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# Unipolarity Without Hegemony

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## Abstract

The current power configuration of the world system is unipolarity without hegemony. Nonhegemonic unipolarity is understudied, and deserves study. A few previous instances can be found in the history of the Central world system: they are usually brief, associated with intense warfare,

hegemonism, counteralliance, exhaustion, and collapse into multipolarity. In other world systems, however, nonhegemonic unipolarity has been more frequent, more durable, and with more diverse exits. Plausible exit scenarios from the current unipolar nonhegemonic phase exist for U.S. hegemony, for bipolarity and tripolarity (via rise of the European Union and/or China), and for multipolarity (via U.S. introversion), but all entail rather lengthy evolutionary processes. Unipolarity without hegemony is not inherently unstable, and could endure for decades. A unipolar configuration probably has equilibrium rules for its maintenance. Nonhegemonic unipolarity affects the characteristic structure of “deadly quarrels” in the world system, and allows some approaches to the policy issue of “deadly quarrels” not readily available in less centralized system structures. Unipolarity without hegemony deserves further comparative and theoretical attention.

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