

Contemporary Global Security Strategies And The Manifestations Of Major Powers: Hedging Strategy As A Model

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Abstract

The concept of strategic hedging is a modern concept of economic origin, it has not received sufficient attention at the level of strategic academic studies. However, strategic hedging is considered as one of the most important national security strategies which adopts various conflicting and cooperative mechanisms. Researchers have made some efforts on strategic and security studies to familiarize themselves with the strategic hedging and its perspective, as well as the concept of global security. Strategic hedging has undergone several changes since its emergent. It began with of the traditional definition and it has been enhanced due to development in the field of security studies. Strategic hedging has received greater attention and focus as a result of international conflicting interactions. Such interaction have left clear implications for the concept of security in its different dimensions globally and regionally. As a result the concept of security has received a significant and comprehensive development across different stages of time.

Introduction

Classical theories assume that countries resort to multiple strategies, to pursue and protect their national interests, and implement the objectives of their foreign policy. Some of these strategies are confessional, others are cooperative, still other employ neutrality. Furthermore, some countries depend on balance, whether soft or coarse, and some are based on the alliance with the major powers. Accordingly, it can be referred to a strategy that we believe has not received sufficient attention in academic studies.

Although, such strategy has been adopted by many small and big powers, it is the hedging strategy which mediates between national security strategies and is considered the third alternative to them. Hedging strategy comes between strategies which adopt conflict mechanisms and those which adopt cooperative mechanisms on

the one hand, and between traditional balance and keeping pace on the other hand. Hedging strategy may take a defensive policy in alliance with the threatening country, or an offensive policy in alliance with a country or countries competing with the latter.

Strategic hedging may also adapt a hard balance and a soft balance, and between direct confrontation or excessive dependence on other countries. Therefore, strategic hedging is perceived as one of the most important preventive strategies that a state adopts due to the potential threats it faces in light of its attempts to preserve its interests and national security. Furthermore, the concept of global security relies on history as the main source in extrapolating such concepts in general. Global security is constantly in harmony with international changes; Therefore, the concept witnessed many variables that led

to its development and transfer from its traditional concepts to another in keeping with the development witnessed by the world.

Research importance

This study is important because it deals with the new concept, i.e., strategic hedging. Moreover, strategic hedging plays a great importance in strategic and security thought, and another and different type of preventive strategies. Strategic hedging may be more convincing than other strategies adopted by countries to ensure and follow up their security and interests and to spare them aside from direct confrontation with its competitors by balancing the positive and negative behavior of the state in the face of potential threats.

Research objectives

1. Identifying the concept of strategic hedging, and explaining its academic importance as it is one of the developments in the international arena despite the less attentions it receives,
2. Distinguishing between strategic hedging and other related concepts, which are often confused with each other in scientific and academic studies,
3. Contributing to the development of the concept and enriching academic studies that specialize in the aspect of security and strategic plans with this kind of hedging strategies, as well stating the most important changes that have occurred in the concept of global security,
4. Clarifying the tendency of the great powers to adopt strategic hedging as a behavior in their foreign policies despite the available strength at all levels.

Research problem

The problem of this study stems from the term “hedging strategy” itself; it tries to disentangle the terminological and conceptual signification of the term. Despite the fact that the term has economic origins, it is often confused with many other concepts to express a direction adopted by countries in their foreign policies. A matter which imposes on the concept to keep pace with or in harmony with developments in the global environment and the extent of their reflection on global security.

Research hypothesis

In this study the researchers are trying to prove a hypothesis that the strategic hedging differs from other concepts and conventions overlapping with it. Despite the modernity of the concept and the various definitions which differ with the multiplicity of intellectual trends through which every thinker looks. That is why there was no agreement on a unified and comprehensive definition, especially since it includes different strategies which embodies a mixture of political responses, and that the concept of global security is constantly changing and evolving, as long as there are events that greatly affect its stability.

Research design

The title of the study requires relying on a systematic integration that includes both the basic deductive and inductive approaches and their pathways. It starts with the historical approach/track, which is one of the most important approaches used in modern studies. Revising the past is useful in understanding the present. This approach is applied in our study by tracing the historical development of the concepts of strategic hedging and global security. Furthermore, in addition to the historical approach, the analytical descriptive approach was used, as long as this approach

is the most important analytical tool for understanding the subject on the impact of the scientific analysis of the phenomenon in order to reach the main pillars and concepts and describe and analyze them as they are. The researchers proceed to search for data and analyze them to reach the results of the study.

Research structure

In light of the research focus, it can be divided into two main axes, as well as an introduction and a conclusion. The first axis deals with the theoretical framework of the concept of strategic hedging. This axis is divided into two sub-sections; the first of explains the term of hedging linguistically and terminologically, while the second distinguishes between the concept of strategic hedging and the other concepts that overlap with it. The second axis deals with the concept of global security and the most important changes the term received from its traditional to contemporary concept.

Theoretical framework

Hedging

Countries usually protect and follow up their national interests; they also implement the goals of their foreign policies by adopting many strategies, some of which are conflictual, some are cooperative, and some depend on hard and soft balancing. Still some employ neutrality, and others make alliance with the major powers, or what is known as keeping pace, including those who seek truce, or take in dependence (Popescu, 2018).

In the context of practicing national interests, it became clear that there is another strategy that countries can resort to achieve their national goals, i.e., "Strategic Hedging". Although Strategic hedging has not received sufficient attention in

academic and strategic studies, and that Strategic hedging is still in its development stage. Researchers have made efforts in strategic and security studies to introduce and theorize strategic hedging, led by Evan S. Medeiros, Mohammed Salman, Vogtek, Wolf, M., Gustav Gerhartz, and Brock Tessman (El-Desouky, 2019).

Also, the strategic hedging behavior is not new in the foreign policies of countries. International events have proven that there are many countries, whether large, small, medium, or emerging have already employed this strategy for achieving their policy and to ensure their national security. Therefore, strategic hedging includes a mixture of cooperation and conflict. Hedging strategies enable the countries that apply them to engage in economic, political, and social cooperation with the threatening countries. On the contrary, they employ military (increasing or modernizing military capabilities and entering into a formal security cooperation or alliance against the threatening countries), economic, diplomatic and institutional mechanisms to weaken its power (Sherwood, 2016). The term hedging has been recently paid attention to, and therefore it has been defined differently. Thinkers defined the term of hedging according to the various intellectual trends they affiliated to. This is why thinkers did get not agree on a unified and comprehensive definition, especially since term includes different strategies that embody a mixture of political responses. Strategic hedging is defined as the behavior of a state through which it seeks to identify risks by adopting multilateral policies aimed at creating mutual interactive effects (Vaicenskaitė, 2017).

According to Dr. Kuik Chwee, Professor of international relations at the National University of Malaysia, the concept of hedging refers to the behavior by which

countries seek to ward off risks, by seeking multiple policy options aimed at producing mutual counter effects, under a state of uncertainty. When a country views a rising power as an imminent security threat, it will seek to achieve a balance in the strategy towards the rising power. Moreover, hedging is also perceived as a set of policies that seek - at the same time - to take counter actions aimed at increasing the options to maximum risk and risk avoidance, and in this context, it refers to the term economic pragmatism. It refers to the attempt of countries to maximize the gains from the rising power by establishing direct trade and investment links, despite the possibility of political or security concerns between the two parties. Hedging is a continuum that works between balance and alliance; it also includes elements of diplomacy, security, and economics (López i Vidal & Pelegrín, 2018).

Strategic hedging is a type of behavior used by countries that want to improve their competitiveness while avoiding direct confrontation with major competitors at the same time. It is an attractive option for countries facing uncertainty as a result of structural changes in the international system, such as: the current unipolarity that gives way to the process of diffusion of power. In such circumstances, strategic hedging becomes an attractive alternative over other strategies, such as (balancing) or (chariot) which are known to correspond to the source of risk to gain benefits; they are pertained especially by countries of with limited influence. Therefore, it can be said that this is the reason for the major powers' tendency to adopt this type of strategies despite the strength they have in several areas (Geeraerts & Salman, 2016).

Strategic hedging

Many researchers integrate the concept of hedging in the literature of international relations with the concept of balance of

power. They presented it as an alternative to balance and bandwidth; such balance is either internal or external. The internal balance of a country, for example, requires increasing in defense capabilities and budget. It develops its economy to accumulate weapons, and improving its defensive policies. On the other hand, the external budget is the effort of the state to formulate alliances for its own security, considering that hedging is an insurance policy in the event of failure of participation (Koga, 2018).

Evelyn Goh, the professor of strategy at the Australian National University, defines hedging as a set of strategies that aim to avoid or plan for contingencies in a situation in which countries cannot make decisions about more obvious alternatives, such as: balancing, action or neutrality. Instead, the states adapt a middle position which frustrates or avoids having to choose one side at the expense of another clear policy. Goh adds that hedging means keeping more than one strategic option open against the possibility of a future security threat in which the state does not depend on one strategy in confronting it (Goh, 2005). Policy makers considered the concept of "hedging" as a systematic option because the state has already sided with the target state, but it determined to use non-coercive methods to induce cooperation as long as the target state remains non-belligerent. Furthermore, the balance of power theory broadly defines hedging as balancing. In the same vein, some specialists defined "hedging" as a strategic choice that the state makes by not taking sides, whether temporarily or permanently (Goh, 2006).

In light of this, hedging behavior pursues strategies that emphasize the mechanisms of engagement and integration on the one hand, and emphasize balance in the realistic concept that takes the form of

security cooperation with other countries and the increase and modernization of military capabilities on the other hand. Brock Tasman, a researcher in international affairs at the University of Georgia, described the behavior of hedging to connote less confrontations than the traditional idea of equilibrium that prevailed in the Cold War. Hedging is less cooperative than the "keep with pace, and follow-up strategies" which make countries cooperate strategically with the leading or most powerful country in order to avoid a direct attack on its part, or to participate in the spoils of victory. This pattern of behavior was predominantly applied on the foreign policies of countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Hashem, 2019).

Through hedging, the state pursues the opposite policy. It strengthens its economic cooperation and prepares for a diplomatic and military confrontation by increasing military capabilities, to avoid an outright confrontation with a potentially hostile state temporarily. Despite the numerous recent studies on hedging, specialists have not yet reached a consensus on the concept, including its definitions, motives, conditions, patterns, and identification. Hence, without clarifying these dimensions, the concept of hedging remains of low analytical usefulness (Mearsheimer & Alterman, 2001).

Hedging is a bit like issuing an (insurance document), for example, if you own a home in a flood-prone area, you will need to protect that asset from flood risk - in other words - to hedge it - by taking out flood insurance, in this example, you cannot prevent a flood, but you can plan in advance to mitigate the risks in the event of a flood (The Investopedia Team, 2022).

Accordingly, many concepts and terms are found to be similar or convergent to the concept of strategic hedging, and it is clear

through this convergence, that there is a clear conceptual gap between policy and academic use for the concept, as the international relations literature integrates the concept of hedging into the theory of balance of power. Makled (2011) defines the balance of power as the situation that arises when one country manages to obtain a huge and overwhelming superiority in its forces, which threatens the freedom and independence of other countries. Such act pushes countries with limited power to confront force by gathering in axes or a coalition of counterforce. Similarly, hedging is presented as an alternative to "balancing" and "movement". Although both balancing and movement have uncertain strategic risks and consequences. Hedging is basically mixed with budget; this countermeasure eliminates the risks of each action, thus either obtaining the benefit of earning time in order to determine whether the country must balance until the future direction of the strategic landscape is clarified, or achieving the strategic benefit of maintaining the country's neutral position in a way that increases for independence (Koga, 2018).

On the other hand, there is an opinion that perceives hedging as completely different from the theory of balance. This opinion classifies the strategic hedging literature by adopting two approaches: the first views hedging as a "strategy focused on security", and it differs from balance policies, while the second approach perceives hedging as a "hybrid strategy" that combines participation and balance. Moreover, Dr. Denny Roy, the specialist in Asian and Pacific security issues, adds that states have four options in the face of potential regional hegemony including: balance, alliance, participation, and hedging. Roy asserts that the practice of the hedging strategy by states goes back to the approach represented when there is a high degree of

uncertainty about the true intentions of the rising power. The first approach clarifies the concept of the security hedging strategy, the one which focuses on security. It is distinguished from other strategies that are obtained by the second approach and which combined strategic hedging with other strategies (Hashem, 2019).

Still some others broadly define hedging to include the general strategies of the state. This creates conceptual flexibility to make hedging applicable to many cases in which states do not adopt a specific strategy. It is also useful in clarifying the political dilemmas that actors face when they try to choose one policy. This flexible definition confirms that the use of mixed strategies is a distinguishing feature of hedging. The most prominent description of American policy is (participation and hedging), as many scholars and policy makers discuss the American “hedging” strategy towards China even in a unipolar system dominated by the United States. So a leader regime can implement a hedging policy to avoid unnecessary conflicts with potential competitors, and most of the literature on the US “strategic hedging” emphasizes participation in integrating China into the current international system and hedging the risks of its failure (Koga, 2018; Robert, 2006).

There is also the 'appeasement policy' obtained by Britain and France in confronting Nazi Germany before World War II in an attempt to avoid war and achieve peace. They made unilateral concessions, as the two countries were engaging in soft diplomacy with Germany, while at the same time they were preparing for a military confrontation; Therefore, it was called the policy of appeasement, which many researchers held responsible for the outbreak of World War II. Therefore, policy of appeasement is

another similar concept of the strategic hedging policy (Ahmed, 2020).

Others have mixed the concept of hedging with neutrality, based on the idea that the goal of hedging is to avoid direct confrontation with the opponent. However, “hedging” differs from neutrality. Neutrality forces the state not to interfere in any conflict, and to adhere to a single stance towards all parties to the conflict. While hedging allows those who adopt it to cooperate with the opponent state, while at the same time cooperate with allies against it (Gindarsah, 2016).

The concept of strategic hedging presents a number of other concepts related to balance and its various forms, including soft balance, hard balance, positive balance, negative balance. Soft balance represents non-military forms of balances in the international system. It often occurs when the weaker state does not accept the influence and control of the stronger state. This type of balance depends on soft power tools, such as, culture: political values, diplomacy, and the justice or legitimacy of foreign policies that the state pursued (El-Desouky, 2019).

On the contrary, solid balance refers to increasing military and economic capabilities, or entering into alliances, as the state increases its military arsenals to achieve balance with the state hostile to it. Solid balance is achieved through a continuous building of conventional and nuclear weapons. when we approach these types of balances with the concept of hedging, we find that strategic hedging aims to balance these two strategies, in order to avoid direct confrontation with the enemy state (Geeraerts & Salman, 2016).

The positive and negative balances are also components of strategic hedging. The state resorts to them in order to reduce threats to its stability, or to survive in a chaotic world.

Positive balance means improving and developing national capabilities and increasing them, whether military or non-military, by following an internal or external balance strategy. Since the internal balance is limited to intensifying and increasing military spending, while the external one includes military alliances and mutual defense agreements (El-Desouky, 2019). Negative balance is the opposite to the positive balance; it works to undermine and weaken the opponents' national military and non-military capabilities. Negative balance is performed by following direct balancing strategies such as espionage, military sabotage, and preventing the arrival of military technology to allies (Koga, 2018).

Section two: Global security

Global security

Due to the accelerating and changing events that the international community still witnessed, an interest in the concept of global security has emerged. Furthermore, the interest and focus in the concept has increased more after the end of the Cold War in 1990. Such developments left clear effects on the concept of security in its various dimensions and levels globally and regionally. The concept of security has undergone a major and comprehensive development at various stages of time, and as a result, the concept of traditional security has radically changed, bypassing its concept which is based on solid military power in dealing with the challenges and risks that face states and the international community.

Globalization, with its political, economic and cultural dimensions, as well as technological and knowledge development and progress, have contributed to the diversity of sources of threat and risks that are not related to the direct traditional military threat pattern

starting with organized crime, climate change, natural disasters, epidemic spread, refugees, cyber security, energy security, etc.

These changing and development have imposed the diversity and expansion of policies and methods of confrontation and treatment to suit the nature and size of the challenges and new motives. Since the Treaty of Westphalia, which was held in 1648, the national state has been considered the basic unit of analysis in international relations; it constitutes the active component and engine in international relations. Therefore, security should be understood from within the state or at the latest from the limits of its contact with other units. Based on this point of view, the concept of security got narrowed to just express special procedures including citizens and their property within the state against potential dangers that affect citizens and their property. Furthermore, this concept has been developed to include procedures that to the state performs to face other countries, such as the formation of armies and entering into military coalitions, in addition to the possibility of states to take positive measures to achieve their security (Al-Rashdan, 2019).

Within the scope of the concept of traditional security, Arnold Wolfers, the pioneer of classical realism define security as the absence of measures that threaten the acquired values, and the lack of fear of these values being attacked. Others link security with the ability of the state/nation to pursue and protect its interests by all means, anywhere in the world. Accordingly, we find that all the definitions set at this stage focused on the military and armamental aspect. It is the focus of the military force, which is perceived within this concept, as the basis for maintaining and achieving security, as well as the military ability of the state to confront and

repel any attack or aggression. This indicates to the use of security in its narrow military sense by linking the two variables of security and military force, given that the military tool is the main tool to achieve the security of states (Al-Rashdan, 2019).

It can be said that the concept of security at this stage has remained with its traditional and has not undergone any changes. Hence, many researchers pointed out that the field of security studies revolved around two main topics: First: the causes of war and ways to prevent it, secondly: the strategy in the sense of the amount of military force used for the political purposes (Lynn-Jones, 1991).

However, the matter has changed with the advent of the information and technological revolution and multiple international transformations. Security studies have entered a new stage. The contemporary trend linked the concept of security with the nature of developments that occurred after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the spread of internal conflicts in some countries, and the increasing problems of illegal immigration to Europe, as well as the emergence of non-traditional transnational threats, such as: diseases and international crime, the refugee problem, environmental violations, terrorism and other challenges. This leads to an awareness that security cannot be reduced to military issues only. Likewise, the scope of the concept of security must be reconsidered so that it is expanded and modified at the same time. The concept of global security has become the ability to secure an adequate level of prevention and protection against dangers and threats of all kinds, with all their effects, and whatever their source (Boniface, 2018).

The impact of international interactions on the development of global security theories

The Copenhagen School for Peace and Security Research is one of the most prominent schools that have made contributions to security studies within the framework of critical theories. This school participated in enlarging the concept of security; it has many important research studies on peace especially with the historian and thinker Barry Buzan who is considered one of most prominent thinkers of the Copenhagen School along with many thinkers who work under the banner of the Copenhagen Institute for Peace Studies. The Copenhagen School of Security is based on the belief that peace is, above all, an endeavor, and that the actors tend to neglect the option of negotiation and peaceful settlements in order to adopt the path of Securitization. A path which its foundations are based on a self-definition to threaten against survival (Bala, 2012).

The security expansionist view stems from the definition Barry Buzan who perceived security as “working to be free from the threat.” In the context of the international system, security expresses the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent entity and functional cohesion against the forces of change that they consider hostile. States and society, in their pursuit of security, sometimes exist in harmony with each other, but they contradict at other times. The basis of security is survival, and Buzan does not mean by working to liberate the threat “to escape from it or to completely neutralize it,” given that when analyzing the chaotic structure of the international system and security, Buzan says that under anarchy it is possible that security to be only relative (Bala, 2018).

Buzan expanded the concept of security in his studies of the work of the German scientist 'John Herz' on the 'security dilemma'. Herz' also believed that international chaos exposes countries to the

security dilemma, but he indicated that realists have controlled the security problems of a state at the level of systemic analysis only. This approach is valid for the major powers that are really affected by the international system in general, to the extent that they are not adapted to studying the security problems of other countries. If the security of the major powers is affected by what happens within the overall the international system as a result of the network expansion of their interests, then small states and regions are not always affected by what happens in geographically distant regions (Busti, 2019).

The development of international conflict tools is considered one of the most important reasons which led to the emergence of multiple levels of security, such as: international security and regional security, but the most important is the emergence of the concept of international and global security. However, is impossible for any country to set itself apart from international interactions and events which affect its national security, directly or indirectly, has become a global situation of a sense of danger and lack of security. Therefore, a global insecurity have been felt. There should be collective action and coordination in order to achieve and protect global security (Al-Rashdan, 2019).

Thus, it became difficult for countries to remain isolated from international issues due to the increase in the degree of connection between the internal and external environments. So, what is happening in various parts of the world affects the security and interests of states directly, even if the events are far from them geographically or outside their surroundings (Adawy, 2016).

The issue of security is a relative. The state pursues to achieve its security appears through interactive relations with the external environment that consists of a

group of states and other actors. Furthermore, the security of a state will be of a regional nature while the security of another state is of an international nature. Therefore, the concept of security is constantly changing depending on the severity of the change in the external environment. The result is that security is not absolutely achieved, and this is the prevailing reality in the international community (Al-Rashdan, 2019).

The more the state tries to ensure and protect its security and interests, the more threats and challenges appear that undermine its goal, for example, the emergence of the United States of America as the only superpower which dominates the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It attempts to maintain the unipolarity in its favor. Hence, many major powers such as China and Russia (the former Soviet Union paid many efforts to take this domination. The two theories of (the peaceful Chinese rise and the new Eurasianism) are the actual translation of these endeavors (Khasib, 2018). These endeavors raised the fears of the major international powers, including the United States of America, which dominates world order. It was prompted to adopt different strategies in order to hedge these fears (Bakir, 2016).

The continuation of wars and political and military conflicts in different regions of the world led to multi-dimensional challenges and threats (political, security, social, demographic, economic, environmental). They have exceeded their geographical borders. Therefore, it becomes a must for actors from countries and regional and international governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to pay preserve and protect national and global security. They should also change their response to become a sustainable long-term

approach at the level of security policies, instead of being short-term emergency policies in light of the growing conflicts and successive wars in the world (Al-Rashdan, 2019).

Conclusion

Unpredictability has now become a permanent factor in international relations, but this was not really the case during the Cold War. As a result of many tense events in the global strategic environment. Therefore, countries, whatever their position in the global system, began to increase their interest in preventive strategies, especially the strategic hedging, to ensure several goals, including its security and interests, which increased the importance of this strategy as a concept and behavior that countries adopt even if they possess all the elements of power, for example, the mutual hedging between the United States of America and China in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region. The region witnesses tensions from time to time, have increased the importance of this behavior in light of the similarity of security in the world. Data indicate that the idea of achieving absolute global security has not and will not be achieved, but rather it can be achieved in a relative manner as explained by school theorists Copenhagen, due to the constant changing in the international environment. This change often brings with it challenges, threats and developments that are reflected on global stability and security since its classical early stages, to the contemporary sense of concept of security.

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