

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES)

WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY AND (NEO-)GRAMSCIANISM

7th lesson

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LEARNING GUIDE

- Lesson length: **7** slides
- Content:
 - Beyond world-system theory
 - World-system theory
 - Gramscianism
 - Neo-Gramscianism
- Recommended minimum duration for review: 30 minutes
- Suggested minimum time for learning: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- The learning of the curriculum is aided by a course book and self-assessment questions.
- Recommended minimum duration of this full lesson: 2 hours



BEYOND WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY

- **Dependency School**
- From a largely Weberian perspective, the main tenets of dependency theory are:
 - There is a financial and technological penetration of the periphery and semi-periphery countries by the developed capitalist core countries.
 - That produces an unbalanced economic structure within the peripheral societies and between them and the central countries.
 - That leads to limitations upon self-sustained growth in the periphery.
 - That helps the appearance of specific patterns of class relations.
 - They require modifications in the role of the state to guarantee the functioning of the economy and the political articulation of a society, which contains, within itself, foci of inarticulateness and structural imbalance.


WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY

- World-System theory can be seen as a direct development of Lenin's work on *imperialism* and the Latin American *Dependency School*.
- Immanuel Wallerstein and his work on the Modern World-System is a key contribution to this school.
- Wallerstein's work has been developed by a number of other writers who have built on his initial foundational work.

WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY

- Wallerstein traces the rise of the capitalist world-economy from the "long" 16th century.
- [According to him](#): ...not the system of the world, but a system that is a world and which can be, most often has been, located in an area less than the entire globe. World-systems analysis argues that the units of social reality within which we operate, whose rules constrain us, are for the most part such world-systems (other than the now extinct, small minisystems that once existed on the earth). World-systems analysis argues that there have been thus far only two varieties of world-systems: world-economies and world empires. A world-empire (examples, the Roman Empire, Han China) are large bureaucratic structures with a single political center and an axial division of labor, but multiple cultures. A world-economy is a large axial division of labor with multiple political centers and multiple cultures. In English, the hyphen is essential to indicate these concepts. "World system" without a hyphen suggests that there has been only one world-system in the history of the world.

WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY

- **Productivity dominance** allows a country to produce products of greater quality at a cheaper price, compared to other countries. From this comes:
 - first trade dominance,
 - then financial dominance,
 - then military dominance,
 - finally, economic dominance  ends in "core" states.
- What comes after dominant (core) states?
 - Peripheral states: least economically diversified, have relatively weak governments, have relatively weak institutions, tend to depend on one type of economic activity, often by extracting and exporting raw materials to core states, tend to be the least industrialized, have a small bourgeois and a large peasant classes, tend to have populations with high percentages of poor and uneducated people, tend to have very high social inequality, tend to be extensively influenced by core states and their multinational corporations. (originally Latin America and today sub-Saharan Africa)
 - Semi-peripheral states: those that are midway between the core and periphery. Sharing values of both core and peripheral states. Spain and Portugal were considered as semi-peripheral states (see their connections with Latin America), but today states like Brazil, Russia, India, Israel, China, South Korea and South Africa (BRICS) are usually considered semi-peripheral, as well as the so-called Eastern Europe.
 - External areas: states that maintain socially necessary divisions of labor independent of the capitalist world economy.

GRAMSCIANISM

- It is not exclusively Marxist, but it shares Marx's views about emancipation and opposition to exploitation.
- The Italian Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) is a key figure in this tradition.
- Gramsci argued that ruling classes maintained power by making prevailing inequalities seem 'natural'.
- This idea is summarised by the term '**hegemony**'.
- For scholars influenced by Gramsci, realist theory is 'hegemonic' because it underpins the status quo.
- They argue that the existing order can (and should) be challenged, because 'reality' is socially constructed by humans who can reshape the world they live.

NEO-GRAMSCIANISM

- Drawing upon the work of the Antonio Gramsci for inspiration, writers within an 'Italian' school of international relations have made a considerable contribution to thinking about world politics.
- Gramsci shifted the focus of Marxist analysis more towards superstructural phenomena.



NEO-GRAMSCIANISM

- In particular Gramsci explored the processes by which consent for a particular social and political system was produced and reproduced through the operation of hegemony. Hegemony allows the ideas and ideologies of the ruling strata to become widely dispersed, and widely accepted, throughout society.
- Thinkers such as Robert W. Cox have attempted to 'internationalise' Gramsci's thought by transposing several of his key concepts, most notably hegemony, to the global context.

(Yes, the same Robert Cox.)



ABOUT THIS LESSON

The images used in the curriculum can be found online and are freely accessible.

The curriculum is for educational purposes only.

Compulsory and recommended literature sources for the given course were used as sources for the lesson.

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