

# Geopolitical economy and the production of territory: The case of US–China geopolitical-economic competition in Asia

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## Abstract

Recent work in political geography and Marxist, critical political economy has refocused attention on the interrelations between political economy and geopolitics. This paper examines the contributions of Antonio Gramsci to the theory of geopolitical economy and the production of territory. Doing so enables two key insights. First, explaining the production of territory requires unraveling multiple—sometimes competing—levels of geopolitical and geoeconomic power relations. It follows that geopolitical economy requires historicizing the practices of territorialization. The second point is that the practice of territorialization is today everywhere bound up with the project of producing and reproducing capitalist (i.e. class) social relations, including the capitalist form of the state as a social relation. To support this claim, we examine recent US–China hegemonic competition in regional, geoeconomic strategies—US’s “Trans-Pacific Partnership” and China’s “One Belt, One Road” Initiative.

## Keywords

Geopolitical economy, territory, capitalist social relations, Trans-Pacific Partnership, One Belt, One Road

## Introduction

A central achievement of recent work by scholars in political geography is to unsettle the apparent naturalness of territory. Some have unbundled or historicized the link between

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sovereignty, territory, and the state (e.g., Anderson, 1996; Antonsich, 2009; Elden, 2009); others question the fixity of borders, showing their volatility and fluidity (Newman, 2006; Passi, 2003). Such works contribute to a critical conception of territory with multiple inflections, emphasizing the production of territory as a social process. Territorial practices are not limited to national borders, and the territorial practices of one actor affect those of others. Hence, the production of territory is never simply the outcome of a single state's activity but rather is an effect of actions by multiple actors (not exclusively states) and is not necessarily intentional.

In this paper, we examine the processes entangled with production of territory to make two broad arguments. First, we contend that while the formal distinction between the "geopolitical" and "geoeconomic" provides some methodological clarity and analytical purchase, ultimately these logics of power must be grasped dialectically—i.e. as a unity-in-difference—in order to provide a full geopolitical economic explanation.<sup>1</sup> We elaborate by examining the interrelation of geopolitics and geoeconomics in the production of territory. In our view, territory derives from the spatial effectiveness of these geopolitical-economic couplings.<sup>2</sup> Hence, while we can explain definite patterns to the world's contemporary political geography, there is no universal formula for the production of state territory. Our second argument is that the thought of Gramsci is particularly fruitful for analyzing the relationship between the geopolitical and the geoeconomic. To elaborate, we turn to Gramsci's prison notebooks—particularly *quaderno* 13 on Machiavelli (1932–1934). Taking these together, our aim is to contribute to the development of geopolitical economy (GPE) by theorizing the relations between geoeconomic and geopolitical logics of power and the ways that they shape, and are shaped by, the production of territory.

To provide a concrete sense of the varied forms these entangled territorial relationships can take, we conclude the paper with a brief case study of geopolitical-economic competition between China and the US in Asia via their new geoeconomic strategies to control the region. Territorial issues between China, the US, and other Asian countries have become more volatile in recent years. Mainstream scholarship and media approach these conflicts in static, inter-state terms, where the territorial dimension is limited to narrow geopolitical questions. We argue that attention should be given to the way the re-intensification of the territorial question is entwined with the reconstitution of capitalist social relations across Asia at multiple scales.

## **Territory and GPE: A concise review**

Let us begin with the well-known definition of territoriality by Robert Sack, who conceptualizes territoriality as "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area" (1986: 19). In this view, territoriality is an "attempt," or political process, that acts through space: territory is its outcome. Despite its influence, Sack's conception of territoriality has clear limitations. It fails to elaborate on the production of territory in political-economic terms. Moreover, Sack's conception is unhistorical: he claims that "territoriality is conceptually abstracted from the multiplicity of social-historical contexts" (Sack, 1986: 28). Although he recognizes that "the most general territorial changes can be associated with changes in political economy" (p. 50), his limited discussion of territoriality as a geopolitical strategy, for instance to obscure the power relations in capitalist society (pp. 78–82), does not attend to how geopolitical-economic forces produce territory.

By contrast, Giovanni Arrighi's and David Harvey's conceptions of the territorial and capitalist logics of power offer a useful lens for viewing these power relations.<sup>3</sup>

Arrighi examines the development of the world system and the exercise of global hegemonic powers in terms of “the contradiction between an ‘endless’ accumulation of capital and a comparatively stable organization of political space” (1994: 33), i.e. the opposition between capitalism and territorialism. While the *territorial* logic of power concerns the expansion of territory as an end in itself, the *capitalist* logic of power prioritizes economic command over resources, especially over territorial acquisitions. To express this abstraction, Arrighi translates Marx’s (1976[1867]) general formula for capital,  $MCM'$ , into two formulas:  $TMT'$  and  $MTM'$  (1994: 33). Arrighi’s formula sees money (M), or economic resources more generally, as a channel to expand territory or take control of new resources ( $T \rightarrow T'$ ). The acquisition of territory or resources is deemed essential for expanding political power, and economic wealth is a means not an end. Conversely,  $MTM'$  treats territory as a means to increase money or economic power ( $M \rightarrow M'$ ). In short, territorial acquisition is only one option for achieving a more important goal, accumulation of wealth.

Arrighi’s analysis of the logic of territory appears to be patterned on Marx’s critique of capital (1976[1867]), but the match is poor. In Arrighi’s formula,  $TMT'$ , the change from T to T' does not necessarily mean the expansion of territory (it can mean simply the acquisition of new resources), whereas Marx’s formula,  $MCM'$ , describes the production and realization of surplus value, hence the expansion of capital. To put this otherwise: whereas Marx’s formula of capital  $MCM'$  explains a movement of a given unity (value) through its different moments (money–capital–money–...), there is no such unity in Arrighi’s historical formula of territory  $TMT'$ .<sup>4</sup> To be sure, value and territory share certain fundamental qualities; both are historical, social relations that crystalize in concrete spatial forms, congealing social differences. Yet the parallels end there. In Marx’s theory, value is not only that phenomena which labor produces and capital seeks to accumulate. It is also the social relation by which, in capitalist societies, disparate expenditures of labor time are unified through commodity production and exchange. This is what makes value, not territory or anything else: capital’s “social hieroglyphic”.

While Arrighi clearly considers the state as the main actor of these two opposing logics of power (1994: 34), Harvey’s analysis of the relationship between capitalism and territorialism modifies Arrighi’s state-centered view. Harvey defines these logics of power in these terms:

By territorial logic I mean the political, diplomatic, economic and military strategies deployed by the state apparatus in its own interest. . . . The capitalist logic, on the other hand, focuses on the way in which money power flows across and through space and over borders in the search for endless accumulation. This logic is *more processual and molecular than territorial*. The two logics are not reducible to each other but they are closely intertwined. (2010: 204–205, our emphasis)<sup>5</sup>

Harvey recognizes that the working of each logic of power involves different agents. He argues: “The motivations and interests of agents differ” (Harvey, 2005: 91) in that “The capitalist operates in continuous space and time, whereas the politician operates in a territorialized space and, at least in democracies, in a temporality dictated by an electoral cycle” (Harvey, 2003: 26). Accordingly, while Arrighi sees territorialism mostly in terms of territorial acquisition and command, Harvey views territorial logic as the strategy of politicians within territorial boundaries. Arrighi recognizes this difference: “[For Harvey,] the territorialist logic refers to state policies, while the capitalist logic refers to the politics of production, exchange, and accumulation. In mine, in contrast, both logics refer primarily to state policies” (Arrighi, 2007: 212).

Both accounts have common limits. Their analyses of GPE often seem to assume that capital or territory are substitutable but imply that, while states are always territorially-circumscribed, capital is not. For instance, Harvey contends “The two spatialities of state

and capital sit awkwardly with and frequently contradict each other” (2014: 155). Jessop criticizes this as a false opposition “between the state as a ‘power container’ that operates exclusively within defined territorial frontiers and the economy as a borderless exchange mechanism with no important territorial anchoring” (2008: 189). On the economic side of this methodological divide, the notion that economic activities are in some sense “non-territorial” is wrong-headed. While economic activities can display an array of different spatial forms, among the crucial activities undertaken by powerful economic actors are attempts to cultivate monopoly or oligopoly power; this often takes the form of attempts to chart out exclusive territorial domains (e.g., trading monopolies, exclusive distribution rights) or to exclude competitors via regulatory practices. Given that, in addition, many contemporary transnational corporations remain strongly national in their bases of operation, the notion that capitalist economic processes are in some sense “non-territorial” is at best a methodological simplification.

On the political side of the methodological divide, to simplify the state as a power container neglects various extra-territorial practices beyond its fixed borders, as for instance with the US military’s operation of bases across the world, which we will discuss further below, or the US Trade Representative’s efforts to expand transnational economic links across the world. Rendering of the state as a power container also disregards various forms of territorial fragmentation, such as Special Economic or Administrative Zones, of the sort that are common in China and other developing regions. In this sense, Robert Brenner notes, “the accumulation of control over territory as an end in itself”, which Harvey introduces as the expression of the logic of territorial states, lacks a *raison d’être*...” (2006: 81).

In addition, both Harvey’s and Arrighi’s approaches oversimplify complexities in the workings of capitalist and territorial logics of power. For instance, as we will note in the case study below, it is not possible to separate China’s overseas expansion via the “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) strategy into capitalist or state imperatives (à la Harvey) or into territorial or non-territorial state policies (à la Arrighi).<sup>6</sup> As Morrissey’s (2017) close analysis of the operation of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) shows, the effective employment of geopolitical volatility and geoeconomic deterrence demonstrates the complex entanglement of territorial, geopolitical, and geoeconomic practices and interests, defying the two-logics framework of Harvey and Arrighi. In sum, while both Arrighi and Harvey’s studies of the relationship between capitalism and territory contribute enormously to the theory of GPE, they fail to fully explain or adequately theorize the political-economic dynamics of the production of state space.<sup>7</sup>

### *Geoeconomics > Geopolitics?*

We must, then, reconsider the interplay between geopolitical and geoeconomic logics of power. By most accounts, the *geopolitical* logic of power is related to the management and maintenance of territorial integrity. On the other hand, the *geoeconomic* logic is a wider set of economic practices, strategies, and imaginaries—not necessarily dictated by the capitalist imperative—working both within territories and across borders.

Recent geographical scholarship has emphasized the ways that economic concerns complicate the production of territory. Some argue that geoeconomic concerns, in the form of deterritorialization, predominate over conventional geopolitical-territorial concerns. For instance, Neil Smith claims that, in the neoliberal era, “It is not that geopolitics is irrelevant, but... the *priority of geo-economic over geopolitical* concerns has to be recognized” (2003: xiv, our emphasis). Against this view, some geographers emphasize

the interlacing of geoeconomics and geopolitics in the production of territory. Coleman (2005) argues that the US border is a “security/economy nexus” arising out of incoherent and contingent combinations between geopolitical and geoeconomic practices at both local and nonlocal levels. He describes state policymaking on the borders as “a fraught bundle of geopolitical and geoeconomic ‘storylines’ rather than as a coherent sovereign ‘script’” (Coleman, 2005: 201). Whereas Coleman centers his analysis on the policing of borders and migrant bodies, Sparke examines the interplay of geopolitics and geoeconomics in a discursive dimension. Examining the case of the US Iraq War, Sparke (2007) claims that while “geopolitical scripting” is closely concerned with manufactured fears and imaginative geographies of danger and enemy, “geoeconomic enframing” entails false hopes from the neoliberal economic vision; it accentuates “networks not blocs, connections not walls, and trans-border ties instead of national territories” through capitalist expansion (2007: 340). Such coupling is also termed “neoliberal geopolitics” in the sense that “disconnection defines danger” (Roberts et al., 2003: 889).

Despite many keen observations, these discussions share some limitations. Whereas the working of geopolitical power is tightly linked with territorial practices (bordering especially), the spatiality of geopolitical logic tends to be envisaged as territorially fixed. On the other hand, geoeconomic power is usually considered in relation to cross-border economic flows. For instance, Sparke contends that “the geopolitical story line of border securitization certainly clashes with the geoeconomic storyline of cross-border economic facilitation” (2006: 169). Geopolitical concerns tend to be equated with territorial integrity, geoeconomic interests with open borders and capital’s flow. Of course, things are more complex. Fractions of capital may support firmer borders, and geopolitical interests can be addressed in various manners: if studies limit the objects of analyses to domestic agents (whether state managers or capitalists) and their interests and distinct imperatives—for instance, between national security and economic development—we can miss international and transnational dimensions. Moreover, geoeconomic calculation does not necessarily entail expansion of cross-border activities. It is worth revisiting Edward Luttwak’s original definition of geoeconomics as “the logic of war in the grammar of commerce” (1990: 19). For example, in his sense, geoeconomic imperatives could be expressed through more protectionist policies whose recent resurgence we can already see in Donald Trump’s administration.

Considering these limitations, Cowen and Smith offer another definition of GPE. Through their notions of “geopolitical social” and “geoeconomic social”, they seek to refine the prevailing view:

Geopolitics was never only about the state’s external relations, but rather . . . involved a more encompassing ‘geopolitical social’ that both crosses and crafts the distinction between inside and outside national state borders. (Cowen and Smith, 2009: 23)

Destabilizing the conception of geopolitical logic as a territorially fixed process, they broaden geopolitics to encompass security, economy, and other related social forms. However, what is problematic in their account is the claim that geopolitical social forms are now “recast” by geoeconomics (Cowen and Smith, 2009: 25). Although Cowen and Smith deny a simple linear replacement, it is not clear how geopolitics could be “recast” by geoeconomics. This reading implies both a strict separation and that geopolitics is *superseded* by geoeconomics (e.g., “market calculation supplants the geopolitical logic of state territoriality” (p. 43)). It is not only Cowen and Smith who affirm that geopolitics is “dead but dominant” (p. 23) displaced by geoeconomics. Similar claims are made by Harvey (2003) and Smith (2003, 2008).<sup>8</sup>

We disagree with this formulation. Any attempt to separate the economic and the political reifies a problematical aspect of bourgeois thought. In fairness, both Arrighi and Harvey also stress that separating territorial and capitalist logics of power is only hermeneutic, since these logics of power intertwine in reality (Arrighi, 1994: 34; Harvey, 2003: 29). We concur. The challenge is to unknot the complex intricacies between these two logics of power while also recognizing their unity. We argue that territorial logics, either territorial fixity or fluidity, are products of geopolitical and geoeconomic processes which derive from class-relevant social struggles. To address this challenge and to advance the debate around GPE and the production of territory, we propose returning to Gramsci.

### **“Even the geographical position of a national state”: Gramsci and GPE**

In turning to Gramsci, we recognize that we appear to skip past a theorist of territoriality who has garnered considerable attention among Marxist geographers, Henri Lefebvre. We do so consciously—not because we fail to recognize the crucial importance of Lefebvre’s foundational insights (see, e.g., Lefebvre, 1991, 2009 [1978]; Brenner, 1997) but because we think geographers have been comparatively negligent in drawing insights from Gramsci’s work. Gramsci’s account of hegemony is widely, and rightly, celebrated.<sup>9</sup> But the geographical dimensions of Gramsci’s theory of politics and hegemony remain to be elaborated. We concur with Jessop that Gramsci’s prison notebooks exhibit an acute sensitivity to the spatiality of state power (Jessop, 2005). Here we briefly outline the elements of Gramsci’s observations about territory and territoriality that are particularly useful to a geopolitical-economy approach.

“Territory”, “global”, and “political economy” are not terms that appear frequently in Gramsci’s prison notebooks. And these concepts were not thematically emphasized in the first three edited collections of Gramsci’s notes published in English (1957, 1971, 1985).<sup>10</sup> As a result, the Anglophone reception of Gramsci in the 1970s and 1980s—when a wave of interest in his notebooks swept the humanities and social sciences, arriving late to geography’s shores—typically treated Gramsci as a cultural and political theorist with little interest in these concepts. Partly as a consequence, the first systematic attempt to sketch a Gramscian perspective about GPE, Robert Cox’s neo-Gramscian international relations (IR) framework, introduced in a pair of essays (1981, 1983) and subsequent book (1987), made few references to Gramsci’s systematic use of these concepts in his notebooks. Rather, Cox approaches IR by considering the interactions of social forces, forms of state, and world orders. In this purview, IR becomes the study of conditional forms of hegemony in the world system, the analysis of the processes by which this hegemony is produced and temporarily stabilized.<sup>11</sup>

Although it could have provided a breakthrough, Cox’s neo-Gramscian IR school enjoyed a strange reception. After finding some adherents in the 1980s, notably Stephen Gill and Mark Rupert, the field faded. Mainstream IR largely ignored the work; critical IR scholars turned toward other schools, particularly constructivism. For their part, political theorists interested in Gramsci find little use in the neo-Gramscian IR school and cite it infrequently. Thus, apart from a few long-standing adherents and the efforts of some younger Gramscian IR scholars to enliven the field, the project has not developed into a broad and robust field of research.

The neo-Gramscian IR school has been criticized on several grounds. From the vantage of contemporary Gramscian scholarship, Cox’s texts made limited and loose use of Gramsci’s texts (Budd, 2013). Although this criticism is valid, in our view, it was not particularly significant for the rejection of the field by IR scholars. From citation patterns



the most prominent criticism was simply that Gramsci's thought forms an inappropriate basis for IR because methodologically he was nationalist: i.e., Gramsci's conception of the political was Italy-centric, defining the nation-state as its implicit unit of analysis and lacking a theory of IR. In a widely-cited critique, Germain and Kenny (1998: 20) argue that Gramsci's concepts "receive their meaning and explanatory power primarily from their grounding in national social formations"; this explanatory power, the argument goes, evaporates as we leave Italy. Shilliam (2004: 72) contends that Gramsci "refuse[d] the international dimension". These claims have proven influential among IR scholars, apparently justifying ignoring Gramscian thought. Yet they are completely at odds with Gramsci's texts.

Fortunately, a body of recent scholarship has corrected these errors. Gill's (1993) edited volume, although uneven, includes several outstanding chapters that open (non-Coxian) iterations of Gramscian IR. Morton (2007, 2010) strengthens the basis for a renewed Gramscian IR, drawing attention to Gramsci's conception of "passive revolution" and applying it to GPE. Ives and Short's philological study of Gramsci's use of "international" (2012) demonstrates, contra Germain and Kenny (1998), that Gramsci's attention to the international dimensions of the political was substantive and systematic. Two recent books complete the critique of Cox's project and contribute to reconstructing a more rigorous Gramscian basis for IR theory (Ayers, 2008; Budd, 2013). And Bieler et al. (2015) historicize this series of exchanges and apply Gramsci to the current international conjuncture, characterized in their view by authoritarian neoliberalism.

Taken together, this literature<sup>12</sup> demonstrates two points essential to our argument. First, in the prison notebooks, Gramsci produced a whole vernacular of meso-level concepts of enduring value to geo-political-economy: "the international" and "the national-popular" dimensions of the political; "passive revolution"; "Americanism"; and so on. In every concrete instance where Gramsci scrutinized a hegemonic condition in the prison notebooks—and it is worth recalling that in almost every case, that hegemonic condition is shown to be incomplete or incoherent—his analysis employed spatial metaphors and geographical references. The political for Gramsci is fundamentally about the relation between the rulers and the ruled: this relation is never an abstraction in his notebooks, but always earthy, granular, and geographical (what Buttigieg (1982–1983) celebrates as "Gramsci's worldliness").

The second essential point that we take from this literature is that, contrary to earlier interpretations that treat Gramsci as stuck within the frame of the nation-state, his analyses of Italian politics presume that such frames are by no means internally-determined and fixed. Simply put, Gramsci regarded international dynamics as fundamental to every instance of hegemony and hence to the critical analysis of political economy. As he relentlessly emphasized regarding Italy and other countries, the making of a territorial nation-state is a historical-geographical-political process with no certain path, nor a definite outcome; the movement toward national-territorial-state unity is driven not only by local and regional processes, but cross-cut by international and "global" dynamics.<sup>13</sup> Hence, when Gramsci examined a particular hegemonic condition or political situation, even where he specified a national reference ("French hegemony," e.g.), his analysis always presumed what geographers call a multi-scalar approach. One of Gramsci's fundamental preoccupations in his notebooks is to explain why the subaltern social groups of Italy failed to build a communist society, supporting fascism instead. Among other strategies for answering this complex question, Gramsci returned repeatedly to analyzing the politics of the *Risorgimento*, the creation of the Italian nation-state in the 19th century. Typically portrayed as a protracted unification of disparate components—making a whole from its parts—Gramsci

saw the *Risorgimento* as a bourgeois remaking of something that had never yet existed and could not be sustained without further transformation—hence the battle between communism and fascism.<sup>14</sup>

Although Gramsci's writings have inspired a rich body of work in human geography, these two points have only been broached (see Glassman, 2004, and forthcoming). And notwithstanding Gramsci's broad influence in critical geography, the field has produced little Gramscian work on GPE. Our paper aims to address this lacunae and to contribute to the (mostly non-geographical) Gramscian literature on the politics of spatiality in the notebooks by elaborating one minor but, we believe, critical clarification. Gramsci's conception of political and international dynamics shows a high degree of sensitivity to the malleable and protean nature of territory. Gramsci conceived territory not as a pre-given object but rather as the spatial form of prevailing social relations (a point noted by Jessop, 2008: 112). For instance, in his famous pre-prison essay on the Southern question, Gramsci argued that communists

must pay special attention to the Southern question—in which the problem of relations between workers and peasants is posed not simply as a problem of class relations, but also and especially as a *territorial problem*, i.e. as one of the aspects of the national question. (1999[1926]: 235, our emphasis)

Moreover, as he explained in another pre-prison essay, “given the scanty development of industry and the regional character of what industry there is [in Italy], not only is the petty bourgeoisie very numerous, but it is also the only class that is ‘territorially’ national” (1999[1924]: 353). Prior to his imprisonment, therefore, Gramsci clearly recognized the entanglement between class and territorial dynamics. And in one of his earliest notebooks, Gramsci noted the necessity of overcoming the limitations of the thought of the Swedish conservative Rudolf Kjellén, who, under Ratzel's influence, coined the term “geopolitics” and argued for its development as a science. Citing Kjellén, Gramsci argued that Marxists must radicalize his conception of “geopolitics”; among other criticisms, Gramsci noted that Kjellén's conception presumed a given, natural, state territoriality (Gramsci, 1995: 195, Q2§39).<sup>15</sup> Thus, while apparently marginal to the prison notebooks, territory was treated as fundamental to the broader aim of reformulating a Marxist theory of the political.

Gramsci's development of a Marxist conception of territory unfolds through the notebooks. To elaborate—while limiting our scope to manageable dimensions<sup>16</sup>—we turn to Notebook 13: “Brief Notes on the Politics of Machiavelli” (*Noterelle sulla politica del Machiavelli*, hereafter Q13). Niccolò Machiavelli is often associated with a confined spatial scope—his advice to the prince is typically understood to presuppose a definite political territory—yet his thought was not actually as circumscribed as is sometimes imagined. Gramsci recognized that Machiavelli wrote for a prince who exercised sovereign power based on networks that cut across spaces that only later became territorially-bounded capitalist states. Gramsci's emphasis on the international and territorial dimensions of state power in his reading of Machiavelli therefore constitutes a theoretical act worthy of consideration.

Apropos Gramsci's reading of Machiavelli, Joseph Femia, a noted Gramsci scholar, contends “Gramsci had very little to say about international relations” since, in his view, “hegemony referred to the cultural or spiritual supremacy of a class or group within a *particular national entity*” (2005, pp. 341–343, our emphasis). We reject Femia's characterization of hegemony but focus here on confronting his general claim. In fact, in Q13—Gramsci's special notebook committed to analysis of Machiavelli—there are 30 discrete references to the international (Ital.: “*internazionale*”) and its cognates.<sup>17</sup>



Moreover, there are 20 references to territory (Ital.: *territorio*) and its cognates (*territoriale*, territorial; *territori*, territories) in a cluster of seven notes: Q13§13, §17, §19, §23, §24, §36, and §37. While it is impossible to date these notes precisely, from Gerratana's philology (Gramsci, 1975) Q13 was written in 1932–1934. This is the decisive period when Gramsci reformulated his conception of the political (Thomas, 2009: xix). We agree with Thomas's succinct formulation of the guiding thread of Gramsci's notebooks: "the search for an adequate theory of proletarian hegemony in the epoch of the 'organic crisis' or the 'passive revolution' of the bourgeois 'integral State'" (2009: 136). Unfortunately, in his magisterial account of Gramsci's conception of the political, Thomas (2009) never discusses territory. Yet, at least by the time of writing Q13, Gramsci's conception of the "bourgeois integral state" had escaped what political geographers call the territorial trap.

What do Gramsci's statements apropos territory in Q13 reveal? The first item on Gramsci's list of elements to consider in calculating the relative powers of states ("*Elementi per calcolare la gerarchia di potenza fra gli Stati*") is relative territorial extension ("*estensione del territorio*": Q13§19). This is a relatively conventional conception. But Gramsci emphasizes that territoriality—its extent, qualities, history and politics—is conditional and fraught, an effect of history and political processes, not inert.<sup>18</sup> He stresses that the analysis of the relations of production (a starting point for Marxist analysis of any political conjuncture) is "complicated by the existence within every state of several structurally diverse territorial sectors" (Q13§17, 1971: 182). Moreover, he argues, the territorial integrity of a state is not treated simply as a given base of political power or as an instrument for its rule but must be seen as an outcome of political struggles.

These insights are crystallized in Q13§2. Gramsci begins this note by cautioning against the sort of empiricist analysis of IR that lacks a clear theory of the relations of force between different societies:

The elements of empirical observation which are habitually included [capriciously] in works of political [analysis] ought... to be inserted into the context of the relations of force, on one level or another. These levels range from the relations between international forces... to the... development of productive forces; to relations of political force and those between parties (hegemonic systems within the state); and to immediate (or potentially military) political relations. (Gramsci, Q13§2; 1971: 176)

That is, the political is not strictly bounded by national territory but constituted by cross-cutting forces operating across different scales simultaneously. From this point, Gramsci poses a question that remains at the heart of the attempt to theorize GPE:

Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? There can be no doubt that they follow. Any organic innovation in the social structure, through its technical-military expressions, modifies organically absolute and relative relations in the international field too. Even the geographical position of a national state does not precede but follows (logically) structural changes, although it also reacts back upon them to a certain extent... (Gramsci, Q13§2; 1971: 176)

Herein lies Gramsci's essential breakthrough apropos territory and the international in Q13. From his premises he draws out the argument that even international relations are effects of the historical-geographical processes that constitute social forces (including but not limited to class relations). To clarify the extent of this claim, he contends that "[e]ven the geographical position of a national state... follows (logically) structural changes" in the organic forces of a given society—and, he emphasizes, "it also reacts back upon them." The political is

constituted dialectically through co-production of society and space, without any firm boundary between those dynamics that are internal and external to the national territory.

Pace Femia, then, the entire thrust of Gramsci's analysis of the political in Q13 emphasizes complex international, multi-scalar, territorial dynamics. The only sense in which it could be said that "Gramsci had very little to say about international relations" is that he would have refused the presumption that it is possible to fully separate the "international" from the domestic, the outside from the inside. Gramsci, though he never used terms such as "the production of territory," nonetheless anticipated the critical approach to territory associated with contemporary political geography. Yet it remains a theoretical approach that has gained too little appreciation by the discipline. Let us now consider how a Gramscian geopolitical-economic perspective on territoriality may be useful for examining a specific geopolitical-economic conjuncture.

## **Geopolitical-economic competition between the US and China in Asia**

The 'Belt and Road' initiative, meeting the development needs of China, countries along the routes and the region at large, will serve the common interests of relevant parties and answer the call of our time for regional and global cooperation. (Xi Jinping, 2015)

As a Pacific power, the United States has pushed to develop a high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership... [that] makes sure we write the rules of the road for trade in the 21st century. ... America should write the rules. (Barack Obama, 2016)

A new notion of "Asian paradox" has become popular among Western observers as well as Asian politicians and scholars. The former South Korean President Park Geun-hye (2012) argues:

the international community is apprehensive that a rising Asia long associated with rapid growth and more open cooperation is morphing into a clashing Asia. Such a bifurcated Asia, or what I refer to as 'Asia's paradox,' is the single most important obstacle that has to be overcome.

This concept implies a normative judgment of the geopolitical-economic situation in Asia: while geoeconomic cooperation has continuously evolved among Asian countries, geopolitical tensions and conflicts increase. But why should this situation be considered paradoxical? To term it a "paradox" presumes that geoeconomic cooperation unavoidably facilitates and promotes geopolitical security and relationship. Recent events reveal the naivety and hollowness of this logic.

The entwinement between geopolitics and geoeconomics in Asia has become more complex as the competition and tension between the US and China has become more intense in recent years. The 2008 global financial crisis marked a critical turning point. While China suffered from the shrinkage of its export market and subsequent economic slowdown, it also viewed the crisis not only as a moment of US hegemonic decline but also as a great opportunity to rise as a global power (Cabestan, 2012). To address this decline in its hegemonic influence and respond to the rise of China, the Obama administration announced the "Pivot to Asia" strategy, which was later re-termed "Rebalancing to Asia". The hegemonic struggle manifests itself in the competitive adoption of geoeconomic strategies in Asia and beyond.

While China has recently revived the Silk Road Project under the title of the "OBOR" Initiative, the US promoted an advanced version of a regional free trade agreement in Asia, the "Trans-Pacific Partnership" (hereafter, TPP). Although TPP was killed after the election of US President Trump (Putz, 2016), it remains an important object for analysis. While we

note how these geoeconomic strategies will affect global hegemony, we also argue that their implications should go beyond inter-state terms. Here, we briefly discuss these development strategies across two planes: first, intertwined inter-scalar geopolitical and geoeconomic interests, discourses, and practices; and second, the territorial and class dimensions of these strategies. Consistent with our criticism of the idea that states are territorially circumscribed (but capital is not), and consistent with our Gramscian insistence that territoriality is shaped by class and class-relevant struggles that manifest in dialectically interconnected geopolitical and geo-economic processes, we contend that these strategies are differentially interlaced with diverse territorial imaginations and practices over the Asian region and beyond. Examination of both powers' geoeconomic strategies verifies our argument that territorial fixity and fluidity is a product of inter-scalar geopolitical and geoeconomic processes deriving from class-relevant social struggles.

### *OBOR and its geopolitical-economic implications*

The 'Belt and Road' initiative . . . is born in the era of globalization. It is a product of inclusive cooperation, *not a tool of geopolitics*, and must not be viewed with the outdated Cold War mentality. (Wang Yi, 2015, our emphasis)

Since September 2013 when President Xi Jinping announced the plan to revitalize the old Silk Road, the Chinese government has strongly promoted the OBOR as the key strategy in its regional and foreign relations. The OBOR refers to "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "Maritime Silk Road". Although this strategy is still in an early phase, various discourses on its implications have emerged inside and outside China. Here we encapsulate them into three narratives. The first narrative presents the OBOR as a geoeconomic or commercial project to facilitate a cross-continental flow of capital, commodities, labor, and resources through infrastructure construction or a "spatial fix" to China's industrial overcapacity problem; the second, in classical and realist geopolitical fashion, construes the OBOR as China's strategic move for fulfilling its geopolitical ambition; and the third interprets the OBOR as a geopolitical-economic strategy to not only counter US imperialist efforts to isolate China but also to promote South-South cooperation.

The first narrative about the OBOR focuses on its geoeconomic potential and implications. Cohen explains,

China will send out its own capital, technology, and management experience, and will promote the development and prosperity of neighbouring countries. In so doing, the country will encourage its own economic transformation and make itself the centre of the regional economy. (2015: 5)

In addition, it is stressed that the OBOR will secure the stable energy supplies necessary for national economic growth and security. This shows that geoeconomic implications of the OBOR are generally discussed as rebalancing strategies at two different scales. The OBOR helps not only to address China's overcapacity problem but also to expand its regional geoeconomic influence. Harvey argues that China's territorial logic has been overshadowed by capitalist logic since 2000 (Harvey and Paik, 2016). He explains that the global financial crisis in 2008 has led to massive spending by the Chinese government, and one of the major strategies to resolve this crisis was the OBOR, as a "spatial fix" to address overaccumulation (Harvey, 2016). Summers (2016) also claims that OBOR should be considered as a "spatial fix" rather than a geopolitical scheme. Since the key elements of the OBOR are to build up not only trans-regional infrastructure from Eastern to Western

China but also a trans-national network of transport, energy, and communication across Eurasia, it entails both internal and external spatial restructuring for renewed capital accumulation.<sup>19</sup>

A second narrative about the OBOR emphasizes its geopolitical implications for Chinese power. For instance, it is described as “a Trojan horse for extending its geopolitical clout” (Campbell, 2016) or “a veiled attempt by China to dominate its neighbouring regions” (Pantucci and Chen, 2015: 12). While the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi rejects the OBOR as a tool of geopolitics, two prevalent geopolitical approaches are to link the OBOR with Halford Mackinder’s geopolitics and with the US post-War Marshall Plan. Theresa Fallon views the OBOR as “Xi Jinping’s grand strategy for Eurasia” (2015: 140). Her claim is that the OBOR will challenge the existing geopolitical order and lead to the “rejuvenation of Eurasia” (Fallon, 2015: 142). Others view the OBOR as the Chinese version of the Marshall Plan, expanding its geopolitical influence by supporting development (Tiezzi, 2014). An underlying idea of both views is the so-called “China threat” theory, which sees China as a revisionist power challenging US hegemony and reconstituting the regional and global order. Francis Fukuyama (2016) sees this as marking a strategic shift in Chinese policy because China aims to export its development model for the first time via the OBOR. And David Shambaugh, a renowned expert on China, contends that the OBOR is China’s attempt to establish an alternative global institutional order challenging the post-war Western one (2016: 162–163).

A third narrative, though not dominant, has been proposed by some Asian scholars who note different possibilities for the OBOR. Jinn-yuh Hsu (2016) rejects the view that suspects China of geopolitical ambition. Instead, he argues that, while the OBOR has stemmed from resistance against geopolitical-economic containment strategies of the US and Japan, it should be encouraged and promoted as “South-South Cooperation”. In other words, Hsu considers OBOR less as an effort for seeking hegemony than as a platform to recover the Third World spirit that developed in Maoist China. Noting the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, Paik (2016) raises the possibility of the OBOR opening up a new Bandung era. In a similar vein, Lee (2016) characterizes the OBOR as a geoeconomic network that aims to reverse the existing order. In this view the US-led TPP represents a confrontational “bloc” for reactionary geopolitics.

Our view of the OBOR differs from these. Can we simply reduce the OBOR to being either a spatial fix or a manifestation of China’s geopolitical ambition? And isn’t it too idealistic, in a world of intense exploitation and conflict, to hope that the OBOR will effectively consolidate an alternative strategy to counter Western hegemony and development models? We are also critical of any approach that simply lists geoeconomic and geopolitical interests with no due attention to their intricate interplay. Although we cannot fully present the geopolitical-economic implications here due to limited space, we try to suggest a concise Gramscian geopolitical-economic reading of the OBOR.

First, we argue that it is critical to explore the class-relevant, social processes and struggles behind the OBOR: “how will its [China’s] class structure and conflicts determine how that power is used internationally?” (Sutcliffe, 2006: 77). This does not refer to just Beijing’s power elites. Like earlier Western Development schemes and Mekong region integration plans, the OBOR is a class-based, inter-scalar, trans-continental development project to enlist Chinese central and local elites, capitalists, intellectuals, and ruling classes in other countries across the OBOR; and like these earlier, fundamentally pro-capitalist and transnational, development plans, OBOR—precisely if it is successful—is likely to increase rates of exploitation and degrees of socio-economic polarization within China (Glassman, 2010). In this respect, beyond its quality as a spatial fix, it is critical to explore how the flows of capital,

commodities, labor power, and resources impact class relations and hegemonic politics in China and other concerned countries. Second, the OBOR affects the territorial expression of China's power dynamics: a new territorial vision (or "geo-body") via the OBOR can support China's nationalist project. The wide circulation of the simplified image of the OBOR with the South China Sea as a key space for the Maritime Silk Road<sup>20</sup> spatially expresses Xi Jinping's signature slogan "Chinese dream (中国梦)" which means the realization of the nation's great rejuvenation (*China Daily*, 2013). Moreover, the intense territorial conflicts in the South China Sea, which show China's efforts of territorialization (re-territorialization in terms of China's irredentist claim) and its recent installment of an overseas military base in Djibouti (Page, 2016), attest that we cannot reduce the OBOR to the working of capitalist logic overshadowing territorial or geopolitical logic, as Harvey and Summers contend.<sup>21</sup> Rather, the OBOR and China's related moves demonstrate that "territorial logics of power can be terrifyingly mobile" (Gregory, 2006: 19).

### *TPP and its geopolitical-economic implications*

TPP also matters for reasons far beyond trade...[I]n our era, economic and security issues overlap; we can't lead on one and lag on the other. (John Kerry, 2015)

In February 2016, the 12 member countries of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) signed the agreement, and US leaders subsequently began pushing for congressional ratification against considerable domestic opposition. Lauded as a key geoeconomic anchor of the US pivot to Asia, the TPP emerged as hot issue in the US presidential election. In response, President Obama wrote an article titled "The TPP would let America, not China, lead the way on global trade" for *The Washington Post* (2016). Warning against the progress that China had made in its own version of a regional economic deal, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), he stressed the importance of the TPP as a geoeconomic tool (to echo a Luttwakian vision) to reinforce US-centered legal and trade regimes against China. Its geopolitical value in consolidating US hegemony in Asia was also highlighted. US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter (2015) even stated that "In fact, you may not expect to hear this from a Secretary of Defense, but in terms of our rebalance in the broadest sense, passing TPP is as important to me as another aircraft carrier".<sup>22</sup> However, despite the efforts of the Obama government to underline the geopolitical-economic importance of the TPP, voices questioning the hegemonic discourse of free trade grew, gaining support from Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Upon Trump's election and inauguration as President, he fulfilled his campaign promise and withdrew the US from TPP.<sup>23</sup>

While the TPP has served as a discursive, institutional, and geopolitical frame to contain and counter China in the Asia-Pacific region (Tsui et al., 2016), the growing opposition and controversy it arouses across the US political spectrum may signal a new impetus in class politics in the US. Trump's support for abandoning TPP came from a combination of workers' groups hoping for policies protecting their jobs from further capital flight and businesses threatened by increased global competition, not least from China. This US political landscape should not be considered as territorially circumscribed—indeed, it has resonance with the sorts of "nationalist" alliances that led to the Brexit vote and that have arisen as reactions to neoliberal globalization in an array of locations around the world, including throughout East and Southeast Asia. For business elites and professional cadres that favor neoliberal globalization, the creation of a uniform economic and regulatory platform for trade and investment across the region may lead to a new form of transnational (or trans-Pacific) class politics, one which pits them in increasingly strident



conflict with the emergent “nationalist” forces. The transnational capitalist class anticipates benefiting greatly from new legal and institutional frameworks of the sort that will continue to intensify the grievances of subaltern groups or newly emerging precarious classes. As such, although the TPP is dead for now, there are good reasons to anticipate new rounds of lobbying for TPP-like institutional forms—as for example with the secretive Trade in Services Agreement that has survived the abandonment of TPP.<sup>24</sup> Such TPP-like arrangements, where they succeed, would not only potentially alter capital-labor relations but also affect and reshape intra-capitalist relations—for instance, by aggravating competition and conflicts among various capitalist fractions, especially between more globally-oriented (or transnationally-oriented) fractions demanding a more open trade regime and locally-based (or nationally-oriented) ones preferring protectionism. In a word, attention to these complex constellations of varied class and social interests, across different scales, will be critical to understanding the geopolitical-economic landscape of Asia engendered by agendas such as TPP and those that will succeed it.

If the TPP was less the territorial and more the institutional and regulatory side of the Pivot to Asia, the US’s various military initiatives in the region demonstrates its more territorial aspect. The US military’s moves in the South China Sea entail the promotion of the narrative of deterritorialization, such as “Freedom of Navigation” against China’s territorial assertions.<sup>25</sup> However, this discursive strategy veils the expansive territorialization of the US military via the installment of new military bases, the conducting of joint military drills and the development of new security ties stretching from Australia to Northeast and Southeast Asia. In particular, the US geopolitical strategy in Asia-Pacific since 1945 clearly reveals that its territorial imperative has not changed much.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to its promotion of “deterritorialization” against China, the US military’s territorial presence has become more palpable. The return of the naval bases at Subic Bay in the Philippines and the recent establishment of a Marine base in Darwin, Australia as well as new military buildup plans such as increased militarization on Okinawa, Japan, Singapore, and Guam demonstrate the fortification of the “Archipelago of Empire” (Cumings, 2009). As Cumings notes:

The practiced eyes of the China watchers miss an entire archipelago of empire... Here is the essential structure constraining every country in East Asia, including China: for the first time in world history, the leading power maintains an extensive network of bases on the territory of its allies and primary economic competitors. (2015: 86)

This reality flatly refutes Hillary Clinton’s claim that the US has “a network of strong alliances in the region, [but] no territorial ambitions” (2011: np).

Accordingly, both TPP-like agreements, posed as alternatives to RCEP, and military rebalancing into the Asia-Pacific, posed as responses to China’s territorial assertiveness, serve to counter the rise of China and maintain US hegemony in the region in both of the intertwined geopolitical and geoeconomic planes—in other words, in full-fledged geopolitical-economic terms. This demonstrates that geopolitical and geoeconomic logics are not territorially circumscribed but intricately overlap across the region. Moreover, class and class-relevant conflicts drive geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in inter- and intra-state relations through all of the complex societies that constitute the Asia-Pacific. Not unlike the mix of international, national, and local class forces that Gramsci analyzed in 19th century Europe, spatially complex class processes shape 21st century Asia, including the territorial and political outcomes that are currently being decided. There is no inevitable territorial form to be taken by the Asia-Pacific region; its shape will be determined by complex social struggles that operate simultaneously through intertwined geopolitical and geoeconomic registers.

## Conclusion

As state space, territory is relentlessly reproduced through the complex articulations between geopolitical and geoeconomic logics of power. These articulations are often disjointed, interrupted, or transformed. For this reason, any attempt to construct a general theoretical framework to elucidate GPE in the production of territory might be seen as fundamentally flawed. Nevertheless, we cannot remain satisfied with reducing this relationship to “historically contingent societal processes” (Passi, 2009: 216). Instead, we should try to trace out how various articulations between geopolitical and geoeconomic logics play out in the production and reproduction of state territory, something we have done here through the exploration of Gramsci’s arguments regarding territory. We retain a state-centric view because states still play the critical role in territorialization (Brenner, 1999). This does not mean that the interactions between geopolitical and geoeconomic logics of power can be read as a “coherent sovereign script” (Coleman, 2005: 201). A state’s strategic employment of specific material practices, cultural representations and discourses does not always result in an expected outcome. It always entails political struggle, as Gramsci—and many other state theorists—emphasized.

Arrighi’s and Harvey’s discussions of territorialism and capitalism extend the theorization of GPE, but they seem to consider states territorially circumscribed, while capital is not. Other political geographers provide rich discussions distinguishing geopolitics from geoeconomics but problematically fail to interrogate the dialectics between them and then needlessly argue for the priority of one over another. We argue that Gramsci’s insight into the dynamics between class relations and the production of territory across different scales can contribute to a theory of GPE and territory that avoids these pitfalls while building on some of the best ideas that the discussions by geographers have produced.

While territory is sometimes seen to be losing significance in a networked global economy, a territorial perspective is still necessary to understand the dynamics of GPE. Geopolitical and geoeconomic logics—which, we reemphasize, are only separable methodologically—articulate via territorial practices and representations of territory; so we must historicize these articulations. The aim here is not to find a single rule or essential structure to determine the GPE of territory. Gramsci called such general formulas “the stuff of much politico-economic fiction” (2007 [1930–1931]: 174). Rather, we should try to explain the unfolding of GPE and the production of territory. A new geographical imaginary is necessary, one that transcends the prevailing capitalist order and its spatial expression, the territorialization of the nation-state. To actually unravel the GPE and its territorial dynamics will require changing the hegemony of this social formation. Explaining is not the same as changing, but understanding is necessary for change.

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## Notes

1. We use the expression GPE as a short-hand for a Marxist, geographically sensitive critique of political economy. We are not wedded to the term “GPE” but we are fending for the elaboration of Marx’s critique in a way that addresses what Sheppard (2011) calls “geographical political economy” (see also introduction of the “Geopolitical Economies of Development and Democratization in East Asia” PWIAS International Research Roundtable [<http://geopolecon.pwias.ubc.ca/>]).
2. Our approach could be seen as state-centric, insofar as we will treat territory as effective state-space coupling. To paraphrase Slater (2004: 23), we consider the nation-state as a geopolitical and geoeconomic pivot in the production of territory. Though we endorse Foucault’s concern that “one cannot confine oneself to analysing the State apparatus alone if one wants to grasp the mechanisms of power in their detail and complexity” (1980: 72), we focus on the state’s role in the production of territory because we agree with Gramsci and Lefebvre that the state occupies a commanding position in contemporary geopolitical and geoeconomic processes. But this perspective need not lapse into economism nor determinism, so long as we conceptualize *the state as a social relation*—an idea from Poulantzas (1978), enriched by Jessop (2008) but derived from Gramsci.
3. Their analyses emphasize specifically imperial powers. Richard Seymour (2012) notes that the theoretical discussion of imperialism has benefitted the “‘spatial turn’ of social theory” or understanding of geopolitical economy in our terms because

when a state projects political authority outside of its sovereign, bounded territory, and begins the task of organising the political space of another nation, the seeming naturalness and obviousness of the relationship between space and political power is necessarily problematized. Still, there’s a logic to focusing on the axis of imperialism, since the emphasis on interstate relations and antagonisms forces one to consider the national territory not as a spatial given but as a social relationship.

4. Harvey’s concept of “spatial fix” implies that TMT’ can change in qualities. One kind of spatial fix is the improvement of urban space and environment primarily through investing in physical infrastructure.
5. In *The New Imperialism* (2003), Harvey defines the territorial logic of power as “the political, diplomatic, and military strategies invoked and used by a state (or some collection of states operating as a political power bloc) as it struggles to assert its interests and achieve its goals in the world at large” (p. 26). One difference from the definition above in *The Enigma of Capital* (2010) is that he adds “economic” strategies by states to the territorial logic of power. It appears that Harvey intends to clarify what is relevant to statecraft as territorialism.
6. In his reply to the comments on *New Imperialism*, Harvey clarifies that “I never argued, for example, that the contemporary state could ever possess interests ‘clearly distinct from, let alone in conflict with, the interest of capital’ . . . such a logical independence is impossible” (2006: 163). Nevertheless, when he theorizes the relation between territorial and capitalist logics, he continues to tie the former to the state and the latter to capital (for instance, see Harvey, 2014). Regarding the capitalist logic of power, Seymour (2012) contends “there is no *single* or *general* capitalist interest, but rather many capitals, nationally constituted and constitutively divided into fractions with a hierarchy of power between them.”
7. For other critical discussions of Harvey’s (and Arrighi’s) geopolitical economy, please refer to Brenner (2006), Castree (2006), Gregory (2006), Seymour (2012) or Wood (2006). For instance, Wood (2006) argues against contradictory relations between territorial and capitalist logics of power, but she instead stresses the relative absence of territorial logic as what distinguishes capitalist imperialism from precapitalist ones.
8. While Harvey stresses that the relation between the two logics should be viewed as “problematic, contradictory, and dialectical rather than as functional or one-sided” (2005: 92), he often posits a

linear idea that capitalist crisis leads to geopolitical conflicts (2014: 154). Castree (2006) also criticizes that Harvey's two-logics framework serves the argument that the exercise of territorial logic serves reproduction of capital, and claims "While the molecular logic of capital is explicated convincingly, the territorial logic of the state is given none of the attention it deserves" (p. 43).

9. For Gramsci's first use of "hegemony", see Gramsci (1999[1926]). For a lucid analysis, see Thomas (2009).
10. This lacunae was partly addressed by the publication of Boothman's *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1995), but will only be filled with the completion of Buttigieg's critical edition (see Gramsci, 2007[1930–1931]).
11. "[C]hanges in the organization of production [relations] generate new social forces which, in turn, bring about changes in the structure of states; and the generalization of changes in the structure of states alters the problematic of world order" (Cox, 1987, cited in Budd, 2013, pp. 29–30).
12. Taken together, this literature could be called "post-neo-Gramscian IR". But since this inelegant term simply means "back to Gramsci", it would be best to say that, with the recent literature, a Gramscian IR (*sans* "neo-") is finally immanent; yet what it entails is not IR, but geopolitical economy.
13. An abbreviated list of the Gramsci's major discussions of IR and geopolitics in notebooks 1–8 (those included to date in Buttigieg's critical translation), would include at least the following: Q1§44, Q1§63n4n7, Q1§138, Q1§150, Q2§16, Q2§39, Q2§48, Q2§78, Q2§90, Q2§125, Q3§5, Q3§11, Q3§38, Q3§46, Q3§55 (n2), Q3§63, Q3§80, Q3§116, Q3§117, Q3§118, Q3§119, Q4§38, Q4§60, Q5§8, Q5§23, Q5§31, Q5§54, Q5§86, Q6§7, Q6§60, Q6§86, Q6§96, Q6§109, Q6§119, Q6§125, Q6§135, Q7§16 (n 1), Q7§101, Q8§21, Q8§37, Q8§48, Q8§80, Q8§141, and Q8§216.
14. It was Nicos Poulantzas who elucidated, under the influence of Gramsci, the constitutive role of the state both in the relations of production and power relations in society and provided a further discussion of territory:

Now, through that very movement by which it both marks out frontiers and unifies national space, the State also turns beyond those frontiers towards an irreversible, clearly demarcated space which yet has no end or final horizon. In other words, it seeks to expand markets, capital and territory... These frontiers therefore become established as frontiers of the national territory only from the moment when capital and commodities are in a position to break through them. (Poulantzas, 1978: 106, see also Jonas (2011))

15. We owe this point to Morton (2010: 220).
16. To elaborate this claim with philological care would require more space than this paper provides.
17. On "the international", see Ives and Short (2012) and Bieler et al. (2015).
18. Hence, Gramsci emphasizes that the social power of a particular group is bound up with its relative territorial dispersion (e.g. Q13§23).
19. We appreciate one of reviewers for this insight.
20. You can see the image of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative on the website of *People's Daily* (<http://en.people.cn/n/2015/1022/c90000-8965767.html>) and that of South China Sea and Nine-Dash Line on the website of *The CCI Times* ([www.ccitimes.com/tuku/news/2016-07-14/2071.html](http://www.ccitimes.com/tuku/news/2016-07-14/2071.html)). The latter includes the message, 中国一点都不能少 (China cannot become any smaller).
21. In addition, the OBOR helps address security concerns of the Chinese state in the Western China where Xinjiang independence activists have linked up with Islamic extremist groups in central Asia (Fallon, 2015).
22. Some question the geopolitical effects of the TPP arguing "no hope of countering its [China's] economic and geopolitical influence with old-fashioned Trade agreements" (Prestowitz, 2016: np).
23. See Baker (2017).
24. See Dollack (2017).
25. See, e.g., Hass (2017).

26. Cumings argues “The United States has a full-blown structure of containment and ‘constraintment’ in the region that is now in its seventh decade and shows no signs of diminishing” (2015: 95).

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