

 <p><u>Norbert Merkovity</u></p>	 <p><u>11-16 minutes</u></p>	<p>Thing to remember:</p> <p>Existing order can (and should) be challenged, because ‘reality’ is socially constructed by humans.</p>
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World-System Theory and (Neo-)Gramscianism

Before we start to talk about world-system theory (also known as World-System Theory), we have to stop by the Dependency School.

Dependency theory, an approach to understanding economic underdevelopment that emphasizes the putative constraints imposed by the global political and economic order. First proposed in the late 1950s by the Argentine economist and statesman Raúl Prebisch, dependency theory gained prominence in the 1960s and '70s.

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 can be seen as a direct development of Lenin’s work on imperialism (**remember** what was about imperialism in lecture about Marxism) 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.

Wallerstein traces the rise of the capitalist world-economy from the "long" 16th century. This is the era of the predominant capitalism.

...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.

According to Wallerstein:

Basically, there are four kind of states.
Core, semi-peripheral, peripheral and external states.

Core states have **productivity dominance** that allows a country to produce products of greater quality at a cheaper price, compared to other countries. The productivity will lead to

- **trade** dominance what will end in
- **financial** dominance. With these two it is easy to build military and it will end in
- **military** dominance, and finally we will come to **economic** dominance.

Semi-peripheral states are those that are between the core and periphery. Sharing values of both core and peripheral states. For a long time, Spain and Portugal were considered as semi-peripheral states (see their connections with Latin America). 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 (or East-Central) Europe.

Peripheral states are

- 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)

External areas: states that maintain socially necessary divisions of labor independent of the capitalist world economy.

Gramscianism and Neo-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*’.

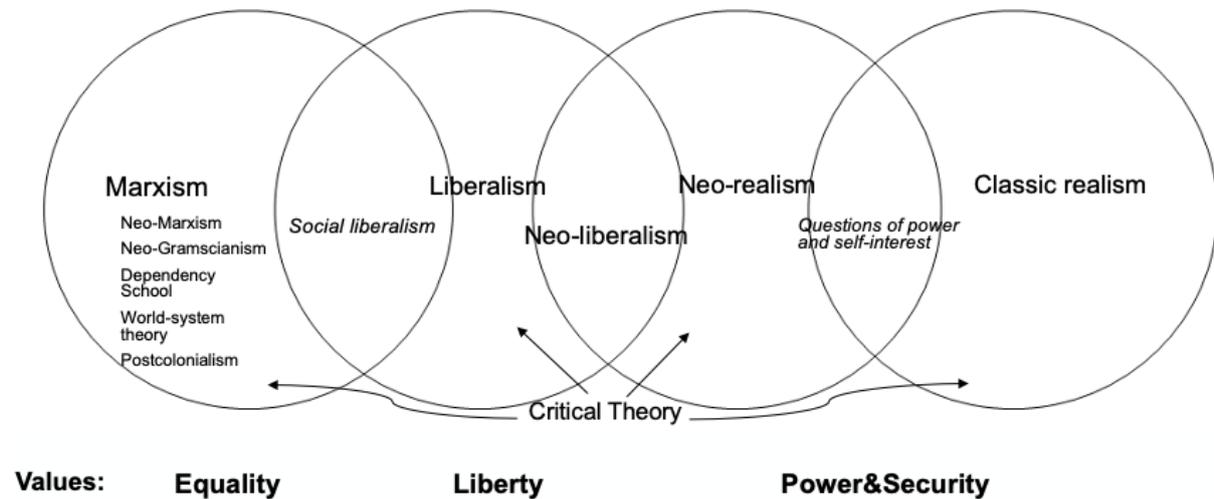
For scholars influenced by Gramsci, realist theory is ‘hegemonic’ because it underpins the status quo. They argue that the existing order can (and should) be challenged, because ‘reality’ is socially constructed by humans who can reshape the world they live.

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.

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.

What is hegemony? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFQrV8UxpVA>

Progress



Questions

1. What can you tell about the essence of *Dependency School*?
2. What are the main tenets of dependency theory?
3. From where originates world-system theory?
4. Who should be mentioned regarding the world-system theory? Why?
5. What are the main characteristics of core states?
6. What are the attributes of *peripheral states*?
7. Is there anything in between core and peripheral states? (If your answer is yes, what are the attributes of those?)
8. Which are the external areas?
9. What is in the centre of (neo-)Gramscianism?
10. What are the main issues in (neo-)Gramscianism?

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