**THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**(IR 316)**

**COURSE NOTES**

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**Theories of IR**

Theory of IR: A Chronology

* 1. The First World War let to the predominance of Liberal Internationalists

Under Woodrow Wilson to challenge realist power politics that caused the War

1930s C. H. Carr criticized Liberal Internationalists for being utopian or too idealistic. His Realism was based on the concept of scarcity and the conflict between “have and have nots.”

1940s H. Morgenthau systematized realism and introduced the concept of national interest based on power.

David Mitrany developed Functionalism in opposition to realist power politics.

1950s Behavioralism aimed to make realism more scientific.

1960s Haas analyzed the European integration process with Neo-functionalist theory.

1970s Realism was criticized in a major way by Liberals who developed Transnationalism and Complex Interdependency Theory.

Marxist criticized realism through dependency and World System Theory.

1979 Kenneth Waltz responded to the Marxist and Liberal challenge with his Structural/Neo-realist theory.

1984 Robert Keohane and Robert Axelrod accepted two Neo-realist assumptions (anarchy and egoism) and integrated them into Neo-liberal framework to analyze international cooperation/international organizations. Neo-liberalism is also called Neo-liberal Internationalism. The main focus is/was on the analysis of international regimes.

1986/1987 Constructivist challenge to Neo-liberalism/Neo-realism was developed by J. Ruggie and Alexander Wendt.

Neo-Gramscian Critical Theory was presented by Robert Cox and Stephen Gill

1990s **>>**  Today IR is characterized by a predominance of Constructivism and neo-Realism while Critical Theory and Feminism are strong but minor.

**Realism in International Relations**

Realism is one of the dominant theoretical approaches in International Relations. There are several forms of realism. However, the key change is from classical realism to neo-realism in the end of the 1970s. The key texts of this approach are the followings and they are all security oriented.

* E. H. Carr (1939) The Twenty Years Crisis
* Hans Morgenthau (1948) Politics Among Nations
* Kenneth Waltz (1979) Theory of International Politics
* John Mearsheimer (2004) The Tragedy of Great Power Politics

**Main Assumptions of Realism**

1. **Human beings are rational and they maximize their own interests.**
2. **States are central actors in international relations**

3. **International relations are inherently conflictual**

4. **Security alliances (e.g. NATO) are a way out of conflict.**

**Understanding of power in realist tradition**:

* Ability to change behavior.To dominate. According to Morgenthau, power is man’s control over the minds and actions of other men. According to Dahl, power means to get other to comply by threatening them with consequences if they do not. This means that power is relational; one does not exercise power in a vacuum.
* Power is also relative. One has to compare one’s power with that of other states. Realism sees military capability as the essence of power. But military capability depends on other factors such as the size of population, resources, etc. However, others argue that power depends on the ability to provide effective leadership, to be persuasive and have convincing ideas and resources to back them up.

**E. H. Carr (1939) - The Twenty Years Crisis**

E. H. Carr has tried to develop a realist theory of International Relations (IR) that does not start from assumptions about human nature. The book is an attack on Woodrow Wilson’s Utopianism or Idealism and the book is devoted to demolish central elements of this idealism.

Carr argued that we need to base our understanding of world politics on the realities power in international politics. For him, it is difficult to go against existing power relations. Furthermore, Carr does not agree that every state has the same interest in peace because not every state is satisfied with the status quo. Only status quo states can be satisfied with peace but all others would like to change things.

For these reasons, international relations will always be conflictual because there is no overarching authority in the international system that would give compulsory jurisdiction for states. States can get away with whatever their power allows them to achieve.

**Hans Morgenthau (1948) Politics among Nations**

The aim of the book was to consolidate realism as a theory of international relations after the end of the Second World War, and to provide support for the role of the United States (U.S.) in maintaining world order.

Morgenthau argues that world politics experiences recurrent wars because of the sinfulness of human nature (concept from Christian theology). He emphasis that we have to be realistic in what we expect from people and we need to expect that if there are conflicts of interest they are not going away without power struggle.

As a consequence of human being, international relations is characterized by states pursuing their interests defined in terms of power.

Morgenthau focuses on states as major actors in international relations. Why this focus is on the states? States are sovereign: This means that they make binding decisions for a political community and they represent their community. Sovereignty is the ability to make decisions about the community’s way of life independent from outside or inside influences. The consequence of sovereignty is that world politics is characterized by anarchy. There is no power above the state. The state is the center of decision-makings. Anarchy means that states are threatened every movement by the quest for power by other state. This leads to continuous power struggles among the states.

**Structural or Neo-realism in International Relations**

Kenneth Waltz shattered the aspirations especially of liberals to provide an alternative account of international relations with his publication of “Theory of International Politics” in 1979 that has served as a reference point for theoretical development for all scholars of IR since then.

According to Waltz, we cannot understand the international system by looking at the units that is the states that constitute the system. This procedure is called reductionism. This means that we can ignore whether states are democratic, authoritarian or monarchies because it does not matter for the international politics.

Waltz believes that the international system shows patters of relationships independent of the nature of units. Waltz distinguishes two types of systems: Hierarchical and anarchical. At present we do not live in a hierarchical system. There is no world government above the nation-state. Instead we live in an anarchic system where there is no higher authority, and if the states are not able to themselves, they are lost.

In contrast to Morgenthau, Waltz does not assume that states want to increase, maintain or demonstrate their power. From Waltz perspective the main aim of the states is to preserve their integrity. This is rather a defensive posture. States adjust their policy according to the balance of power. The balance of power is determined by the number of states who can seriously threaten the other’s survival. Change occurs if the anarchical balance of power system is transformed into a hierarchical system with one central power above all other states.

**Offensive Neo-Realism**

Many realists question whether Waltz is right in reducing theory to the systemic level. According to the central critic of John Mearsheimer Waltz only describes satisfied status quo powers. For Mearsheimer, however, the most powerful state always has to make sure to remain the “king of the hill” (the most powerful state in the system) whereas the other states have to become the most powerful state in the system. This introduces a completely different dynamic into the international relations. Offensive neo-realists disagree with defensive neo-realists perception that states look for only an “appropriate” amount of power. Mearsheimer’s, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* argues that states face an uncertain international environment in which any state might use its power to harm another. Under such circumstances, relative capabilities are very important and security requires getting as much power compared to other states as possible. **The stopping power of water** means that the most a state can hope for is to be a *regional hegemon.*

Mearsheimer’s theory makes five assumptions.

1. The international system is anarchic
2. Great powers possess some offensive military capability, and accordingly can damage each other
3. States can never be certain about other states’ intentions
4. Survival is the primary goal of the great powers.
5. Great powers are rational actors

From these assumptions, Mearsheimer concludes that great powers fear each other, that they can rely only on themselves for their security, and that the best strategy for the states to ensure their survival is the maximization of the relative power. In contrast to the Defensive Neo-realists, who suggest that states look for only an “appropriate” amount of power Mearsheimer argues that security requires getting as much as power relative to other states as possible. Mearsheimer argues that increasing capabilities can improve a state’s security without triggering the counter response. Power maximization is not necessarily self-defeating, and hence states can rationally aim for regional hegemony.

Mearsheimer’s theory provides a structural explanation of great power war, suggesting that the main causes are located in the architecture of the international system. What matters most is the number of the great powers and how much power each controls. Great power wars are least likely in bipolarity, where the system only contains two great powers because there are fewer potential conflicts. While multipolarity is, in general, more war-prone than bipolarity, some multipolar power configurations are more dangerous than others.

**Liberalism in International Relations**

* Liberal Internationalism (Woodrow Wilson) After the First World War
* Functionalism and Neo-Functionalism (David Mitrany and Ernst Haas) In the 1940s and 1950s
* Pluralism, Transnationalism, Interdependence Theory **(**Robert Keohane) In 1970s
* Neoliberal Institutionalism (Robert Keohane) In 1980’s
* Neo-Idealism (Francis Fukuyama) In 1980’s
* Neoliberal Internationalism In 1990s and 2000s

Each of these manifestations of liberalism has its own focus and argumentation. Liberal internationalism and functionalism are genuine approaches to the problem of security. Neo-fuctionalism focuses on the role of regional integration. Pluralism, transnationalism and interdependence theory argued in the seventies that the grooving interconnectedness of nations through free markets has changed world politics at least for some areas and some regions. Neo-liberal institutionalism sought to meet the challenge posed by Kenneth Waltz with his emphasis on systemic theory and foundation in microeconomics. The general focus here is on how insecurity, cheating and mistrust can be overcome by cooperation. Francis Fukuyama revived idealism by arguing that the growing spread of democracy will lead to a transformation of anarchy to a more liberal democratic international system. (Neo-liberal internationalism)

One general proposition of liberalism is that there is progress in history, the way mankind has organized itself over millennia has changed for the better regarding key concerns such as individual liberty. “Liberals see the establishment of the state as a necessary port of preserving liberty either from harm by other individuals or by states. The state always is the servant of the collective will, not the master, and democratic institutions are the means of guaranteeing this. […] as long as states continue exist in relation to one another […] the liberal of providing peace and progress will forever be undermined.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Basic Assumptions of Liberalism**

1. Internal constitution of states has an impact on the nature of the international system.
2. Change of the international system is possible because there is progress in history. According to Fukuyama, the further spread of democracy at national level will lead to a reduction of anarchy and war because democracies create a totally different international system among each other. (See E.U.)
3. Human beings are rational (calculate costs and benefits) and they are reasonable (open for arguments and negotiations).

In General we can say that liberalism is a theory that emphasizes change, progress, freedom, reason or rationality, the free market, importance of individuals, limited state and, most relevant for the international relations scholars: cooperation or peace, self-determination of nations. One can say that liberals develop an optimistic picture of international relations. However, liberalism is within itself very contradictory. Economic liberalism emphasizes economic efficiency and the right of property owners while political liberalism wants democratic governance and emphasizes rights of individuals. However, very often democratic decision making is not efficient and takes longer. Furthermore, liberalism does not apply democratic principles to the economy. Economic decisions such as whether a firm should be closed, wages be lowered, prices be raised are not subject to democratic decision making but to the rule of “efficiency.” There is then a clash of different within liberalism.

**Historical Development of Liberalism in International Relations**

Liberalism is dominant in world politics in a different sense than realism. Economic liberalism is reflected in U.S. foreign policy in terms how the U.S. wants societies to be organized. This influences of economic policies by the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organizations (WTO). In this sense, liberalism is as powerful as realism in the real world but it relies on power politics to be effectual.

The starting point for idealism was the assessment that the First World War was a horrific event because of its destructiveness and bloodiness and its scope an effective mechanism needed to be developed to prevent war. In order to do so, the causes of war needed further systemic study. This is what the first international relations scholars (that were given chairs at the same time in Britain) set out to do.

The U.S. President Woodrow Wilson takes as the starting point that the origin of the war has to be sought in the way the international system was organized. According to this analysis war comes about for two reasons.

1. More people are against war and war comes about because people are led into it. Therefore, there is a need for democratic political systems that respect the needs of minorities, who should have the right of self-determination. Authoritarian systems therefore need to be abolished and democratic states where all citizens are equal need to be created.
2. Another origin of the war was the anarchical situation in the international system where states were free to behave how they wanted. Liberal internationalists believed that international institutions can mitigate the effects of anarchy in international relations because international institutions provide rules and regulations that inform state behavior and thus make it more predictable.

**Functionalism**

A next step in the development of Liberalism was the “Functionalist Theory of International Politics” developed by David Mitrany in his book, “A Working Peace System.”

Mitrany’s starting point was that the nation-state system leads to war and it needs to be reduced in importance. But, the reduction of sovereignty cannot be achieved in one step, such as the League of Nations aspired to do. A functional theory of politics is based on the idea that the main role of states is to provide functions for their people such as welfare and security.

Mitrany’s basic idea was that those interests that are common should be brought together in international institutions. He argued that cooperation only works if its task is specific. All-purpose organizations are initially not effective. Instead, the starting point should be one single common need. Many problems such as river pollution, water resources etc. cut across borders and all states concerned by this problem have a common interest to do something about it. Mitrany argued that the area of cooperation should be where the need arose, for some problems then, local or regional cooperation is enough, most problems however, will have to be dealt with on a global level. It is the explicit goal of functionalism to reduce the role of the nation state. This aim was to be achieved gradually. Mitrany thought that individuals would gradually transform their loyalties from the state to the new international agencies. So basically, in Mitrany’s vision of the world the functions of everyday social life, that is transport, health care, communications, agriculture, industrial development are no longer carried out within the confines of each sovereign state but are undertaken across frontiers on a regional or universal basis. On the other hand, realists criticized functionalism for failing to see that the loyalty of a citizen to its state is not the post-office but it is more a feeling of national unity and therefore this feeling of belong together cannot be replaced by global institutions.

**Neo-Functionalism**

Neo-functionalism developed out of the federalist approach to European integration. Federalists wanted integration to start with high-level politics in the area of security but functionalists argued that cooperation is easier for states in low-key area such as common standards of food hygiene. Neo-functionalists argued that eventually from such low-key areas of cooperation, there will be a spill over to more and more areas.

Neo-functionalism differs from functionalism in two important respects: It has been developed as a result of the European integration process, and it contains the idea that not only functions but also decisions making procedures, thus real sovereignty, can be transferred to international level. This was made possible by the fact that the European Economic Community established in 1957 contains limited elements of supra-nationality.[[2]](#footnote-3)

**Complex Interdependence**

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye have been major influence in international relations since they published the specific volume of international organizations on trans-nationalism in 1971. Here, they focused on the growing importance of private activities such as trade, communication, financial transfers and migrations and their impact on governments. They argued that many international organizations have emerged that include private actors as well. They argue that **transnationalism** changes the attitudes of elites, leads to a development of a global civil society with NGO’s acting across the borders, it constrains state sovereignty but also allows some states to be more influential (e.g. oil states). Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye developed their thought further on complex interdependence which outright challenges the dominance of realism in international relations by contrasting it with the complex interdependence model. This was the first time that Liberalism has developed a comprehensive and easy to understand alternative to realism.

Interdependence is usually a result of international transactions (money, people, goods, information). As a result, countries policies are have become interdependent. The change in oil prices creates problems for Western states, at the same time there was a need to recycle the oil money (thus, oil states also depend on global markets controlled by Western states). Keohane argues that interdependence is not a problem as long as actors are able to respond in a way which allows for the continued functioning of a society. Societies are however vulnerable, if they cannot adjust quickly. For example, in the long run the rise in oil prices is not a problem because in about 3 to 6 years we will have cars which run on different power systems and oil will be replaced by a different form of energy.

There model of complex interdependence looks as follows

* The world has changed. Realism is no longer able to describe and explain the international situation alone. Another theory is needed.
* States are not the only actors. They are part of a whole network of actors such as international organizations, relations between bureaucracies and firms.
* There is no hierarchy of issues and the goals of state vary according to the issue.
* The resources of a state depend on the issue and not on the military capability of a state. Military capability does not translate into policy outcomes in all issue areas. Outcomes in complex interdependence will not depend on military power but on the ability to form coalitions and to control elite networks among other things.

**Neo-liberal Institutionalism**

Unlike earlier liberalisms, neo-liberal institutionalists start, like realism, from systemic pressures on states. They are also less normative and more scientific (positivistic) than the earlier liberals. The pressure for neo-liberal institutionalists stems from globalization or interdependence that have made the nation-state less important as an institution that is able to solve problems that reached beyond the territorial boundary of the state and require the cooperation of other states to be solved. The central question for the neo-liberal institutionalists is therefore how and under which conditions do state cooperate?

The central change of neo-liberal institutionalism was the acceptance of the assumptions that states are unitary actors that operate in an anarchical system.

The core principles of neo-liberal institutionalism are the followings:

* Actor: Although emphasizing the importance of non-state actors in his early studies now Robert Keohane’s understanding of neo-liberal institutionalism admits that non state actors are subordinate to states.
* Structure: Liberals broadly accept the structural condition of anarchy in the international system, but crucially, anarchy does not mean cooperation between states is impossible, as the existence of international regimes demonstrates.
* Process: Integration at the regional and global level is increasing.
* Motivation: States will enter into cooperative relations even if another state will gain more from the interaction.

Leading neo-liberal institutionalists such as Axelrod, Keohane, and Oye developed their ideas in response to Kenneth Waltz’s theory of neo-realism outlined in his 1979 work *Theory of International Politics.* Moreover, this response was from within the mainstream as opposed to the radical critical theory challenge from the margins which also developed in the 1980s. Given this context, it is not surprising that neo-liberal institutionalism often seems closer to contemporary realism than to the tradition of liberal thinking about international relations.

**Constructivism in International Relations**

**Introduction**

Constructivism is a theory on international relations that was developed by Alexander Wendt, John Ruggie and N. Onuf and adopted by others such as the feminists. It challenges Liberalism, Realism and Marxism because they do not recognize that human beings are cultural beings who create social facts that are not acceptable to positivist explanations. Constructivism therefore relies on different methods (case studies, reasoning). Its main importance is to refocus IR on the role of ideational factor in world politics. Constructivists argue that there are developments such as European Integration, the anti-apartheid struggle, humanitarian intervention etc. that cannot be understood by referring to material interests alone. In contrast to realists, constructivists argue that state interests are not pregiven by the international but are shaped by ideas about that international system.

This has led Wendt to conclude that anarchy is not a pregiven unchangeable structure but is what states have made out of it. He consequently distinguishes different structures of anarchy.

**Three ontological propositions of constructivism:**

The world is defined by material and ideational forces. But these ideas are not akin to beliefs or psychological states that resides our heads. Instead, these ideas are social. Our mental maps are shaped by collectively held ideas such as knowledge, symbols, language, and rules. In this context it can be said that, firstly, the role of ideas as more important than the role of material forces. “Intersubjective systemic structures consist of shared understandings, expectations, and social knowledge embedded in international institutions and threat complexes, in terms of which states define (some of) their identities and interests.”[[3]](#footnote-4) Secondly, identity constitutes interests and actions: “Identities are the basis of interests.”[[4]](#footnote-5) Wendt argues that sovereignty is an institution, which is constituted by intersubjective understanding. “There is no sovereignty without another […]. The essence of this community is a mutual recognition of one another’s right to exercise exclusive political authority within territorial limits.”[[5]](#footnote-6) Sovereignty did not always exist; it was a product of historical forces and human interactions that generated new distinctions regarding where political authority resides.

There are two mechanisms of identity formation: Natural and cultural selection. Wendt argues that natural selection is not a process of war of all against all, but a a process of differential reproduction. He cites that there were 600 000 political entities in the world 3 000 years ago, while only 200 today. Natural selection, according to Wendt, explains well about the emergence of the Hobbesian anarchy in the international system. A huge numbers of political entities were unable to reproduce and play power politics to survive. Natural selection plays a greater explanatory role in the world without shared ideas and knowledge.[[6]](#footnote-7) However, since the Westphalia, the death rate of political entities has dramatically fallen despite continuing warfare and unequal distribution of power.

In this regard, Wendt introduces the cultural selection, an evolutional mechanism that transfers the dominant ways of behaviors by especially imitation and social learning. The imitation is in which states imitate the successful former, and these imitations promotes the homogenization of the state-system. Imitation spread faster than natural selection. “Whereas natural selection can change a population’s characteristics only over many generations, imitation can do as such quick as an idea’s success can be demonstrated, certainly within the span of a single generation.[[7]](#footnote-8) This may explain the rapid expansion the homogenized state forms in the late twentieth century without material incentives linked with reproduction process.

Third, agents and structures are mutually constituted because structure is constructed by the way states define their identities and interests. Like Ruggie, Wendt also introduces structurationism instead of the neo-realists’ structuralist ontology. “The goal of structurationist ontology is to replace the ‘dualism’ of agency and social structure that pervades individualist and collectivist ontology with a perspective that recognizes the ‘codetermined irreducibility’ of these two fundamental units of social analysis.”[[8]](#footnote-9) There are three key components of structuration. ‘Agents’ are purposive and socially recognized individuals or groups that intentionally and unintentionally produce/reproduce social structure. States are also agents in the way they are socially recognized by other states. ‘Systems’ are sets of interactions and practices among agents. For instance, state-system is sets of interaction and practices among existing states one another. ‘Structures’ are sets of internal relations that define identities, powers, and interests. State also has internal relations that constitute identity and interest.[[9]](#footnote-10)

**Marxism in International Politics**

There are many steps in the development of Marxism. It is, as a “theory”, now about 150 years old and it has developed both through concrete political movements and through academic writing. Therefore, Marxism is now rather complex body of thought. In this course, the focus will be on international relations where Marxism has made contribution through theories of Imperialism, Dependency Theory and World System Theory, neo-Gramscian Marxism and Political Marxism. In this course we will look at some theories of Imperialism, World System Theory, neo-Gramscian Marxism. Thus, there will no discussion on Dependency Theory, the various regulation school approaches and Political Marxism.

**Karl Marx:** No “theory” of IR as such

**Lenin and Kautsky:** Theory of Imperialism

**Immanuel Wallerstein:** World System Theory

**Robert Cox:** Neo-Gramscian Perspective

**Karl Marx: Historical Materialism**

*History of capitalist expansion*

The history of capitalist expansions from an international relations point of view can be classified into five different historical periods.[[10]](#footnote-11)

* Coming into being of capitalist order in England in 18th century in the form of “agrarian capitalism.”
* Spread of capitalism in 19th century to other countries through industrialization. Great Britain organized the international sphere of this period.
* Imperial competition between various European powers (and U.S.) leading two major world wars and the splitting up of empires (like Austrian-Hungary and the Ottoman Empires) to carve out their own sphere of influence (1873-1945).
* American hegemony in the western core alongside superpower confrontation (1945-1971).
* Since 1971, the U.S.’s bid for global dominance to form an empire. Hegemony is transformed into more authoritarian form of rule, first towards the allies then towards the rest of the globe.

Marx’s main point was that capitalism as a society that came into being in England in 17-18 century represents a major break with history. The central feature of this society is that it reproduces itself through the **market.** Both workers and owners need to survive on the market place.

**Marxism in the 1910/20s**

**Lenin and Kautsky:** Theory of Imperialism

The theories of Imperialism were developed by Bukharin, Lenin, Luxemburg, Hilferding and Kautsky in order to understand the transformation within capitalism that led to the Great War in 1914. The historical context of these theories was an intensifying rivalry between capitalist countries at the end of the 19th century leading to the First World War while at the same time there was intensified global economic integration. So, the question for the new generation of Marxist thinkers was how to make sense of these two contradictory tendencies of globalization and nationalism.

**Why did the First World War break out according to the theories of imperialism?**

There was a change from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism. Rising productivity means that fewer and fewer workers produce more and more goods. This leads to declining rate profit, under consumption and overproduction leads economic crisis. In order to deal with competitive pressure firms change. The concentrate and centralize and this process of concentration and centralization has created monopoly of capitalism. Lenin argued that this problem cannot be solved in capitalism. Imperialism, where the state combines with national bourgeoisie to capture markets, is the highest state of capitalism.[[11]](#footnote-12) It will be followed by a major breakdown making room for a socialist revolution.

**Marxism and International Relations**

Marxism is a body of theory and of political action that question the origin, character and lines of development of the economic, social and political system of the modern world dominated by free markets in the economic sphere.

Marxism is especially critical of liberalism because liberalism promises to liberate human beings , create equality and bring about human rights for everyone but in fact is unable to do so because there are basic flaws in the liberal world view that make it unable to see the world as it really is. According to Marxism, the world is where power and inequality among human beings are prevalent. In other words, Marxism wants to make sure that the promises of liberalism are being kept and create a world where everybody is truly equal and free.[[12]](#footnote-13)

**World System Theory: Immanuel Wallerstein**

Wallerstein puts that the present modern capitalist world economy emerged in 16th century. It is defined as a social structure where the accumulation is endless and dominates all other social arrangements. In his argumentation capitalism emerged out of the crisis of feudalism.

Wallerstein outlooks the development that has taken place in Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and China.

He also overlooks political mechanisms that prevent developments. For example, foreign policy by major powers rules on international institutions such as the IMF.

*Central Argument*

1. Even development is not possible in a capitalist world economy because it relies on a spatial division of labor.
2. This spatialization expresses itself in a **core,** formed by the advanced states relying on highly skilled labor force and capital intensive production.

* **Semi peripheral** states are not really strong but neither are they weak. Semi peripheral countries give legitimacy to the world system because they give illusion that development is possible.
* **Peripheral** countries mostly export raw materials to the core. These countries often have the problem that they export less than they import and that the prices of their export are declining leading to a structural deficit.

**Neo-Gramscian Marxism**

The pioneers of this critical perspective are Robert Cox, Stephen Gill, Henk Overbeek, Kees van der Pijl and Sandra Withworth.

The main article of Cox is the “*Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory.”*[[13]](#footnote-14) The aim of the neo-Gramscian approach is to move beyond “International Relations Theory.”

For Waltz and Keohanne international relations is characterized by anarchy because especially the powerful states will not accept a higher authority above them. Cox believes that smaller states are used to live in a hierarchical relationship with the big powers but the big powers themselves will not and cannot bind themselves to any rules.

For a critical theory perspective, this is a problem for the dominant power. It shows that realism is only concerned with legitimizing great power behavior. All non-dominant states are in fact embedded in a relationship of hierarchy and dependence. For most states therefore, there is not a problem of anarchy but of hierarchy.

Cox has made a central contribution because his concept of internationalization of the state precisely captures the fact that all states (except the powerful ones) are embedded in a system of hierarchy and dependence. Cox argues that the internationalization of the state is a mechanism for the United States to maintain its leading position or its hegemony. This is the main difference that distinguishes the U.S. from all other previous imperial states. The U.S. has set up mechanisms to reproduce and strengthen her hegemony through the embedding of states in international organizations.

Between 1945 and 1970, the U.S. was not really an imperial power that ruled through conquest and subordination but *through international norms and institutions, organizations and regimes* that allowed de jure independence of states. International organizations function as a mechanism of surveillance to make sure that one of the central aims of the U.S., the free movement of goods, capital and technology are being achieved.

The three institutions that the U.S. set up for this purpose have three different tasks in this regard: World Bank, IMF and GATT (WTO).

Nevertheless, internationalization of the state refers to the situation that all countries today are now members of these three institutions that set the rules for the global economy and proscribe behavior/policies for states. They are largely run by the U.S. with the help of her allies, Europe and Japan. However, internationalization of the state has come to an end in the 1970s because of the internationalization of production. The consequence of the internalization of production is that it changes national class structures. Especially leading elite sections are integrated to form a global class structure with its own ideology and institutions. This global class rules the world through the internalized stated system in the interest of maintaining global capital accumulation. As a consequence we now should no longer talk about U.S. hegemony but the hegemony of international capital. One of the major consequences of the rise of this transnational capital is that the majority of the population also in the rich countries remains excluded from the benefits of globalization.

1. Tim Dunne, Liberalism in: Baylis, John, and Steve Smith, (2001), The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations, 2nd ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Political integration beyond the nation-state where sovereignty is given up to a higher level. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Wendt, (1994), p. 389. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Wendt, (1992), p. 398. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Ibid, p. 412. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Wendt, (1999), pp. 321-324. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Ibid, p. 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Wendt and Duvall, (1989), p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. It is based on neo-Gramscian. Marxism History of capitalist expansion started in the 17th century, spread of liberal competitive capitalism in England under Pax Britannica, and change into monopoly capitalism and rival imperialism until the end of the Second World War New form of stability until was seen until the mid-1970s. Since then, reassertion of U.S. power through economic and military means and changes from industrial to post-industrial societies. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. “Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among biggest capitalist powers has been completed. (Lenin, 1917); For Hobson (1905), imperialism “implies the use of the machinery of government by private interests, mainly capitalists, to secure from them economic gains outside their country.” [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Gamble, (1999), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Cox, (in), Neorealism and Its Critics, (ed) R. O. Keohane, New York, Colombia University Press, 1986. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)