankara wants to use the opportunity emerging from the competition and decreases the degree of autonomy left to the US in return for security and economic gains, 2. Washington wants to expand its power over subordinate states in the region to have a better struggle against the return of Russia into the region militarily. How these two developments Turkey faces as a result of newly emerging regional order will take shape in the short and medium waters is a basic parameter that will significantly affect Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

The main target of the project is to explain this parameter and possible scenarios (through presentations and academic articles) for both experts and political decision makers in Turkey.

Keywords: Turkish foreign policy, the US-led order, Russia, Hierarchy



ÖZET

Bu proje 2013 sonrası Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinde yaşanan krizi Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri içinde görece yeni olan hiyerarşi yaklaşımı ile açıklamayı hedeflemektedir.

İki ülke ilişkilerinde İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında ilk kez gittikçe tırmanan ve nihayetinde (Suriye’de) adı konulmamış bir vekâlet savaşına varan derin bir kriz yaşanmaktadır. Söz konusu kriz “eksen kayması” özelinde çalışılsa da Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini içindeki teorik literatüre eklenmemiştir. Üstelik “eksen kayması” analizleri projenin konusu olan krizden önce sıklıkla kullanılmıştır ve bu nedenle 2013 sonrası krize özgü bir açıklama sunmaktan uzaktır.

Nasıl oluyor da Amerikan düzeni içinde egemenliğinden verdiği taviz karşılığında (ülkedeki Amerikan üsleri ve dış politikasını Amerikan nüfuzuna açmak) iki önemli fayda sağlayan (güvenlik şemsiyesi ve liberal ekonominin getirdiği refah) Türkiye, Amerikan düzeni ile yaptığı sözleşmenin sınırlarını zorlayan bir politik tercihte bulunuyor? Projenin temel argümanı, Türkiye’nin içinde bulunduğu bölgede Rusya’nın askeri bir güç alternatifi olarak ortaya çıkması ve ABD’nin burada Soğuk Savaş sonrasında beri devam ettirdiği askeri müdahale tekeline kırmasıdır (Gürcistan, Ukrayna ve Suriye). Bu yeni durum Türkiye’nin Amerika ile olan hiyerarşik ilişkisini temelden etkilemiştir. Etrafındaki bölgenin iki askeri hiyerarşinin rekabet alanı olması ve Soğuk Savaş’tan farklı olarak Rusya’nın açık bir tehditte bulunmadığı bir bölgesel denklem Türkiye özelinde iki sonuç doğurmaktadır: 1. Söz konusu rekabetin neden olduğu fırsatı değerlendirmek ve Amerikan düzeninde yer alma karşılığında vazgeçilen egemenliği mümkün olduğunca minimuma indirmek, 2. Bölgede rakip bir askeri hiyerarşi ile rekabet etmek zorunda kalan Amerika’nın kendi düzeni içinde yer alan Türkiye’nin egemenliği üzerindeki gücünü genişletme ihtiyacı. Yeni düzenin Türkiye’yi karşı karşıya bıraktığı bu iki sonucun kısa ve orta vadede nasıl şekilleneceği, Türk iç ve dış politikasını önemli ölçüde etkileyecek temel parametredir.

Projeden beklenen temel çıktı söz konusu parametreyi hem uzmanlar hem de siyasi karar vericiler için açıklamak ve olası senaryoları (yapılan sunumlar ve yayımlanan makaleler yoluyla) netleştirmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk dış politikası, Amerikan düzeni, Rusya, Hiyerarşi



WHEN SUBORDINATES CHALLENGE TO HIERARCHY: A THREE LEVEL ANALYSIS OF TURKEY'S CRISIS WITH THE US-LED ORDER

Introduction

The increased interest in hierarchy studies¹ assumes that the dominant state provides security, wealth, and status to the weaker state in exchange for which the latter partially abandons its sovereignty. This hypothetical assumption has been tested by mushrooming empirical studies for more than a decade. Today, many IR students rush to prove the fact that although empires have faded away, stratification, namely the ordering of actors as superior or inferior to one another, is still the ruling principle among 'sovereign' units in world politics.² In order to show that we essentially live in stratifying dynamics, students of IR either focus on how the dominant actor makes weaker states subordinate to its own order or look at the conditions under which secondary countries all around the world enter into a hierarchical order by surrendering some part of their sovereignty.³ Some studies also look at systemic legitimacy crises, disruptive military innovations, and ideological shocks in order to explain why hierarchical orders collapse.⁴ However, the current literature of hierarchy approach remains immature when it comes to explaining why subordinate states prefer challenging states to dominant ones, within a hierarchical order.⁵ Put differently, while existing studies looking at subordinate states' behavior deal largely with the acquiescence/submission of weaker states on the one end of the continuum, they neglect acts of resistance on the other. By sorting the extensive and diverse literature on hierarchy-driven studies into theoretically supported hypotheses, the present paper aims at identifying when and why subordinate states select a strategy of challenging the lead state in the hierarchical order.

¹ See for example, (Alexander Cooley, *Logics of Hierarchy: The Organization of Empires, States, and Military Occupation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009); David C. Kang, *East Asia Before the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Andrew Phillips, *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Evelyn Goh, *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Alexander D. Barder, *Empire within: International Hierarchy and its Imperial Laboratories of Governance* (London: Routledge, 2015); Vincent Pouliot, *International Pecking Orders: the Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Seo-Hyun Park, *Sovereignty and Status in East Asian International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Ayşe Zarakol, ed., *Hierarchies in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Michael Zürn, *A Theory of Global Governance: Authority, Legitimacy, and Contestation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

² John M. Hobson, "Back to the Future of 'one Logic or Two'?: Forward to the Past of 'Anarchy versus Racist Hierarchy'?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2017): 582. See also; John M. Hobson, and Jason C. Sharman, "The Enduring Place of Hierarchy in World Politics: Tracing the Social Logics of Hierarchy and Political Change," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 1 (2005): 63-98. For example, Zarakol says that "the present dynamics of the international system continue to be underwritten by the status hierarchies of the past"... [Non-European states were] stigmatized as being inferior, backward, barbaric, effeminate, childish, despotic, and in need of enlightenment... This stigma was then used to further exclude such states from the sovereign protections accorded by society, opening them up to further European exploitation". (Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 17 and 54).

³ David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁴ Andrew Phillips, *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 43-44.

⁵ See for example; Mark David Nieman, "The Return on Social Bonds: Social Hierarchy and International Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no.5 (2016).



Addressing this question is relevant for two central reasons. First, international politics will likely witness the challenging behaviors of subordinates within the US-led order as long as the unrivalled supremacy of the US is undermined and the current unipolar system evolves into a multipolar one. In other words, subordinate or secondary states, those that cannot take the risk of facing the wrath of the lead state without finding a great power balancer, will be more likely to make grand strategic choices in upcoming decades.⁶ The writing is on the wall. After the 2003 Iraqi war, disagreements between the US and its European subordinates are looming large. Many Asian countries have already shifted to an economic hierarchy led by China and others,⁷ like the Philippines under President Duterte, have moved away from the US.⁸ Second, even if rival hierarchies keep rising, it will not be Russia or China but periphery states that have the ability to shift the US-led order in one direction or the other.⁹ In addition to examining the lead state and other rival great powers, studying the dynamics in secondary states draws a more complete picture about hierarchical settings.¹⁰ Although a war between the US and China/Russia leading to the victory of the latter makes hierarchical transition possible without choices of secondary states, this seems less probable in the world of nuclear weapons.¹¹

There are three sets of claims in the hierarchy literature on why some subordinates are more likely than others to challenge the lead state. Although the existing studies primarily focus on systemic¹² and state level variables in explaining the patterns of challenge to hierarchy among subordinates, they also identify some correlates of challenging behaviors among subordinates at individual level. By bringing together both well-developed and less studied hypotheses from a range of levels, this paper aims to provide a three level explanation of what makes some subordinates more likely than others to contravene the rules of hierarchical order and challenge the lead state. By challenge, I mean “the pursuit of foreign policies that are incongruent with the dominant’s interests”.¹³ Such challenging behaviors of subordinates are driven by two different motives, greater autonomy within the existing order, or shift to alternative orders. While the first is common (the main focus of this paper), the latter is very rare (e.g., Egypt, Cuba and Indonesia during the Cold War). To explain subordinates’

⁶ See, Bruce Gilley, and Andrew O’Neil, *Middle Powers and the Rise of China*. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2014).

⁷ Gilford John Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no.1 (2016).

⁸ Richard Javad Heydarian, “Tragedy of Small Power Politics: Duterte and the Shifting Sands of Philippine Foreign Policy,” *Asian Security* 13, no. 3 (2017): 220-236.

⁹ Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” 3; Joseph MacKay, “Rethinking Hierarchies in East Asian Historical IR,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* (2018), doi: 10.1093/jogss/ogy028.

¹⁰ David C. Kang, Dat X. Nguyen, Ronan Tse-min Fu, and Meredith Shaw, “War, Rebellion, and Intervention under Hierarchy: Vietnam–China Relations, 1365 to 1841,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2018): 2, doi: 10.1177/0022002718772345.

¹¹ Daniel Deudney, “Hegemony, Nuclear Weapons, and Liberal Hegemony”, in *Power, Order and Change in World Politics*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). See also; Kenneth N. Waltz, 1981. “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better: Introduction,” *The Adelphi Papers* 171 (1981); Robert Jervis, *The illogic of American Nuclear Strategy*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Nuno P. Monterio, *Theory of Unipolar Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹²While David A. Lake’s (2019) bargaining thesis focuses only on the hierarchy’s internal dynamics, the process of bargaining between the lead state and potential subordinates is always influenced by international/systemic dynamics. As Colgan and Miller (2018: 5) rightly captured, rival hierarchies seek to attract and retain subordinate states, making system-level explanation relevant in hierarchy-driven studies (Jeff D. Colgan, and Nicholas L. Miller, “Rival Hierarchies and the Origins of Nuclear Technology Sharing”, *International Studies Quarterly* (2018) (forthcoming): 2 and 32).

¹³ Nieman, “The Return on Social Bonds: Social Hierarchy and International Conflict,” 667.

challenging behaviors, the paper adopts a “boxes-within-boxes” framework according to which political processes in one level (box) are modeled but then treated as inputs into political processes in other levels.¹⁴ The concept of hierarchy offers a basis for uniting fragmented insights about world politics in an “analytic eclecticism” by cutting “analytically across and through the levels of analysis”.¹⁵ Without looking at cognitive motivation of individual leaders, it is impossible to explain variations in the behavior of similarly situated states. In a similar vein, it is not possible to explain why individual leaders with similar cognitive motivation pursue different choices without taking state level dynamics such as regime type, and domestic coalitions into consideration.¹⁶

In addition to existing theoretical claims, looking at practices of subordinate states is helpful in deciding which hypotheses are more relevant. There are three distinct phases of challenge to hierarchical order: economic shift, arms transfer from rival great powers, and security shift. States in the first phase are still strongly tied to the hierarchical order and they often ally with their security patron when push comes to shove.¹⁷ Put differently, the probability that the subordinate will defect appears less in the phase where subordinates depend on the lead state for their own security. However, states buying arms from rival great powers are likely to cause alarm in the lead state of the hierarchy. This is so because subordinate states that establish strong ties to rival great powers via arms transfers have the potential to develop (or are already undertaking) out-of-hierarchy commitments and entanglements.¹⁸ From this, we might infer that the hegemon’s uneasiness increases if those states are also tied to rival great powers economically. In other words, the second stage is highly critical because it has some strong signals about the decentering of subordinates from the existing hierarchical order.¹⁹ The third and last phase represents the ultimate shift and therefore is not the focus of this study which

¹⁴ See; David A. Lake, and Robert Powell, *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009). Such a multi-level approach is well developed by neoclassical realism, see; Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998); Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, eds., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Janice Bially Mattern and Ayşe Zarakol, “Hierarchies in World Politics,” *International Organization* 70, no. 3 (2016): 630; Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, *Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). See also, Carsten-Andreas Schulz, “Hierarchy salience and social action: Disentangling class, status, and authority in world politics,” *International Relations* (2018), doi: 0047117818803434.

¹⁶ Emilie Marie Hafner-Burton, Stephan Haggard, David A. Lake, and David G. Victor, “The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations,” *International Organization* 71, no. 1 (2017): 18-21.

¹⁷ Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” 9-43.

¹⁸ Kyle Beardsley, Howard Liu, Peter Mucha, and Juan Tellez, “Hierarchy and the Provision of Order in International Politics,” *Journal of Politics* (forthcoming), http://people.duke.edu/~das76/Research/BLMST_Hier_JOP.pdf ; Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zack Cooper, “To Arm or to Ally? The Patron’s Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances,” *International Security* 41, no. 2 (2016): 90-139; Brandon J. Kinne, “Defense Cooperation Agreements and the Emergence of a Global Security Network,” *International Organization* 72, no. 4 (2018): 799-837; David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in its Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Japan’s recent arms transfer relations with India triggered the suspicion whether Japan decenters itself from the US alliance. See, Thomas S. Wilkins, “After a Decade of Strategic Partnership: Japan and Australia ‘Decentering’ from the US Alliance?,” *The Pacific Review* 31, no. 4 (2018); Pakistan’s buying advanced military equipment from China is seen as “a sign of a shifting balance of power”. See; Kiran Stacey, “Pakistan shuns US for Chinese high-tech weapons” April 18, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/8dbce0a0-3713-11e8-8b98-2f31af407cc8> (accessed February 10, 2018).

is aiming to explain challenging behaviors of subordinates. States at the second level are empirically rich, not only for testing the hypotheses in the hierarchy literature but also for clarifying those hypotheses retrospectively. More significantly, there are numerous under-examined hypotheses in the literature and therefore cases at the second level can be analytically helpful in selecting the most relevant ones. The set of hypotheses given below will, therefore, be generated through a synthesis of insights gleaned from theoretically driven hierarchy studies and arguments in policy-oriented analyses on states at the second stage.

By using hierarchy-driven hypotheses, the paper will attempt to explain the recent crisis of Turkey with the US-led order, a currently hot topic in international politics. Turkey has been a vital ally of the US since World War II not only because it is NATO's second-largest army, after America's, but also because it hosts military bases, including Incirlik, which remain central to the US interests in the Middle East. Since 2013, Turkey has experienced its deepest and most alarming crisis with the US-led order, leading the *New York Times'* editorial board to issue an open warning: "Turkey has prospered as a NATO member. That means it is likely to be the big loser if it forsakes the West for, say, closer ties with Russia".²⁰ Although many pundits including those in the *New York Times* embraced the shift-of-axis as an explanatory concept for the recent crisis, this prophetic exit-oriented debate is misleading for three simple reasons. First, history proves that such debates have a poor prediction. For example, Turkey's crisis with the US in the 1970's triggered a similar debate but Turkey remained within the US-led order.²¹ Second, the exit-oriented debate overshadows Turkey's search for greater autonomy within the US-led order. Finally, such conceptualization of Turkey's crisis with the US is value-laden simply because it constructs Turkey as inferior against the superior West.²² Therefore, this paper will ask the question: why does Turkey as a subordinate actor in the US-led order pursue policies that are incongruent with the US interests?

The remainder of the paper is divided into two main sections. The first section will develop nine different hypotheses, three for each level, explaining when and why subordinates defy the lead state in the hierarchy or the hierarchical order itself. The second section provides an empirical clarification of those hypotheses. Although putting them to a more systematic and broad-scaled empirical test is beyond the scope of this article, it looks at the curious case of post-2013 Turkey in order to clarify what makes some subordinates more likely to challenge against the lead state in the hierarchical order. Finally, the concluding part highlights some drawbacks in the arguments developed in this paper and suggests potential venues for future research.

1. WHY SUBORDINATES CHALLENGE?

²⁰ The Editorial Board, "Some Urgent Questions About Turkey," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/13/opinion/turkey-erdogan-nuclear-weapons.html> (accessed February 10, 2018); David Gauthier-Villars, 2018. "Turkey Shifts Toward Russia as Sanctions Sour U.S. Relations", *The Wall Street Journal*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/turkey-shifts-closer-to-russia-1534289856> (accessed September 10, 2018).

²¹ Der Spiegel, "Verlassen die Türken die Nato?", 21 Mart, 1977, no. 13: 136-137, and 140; Nicholas Gage, "Turks' Eastern Ties Worrying the West", *The New York Times*, April 28, 1978.

²² Johanna Vuorelma, "The Ironic Western Self: Radical and Conservative Irony in the 'Losing Turkey' Narrative," *Millennium* 47, no. 2 (2018).



This paper explores when and why subordinate states challenge their great power patrons in the international system. Accordingly, it sorts out three main clusters of explanations by focusing on different levels of analysis: system, state, and individual respectively.

1.1 System Level

In an unchecked unipolarity, dependency on the hegemon for security needs decline simply because weaker “states are not threatened by a global rival power”.²³ On the other hand, the dominant state finds itself “with new bargaining advantages” in a unipolar system because it is less dependent on weaker and secondary states.²⁴ While the first scenario motivates subordinates to behave opportunistically, the latter makes the unipolar state more prone to reduce constraints over its autonomy in relations with other actors and to “behave in ways that annoy and frighten others”.²⁵ For this reason, opportunistic behaviors of the subordinate become the target of the hegemon especially in the region where the level of the hegemon’s engagement is high and no great power prefers balancing the hegemon.²⁶ When the dominant state exceeds its authority over subordinates or becomes “less constrained in its actions”,²⁷ subordinates perceive a threat from the preponderant capabilities of the very powerful and become more sensitive to potential opportunities such as balancing, and balking.²⁸ However, balancing in a unipolar system is too risky for two reasons. First, flocking to the weaker side²⁹ does not provide an effective balancing against the unrivalled great power.³⁰ Second, other great powers in the system are less likely to take the risk of facing the unipole. Should the hegemon with a formidable military and economic capacity turn against revisionist subordinates, their survival is not assured.³¹

H1a: any change in the subordinate’s position against the wishes of the hegemon is too risky and therefore less likely in an unbalanced unipolar system.

To the extent that the hegemon restrains the use of its military supremacy, acts multilaterally in military actions allowing other states to have a voice, and makes concessions to others’

²³ Gilford John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 138; Kang et al., “War, Rebellion, and Intervention under Hierarchy: Vietnam–China Relations, 1365 to 1841,” 5-6.

²⁴ Jeff D. Colgan, and Nicholas L. Miller, “Rival Hierarchies and the Origins of Nuclear Technology Sharing”, *International Studies Quarterly* (forthcoming) (2018): 33; Stephen Martin Walt, “Alliances in a Unipolar World,” *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 98; Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 139 and 142.

²⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, “America as a Model for the World? A Foreign Policy Perspective,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 24, no.4 (1991): 69; Robert Jervis, 2009. “Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective,” *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009).

²⁶ David A. Lake, “Great power hierarchies and strategies in twenty-first century world politics,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013) 561; Nuno P. Monterio, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 161.

²⁷ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 14; Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 95.

²⁸ Lake, “Great power hierarchies and strategies in twenty-first century world politics,” 562; Christopher Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion: Why Great Powers Will Arise,” *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993); Kenneth N. Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000).

²⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Illinois: Waveland Press Inc., 1979), 127.

³⁰ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 33.

³¹ Monterio, *Theory of Unipolar Politics*, 161; Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 105 and 243.

interests to secure their cooperation,³² the unipolar system may remain unchecked and therefore secondary states are likely to bandwagon behind the hegemon. However, three developments adversely affect the persistence of the hegemon's preponderance. First, states free from being attacked by the hegemon build up military and economic capabilities until they can conduct an independent foreign policy.³³ Second, other great powers at sleep return to engagement, making balancing against the hegemon possible for secondary states. Third, the hegemon intentionally prefers isolationism, and disengagement as the US did after the First World War. In all cases, the unipolar system becomes increasingly unstable and evolves into a multi- or bipolar one, leading to competition among "rival hierarchies".³⁴ Russia's wake up under Putin, China's persistent rise economically, and Germany's growing autonomy ended the US's once unrivaled position in the 1990s. While the US is still the hegemon in world politics, its preponderance is now balanced by great power engagements in all regions ranging from Africa to the Middle East and South Asia.

In a multi- or bipolar system, "competition with other great powers gives subordinates the ability to exit more easily from any abusive relationship".³⁵ For example, "the Soviet Union provided an 'exit option' for states at risk of being exploited by the United States" during the Cold War bipolarity (e.g., newly decolonized countries in Africa and Asia).³⁶ On the other hand, small states in a bipolar coalition "see the lead state as a security protector"³⁷ and the lack of a hegemonic patron increases the risk of falling prey to the lead or other states in the opposite coalition. As a result of these two dynamics, both the hegemon and the subordinate compromise, leading to a better deal for the subordinate³⁸ and more certainty for the lead state regarding its subordinates. However, two other dynamics will destroy the balance between the hegemon and its subordinates. First, the hegemon may abuse the advantage it has in its relations with subordinates.³⁹ Especially in regions where great powers compete for security and wealth, the lead state demands more certainty from its subordinates and forces them to behave against their own will. This breaks cordial relations between the lead state and the subordinate one, and therefore friendly feelings towards each other turn into hostility.⁴⁰ Second, great powers prefer to signal restraint and peaceful intentions, posing no existential threat to subordinates within the rival hegemonic order. This is so simply because unfriendly behaviors are likely to align subordinates more closely with their patron.⁴¹ The conjunction of the two is more probable in a multi- or bipolar system.

³² Lake, "Great power hierarchies and strategies in twenty-first century world politics," 561-562; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 223-232.

³³ Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment," *International Security* 31, no. 2 (2006): 9.

³⁴ Jeff D. Colgan, and Nicholas L. Miller, "Rival Hierarchies and the Origins of Nuclear Technology Sharing", *International Studies Quarterly* (forthcoming) (2018).

³⁵ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 14; Colgan and Miller, "Rival Hierarchies and the Origins of Nuclear Technology Sharing", 6.

³⁶ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 123.

³⁷ Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 139.

³⁸ David A. Lake, "Legitimizing Power: The Domestic Politics of US International Hierarchy," *International Security* 38, no. 2 (2013): 88.

³⁹ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 32.

⁴⁰ Shogo Suzuki, "Delinquent Gangs' in International System Hierarchy", in *Hierarchies in World Politics*, ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁴¹ Colgan and Miller, "Rival Hierarchies and the Origins of Nuclear Technology Sharing", 7.

H1b: the subordinate's challenge to its hegemon is more likely in a multi- or bipolar system.

In addition to great power engagement, there are some other “structural modifiers” such as geography,⁴² affecting the choice of secondary states in their relations with the hierarchical order. For example, geographical remoteness makes “the power ascent of the United States less threatening to the rest of the world”⁴³ and therefore secondary states are prone to choose the US as security provider instead of a contiguous great power.⁴⁴ This is something that matters more when subordinates look at neighboring great powers as an alternative security provider or a potential balancer. Undertaking a subordinate position within the neighbor's hierarchy is riskier than being subordinate within an order led by a distant great power. This is what keeps Japan, and South Korea attached to the military hierarchy of the US, preventing them from shifting into the China-led Asian order. East Asian countries with American security ties on the ground affirm that the US's security engagement in Asia is a vital counterweight to rising Chinese power.⁴⁵ If there is no great power balancer around, small countries which neighbor to the unipole are more likely to bandwagon. For example, Korea, during the tribute system led by imperial China, consistently exhibited a higher level of compliance with Chinese hegemony than did Japan, because Korea was confronted with a greater external threat, namely, the potential for neighboring China to use force against Korea.⁴⁶

H1c: subordinates within the order of a remote great power are less prone to shift into a neighbor-led order.

1.2 State Level

Hierarchy is most commonly used “as a synonym for the distribution of capabilities” among states.⁴⁷ This is so because it is, before everything else, the distribution of material capabilities that situates the lead state and its subordinates in a hierarchical order. Put differently, compliance, participation, and rules within a hegemonic order are ultimately enforced and ensured by the power capacities of the leading state.⁴⁸ Although there is always the possibility of questioning and re-designing the relationship, subordinates recognize the authority of the

⁴² Glenn H. Snyder, “Process Variables in Neorealist Theory,” *Security Studies* 5, no.3 (1996); David A. Lake, “Domination, Authority, and the Forms of Chinese Power,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10, no. 4 (2017): 376.

⁴³ Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 131; Jack S. Levy, and William R. Thompson, “Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power?” *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010).

⁴⁴ On the relationship between geography and the level of threat, see; Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985).

⁴⁵ Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” 38.

⁴⁶ Ji-Young Lee, “Hegemonic Authority and Domestic Legitimation: Japan and Korea under Chinese Hegemonic Order in Early Modern East Asia,” *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016): 338; Seo-Hyun Park, *Sovereignty and Status in East Asian International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 63.

⁴⁷ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, xi and 61; David Kang, “Hierarchy and Stability in Asian International Relations,” in *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Michael Mastanduno, and G. John Ikenberry (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ahsan I. Butt, “Anarchy and Hierarchy in International Relations: Examining South America's War-Prone Decade, 1932–41,” *International Organization* 67, no. 3 (2013): 579.

⁴⁸ Ikenberry, “Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia,” 6-7; Phillips, *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders*, 24; Charles A. Kupchan, “The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to Pax Americana,” *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (2014): 251.

lead state because they acknowledge their own limits.⁴⁹ When subordinates want to exit from hierarchical relations and the lead state considers otherwise, uneven distribution of capabilities “does not permit the subordinate to unilaterally and peacefully terminate the hierarchy”.⁵⁰ Therefore, any improvement in the military and economic capabilities of the subordinate profoundly affects its position within the hierarchical order.⁵¹ Richer countries, for example, “possess smaller opportunity costs in defense spending. They may therefore be less willing to trade sovereignty for external protection” and more likely to exit from hierarchical relationships.⁵² When the rise of material capabilities motivates the subordinate to act opportunistically and the hegemon state fails to maintain the capability to discipline the defiant subordinate,⁵³ the hierarchical order falls down at least for the challenger.

H2a: the more the subordinate’s material capabilities increase, the more likely they are to demand greater autonomy, leading to challenge against the hegemon.

Uneven distribution of power capacities can be a necessary but not sufficient factor in keeping subordinates attached to the hierarchical order.⁵⁴ The credibility of hierarchical order in domestic politics significantly determines the direction which subordinate states take. This non-material aspect of the hierarchical order has two important implications. First, states running with similar ideologies (liberal, capitalist etc.) are more likely to stay in the same hierarchical order. For example, the narrative of the West as a common identity created legitimacy for the US in its domination over European countries. The same narrative even worked for countries outside of the West such as Japan and Turkey simply because they had long admired the West and emulated its beliefs, and practices.⁵⁵ If the identity of state or society undergoes a transformation, subordinates are more likely to challenge the lead state or at least scrutinize alternative orders.⁵⁶ Second, hierarchy creates legitimacy for the ruling political elite by being

⁴⁹ Michael Zürn, *A Theory of Global Governance: Authority, Legitimacy, and Contestation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 46.

⁵⁰ Alexander Lanoszka, “Beyond Consent and Coercion: Using Republican Political Theory to Understand International Hierarchies,” *International Theory* 5, no. 3 (2013): 395.

⁵¹ Deborah Welch Larson, and Alexei Shevchenko, “Managing Rising Powers: The Role of Status Concerns,” in *Status in World Politics*, ed. Thazha V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, and William C. Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 56.

⁵² Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 142; Alexander Cooley, “The Emerging Politics of International Rankings and Ratings: A Framework for Analysis,” in *Ranking the World: Grading States as a Tool for Global Governance*, ed. Alexander Cooley and Jack Snyder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4-5; Rebecca Adler-Nissen, “Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society,” *International Organization* 68, no. 1 (2014): 154.

⁵³ Lake, “Domination, Authority, and the Forms of Chinese Power,” 370.

⁵⁴ The focus on that aspect of relations among states differs the hierarchy approach from the alliance literature. (Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, 56; Hobson and Sharman, “The Enduring Place of Hierarchy in World Politics: Tracing the Social Logics of Hierarchy and Political Change,” 68 and 87; Christian Reus-Smit, “Cultural Diversity and International Order,” *International Organization* 71, no. 4 (2017): 878; Charles A. Kupchan, “The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to Pax Americana,” *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (2014): 251).

⁵⁵ Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); David A. Lake, “International Legitimacy Lost? Rule and Resistance When America Is First,” *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 1 (2018): 11.

⁵⁶ Daniel H. Nexon, and Thomas Wright, “What’s at Stake in the American Empire Debate,” *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 2 (2007): 263.

institutionalized into the language and practice of domestic legitimacy politics.⁵⁷ For this reason, hierarchy functions both as “a source of domestic political legitimacy” for the ruling political elite,⁵⁸ and as the normalization of exclusionary practices towards dissident political movements in subordinate states.⁵⁹ When the role of hierarchy in ordering domestic power relations changes against the interest of the ruling elite (or party), subordinates are more likely to defy the lead state.

H2b: If the credibility of hierarchy decreases in the subordinate, it is more likely to see a challenge against the lead state.

Regime type profoundly affects the way in which the subordinates take grand strategic decisions. Democracies are “less susceptible to radical changes in policy” simply because they “are more transparent”, and therefore “may face higher audience cost for renegeing on promises”.⁶⁰ Also, democratic states tend to distribute the benefits from the hierarchy to the people, making the median citizen resistant to any swift changes in grand strategic choices. Added to these two dynamics, a democratic subordinate has opportunities to consult, bargain, and negotiate with the lead state in a democratic hierarchy.⁶¹ This binds democratic subordinates more tightly with the leading democratic state and therefore increases the cost of exit. In autocratic states, on the contrary, benefits of subordinates from hierarchy are concentrated within the governing elite. This has two implications for a hierarchical order. First, domestic resistance is less likely when the leader is bought by the rival hierarchical order. Second, political mobilization in such countries is more likely to be against hierarchical relations.⁶² Countries experiencing regime change might be more conducive to rise against hierarchical relations. As the 1979 revolution in Iran evidently showed, “only by challenging international hierarchy” through which autocratic rulers stay in power against the wishes of the median citizens, can the opposition come to power.⁶³

H2c: When compared to autocratic states, democratic countries are more resistant to sudden shifts from one hierarchical order to another.

1.3 Individual Level

The beliefs of individual decision makers who sit at the top of state institutions function as cognitive filters when they react to international challenges and opportunities, leading to grand strategic adjustment.⁶⁴ Although it is true that system and state level dynamics play an

⁵⁷ Park, *Sovereignty and Status in East Asian International Relations*, 31; Il Hyun Cho, and Seo-Hyun Park, “Domestic Legitimacy Politics and Varieties of Regionalism in East Asia,” *Review of International Studies* 40, no. 3 (2014); Phillips, *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders*.

⁵⁸ Park, *Sovereignty and Status in East Asian International Relations*, 32.

⁵⁹ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

⁶⁰ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 9, 14, and 125. For audience cost, see; James D. Fearon, 1994. “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994).

⁶¹ Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 26 and 215.

⁶² Lake, “Legitimizing Power: The Domestic Politics of US International Hierarchy,” 76.

⁶³ Lake, “Legitimizing Power: The Domestic Politics of US International Hierarchy,” 94.

⁶⁴ See for example, Alexander L. George, 1979. “The Causal Nexus Between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The ‘Operational Code’ Belief System,” in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979); Deborah Welch

important role in putting some individuals at the position of decision maker, who occupies the position does still matter. For example, Donald Trump is a symptom of structural dynamics, not the cause,⁶⁵ but his grand strategic preferences such as retreating from international trade agreements to ‘make America great again’ noticeably differ from his predecessor Barack Obama. This is much like the difference between Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and his successor Mikhail Gorbachev in their reactions to the decline of the Soviets in the 1980s.⁶⁶ Since structural theories ignore “the problem of assessment” and “move directly from international structure to state behavior”,⁶⁷ they fail in explaining why any particular change, rupture, or risk-taking occurs within the international system.⁶⁸ While many statesmen prefer *status quo*, leaders with ambitious visions about their countries or statesmen viewing the world through strong ideological lenses are more likely behave opportunistically.⁶⁹ Therefore, leaders in a subordinate state may see fit to change the place or role of their countries within hierarchical relations when they feel the hierarchical order is unjust or working against the interests of their states. This reflexivity⁷⁰ makes challenge against the hierarchical order possible.⁷¹

H3a: leaders with grandiose visions are more likely to challenge the limits imposed on subordinate states by the hierarchical order.

After the 1979 revolution in Iran, new political leaders expeditiously left from the US-led order and labeled the old patron as an existential enemy. This was so because if new political leaders hold “beliefs that differed substantially from” their predecessors who kept the state subordinate under the hierarchical order, those beliefs can have a “profound effect”.⁷² This clearly shows that choices of decision makers may vary markedly even as many other key variables remain constant (in the case of Iran, both decisions were taken in similar regime types, autocratic,

Larson, 1994. “The Role of Belief Systems and Schemas in Foreign Policy Decision-making,” *Political Psychology* 15, no. 1 (1994); Daniel L. Byman, and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back in,” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001); Giacomo Chiozza, and Hein E. Goemans, “International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War still ex post Inefficient?,” *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 3 (2004); Valerie M. Hudson, “Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1, no. 1 (2005); Hafner-Burton, Haggard, Lake, and Victor, “The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations.”

⁶⁵ Lake, “International Legitimacy Lost? Rule and Resistance When America Is First,” 6; Christopher Layne, “The US–Chinese Power Shift and the End of the Pax Americana,” *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 89.

⁶⁶See, Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁶⁷ Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Press, 2010), 8 and 7.

⁶⁸ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 86-87.

⁶⁹ Daniel L. Byman, and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back in,” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 137-138.

⁷⁰ For Adler-Nissen, how subordinates perceive their position and hierarchical order itself does matter in behaviours of subordinates. (See, Rebecca Adler-Nissen, “Are we ‘Nazi Germans’ or ‘Lazy Greeks’? Negotiating International Hierarchies in the Euro Crisis”, in *Hierarchies in World Politics*, ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁷¹ John G. Oates, and Eric Grynviski, “Reciprocity, Hierarchy, and Obligation in World Politics: From Kula to Potlatch,” *Journal of International Political Theory* (2018), doi: 10.1177/1755088217751753.

⁷² Hafner-Burton, Haggard, Lake, and Victor, “The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations,” 1.

under a bipolar system).⁷³ Although the image of top decision makers plays a significant role, “desires of individuals” are not only bargained, when they are aggregated into groups and coalitions, but they are also “refracted through domestic political institutions”.⁷⁴ Institutions mitigate biases of political leaders simply because they both lower the cost of obtaining information and ensure that alternative views are presented.⁷⁵ Therefore, the more political leaders are isolated from political institutions, the more their beliefs have an effect on the outcome. This is so for two simple reasons. First, institutions are resistant to change because it is costly and difficult. Second, unbalanced leaders with strong beliefs/ideology are “at continual risk of becoming prisoners of their preconceptions, trapped in self-reinforcing cycles in which their initial ideological disposition stimulates thoughts that further justify that inclination which, in turn, stimulates further supportive thoughts”.⁷⁶ Therefore, when politically motivated leaders set themselves free from state institutions, they likely challenge the lead state against which their ideology is constructed and consolidated. They can act as the embodiment of national interest.

H3b: Leaders free from the influence of political institutions are predominantly driven by their beliefs in grand strategic choices.

Even when the influence of political institutions diminishes into zero, though it is impossible, individual decision makers still cannot be counted as fully isolated actors. Political advisors and others around the leader either mitigate biases of the top decision maker or magnify them. If individuals who are more likely to raise alternative views with credibility closely surround the political leader, policy options driven by the image of the leader are likely to appear less rational.⁷⁷ Therefore, the more leaders are surrounded by rival views, the less the image of the leader determines the outcome. On the other hand, leaders may choose to cut potential dissenters out of his/her close circle, negating the benefits of their distinct viewpoint. Although inexperienced leaders are more likely to marginalize potentially divergent viewpoints,⁷⁸ even some experienced leaders may prefer to have like-minded individuals around them. Homogeneity among participants of a decision-making process led by an experienced leader increases the likelihood that the leader’s image plays a greater role in grand strategic choices.⁷⁹ This would be so simply because similar-minded individuals around the leader are prone to magnify biases stemming from the leader’s image instead of presenting alternative arguments with credibility. Since hierarchical orders operate as a social contract through which hegemon and subordinate positions are interpreted through mutually negotiated cultural or

⁷³ Brian C. Rathbun, *Diplomacy's Value: Creating Security in 1920s Europe and the Contemporary Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 5.

⁷⁴ Lake, “International Legitimacy Lost? Rule and Resistance When America Is First,” 8.

⁷⁵ See, Alastair Smith, “Diversionary Foreign Policy in Democratic Systems,” *International Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (1996); Donald Rogowski, “Institutions as Constraints on Strategic Choice,” in *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, ed. David A. Lake and Robert Powell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Jessica L. Weeks, “Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict,” *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (2012).

⁷⁶ Philip E. Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How good is it? How can we Know?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 118.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth N. Saunders, “No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making,” *International Organization* 71, no. 1 (2017): 231-232.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 232; Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, D. Alex Hughes, and David G. Victor, “The Cognitive Revolution and the Political Psychology of Elite Decision Making,” *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (2013).

⁷⁹ Margaret G. Hermann, and Thomas Preston, “Presidents, Advisers, and Foreign Policy: The Effect of Leadership Style on Executive Arrangements,” *Political Psychology* 15, no. 1 (1994): 79.

political frameworks,⁸⁰ the anti-hierarchy beliefs of decision makers in the position of subordinate play an important role in undermining particular forms of hierarchical authority relations.

H3c: the more homogenous the advisers surrounding the leader, the more the leader's image determine grand strategic decisions.

Levels	No	Explanations
System-level	H1a	In a unipolar system, challenge is less likely
	H1b	In a multi- or bipolar system, challenge is more likely
	H1c	Challenge of subordinates close to a rival great power is less likely
State-level	H2a	The greater the improvement in material capacities, the greater the likelihood that subordinates challenge
	H2b	If the importance of hierarchy decreases for domestic politics, challenge is more likely
	H2c	Democratic countries are less prone to posing risky challenges to the lead state.
Individual-level	H3a	Leaders with a grandiose vision are more likely to challenge
	H3b	Freedom from domestic constraints increases the likelihood of a grandiose leaders' challenge
	H3c	Grandiose leaders surrounded by like-minded advisors are more likely to challenge

2. THE CRUCIAL CASE OF TURKEY

In 1945, the Soviet Union posed an existential threat to Turkey, demanding the control of the Straits, and the return of Kars and Ardahan, cities in northeast Turkey.⁸¹ In addition, war measures such as a huge conscription campaign during the Second World War had devastated the Turkish economy. To deter the Soviet threat and improve its economic conditions, Turkey turned its face to the US and the latter's newly emerging order. In short, gains from hierarchy were significant for Turkey. When the US tabled some conditions for making Turkey part of its hierarchy, the latter immediately responded and accordingly changed its political system from authoritarian to democracy.⁸² Along with material motivations, such an

⁸⁰ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*; Evelyn Goh, *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ian Clark, *Hegemony in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁸¹ Kivanç Coş and Pinar Bilgin, "Stalin's Demands: Constructions of the 'Soviet Other' in Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1919–1945," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, no. 1 (2010).

⁸² Unlike Lake's argument that democracies flock together, resulting in the continued hierarchy, the Turkish case shows that an authoritarian country may join the hierarchy of democracies to deter a threat. Turkey did not join the US-led order because it was a democracy. Rather it became a democracy in order to join the democratic international hierarchy led by the US. This case corroborates McDonald's argument in that "membership in a great power hierarchy increases the likelihood that a subordinate state possesses the same regime type as the dominant state". (Patrick J. McDonald, "Great Powers, Hierarchy, and Endogenous Regimes: Rethinking the Domestic Causes of Peace," *International Organization* 69, no. 3 (2015): 569).

alliance was underpinned by Turkey's historically distilled quest to secure a respected status in the West.⁸³ In its almost 60-year history, the initial contract establishing a hierarchical relation between Turkey and the US survived many crises ranging from the US arms embargo on Turkey in 1975 to Turkey's rejection of the 1st of March 2003 motion which would have given the US the right to use Turkish territories in the invasion of Iraq. Both Turkey and the US took some appeasing steps after all crises in order to save the initial contract. This was so mostly because both sides continued to gain from the hierarchical relation. While the US-led order provided numerous benefits to Turkey such as cheaper security, continuing economic/military aid, the delivery of bail-outs in harsh economic conditions, a respected status in the West, and political advantages in relations with the neighboring countries, the US in return gained a great deal from Turkey, anchoring the US-led order's eastern flank and hosting military airbases central to the US interests in the Middle East.

The sustainability of the hierarchical relation between the US and Turkey, however, has faced grave and mounting challenges since the early 2010s. Although Ankara disrupted the US' sanctions over Iran by being the major buyer of Iranian oil and gas, and paying for these purchases through the export of gold to Iran, Turkey continued to be a strategic ally of the US in the Syrian crisis until late 2013. However, alliance relations between Turkey and the US have been dramatically shattered by developments in Syria.⁸⁴ The rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria not only shook the pillars of Turkish security but also poisoned the core of US-Turkey relations. On the one hand, the Western media and American policy makers implicitly accused the Turkish government of supporting radical groups in Syria including ISIS. On the other, the US declared the YPG (The People's Protection Units) as its tactical ally in the war against ISIS and started to generously arm it with high-technology weapons.⁸⁵ Given the fact that the YPG is the PKK's Syrian branch, and Turkey, the US and the EU list the latter as a terrorist organization, Ankara perceived the US-YPG collaboration as an existential threat to its own security. The 2016 July coup attempt, which left more than 250 dead, represented the tipping point in Turkey's relations with its NATO partners. The Turkish government implicitly accused the US of being behind the coup⁸⁶ and demanded the immediate extradition to Turkey of Fetullah Gülen, the main culprit of the coup, from his mansion in Pennsylvania, USA. Washington, however, did not choose appeasement; it rather criticized the measures taken against Gülen's followers who had established themselves within state bureaucracy and condemned the "authoritarian slide" in Turkey.⁸⁷

Although the Turkish government waited for Donald Trump's presidency with a hope for change, the US both continued its policy of not extraditing Gülen and more importantly resumed an inflammatory court case centered on Iranian-born Turkish citizen Reza Zarrab, in

⁸³ See, Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, chapter 3.

⁸⁴ Liz Sly, "For Turkey and U.S., at odds over Syria, a 60-year Alliance Shows Signs of Crumbling," *The Washington Post*, October 29, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/for-turkey-and-us-at-odds-over-syria-a-60-year-alliance-shows-signs-of-crumbling/2014/10/29/9fa07c49-0546-4afd-b6ad-cf6fa70e7fe4_story.html (accessed February 10, 2018).

⁸⁵ Andrew Buncombe, "Donald Trump to Arm Syrian Kurds against Isis despite Turkish Opposition," *Independent*, May 9, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trump-syria-kurds-arms-isis-weapons-turkey-erdogan-anger-a7727031.html> (accessed February 10, 2018).

⁸⁶ Victor Kotsev, and John Dyer, "Turkey Blames U.S. for Coup Attempt," *USA Today*, July 18, 2016, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/07/18/turkey-blames-us-coup-attempt/87260612/> (accessed January 10, 2018).

⁸⁷ Justin Sink, "Crackdowns by Turkey's Erdogan Are 'Troubling,' Obama Says," *Bloomberg*, April 02, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-01/crackdowns-by-turkey-s-erdogan-are-troubling-obama-says> (accessed February 10, 2018).

New York. During the court case, Zarrab was charged with being engaged in trade with Iran in a scheme to avoid US sanctions and, more importantly, assisted by the Turkish state. The Turkish government perceived the case as a political operation aimed at punishing the top leaders of the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), including the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. As the court case was unfolding, Turkish courts, in October 2017, arrested two members of the US consular staff on suspicion of links to the 2016 coup attempt. Washington immediately suspended visa services in Turkey, and the latter responded in kind. Although both countries resumed full visa services after a three-month standoff, relations further soured when Turkey started its Olive Branch Operation against the YPG in January 2018. Given the US's tactical alliance with the YPG, the Olive Branch Operation in Afrin, Syria, turned into a sort of proxy war between Turkey and the US.

While the crisis between Turkey and the US gets deeper, Ankara's relations with Russia have dramatically improved despite a one-year break after the downing of a Russian jet by a Turkish warplane on 24 November 2015 in the Syrian war theatre. Growing economic relations between Ankara and Moscow had already risen to the level of 'strategic partnership' in 2010 with the signing of a pact to build Turkey's first nuclear power plant.⁸⁸ However, this partnership was shadowed by diverging policies in the Syrian crisis for a long time. After the 2016 July bloody coup attempt, Turkey not only started to work with Russia together in the Syrian crisis, it also signed an accord for Moscow to supply Ankara with S-400 surface-to-air missile batteries. The last step alarmed Turkey's NATO partners, hitting the headline in the West as "the clearest sign of Turkey's pivot toward Russia and away from NATO and the West".⁸⁹ In short, Turkey challenges the US position in many areas: the resolution of the Syrian crisis, buying high-technology weapons from a rival hierarchy, relations with Iran, the recognition of the YPG as a legitimate actor, the future of Fetullah Gülen, and so forth. Despite these myriad disagreements, Ankara never questioned the value of the NATO Alliance, nor declared its intention to shift to rival hierarchical orders.

2.1 Explaining the Puzzle

For almost two decades after the Cold War, the US maintained a near monopoly on the use of force in regions around Turkey, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.⁹⁰ This US-led order continuously expanded against Russian interests until the closing years of the first decade of the 2000s. Russia countered the US influence first in Georgia by using military power against pro-Western political actors there in 2008. Russia's military intervention into Georgia encapsulated its desire to proclaim its comeback on the world stage as a competitor to the US primacy.⁹¹ Russia's assertive return to the region did not end in Georgia. Motivated by the

⁸⁸ Emre Erşen, "Evaluating the Fighter Jet Crisis in Turkish-Russian Relations," *Insight Turkey* 19, no. 4 (2017).

⁸⁹ Carlotta Gall, and Andrew Higgins, "Turkey Signs Russian Missile Deal, Pivoting From NATO," *The New York Times*, September 12, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/world/europe/turkey-russia-missile-deal.html> (accessed February 10, 2018).

⁹⁰ Central Asia was an exception. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia pursued its hierarchy in its near abroad. For post-Soviet hierarchy, see; Alexander Cooley, and Hendrik Spruyt, *Contracting States: Sovereign Transfers in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Keith A. Darden, *Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals: The Formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); David A. Lake, "The Rise, Fall, and Future of the Russian Empire: A Theoretical Interpretation," in *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 30–62.

⁹¹ Deborah Welch Larson, and Alexei Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010): 91. See also; Thomas Ambrosio, *Challenging America's Global Preeminence: Russia's Quest for Multipolarity* (London: Ashgate, 2005).

lesson of Libya, where Moscow's inaction had allowed a NATO-led intervention and the loss of Russian interests in the country, Vladimir Putin followed an "assertive" and "competitive" strategy both in Ukraine and in Syria to prevent further damage to Russia's "regional leadership".⁹² Thanks to the US retrenchment, and weakening US credibility after President Barack Obama's "failure to reinforce America's 'red line' in Syria", Russia gained a more assertive footprint in the Middle East.⁹³ Another sign of emerging Russian-led hierarchical order is the recent expansion of Moscow-led economic organizations. By using its asymmetrical power capabilities, Russia put pressure over many neighboring countries to join such organizations as the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Union.⁹⁴ In addition to its military and economic influence, Moscow promoted "counter norms".⁹⁵ Those counter-norms not only consolidate a Russia-led 'counter order', they also attract potential subordinates.⁹⁶

The military engagements and increasing influence of Russia in the region around Turkey affected Ankara's strategic choices in three dramatic ways. First, unlike the unipolar system of the 1990s and the following decade (H1a), Turkey now has a potential great power balancer while the US thus demands more certainty about and control over Turkey's behavior (H1b). This made Ankara more opportunistic and therefore defiant against the wishes of the US particularly regarding the future of Syria. Second, the theoretical premise holds that the rise of a potential competitor will likely lead to a more favorable bargain for subordinates if they have no substitute in their region for the interests of the lead state.⁹⁷ Therefore, NATO allies, "alarmed at a resurgent Russia", to use the words of the former US Secretary Rex Tillerson,⁹⁸ will likely give way to compromises, leading to the rise of Ankara's autonomy, in order to keep Turkey in the continued hierarchy (H1b). Third, Russia is the giant neighbor of Turkey through the Black Sea (H1c). Countries that are more threatened by a contiguous great power are more likely to subordinate themselves to an out-of-area great power.⁹⁹ This was the case for Turkey after the Second World War. Although today's Russia does not pose any direct threat to Turkey, its assertive record in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria has already fomented fear of uncertainties, making Ankara very cautious about a possible slide to the Russia-led order.

⁹² Maria Raquel Freire, and Regina Heller, "Russia's Power Politics in Ukraine and Syria: Status-seeking between Identity, Opportunity and Costs," *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no. 8 (2018): 1187; Deborah Welch Larson, and Alexei Shevchenko, "Russia says no: Power, status, and emotions in foreign policy," *Communist and Post-communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014).

⁹³ Gareth Standfield, Doug Stokes, and Saul Kelly, "UK Strategy in the Gulf and Middle East after American Retrenchment," *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 4 (2018).

⁹⁴ Elias Götz, "Putin, The State, and War: The Causes of Russia's Near Abroad Assertion Revisited," *International Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2017): 228. See also; Lex Donaldson, Joseph L. Noguee, and Vidya Nadkarni, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (London: Routledge, 2014).

⁹⁵ Alexander Cooley, "Countering democratic norms," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 3 (2015); Alexander Cooley, and Matthew Schaaf, "Grounding the Backlash: Regional Security Treaties, Counternorms, and Human Rights in Eurasia," in *Human Rights Futures*, ed. Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, Leslie Vinjamuri (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁹⁶ Stephen Hopgood, 2017. "Human Rights on the Road to Nowhere", in *Human Rights Futures*, ed. Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 298.

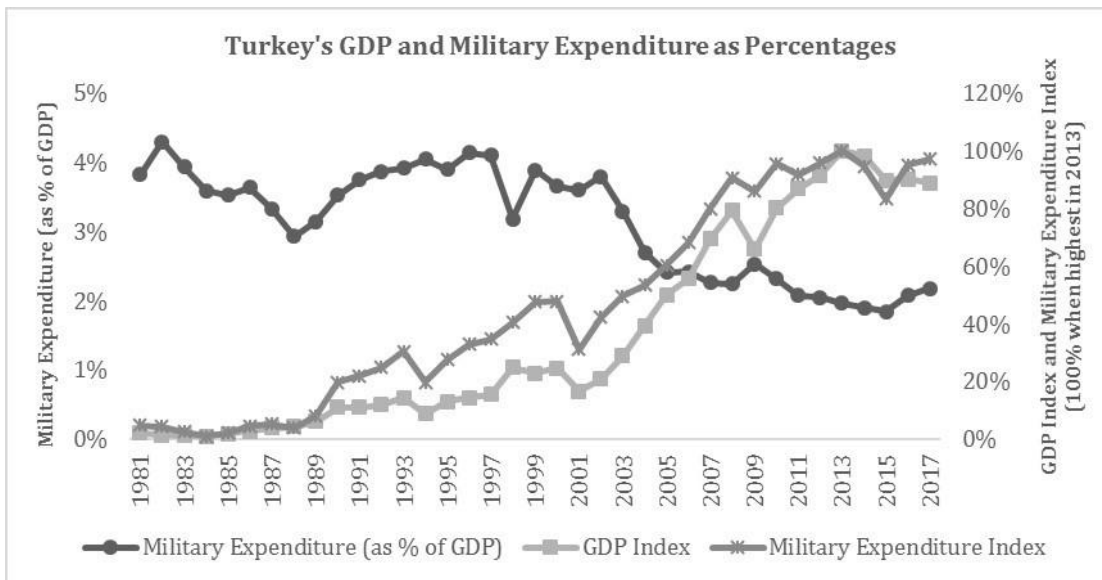
⁹⁷ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 88; Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*, 98-99.

⁹⁸ Joyce P. Kaufman, "The US Perspective on NATO under Trump: Lessons of the Past and Prospects for the Future," *International Affairs* 93, no. 2 (2017): 252.

⁹⁹ Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 142.

But what differentiates Ankara from other similarly situated countries such as Greece in utilizing the rise of a potential balancer for a better deal with the US-led order? At the state level, Turkey has experienced two essential changes since the early 2000s. First, the material capacities of Turkey improved dramatically, making Ankara more independent from the US-led order (H2a). If secondary states trade their sovereignty for security, improvements in their material capacity will change the conditions under which the initial bargaining took place. Consequently, the secondary state with a better self-help capacity will either attempt to increase its autonomy within the existing hierarchical order or choose to behave free from the rules of that order. If the improvement of material capacity makes the subordinate a new great power, it will demand more autonomy without being in need of a balancer.¹⁰⁰ However if there is improvement but not enough to become a great power, the subordinate will likely challenge the hegemon only when a great power balancer is around (H1b). The latter has been the case for the post-2013 Turkey simply because dramatic increases in material capacities of Turkey resulted in ‘status inconsistency’, that is a difference between the status that was attributed by the US and the status that was actually deserved.¹⁰¹

Figure 1¹⁰²

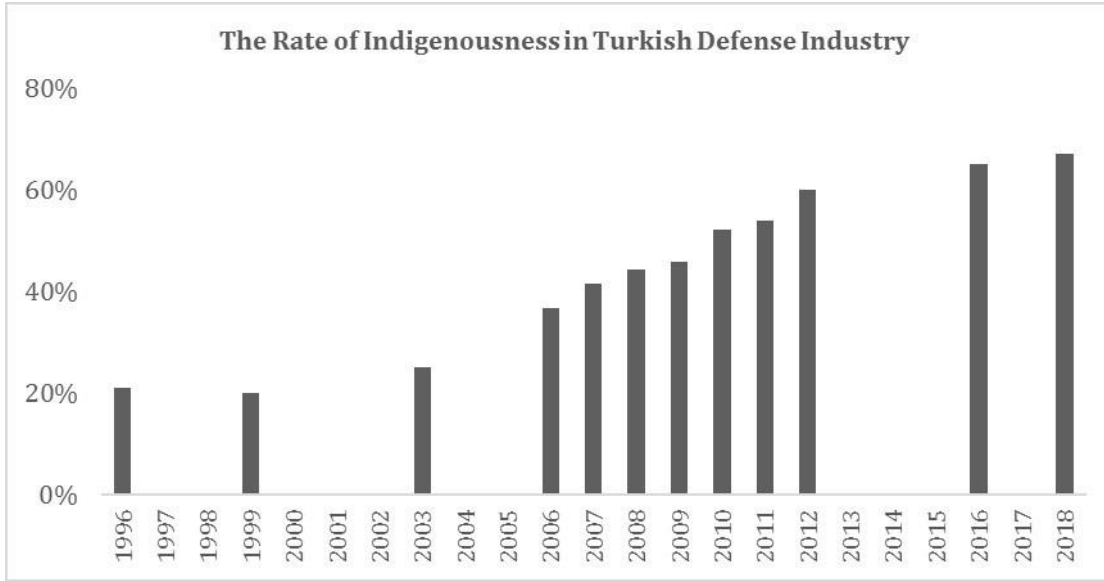


¹⁰⁰ For example, secondary states with nuclear weapons will have little fear of aggressions from the hegemonic state and thus will have little or no need to counterbalance against the paramount state. (Deudney, “Hegemony, Nuclear Weapons, and Liberal Hegemony”, 215-216).

¹⁰¹ See for example; Emel Parlar Dal, “Conceptualising and testing the ‘emerging regional power’ of Turkey in the shifting international order,” *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 8 (2016); Şaban Kardaş, 2013. “Turkey: A Regional Power Facing a Changing International System,” *Turkish studies* 14, no. 4 (2013).

¹⁰² GDP Index and Military Expenditure Index were generated as percentages of current GDP and military expenditure (100 percent when they are highest in 2013), World Bank, World Development Indicators Database Archives, <https://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=wdi-database-archives-%28beta%29>

Figure 2¹⁰³



In parallel with the rise of Russian engagement, improvement in Turkey's material capacity throughout the first decade of the 2000s clearly resulted in dissatisfaction in Ankara over the ascribed status and laid the foundations for a more assertive foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ In the aftermath of the 2001 crisis, the Turkish economy performed well in comparison with its own historical standards, epitomizing in the increase of GDP from US\$200 billion in 2001 to US\$950 billion in 2013, according to World Bank data. Although Turkey's military expenditure increased from US\$7 billion in 2001 to US\$19 billion in 2013, the real game changer was the rise of Turkey's investment in its indigenous defense industry. The US arms embargo on Turkey in 1974 was a turning point. The US was supplying "over 90 percent of Turkey's military equipment" at the time,¹⁰⁵ and therefore Ankara decided to invest in an indigenous defense industry to act independently in protecting its interests in Cyprus and to decrease Turkey's susceptibility to arms embargoes. Although Turkey established the foundation of the future defense industry during the 1980s, the AKP rule witnessed a dramatic improvement in the indigenous defense industry. The rate at which Turkey's defense industry met Ankara's procurement requirements

¹⁰³ Aytekin Ziyilan et al., *Savunma Sanayi ve Tedarik* (Ankara: TÜBİTAK Yayınları, 1998), p. 41; Aytekin Ziyilan, *Savunma Sanayi Üzerine* (Ankara: 1999), p. 51; "Activity Report 2011," The Undersecretariat for Defence Industries, 2011, http://www.sp.gov.tr/upload/xSPRapor/files/dcaoK+2011_Yili_Faaliyet_Raporu.pdf; "The Performance Programme 2014," The Undersecretariat for Defence Industries, 2014, https://www.ssb.gov.tr/Images/Uploads/MyContents/F_20170523144711700156.pdf; "The Performance of the Turkish Defence Industries in 2016," The Republic of Turkey Presidency of Defense Industries, 2016, <https://www.ssb.gov.tr/WebSite/contentList.aspx?PageID=48&LangID=1>; "Binali Yıldırım: Savunmada yüzde 67 yerlilik oranına ulaştık," *Hürriyet*, 18 November 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/binali-yildirim-savunmada-yuzde-67-yerlilik-oranina-ulasik-41023130>

¹⁰⁴ Ziya Öniş, and Mustafa Kutlay, "Rising Powers in a Changing Global Order: the Political Economy of Turkey in the Age of BRICs," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 8 (2013): 1414; Emel Parlar Dal, Ali Murat Kurşun, and Hakan Mehmetcik, "Decoding Turkey's Institutional Accommodation in the Changing International Order: the UN and G20 Cases," *International Politics* (2018), doi: 10.1057/s41311-018-0153-1.

¹⁰⁵ The US, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973–1976," Vol. XXX. Document 217 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007).



rose from 24 percent in 2003 to 64 in 2016.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, such improvements in Turkey's military capacity made two military operations in Syria more efficacious, the first against ISIS in 2016-2017, and the second against the YPG in early 2018.

Since the late Ottoman period, the Turkish people internalized a perception that their country is 'behind' the West and it is inevitable to embrace Western judgment.¹⁰⁷ In other words, an active residue or sediment of Turkey's centuries-long experience with the West not only functions within its present, it also continues to shape the perception of the ruling elite and ordinary people (H2b). However, the credibility of the US-led hierarchy in Turkey has currently been challenged by its changing function in its domestic power setting. This is the second essential change at state level. Until AKP's coming to power in 2002, the cordial relation with the West was more than a simple security pact; it was rather an integral part of domestic legitimacy politics. Here the Westernization policy, as a "strategic resource" that actors can mobilize in pursuit of diverse goals,¹⁰⁸ played a key role in rendering the founding ideology of the state, Kemalism, to be preferred and privileged and through which certain state and civil-society institutions survived the challenges from domestic dissident and counter-social movements. After being crushed in 1997 by the Turkish Armed Forces, the self-appointed guardian of the state ideology, Turkey's political Islamists transformed their anti-Western language and came to power again in 2002.¹⁰⁹ In its first years in power, the AKP rendered Turkey's EU accession process an instrumental tool in delegitimizing the tutelage power of state bureaucracy over elected politicians.¹¹⁰ After the AKP knocked down the guardians of the old regime including the Turkish Armed Forces in the early 2010s, the necessity of close relations with the West lost its appeal and function for power holders in Turkey. Not surprisingly, when US officials increasingly pressed Turkey to demonstrate its commitment to Western partnership and prove its role as a reliable ally throughout the 2010s, the AKP government used this criticism as an opportunity in consolidating its own power and marginalizing its political rivals and dissident social classes.¹¹¹

Although civil liberties continue to be violated and "populist majoritarianism" has increasingly dominated daily politics, Turkey still maintains formal institutions of a procedural democracy, free elections, and political parties.¹¹² Although the AKP capitalizes anti-US sentiments and searches for soul mates in emerging non-Western orders,¹¹³ oppositional parties are around and the Kemalist secular ideology is a broad-based opposition movement in Turkey. It is

¹⁰⁶ Stratfor, "Turkey Builds a Military-Industrial Complex to Match Its Ambitions", *last modified* May 26, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/turkey-builds-military-industrial-complex-match-its-ambitions> (accessed February 10, 2018).

¹⁰⁷ Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, 56 and 39.

¹⁰⁸ Christian Reus-Smit, "Cultural Diversity and International Order," *International Organization* 71, no. 4 (2017): 23.

¹⁰⁹ Burhanettin Duran, "JDP and Foreign Policy as an Agent of Transformation," in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, ed. Hakan Yavuz (The Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2006).

¹¹⁰ See, Zeki Sarigil, "Europeanization as Institutional Change: the Case of the Turkish Military," *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 1 (2007)

¹¹¹ Deepa Prakash, and Asli Ilgit, "More than a Feeling: Emotional Responses to International Criticism in Erdoğan's Turkey," *Review of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017).

¹¹² See, E. Fuat Keyman, 2014. "The AK Party: Dominant Party, New Turkey and Polarization," *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 2 (2014); Karabekir Akkoyunlu, and Kerem Öktem, "Existential Insecurity and the Making of a Weak Authoritarian Regime in Turkey," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 4 (2016); Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, *Democratic Transition and the Rise of Populist Majoritarianism: Constitutional Reform in Greece and Turkey* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

¹¹³ Suzuki, "'Delinquent Gangs' in International System Hierarchy", 231.

necessary, therefore, to underline that any serious challenge to the US-led order, coupled with economic and political crises, is likely to increase the audience cost for the AKP in the upcoming elections (H2c). For example, foreign policy troubles, and a stalling economy played an important role in the June 2015 elections, whereby the AKP lost the majority required to establish a government for the first time since 2002. Furthermore, because grand strategic choices are risky and costly, the AKP is less likely to relinquish the benefits and renounce the US-led hierarchical order. Although ideological divergence between the US-led order and the new rulers of Turkey increases the likelihood of challenge (H2b), overall democratic system makes the AKP extremely cautious in not putting benefits from the US-led order at risk (H2c). The economic integration of Turkey into the West has generated an indispensable wealth.

For decades, two important dynamics shaped Turkish politics. First, the Turkish Armed Forces pursued a tutelary power over elected politicians. Second, most of the governments were coalitions and short-lived, increasing advisors' influence over political leaders. Erdoğan, an exceptionally charismatic leader, not only rendered impregnable institutions of the Kemalist regime submissive (H3b), he also built a 15-year political experience, making all potential advisors unfledged in state affairs (H3c). Besides, two critical developments made Erdoğan stand outside his own party and overcome "strong institutions" such as the parliament and the cabinet. While the domestic political turmoil after 2013 eliminated potential balancers of Erdoğan within the party, including the former President Abdullah Gül, and former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, the 2017 constitutional reform enlarged the power of the presidency against other elected state institutions (H3b). Given the fact that the role of leaders is "most visible when international hierarchies are first emerging or when actors are transitioning from one hierarchy to another",¹¹⁴ the image of Erdoğan has played a significant role in Turkey's mounting crisis with the US and will likely matter a great deal in the future of Turkey within the US-led order (H3a).

Görener and Uçal, in their data-driven study analyzing Erdoğan's interviews and press conference responses from 2004 to 2010, find that scores of Erdoğan are high in "the belief in ability to control events" and on general "distrust of others".¹¹⁵ His high score in the belief that he can "push the limits of what is possible" makes Erdoğan a leader who can orchestrate sharp departures from long-standing, *status quo* oriented policies in Turkey's foreign relations.¹¹⁶ Another recent operational-code-based study of Erdoğan's personality, on the other hand, finds that he "pursues shared interests by following flexible strategies and shuns brinkmanship as much as possible".¹¹⁷ Although these two data-driven findings seem inconsistent, they, however, together can explain why Erdoğan is very cautious in making grand strategic choices while he often takes risk in secondary foreign policy issues. Throughout the post-2013 crisis with the US-led order, Erdoğan pushed the limits of the US in order to advance the autonomy of Turkey within the US-led hierarchical order but never gave the final verdict (exit initiation). He, therefore, followed a strategy of 'two steps forward one step back' through which he was able to increase the autonomy of Turkey without risking its secure position in world politics.

¹¹⁴ Andrew Phillips, "Making Empires: Hierarchy, Conquest and Customization," in *Hierarchies in World Politics*, ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 62; Byman, and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back in," 142.

¹¹⁵ Aylin Ş. Görener, and Meltem Ş. Ucal, "The Personality and Leadership Style of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 3 (2011): 365, and also 367-368.

¹¹⁶ Görener, and Ucal, "The Personality and Leadership Style of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy," 369.

¹¹⁷ Özgür Özdamar, "Leadership Analysis at a 'Great Distance': Using the Operational Code Construct to Analyse Islamist Leaders," *Global Society* 31, no. 2 (2017): 181.

For example, Turkey, in September 2013, made a tentative agreement to purchase a \$3.4 billion long-range missile defense system from a Chinese company and cancelled this agreement in November 2015 after harsh reactions from its NATO allies.

In the Turkish case, while H1b, H2a (partly), H2b, H3a (partly), H3b and H3c are causal dynamics behind Ankara's challenging behaviors against the US; H1c, H2a (partly), H2c, and H3a (partly) mitigate the magnitude of those behaviors. Therefore, we currently witness significant challenges by Turkey against the US interests together with many compromising steps. In closing, what can we say about the popular question: will Turkey exit from the US-led order? To start with, it should be noted that systemic variables make Turkey more opportunistic and demanding within the US-led order while they also keep Turkey within this order. If Washington offers a better deal making Turkey, say, more autonomous in dealing with the PKK and its branches in the Middle East, and solving Turkey's recognition problem¹¹⁸, an out-of-area patron (the US) is more preferable to a contiguous one (Russia).¹¹⁹ Although recent improvements in Turkey's material capacity motivate Ankara to behave more opportunistically, it is not enough to exit from the US-led order without being a subordinate in a different hierarchical order. This leaves Ankara with a tough question such as whether Russia's engagement in the region has a future. While Russia is strong enough in military power, its economy will likely fall short in financing its assertive ambitions.¹²⁰ Domestic variables also support the 'no future shift' argument for Turkey. In a democratic country where the opposition is on the alert, the ruling party will likely avoid taking risky and costly steps and continue to exploit opportunities without making any grand strategic choice. Moreover, the image of Erdoğan supports such an inference. Therefore, unlike the period after World War II when Turkey faced an acute security threat from the Soviets, Ankara, this time, will prefer the exploitation of the competition between two hierarchies to persist and not 'sell' its sovereignty with a chip price.¹²¹

4. CONCLUSION

Before deliberating potential areas for future studies, the present paper should acknowledge its main limitations. For two decades, the identity debate influenced by constructivism has significantly dominated studies on Turkish foreign policy (including some of the author's), leaving data-driven works peripheral. As this article is mostly based on existing studies, data-driven analyses in the future may potentially revise some empirical findings. For example, the effect of non-state actors such as export-oriented firms on foreign policy decision-making may be relevant in the explanation of compromises with the lead state. Second, the paper leaves the question of what happens when challenging behaviors are counted as a signal for an exit from hierarchy unanswered. This is important because disobedient behaviors might evolve into an exit initiation. On the other hand, some defiant behaviors end up as the consolidation of a subordinate's place in the hierarchy. What are the criteria in differentiating a challenge from an exit initiation? Is there a threshold where challenging behaviors turn into an exit initiation?

¹¹⁸ Ankara not only fails to attain a recognition it desires from the US-led order (it is perpetually labeled as authoritarian) but it has also been ostracized (the PKK, the main threat of Turkish state, and its branches have gained legitimacy in the West). As Suzuki argues, a state might withdraw from some aspect of the existing hierarchical order because it views its rules as unjust and sees very little stake (even threat) in maintaining it. (Suzuki, "Delinquent Gangs' in International System Hierarchy", 227).

¹¹⁹ Ikenberry, "Between the Eagle and the Dragon: America, China, and Middle State Strategies in East Asia," 35.

¹²⁰ Stephen M. Walt, "US Grand Strategy after the Cold War: Can Realism Explain it? Should Realism Guide it?" *International Relations* 32, no. 1 (2018): 14.

¹²¹ Lake, "Legitimizing Power: The Domestic Politics of US International Hierarchy," 88.

This study offers three contributions, two conceptual, and one empirical. First, it theorizes on the causes of subordinate states' challenging behavior against the lead state of the hierarchical order. Second, it shows the limits of focusing on one level in explaining the fundamental working of hierarchies and underlines the importance of the individual level, missing in most of the hierarchy-oriented studies. Third, the paper provides a new explanation of Turkey's post-2013 crisis with the US. These contributions open an avenue for future studies. Each hypothesis in this paper can be judged by situations where other subordinate states challenge their patrons. In South and East Asia, there are many subordinates within the US-led order and most of them have already entered into the China-led economic hierarchy. Scholars even argue that some Asian small and middle powers are already bandwagoning with China.¹²² Central Asia, the traditional backyard of Russian power, has been turning into a region over which China and Russia compete for influence. Because all these subordinate countries have varying political dynamics, future studies on them will potentially build a more balanced account of why subordinates challenge. For example, Turkey provides a case for how democratic countries challenge their great power patron. Saudi Arabia potentially provides a rich but different laboratory to test regime type hypothesis. By doing so, future studies could further theorize and test which types of regimes are most likely to challenge the lead state.

Scholars have increasingly used historical cases in order to test hypotheses of hierarchy approach or develop new ones. Like studies dealing with current puzzles, most historical works focus on how hierarchical orders are constituted or how they lose their legitimacies.¹²³ However, it is equally valuable to trace the role of subordinates in the decline of various hierarchical forms ranging from the Chinese tributary system¹²⁴ to the collapse of British colonial order.¹²⁵ Such studies will potentially offer important insights into why empires collapse. For example, the Ottoman Empire created the Millet system in which different religious groups were ordered hierarchically, with Muslims at the top. Such a historical puzzle potentially enriches the hypothesis about credibility of the hierarchical order. Another stimulating historical case is the Cold War period where bipolarity predominantly shapes the behavior of subordinates. Although this paper approaches bipolar and multipolar systems in a similar way, a closer look at challengers during the Cold War will potentially provide new insights. For this, De Gaulle's France¹²⁶ presents an interesting puzzle for researchers to scrutinize.

¹²² See for example, Robert Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006).

¹²³ Kupchan, for example, compares different orders of hierarchy in history, see, Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to Pax Americana."

¹²⁴ Phillips, *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders*; Yongjin Zhang, and Barry Buzan, "The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 1 (2012).

¹²⁵ Andrew Phillips, "Contesting the Confucian Peace: Civilization, Barbarism and International Hierarchy in East Asia," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 4 (2017), doi: /10.1177/1354066117716265.

¹²⁶ See, Garret Joseph Martin, *General de Gaulle's Cold War: Challenging American Hegemony, 1963-68* (Berghahn Books, 2013).



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