

## **TRENDS OF EMPIRES EXERTING GEOPOLITICAL INFLUENCE: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF AKKADIAN TO BRITISH EMPIRE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study focuses on how empires had been historically exerting geopolitical influence on other political entities and what has been the similarities and differences of the way different empires exerted political influence. Starting from Akkad, one of the oldest empires, to one of the largest Empires in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the British Empire, and the distinct patterns were formed before the colonial era and during the colonial period. Empires like Roman, Byzantine, Arab and Ottoman pursued harsher means to bring areas and territories under their influence dominating through military might and aggressive interventions while colonial empires initially occupied territories the same way, however, later used more systematic approaches and political instrumentation through economic and political policies to keep their influence intact and used alliance politics to sustain and spread their dominance. As a result of the study, a distinct pattern of geopolitical influence emerged. This comparative analysis proposes two phases, namely precolonial and colonial, to distinguish the unique form of geopolitical influence in both periods. Empires/States had a very different way of exerting geopolitical influence before the colonization era, which was usually the direct military occupation, territorial subjugations, plunder and loot under individual aggressive plans and ambitions of rulers. Post-1492, with the emergence of colonial practices, it was through trade and colonization transited to the occupation of territories under direct rule. This period is marked by the mercantilist policies, economic exploitation, and politics of alliances to influence the way mighty empires and states exerted their geopolitical influence on others.

**KEYWORDS:** Empires, Geopolitical influence, Military interventions, Colonization, Alliances.

## Trends of Empires Exerting Geopolitical Influence: A Historical Analysis of Akkadian To British Empire

### **INTRODUCTION**

Political powers with local and/or regional magnitude exercise or pursue efforts to bring the other political entities and surrounding areas and populations under their influence. There is enough evidence to draw a historical pattern of states and empires to exert geopolitical influence over the adjacent territories and form alliances with the distant political entities to pursue their hegemonic designs in a wider geographical landscape. From oldest times, empires like Akkadian, Sumerian, and Babylonian to relatively less ancient Roman, Byzantine, Arab and Ottoman empires had all reflected the pursuance of geopolitical influence through various means. Mostly through direct military intervention in history to the most sophisticated propaganda and systematic diplomatic processes in contemporary world politics. European states were transformed into regional and global actors of influence, especially the British Empire. The modern empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were no exception, be it the British Empire or contemporary imperial states. Pursuance of geopolitical influence remains the foremost important agenda of the political powers today. The rulers of these empires had multiple reasons to pursue such an influence from personal ambitions to defending the frontiers of an ally. Many times, the most critical factor was to find ways to feed large militaries or protect trade channels to keep the empire alive through economic means. The human instinct to influence other humans is precisely reflected in the character of empires.

### **PRE – COLONIAL EMPIRES**

Akkadian, one of the oldest known empires (Liverani, 1993), emerged in Mesopotamia around 2300 – 2100 BCE. Of the eight rulers, Sargon the Great is referred to have spread the influence of the Empire. He made efforts to bring the surrounded areas and populations under the influence of the languages being spoken in the Empire and promote the same for the purpose of the hegemony of the Empire. He took many steps for irrigation, roads, development of infrastructure, and introduced taxes, but his greatest strength was his military invasions conquering a large part of Mesopotamia and expanding it to Syrian territories in the north to the central west of Arabian Peninsula. It had its influence reaching as far as Anatolia in the west of the Empire. The first Babylonian Empire (1900-1600BCE) emerged much later but in almost the same area. Hammurabi, who took the Empire to its zenith, is best known for his 'Code', which was a set of laws to govern the land. His Code is considered one of the earliest surviving politically important writing of significant length. He sent his code not only within the Empire but also far and wide to spread the geopolitical influence of his Empire. He turned a small city-state into a regional superpower (Charpin, 2012).

Roman Empire had a very strong regional and global influence. Christopher Kelly, the author of *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, refers to the Roman Empire as a super-state (Kelly, 2004). In another book, Morley (2010) has made an entire case of Roman imperialism. Book offers a detailed account of its geopolitical influence on the regions and the contributions towards modern day imperialism. He opines that "the idea of Rome has long outlived the physical empire that gave it form, and now holds sway over vastly more people and a far greater geographical area than the Romans ever ruled. It continues to shape our understanding of the nature of imperialism and thus, however subtly, to influence the workings of the world". Though the Roman Empire as an integrated entity lasted for only about 350 years the eastern part of the Roman Empire lasted for another 1000 years interchangeably referred to as the Eastern Roman Empire, the Roman Empire, or popularly as Byzantine Empire. Byzantium became a buffer state (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2006) between Western Europe and the powers invading from the East. It was only in the year 1453 when the Empire fell in the hands of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire had gained a powerful political status and geopolitical influence in the region. Western states, instead of continuing their trade through the Eastern route under the Ottoman Empire, chose to avoid the Muslim Empire, which gave birth to very different kind of political spread, and invasions through seas.

To qualify to be an empire, a state is required to have conquered various areas and kingdoms with multi-ethnicity (Münkler, 2007). In this regard, the Ottoman Empire was truly the greatest of all times. By the mid of sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had become transcontinental with the present-day Turkey as its core region. It had conquered areas and regions in southeastern Europe. Suleiman, the Lawmaker or the Magnificent, expanded the limits of the Empire from Northern Africa on one side to the Persian Empire on the other, from southern Poland to the end of the Arabian Peninsula. During this time, the Empire became the center of attention for regional power politics. Glen M. Cooper, an assistant research professor of Greco-Arabic Studies and History of Science at Brigham Young University says "The Ottoman Empire had tremendous impact on the West, not only through the transmission of goods and ideas but also as an ideological — and actual warfare — opponent" (Wadley, 2018). The Empire was spread over almost 90,000 Square miles encompassing three continents. Ottomans had one of the strongest Naval Force of the time. Ottoman influenced the regional as well as the global political environment of the time by creating the alignment and opposing poles. Ottoman remained a threat to the west as the efforts to conquer Vienna were made multiple times. Though the Ottoman's never tried to attack or besiege any central European territories after the second siege of Vienna in 1683, yet its involvement and influence in the European affairs continued till the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. Quataert

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(2005) refers that throughout nearly all of its 600-year history, the Ottoman state was as much the part of the European political order as were its French or Habsburg rivals. Ottoman Empire had many vassals (tributary states) including but not limited to Wallachia, Transylvania, Crimea Khanate, Principality of Serbia, Moldavia, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Duchy of Naxos, Eastern Hungarian Kingdom and Ragusa. Many areas under the geopolitical influence were not the vassal or tributary states, while some areas were given special status like the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Extremely humiliating 1920 Treaty of Sevres marked the abolishment of the Empire after having lost the First World War as part of an alliance with the central powers, Empire's cultural and religious influences have lived much longer like the Roman Empire.

A close look at the evolution, climax, and fall of these early empires shows that influencing the regional and global political entities had been a clear and obvious motive of all. Birdal (2011) argues that both the Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire were empires of global influence, justifying this argument in the context of the respective authority of the two in the religious sphere of Christianity and Islam. The argument also holds its strength for the reason that both empires were transcontinental, being able to control areas in Europe, Asia, and Africa and engage in extensive wars and political arrangements within the areas of influence. In the same context, the first one often referred to as Holy Roman Empire, while the second one enjoyed the de facto status of a caliphate (successor of the state of Medina and sole ruler of the Islamic Ummah). Religion was an important tool for these states to pursue their political and military agendas. Roughly each of them ruled over 5 million square kilometers in terms of the geographical landmass and pursued hegemonic designs, but their political and cultural influence was far more spread. Numerous empires have existed in the world with enormous size and resources, large armies, abundant exploits, and above all, strong geopolitical influence in the surrounding territories. However, this research focuses on the very special character of the empires to form political alliances and exert influence to pursue its regional or global supremacy. Empires like Umayyad and Abbasid Dynasties were central to the spread of Islam through political extension and outreach of its populations and armies. Both being successor to each other covered the same area reaching almost 11 million square kilometers at peak and maintained their influence as far as the Indian subcontinent. A standalone and relatively short-lived empire was the Yuan Dynasty in China. Yuan is an example of empires that swelled to large sizes but were relatively short-lived. Similar to the Yuan Empire, another humongous and the largest contiguous land empire was the Mongol Empire. Its greatest achievement was to link (2019) Europe with Asia influencing both the regions for eternity. It was only under Mongols that the trade between Europe and Asia

flourished to the point that China, on the farthest end of Asia, started receiving traders the first time ever in history.

## **COLONIAL EMPIRES**

Portuguese Empire was the first European Empire of a global magnitude, but the Spanish Empire had a much larger area and widest territories under its direct sovereignty (Maltby, 2009). Maltby also mentions that even today, 300 million people speak Spanish, and it is the primary language of more than 20 countries. Empire at its zenith in 1800 covered an area of 14 million square kilometers. It was spread over to five continents with areas as far as in North America and South America in the west and present-day Philippines in the east. Spanish Empire not only made economic exploits but also pursued its colonial ambitions as well as made attempts to form its supremacy over the other European as well as regional powers in the occupied territories. The Spanish Empire and the Britain friction over politics of colonial influence and a race for supremacy are traced back to the time of the Anglo-Portuguese alliances and the British support to its ally over Iberia. Finucane (2016) traces a complex yet collaborative relationship of the two in Spanish Atlantic during the global colonial challenges, which ultimately ended in Anglo Spanish conflicts. Portuguese were the first ones to colonize vast areas outside Europe, and the Empire ballooned to be a global empire parallel to the Spanish Empire, yet it was much smaller in size and weaker in pursuance of its supremacy as compared to the former. What went wrong to a mighty empire of a global magnitude was partially the emergence of the new political actors with more resources and military might and partially the weakness of the Portuguese rulers to counter and confront the aggressive geopolitical influence of these states. Britain had such an influence on Portugal that it was stated as 'Client state of Britain' (Clarence-Smith, 1985), and it signed treaties that drained its wealth to other imperial powers, mostly the Britain.

The states in the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were more imperialistic in their scope and character (Brzezinski, 2012). European age of exploration gave way to competition among European states that culminated with a race for supremacy beyond the regional level if not truly global. Other than Spain and Portugal, France and the British became the major power players due to active colonization and imperialistic plans. France had started colonization as early as the 1600s, and by 1670 it had an area of 3.4 million squares kilometers. The aggressive colonization, which started with Parts of North America followed by western parts of Africa, reached to the extent of 11.5 million square kilometers by 1920. As the earlier expansion had driven the French Empire to pursue its influence within Europe, which resulted in aggressive Napoleonic Wars. By 1800, France became the most powerful country in Europe, and later victories

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encouraged the French political ambition to experiment with the colonial advancement in Asia and brought considerable success. As a powerful country in Europe and likely at a global level, France developed alliances and confrontations challenging its status. French Empire had a tumbling blow during its war with Kingdom of Prussia. However, Germany and United Kingdom remained major rivals for France until the end of the Second World War. Parry, Girard, & Weinmann (2002) state that "From 1800 to 1945 its [France] main rivals were Germany and the UK, for the control of Europe and of Empire. These antagonism have been largely settled, by the development of the EU and the loss of the overseas empires". German confrontation was to gain a better status and role within Europe while UK's rivalry on both fronts European and global levels was determined by its own emergence as a powerful European state harnessing global gains and pursuance of political agendas aiming at winning more powerful and imperial status.

Portugal, Spain, France, and the UK were not the only European empires which had overseas colonies, protectorates and mandated territories. Greatly influenced by the economic gains and prosperity of pioneering colonial powers, other relatively smaller states also started exploration. Denmark was one of the earliest ones to follow, while by the end of 15<sup>th</sup>-century the number rose to seven. With the joining of the USSR, Dutch, Belgium, Italy, and Germany, the colonial powers club had eleven powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not to mention Sweden that had a short-lived colonial empire. A relatively lesser-known but covering a sizeable area of the world was Russian Empire. At the peak of its expansion, the Empire was the only rival to the British Empire, with an area almost equal in size. Professor of Russian Government at London School of Economics, Dominic Lieven (2003) mentions that The British Empire, the Ottomans, and Habsburgs were the major rivals to the Russian Empire with similar challenges and problems. Russian Empire lasted for 200 years and was a complex mix of ethnicities, religious groups, culture, and political entities.

By 1800, when the USA entered the global colonial club, more than 30 % of the globe was controlled by Europe. The only other notable colonial empire of the world was Japan in Asia. Japan did not have colonies to the extent of its European counterparts. USA and Japan enjoyed no direct rivalry on the mother countries, and to the European comfort did not pose any serious threats to their motherlands, yet there were bound to be in conflict with European imperial powers. Spain and France were the pioneer colonizers of North America joined by the United Kingdom. Three held substantial parts of the continent under their control and heavily influenced the political arrangements and adjustments and readjustments with growing geopolitical influence and colonial territories of the United Kingdom. During

the revolution years in America, the British used extremely harsh means to control the fast-growing resentments and struggle for independence. The original 13 colonies which declared independence in 1776 were all controlled by the Kingdom. After a break away, they made a military alliance with the French. French saw an opportunity to pay back the burden of the humiliation of the Seven Years War (1754 - 66) (Anderson, 2007), which had erased out French dominance. French lost the war to the British Empire and lost colonial presence in North America forever. Joining hands with United Colonies to fight the British Empire paid well. The British lost the war and lost North America forever. The Empire's influence further diminished with its defeat in 1783.

It was within a short span that the USA joined the club of imperial powers. Perhaps equipped with the years of experience of dealing with the colonial powers and a large number of manpower that had actually been part of colonizing powers, helped it. It had the advantage of being away from the main battleground or sphere of influence of most European colonial powers. This advantage provided steady growth, and recent experience of fighting one of the leading imperial power proseed it to a mindset for its own expansion. Japan was a different case altogether as an island nation not much threatened by home rivalries and strengthened by a centuries-old Empire that had influenced its neighboring islands richly through its culture and traditions. The areas historically influenced were first to be captured by Japan in late 1800's. Japan kept intervening in Korea from time to time following the pattern of European colonial powers and its geopolitical influence grew stronger with time. Treaties were signed to get extraordinary benefits for its public, while the main objective was to exploit these territories economically. Aggressive overseas occupations started as late as 1895. Its influence was also recognized in the European political power ambit, and UK signed an Alliance in the early 1900, which lasted for good twenty years establishing Japan as a non-European imperial power. To justify this state of affairs, O'Brien states "Japan was being asked by the World's most important power to provide security for some of its most important imperial components". (O'Brien, 2003, p. 1) However, neither USA nor Japan ever qualified to be colonial powers to the extent of mighty European powers.

The emergence of such a large number of European powers in close geographical proximity and with global outreach and geopolitical influence gave birth to the new form of rivalries, usually referred to as imperial rivalries (Sterling, 1940) and race for supremacy. In the early years of colonization, the globe had offered enough resources both in terms of lands for occupation, populations to conquer, and wealth and riches to invade that minor conflicts were handled through mutual adjustments and

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collective gains. Wherever these adjustments outbalanced, conflicts emerged and a locally negotiated balance of power was maintained. Wars for taking superiority in the foreign lands remain a constant feature though none could attain the form of a global crisis. Europe remained stressed and strained during these newer forms of conflicts and adjustment, but much of it happened on the foreign lands. In 1801, Britain and Ireland joined together to form the United Kingdom that endorsed the British superiority over mainland Europe as well as its perception of a global power rolled out. By early 1900's the UK emerged as the largest colonial empire with established global superiority. This is called The British Imperial Century (Parsons, 1999), and historians scale it from 1815 to 1914. An enormous empire of 35 million square kilometers unprecedented in human history. It was unparalleled to any other contemporary empire with rule over more than a quarter of the global landmass. The term 'sun never sets in the Britain' was a befitting title to the Empire. A huge empire required a geopolitical influence of an exceptional magnitude destined to political supremacy unmatched in the human existence. Empire superseded its European predecessor Spain in terms of its continental presence in all six inhabited continents, holding almost 1/4th of the world population.

UK attained a superior status in terms of military might, economic edge as well as a political power player. In terms of trade, the UK became third in the line of states with global trade impact after The Roman and Mongolian Empires. However, Empire had a more diversified and widespread trade network across the globe as compared to more linear trade routes under the earlier two empires. Roman Empire offered an across Europe and west Asian Trade framework while the Mongolian Empire was instrumental in taking these routes as far away as the eastern ends of China. The United Kingdom superseded them both with global impact on trade through its strongest naval power and bases, ports and colonies across continents and oceans and slave labour and goods transportation from north to south and east to west.

It is believed that the European empires which had emerged as global entities with their overseas colonies and massive foreign occupations mostly held mercantilist policy whereby using the wealth of the colonized entities for the benefit and development of the mother country or area. It was a new form of exploitation as main raw materials, cheap and slave labour was used to make luck across colonial areas. By the receding years of the 1800s, British Kingdom attained a superpower status greatly due to the wealth of the overseas areas and colonies. These were instrumental in carving out the British Kingdom's biggest weapon and central element to its strength, a global trade network. Fueled by trade advantage to the kingdom, it helped to develop in favour of the kingdom. From the provision of armies to the



supplies of ammunitions and raw materials, colonies provided with every possible resource to endorse UK supremacy amongst the imperial nations of the time.

The British role in it was to coin a successful economic policy of mercantilism (Smith P. J., 2015), which not only complemented economically but drained the subjugated territories of their precious resources and strength, which could provide impetus to indigenous movements to throw away the colonial clutches. Growing commercially strong and exploiting the resources of these colonies for imperialistic designs became major elements of this mercantilist policy. A trade with massive profits and continuous money supply at the expense of colonized masses offered great advantages. If the industrial revolution geared the socio-economic and politico-military developments in the kingdom, it was greatly due to the mercantilist imperialism that edged UK ahead of other European and non-European imperial powers. A question arises that did UK only had a mercantilist approach to its administration of the colonies, or did other imperial powers also benefitted from this practice?

Originally coined in France, both France and the UK centered their economic policy on mercantilist models. Though the mercantilist ideas were common during colonialism and almost all the imperial states practiced them to some extent, UK aggressively endorsed (Stern & Wennerlind, 2014) practices, laws, and policies that restricted colonies to trade with the mother country only and stopped to trade with other states. According to the Navigations acts, use of foreign ships or at times employment of the British only staff, trade to be channeled through the Empire and many other restrictions were legalized. States before the 18<sup>th</sup> century focused more on the conquest of territories to enlarge their area and expand the geopolitical influence on neighboring areas as well as gain manpower and wealth to support further expeditions. These victories brought wealth to incur expenditures on military and finances to run the affairs of the governments. Wealth whether in the form of treasures of the occupied lands, booty or ransom often proceeded to be the ownership of the aggressor or ruler. No standard system or process other than the subjugated territories to pay a fixed amount as a ransom to the victorious existed.

The colonies existed for centuries but the European colonial era was exceptional in terms of number of colonial powers and areas of the world colonized, similarly it was exceptional the way these colonies were treated and exploited by the colonial powers. Mercantilism emerged as a major economic policy and practiced for many colonial powers viz-a-viz imperialism as a major political tool and policy to tackle political issues. From government's functioning to the working of politico-economic institutions and socio-cultural structures, nothing escaped the changes and

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challenges of a huge empire. It was also different due to the industrial revolution and mass employment and production of goods. The UK maintained its global imperial status for almost a hundred years from the early 1800s to the times of First World War and with a little lesser degree till the Second World War. Internal challenges and external pressures settled down as Empire strengthened by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Empire pursued its supremacy against other imperial powers and earned its due share of rivalry. The territorial expanse of a global scale required a different political experience to handle the contemporary rivals not comparable to any other rivalry in past history. The emergence of the British Empire as a global power was not only detrimental to the neighboring European powers but also disadvantageous to imperial Japan and the USA.

British supremacy was not pursued through politics and diplomacy, it was reflected in every aspect of the empires life; advancement of Protestant Christianity, propagation of English lifestyle as grander and spread of British culture as regal, technological superiority, military supremacy, naval entourage and royal decrees. Rivalries driven by this supremacy were not new to the Empire. Most of the rivalries had historical traces purely inherited by the Empire as a legacy of European historical disorder and warfare but differed in nature and intensity and scope. The first half of the nineteenth century experienced a wave of colonialism coupled with the industrial revolution in a much faster and radical manner. Expansionism accelerated, but with it, the nature of trade with the colonies started changing a lot. Mass production encouraged imperial powers to find out ways and markets to get surplus consumed. Earlier the trend had been to get supplies of raw materials and cheap labour to provide the finished good to its own mother country publics. Now a need for new markets with demand for the surplus raised the new challenges towards colonial policies. Thus, it required a spread of colonialism as well as an approach to perceive colonies as customers as well. Extensive exploitative practices started being converted to transformed economic possibilities. It was against this backdrop more economic and some political (Hoffman, 2017) that Europe expanded its colonial realms extensively.

Emerging European powers forced to channelize the flow of trade in both ways as compared to imbalanced trade between mother county and occupied areas. The exploitation of slaves, and raw material, spices, precious metals, coupled with stratification of social classes in colonies became a common practice. Erecting trading posts and building forts and white settler areas and developing military might overwhelmed imperial powers. To win their share of this changing scenario, colonial powers intensified the expansion plans that lead to a new era of rivalries. These rivalries were aimed to increase the global share of occupied territories,

monopoly of trade routes and merchandise, designing aggressive policies to regularize global commercial enterprise. This germinated complex array of rivalries. Empires which had been strained by the local historical enmities within Europe and with neighboring European entities found themselves signing treaties, contract and documents of mutual benefits and cooperation at one place or colonized neighborhoods in contrast fighting and confronting each other in another setting. The only good that transpired in this backdrop triggered development in the colonies though largely aimed at fortifying the mother country but partially construed to mitigate colonial population resentment against their new lords.

The British Empire emerged as a state delimiting inter imperial (Screpanti, 2014) rivalries and invoking global imperial rivalry with European as well as the USA and Japan as non-European actors on the rise. Screpanti discusses the five types of imperialism and explains how mercantile imperialism converted to colonial imperialism. He further states that,

"The third form was that of colonial imperialism. This began in the first half of the nineteenth century and peaked in the second half. It finally expired with the Thirty Years' War (1924 – 45), when the inter-imperial rivalries exploded with the utmost virulence. In this system of international relations, capitalist interests again prevailed over state power politics, which they subordinated to the impulse to accumulate. The states became republics or constitutional monarchies in which restricted suffrage was used to turn governments into the 'business committee' of the capitalist class. Firms tended to organize into large financial and industrial groups, giving life to cartels and conglomerates that sought to gain monopolistic over national markets. The urgency of accumulation implied the need to enlarge markets and therefore expand empires. These spread toward Africa, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent in the form of colonial occupation, and towards the Americas and the far East in the form of influence zones" (p. 43).

Power politics gained momentum from the zones of geopolitical influence and extended in wider colonial zones where financial and commercially interest of the states intersected. Global political scenario was being carved by the vicissitude of the emerging rivalries. British dominance challenged geopolitical influence and control of other imperial powers and threatened their interests. This hegemony secured trade benefits of unprecedented scales for the British. Contrarily, it posed serious concerns for contemporary powers in terms of their economic gains and political interests as well as share in the world politics. The internal balance of power in Europe was tilting in favour of the British Empire. Britain had strengthened itself at home and stability with enormous commercial enterprise entrusted the home country with the confidence and enhanced

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ambitions to pursue its influence worldwide. Massive manpower support from colonies fortified militaries and strengthened Empire's control over the colonies. It assured an environment free of multiple challenges at home and on the colonial front to pursue its global influence and build an image of a hegemon.

Of the eighty major wars the British Empire fought from 1801 to 1900, almost 19 were fought with the help of allies. At the War of Seventh Coalition, the number of allies reached almost 12 being the highest number of a coalition formed in the nineteenth century. War of Seventh Coalition, as the name suggests, was one of the series of wars fought with the help of allies. The various alliances formed under the British umbrella, and the number of wars fought, testify to the growing hegemony of the Empire. In 1899, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States of America, Germany, Russia, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary formed a truly global alliance to quash the Yihetuan Movement (Buck, 1987) popularly known as Boxer Rebellion in China. The movement was brutally crushed in 1901, having left a changed approach in global imperial conquest for influence. Turning of the century had turned the motives and objectives of imperial powers to form the political power coalitions. Most colonial associations and military expeditions in the nineteenth century had been for the sake of expansion, occupation of territories and for mutually benefitting from the resources and exploits of the colonized. The Alliance of the Eighth paved way for the changed power play. It was formed to protect the Christian population, governmental officials and lift the siege of the Diplomatic Area in Peking China. In a humiliating defeat, indemnity of a huge sum was imposed on the Qing Empire to be paid to all the eight states of the alliance over the 40 years.

Europe witnessed a transformation of political associations and influences within the next decade post-Eight Nations Alliance. Relatively less powerful nations became suspicious of the more powerful imperial nations in Europe. An environment of distrust towards each other caused a hostile political environment. Many attribute the incident of the First World War to this growing mistrust and rivalries when the imperial powers aggressively attempted to increase the zone of geopolitical influence in the world. Within a decade or so from the time of the Eight Nations Alliance, a very different pattern of alliance started forming. The arch-rivals for centuries, namely France and the United Kingdom, entered in the new era of the alliance. Although both had not fought a major war in the 100 years of the nineteenth century and were allied to face Russia in the middle of the century. Both had times of tense relations, and confrontations ensued in foreign lands of colonies vented badly at home grounds. Initially, the alliance born out of a threat from rising Germany (Johnson, Mayne, & Tombs, 2004) gradually

strengthened for mutual interests and political influence. The signing of Entente Cordiale marked a new beginning.

Today the legacy of Entente Cordiale is two nations of extremely friendlier relationship and a peaceful neighbourhood. Both are not at the zenith of global political hegemony nor pursue hegemonic influence comparable to the times of Entente. However, both nations share many values within the European Union, not only within themselves but with the wider European Community. It was certainly not developed out of a day's effort post Entente. It was not an agreement of cooperation or a document for peaceful relationships neither an understanding of alliances for future cooperation. It was to work out pressing issues between the two empires in colonial lands of overlapping zones of influence.

"That agreement between France and Britain was certainly not an alliance, nor even a treaty, both of which would have been a forward looking. Instead it was a hotch-potch of a convention and two declarations signed in London on 8 April 1904 whereby Britain and France settle a number of outstanding colonial differences over far-flung parts of their respective empires.....rather than drawing the two empires together, it physically pushed them apart by establishing respective spheres of influence in Siam and West Africa" (Johnson, Mayne, & Tombs, 2004, p. 3).

A simplistic definition of an alliance would be coming together of two or more states to pursue their interests that might range from militarily occupying territory or confronting an act of aggression and/or pursuing or countering the political influence. It could be formed through an official and documented process or an understanding reached through considerate friendly means. Weitsman defines alliances as "any formal or informal agreement between two or more states intended to further (militarily) the national security of the participating states. It is a continuing security association among member states with an element of forward planning and understanding to aid member states militarily or through benevolent neutrality" (Weitsman, 2004, p. 34). Alliances are formed for multiple reasons and could be of various types. She further states six levels of security alliances based on the level of commitment of the states ranging from the least being 'benevolent neutrality' to extreme being, 'integration of forces and strategy' (p. 35). The same was the case in Europe where many alliances of various sizes, scope, and in the context of fast-changing political scenarios were formed. Alliances were formed to address local geopolitical issues such as the League of the Three Emperors (Runkel, 1925) aimed at effective control of ethnic groups and at the regional level to maintain geopolitical influence on entire Eastern Europe by the members of the alliance namely, Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian empires. During intermittent periods of the alliance, another alliance was formed to avoid

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war by the Austro-Hungarian and German states in 1879. Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy formed a purely military alliance with the title of the Triple Alliance in 1882, which lasted for more than thirty years. Another Dual Alliance between France and Russia in 1894 was triggered by informal contacts (Anderson, 2007), leading to a formal treaty. The alliance is considered an ignition (Kennan, 1984) what later became a glowing fire of the First World War. The two dual alliances emerged as power alignments for the future world war.

The Britain's policy of staying out of continental European conflicts and engagement helped concretely. This disengagement made pursuance of global expeditions and motives progressive. Its reluctance to join regional setup of power balance also out of need. The British Empire had been successful in keeping its image of a global hegemon, and this status instrumented multiple benefits for the Empire in a purely imperialistic entanglements. Porter (1987) argues that it was the main pillar of the British Empire's foreign policy to remain disengaged from Europe from 1830 onwards. He states that,

"In the middle of the nineteenth century, Britain was scarcely in any sense at all a 'European' power. It would have been impossible for her to be so: impossible, that is, without changing her social and economic structure and her political nature fundamentally. It would have been impossible for the Britain as she was then to become part of the continent as it was then: a different world, with different interest and values and priorities; full of tadpoles still, with not a frog in sight."

This disengagement policy helped Britain in many ways. Rather than draining its resources and energy on regional politics and conflicts, it focused much on its global expansion and colonizing and consolidating colonial entities as well as fortifying its naval power. This could also be a possibility that by the end, the British Empire had attained a greater naval superiority on all the contemporary powers, especially the Ottoman Empire that was now marked with old and outdated maritime strength. Hence the British ambitions of a World Power contrasted sharply with its tilt for European power. It should be noticed that by the end of the century, an important development was the German foreign policy shift to pursue its global power agenda. The initiation of 'weltpolitik' (Lee, 2003) posed the first challenge to the British global ambitions. Lee lists three main reasons for this shift, and mentioning the first one, he states that, "the most obvious is that it was a logical stage in the Germany's growth as a major power."

The first two decades of the twentieth century are marked with the formation and development of global alliances of greatest ever magnitude. No other alliances in history to pursue collective political power had been

so damaging and catastrophic. The results of the First World War, which was primarily fought between the two powerful alliances of this era, prove the stance. The loss of human life and damage to property, trade, and emerging industrial activity was unparalleled to any other war in history. The advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century experienced a new form of global political power play. Technological advancement, an abundance of military resources and manpower, improvement of military warfare, the formation of alliances, and modification in mercantilist policies formed the very basis for the political engagements at that time. Geopolitical influence of empires and states spread beyond continental landmasses and expanded kingdoms of seas. Unparalleled human occupation of vast seas and sophisticated naval activities with state of the art navigational support initiated more maritime warfare possibilities. Maritime routes (Killingray, Lincoln, & Rigby, 2004) played a phenomenal role in the development of trade and movement of the people across continents.

It was not just helping people and power to travel to new places and colonies, it pushed the ideas and innovations of one place to another. Rule and consistent control over the maritime trade routes and ports was paramount to the hegemony of the imperial superpowers. These circumstances not only gave birth to a distinct but complex pattern of rivalries of diversified political powers i.e., USSR, Japan, UK, Germany, Italy, France, US, but also ignited/coined the worlds' most radical supremacy race. This race germinated the seeds for global conflicts of ever greater scope and intensity, far greater than any other conflicts among nations.

Continuing on efforts to form a balance of power in continental Europe and elsewhere in the world, two famous alliances were formed before 1914, referred to as The Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, while France, Russia, and Britain were the Entente of three. Twentieth-century alliances differed in nature to the earlier alliances much the way these were formed and also the way the legacies of these alliances exist till today almost after a hundred years. Alliances had come out of an expectation to maintain the balance of power. Such a balance of power was much needed more so to sustain the benefits of global trade and colonial loots. However, these alliances failed in maintaining a balance of power that could ensure the peaceful coexistence of the rising powers. The Triple Entente surfaced (McCullough, 1999) out of the Britain's apprehensions of rising German power and the public image of the Triple Alliance formed in 1894. It was after a long period of disengagement of the British Empire that an alliance was formed on the mainland Europe of three European powers. Britain joined France and Russia to curtail and confront Germany and in totality the Triple Alliance. The emergence of alliances maintained the fact for the emergence of power imbalances and the perception of threats by

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the political actors in Europe. The tensions and frictions that remain minimal for a brief period surmounted fast in the early years of 1900's necessitating struggle for a change in the status quo. In a short book, *The Origins of the First World War*, Ruth Henig states:

"Since 1900, Europe had been wracked by a series of crises, each of which had brought her great powers close to war. These crises were provoked by a number of serious issues which were causing mounting friction amongst the powers and which, by 1914, in the opinion of many European statesmen, were becoming insoluble by means other than resort to war" (Henig, 2006, p. 1).

These years were critical for the European alignment to another wave of frictions and rivalries. On one side, old inexplicable issues were being settled down in case of understanding reached by The British and Germans for the fate of African holdings of the receding Portuguese Empire. Balkans provided some respite despite looming flames of war. French and German came closer, mitigating their old differences and frictions. But on the other hand, underlying issues of greater frictions and differences from the past transcended all these positive developments. Adversarial relations of European nations for centuries at the European mainland haunted the prevailing peace and tranquility. Two important developments of the early twentieth century were growing sentiments of nationalism and Arms race. Nationalism had nourished greatly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century widely among European nations and impacted the socio-political domains of everyday life heavily. An enhanced feeling of connection with the same race, same ethnicity, or distinctiveness of people within territorial borders gave rise to nationalist movements. This cohesion was good for the nations to consolidate their internal populations and strengthen themselves. However, this strength to become a weapon of dominance and superiority towards other nations and cause clashes to the magnitude of a world war was not anticipated. By the end of the century, nationalism became antagonism (Porter B. A., 2000) towards other countries and nations. "In the reign of William II, German nationalism became more progressive and had an increasingly unsettling effect upon relations between the Great Powers" (Scaife, 2004, p. 60).

Supremacy of nations based on their natural superiority coined new waves of dominance and power. Pursuance of geopolitical influence and dominance began to be a public interest area. There were multiple factors and causes which resulted in the fateful event of First World War. Nationalism was not the only factor but one of the important and strong reasons to cause First World War (Rosenthal, 2014). This provided enough fuel to the fire when men, the young and the old, were all invited and recruited to fight for their national pride and status. The second



development that twentieth-century surmised a new race and a new competition among nations for deadly arms and mighty armies. Having formed multiple alliances, European states remained sceptical of the usefulness and continuity of these alliances at the time of any major conflict. Economic development, in addition to revenues from trade and commercial enterprise (Kennedy, 2017) supplied enormous sums of money to invest in armament, especially maritime battleships and conflict infrastructure. The presence of the two, provided a lethal combination for a war ground. Kennedy opines that capacity of a nation in terms of its economic strength and productivity directly impacts its ability to dominate in the fields of politics and military strength. He convincingly (ibid, p.439) proves that post sixteenth-century wars are fought and won by the economically more resourceful empires.

For this reason, arms of mass destruction were manufactured and that too in massive numbers, great sizes, intensity, and destruction with material resources of the booming economies. Naval build-up required to ensure control over the maritime routes combined with military build-up to keep control over colonies and confront other imperial power compelled for enhanced military spending. The development of naval armament, intensified as Germany and the United Kingdom both invested massive money. They focused on improving their naval fleets, which were extensively armed, bigger in size, and better in speed. Alongside building up of naval bases created intense naval rivalry. Ultimately this accumulation of resources for taking the lead over each other sparked militarism. The term militarism exclusively marks this period of huge spending on military enlargements, the superiority of military autocracy over public bureaucracy and government policies, (Johnson M. , 2013) militant interpretations of the issues of mutual cooperation among states, a considerable increase in military manpower, European powers built huge armies and competed for each other for the advancement of weaponry. Most imperial powers believed that a lead in military strength would allow for a natural allowance for dominating and winning over any situation of conflict of war following customary stance of earlier empires. Nevertheless, some imperial powers emphasized more on the technological edge and lead to the customization of weapons.

Undoubtedly armament race could be considered as the single most central factor to facilitate a hostile environment. Though some recent works with the revisionist approach especially Ferguson (2012) who takes an opposite view on militarism and contests. He believes that it was rather Britain's inability to handle a war at continental Europe due to ineffective and insufficient military arrangements that it made efforts to inflate it to the global scale. Secondly, the German entry to the war was driven by its

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apprehensions of a weaker military position. Subsequently, the prime contestants of the war, Britain and Germany, grossly indulged in a huge military conundrum. The military built-up often supervised and planned by military minds and ideals transformed the approaches towards tackling the balance of power issues and conflict handling in Europe as well as in the rest of the world. Resentments caused by the whooping military might of the few like Germany and the United Kingdom stimulated other European states to accelerate their own efforts to achieve minimum deterrence. Sustenance to the national/state security through strong defense structure and policies required more amplified spending on defense. These spending and military built-up threatened other nations. Obviously, increased budgetary spending of one state alarmed other states to the extent that they felt compelled to balance this equation or surpass it by diverting more resources in this direction.

The total defence budget of the major powers in Europe increased from less than a hundred million British Pounds in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to almost four hundred million pounds by the time First World War erupted. These expenditures enormously increased when the war scene set in. Deadly war cost millions of human lives and loss of businesses, trade, and damage to the economy, society, and populations, and property. Changing socio-political environment, nationalism, imperialist designs, arms race, and regional hegemony and global dominance all led to the First World War. First World War was the first such event to bring a foray of supremacy and accelerate the rivalry among the multiple nations giving birth to a new form of poles termed as Allied Powers and Central Powers.

First World War was fought between Allied Powers and Central Powers. In the beginning, Allied powers, namely France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, confronted the Central Powers, namely Austro-Hungary, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire. Later other countries started joining the war. The group of countries formed first ever distinct poles within a multipolar world. Great Britain, France, Russia, Romania, Italy, Japan and later the United States of America had come together to form a unique block ever in the history of the political power in terms of their geographical, ideological and political differences and struggle against an opposite block of central powers consisted of Germany, Austria – Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria.

In addition, other countries, territories under colonial powers, and mandated areas also underwent the catastrophic war in the continuing months and years. Sparked by a small conflict between Austria and Serbia, took 32 countries onboard and entered in every zone of warfare land and sea, adding a new zone of air raids. Catherwood (2015) highlights that war spread in every part of the world and gives detailed facts about its important battles fought in Europe and elsewhere from Africa to Spain and on Asian

fronts, including the Middle East. He also explains how technology advancement influenced war progression, especially the introduction of Air warfare. War revised the sphere, scale of and intensity of political influence, hegemonic impression, and designs for global dominance. Furthermore, the social strata, economic conditions, political processes, and cultural manifestations all got affected within Europe and, to a lesser extent but globally. Central powers faced humiliations on different fronts. Loss of human lives, economic meltdown, social chaos, demoralized populace, forfeiture of territories in the home country, and extinction of rule over colonial areas. War cost much to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire that were disintegrated. This dismemberment wiped out the first one forever while the Ottoman Empire survived with much less area and almost no geopolitical influence that is modern-day Turkey. Devastated and drained of resources internally and weakened militarily, Germany encountered much of the inglorious defeat and a significant loss of a huge part of its European territory.

Alternatively, there was not much good news for the Allied Powers other than victory. The United Kingdom, the major actor in Allied Powers, lost its ambitions for global super power. Burdened under surmounting debt, it had more to lose than to gain out of the victory. Britain's surplus in 1913-14 of 6 to 7 million pounds converted to a deficit of 1529.8 million pounds in 1917-18. It was roughly three times the total revenue collected that year (Horn, 2002, p. 83). War destroyed the allied powers hegemony, and imperial powers faced uprisings and independence movements in the colonial areas. Many new states emerged in the aftermath of war. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia carved out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and concurrently, Latvia and Lithuania were freed from Russian control. Finland, Estonia, and Poland also got independent status. Many others got control of their lost territories to the imperial nations. Huge reparations had to be paid by the defeated powers. Internal imbalances, revolutions, rebellions, and political upheavals continued for years as aftershocks of the war. One of the aftermaths of the First World War was the disruption of the balance of power. A feeling of concern developed by the ending days of the war when peace treaties were being signed among major European powers about the power balance in the post-war Europe. Declaration of the First World War proved the biggest blow to the earlier balance of power approach based on the historical notion of balancing through alliances and treaties. Britain held the position of a balancer in Europe in the pre-war era that was almost lost. Empire also enjoyed a position of a global hegemon that was dwindling now. The defeat of Central Powers formed a distinct supremacy block of Allies, but within the next two decades, the changing dynamic gave rise to not only a readjustment to this pattern but also formed next blocks of rivalry termed as Axis Powers and Allies.

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### COMPARATIVE MODEL OF GEOPOLITICAL INFLUENCE

The study of the historical trends of how empires and/or states influence each other has resulted in some distinct findings. These findings unveil a specific pattern that is being discussed henceforward. The way and means used to exert geopolitical influence during a certain time period are analyzed to find out a correlation between the two. Interestingly, the critical aspect is the two-way relationship of the 'modes of political influence' and each of the phases mentioned. By and large, how states or empires have been exerting their supremacy and using power as well as influencing throughout history up to the British Empire may be categorized into two phases on the basis of characteristics most common and modes widely exercised.

Phase and time period	Modes of Geopolitical influence	Distinct Features
Pre-colonial	Military aggression (establishment of direct rule) Territorial subjugation (increase in area) Fear of attack, plunder, loot, ransom Warfare victory	Wars Security for the subjects Hard Power (individual ambitions) dominance power
Colonial 1492-1919	Colonization Imperialist Policies Mercantilist policies Military Alliances	Maritime rivalries Enslavement Trade Industrialization

In the first phase, and it is to be noted that phases are loosely defined in the time dimension and might overlap, military aggression and occupation was the most common, widespread and regular mode of influencing other territories and populace. A victory meant a complete subjugation of enemy territory and usually wiping out the existing ruler, monarch, or king and demolishing the ruling structure to replace with one of the victorious. It held an advantage of direct rule and a set up fully powerful and in control of the invader. Hence, to bring areas and territories under political influence, army aggression was usually considered necessary. Weaker states or smaller kingdoms had to accept geopolitical influence out of fear for the attack, mass killings of its subjects, destruction of cities and properties, plunder, and loot. Wars were common during the pre-colonial phase, and military confrontations were repeated modes of bringing areas under political influence.

The second phase that roughly began in the late 1500s was distinct with aggressive colonization. Though colonization itself was a military pursuit, often it did not involve the havoc to the level of pre-colonial wars. Within these colonies, imperialist and mercantilist policies were introduced to exploit, and enslavement was common practice. The cheap labour and excess of raw material from the colonies provided inputs for the rapid industrialization throughout this phase. To ensure the smooth and continued supply of resources, colonial powers innovated extensive imperialistic practices, acts, and rules to succeed in mercantilist approaches. Military alliances were formed very often to maintain influence on colonies and expand the sphere of influence. Within these alliances, issues of political supremacy and rivalries were a common feature. This phase took extensive geopolitical influence to the seas through active exploration and naval expansions. Due to magnanimous trade supplies and volumes, maritime rivalries erupted as well. The two phases could be bracketed with harder modes of influencing other political entities and bring foreign and overseas territories under a zone of influence through aggression, military intervention, arms advancement. However, the second phase is distinct in terms of more methodical pursuance of geopolitical influence through policies and laws. Though maritime clashes became a significant course of aggression during this period, many of the conflicts started to be regulated by treaties and understandings reached among the colonial powers.

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