

Inclusive Institutional Balancing: Hegemonic Power's Early Responses to Rising Power

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Abstract

In recent years, due to the rise of China and the intensification of Sino-US strategic competition, great power competition has received extensive attention from the academic area. This article examines the early responses of hegemonic powers to rising powers. In the early stages of power transition, hegemonic powers tend to adopt an inclusive institutional balancing and intra-system power transition to address a potential challenge from a rising power. This is primarily because this strategy ensures that the rising power continues to support the existing international order during crises rather than attempting to establish a new order. Additionally, inclusive institutional balancing and intra-system power transition can enhance the rising power's international status and influence, leading to cooperation between the two sides in providing public goods for the international community. This can help both countries avoid falling into the "Thucydides Trap" and the "Kindleberger Trap." This article supports its core argument by examining the cases of U.S.- Soviet relations, U.S.-Japan relations, and U.S.-China relations. Through a comparative analysis of these three different cases, the article concludes that, during early of power transition and global crises, hegemonic powers are unlikely to adopt a containment strategy in the early stages; instead, they are more likely to accept and cooperate with rising powers to jointly address global challenges.

Keywords: Institutional competition; Thucydides Trap; Kindleberger Trap; Sino-US relations; Power transition