Counter-Hegemony in the Theory of the Multipolar World

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The most important aspect of the Theory of the Multipolar World (TMW) is the concept of counter-hegemony as first formulated in the context of the Critical Theory of International Relations (IR). In transitioning from Critical Theory to the Theory of the Multipolar World[i], this concept also undergoes a special sense of transformation which should be examined in more detail. In order to render such an analysis possible, we should first recall the main positions of the theory of hegemony with the framework of Critical Theory.

The Concept of Hegemony in Realism

Although the concept of hegemony in Critical Theory is based on Antonio Gramsci’s theory, it is necessary to distinguish this concept’s position on Gramscianism and neo-Gramscianism from how it is understood in the realist and neo-realist schools of IR.

The classical realists use the term “hegemony” in a relative sense and understand it as the “actual and substantial superiority of the potential power of any state over the potential of another one, often neighboring countries.” Hegemony might be understood as a regional phenomenon, as the determination of whether one or another political entity is considered a “hegemon” depends on scale. Thucydides introduced the term itself when he spoke of Athens and Sparta as the hegemons of the Peloponnesian War, and classical realism employs this term in the same way to this day. Such an understanding of hegemony can be described as “strategic” or “relative.”

In neo-realism, “hegemony” is understood in a global (structural) context. The main difference from classical realism lies in that “hegemony” cannot be regarded as a regional phenomenon. It is always a global one. The neorealism of K. Waltz, for example, insists that the balance of two hegemons (in a bipolar world) is the optimal structure of power balance on a world scale[ii]. R. Gilpin believes that hegemony can be combined only with unipolarity, i.e., it is possible for only a single hegemon to exist, this function today being played by the USA.

In both cases, the realists comprehend hegemony as a means of potential correlation between the potentials of different state powers.

Gramsci’s understanding of hegemony is completely different and finds itself in a completely opposite theoretical field. To avoid the misuse of this term in IR, and especially in the TMW, it is necessary to pay attention to Gramsci’s political theory, the context of which is regarded as a major priority in Critical Theory and TMW. Moreover, such an analysis will allows us to more clearly see the conceptual gap between Critical Theory and TMW.

Antonio Gramsci’s Hegemony Concept

Antonio Gramsci based his theory, later known as Gramscianism, on his understanding of Marxism and its practical embodiment in history. As a Marxist, Gramsci was convinced that socio-political history is completely predetermined by the economic factor and, like all Marxists, he explains the superstructure (Aufbau) through the base (infrastructure). Bourgeois society is in essence a class society in which the processes of exploitation reach their most concentrated expression in the form of the ownership of the means of production and the appropriation of the surplus value arising in the production process by the bourgeoisie. Inequality in the economic sphere (the base) and the domination of Capital over Labor composes the essence of capitalism and accordingly determines all social, political, and cultural semantics (the superstructure).

This thesis is shared by all Marxists, and there is nothing new or original here. But then Antonio Gramsci asked: how was a proletarian socialist revolution possible in Russia where, from Marx’s point of view (analyzing the situation in the Russian Empire in the 19thcentury from a prognostic perspective) and from the point of view of classical European Marxism from the beginning of the 20th century, the objective base (the underdevelopment of capitalist relations, a small proletariat, the predominance of the agricultural sector in the country’s total GDP, the absence of bourgeois political system, etc) excluded the possibility of a Communist party coming to power? After all, Lenin made this possible and began to build socialism.

Gramsci understands this phenomenon as fundamentally important, calling it “Leninism”. In Gramsci’s understanding, Leninism was the vanguard, advanced action of a consolidated and strong political superstructure (in the form of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks) in seizing political power. Once such a vanguard becomes a relevant factor, and revolution is successful, then it should rapidly develop the base through the accelerated creation of the superstructures whose according economic realities have not yet been implemented under capitalism, i.e., industrialization, modernization, “electrification”, “public education,” etc. Thus, Gramsci drew the conclusion that under certain circumstances politics (the superstructure) can stay ahead of the economy (the base). The Communist Party can “get in front” of the “natural” development of historical processes. Consequently, Leninism proves the existence of the significant autonomy of the superstructure in regards to the base.

But Leninism, as Gramsci understood it, was limited to the political segment of the superstructure, in which the functioning of law and government and the issue of domination are already solved. Gramsci insisted that the superstructure has yet another important segment which is not political in the fullest sense, i.e., not merely associated with political parties or bound to the issue of political power. Gramsci called this sphere “civil society.” Such a notion, however, should always be accompanied with the qualification of “civil society as understood by Gramsci”, for its meaning does not always coincide with the one that it is assigned in liberal theories. Gramsci’s civil society is the “zone of expansion” for the intellectual parts of society including science, culture, philosophy, art, analytics, journalism, etc. The Marxist, for Gramsci, relies on the regularity of the base in this domain, as for the whole superstructure. But…Leninism demonstrated that the regularity of the base, in some cases, is overcome by the relative autonomy of the superstructure, which advances ahead of the base’s processes. The experience of the Russian Revolution, as an historical example, demonstrated how politics is realized at the level of the superstructure. But here Gramsci emphasizes that, if this is so in the case of the political sphere of the superstructure, then why could something similar not happen at the level of “civil society?” It is at this point that Gramsci’s notion of “hegemony” appears.[iii] He successively outlines something analogous to the economic division of Capital vs. Labor in the base, or the contradiction between the bourgeois party and government vs. the proletarian party and government (as in the Soviet Union), can take place in the intellectual sphere (Gramsci’s “civil society”). This third realm of contradiction is termed “hegemony” by Gramsci, where bourgeois consciousness and proletarian consciousness vie for domination relatively autonomous from both politics and the economy.

Studying bourgeois sociology[iv], the German sociologist Werner Sombart showed that leisure is valuable for this third category, or third “class,” which partially possesses such comfort while other social groups either do not know or do not have such. Hegel’s The Phenomenology of Spirit[v] similarly says that the Slave operates not by his own consciousness, but the Master’s consciousness. As is known, this and other elements of Hegel formed the foundation for Marx’s communist ideology. Continuing this chain of thought, Gramsci concluded that the adoption or rejection of hegemony (bourgeois consciousness structures) does not and cannot directly depend on the fact of belonging to the bourgeois class (in the sense of the base) or from political involvement in a bourgeois party or administrative system. Being on the side of hegemony, or against it, according to Gramsci, is a free choice. As an intellectual chooses it consciously, he is transformed from a “traditional” intellectual into an “organic” intellectual, i.e., one who consciously takes his/her stance on hegemony.

This leads to an important conclusion. The intellectual may oppose bourgeois hegemony even while living comfortably in a society in which capitalist relations are the basis and bourgeois political domination prevails. The intellectual can reject or accept hegemony freely, i.e., he has a gap of freedom similar to the autonomy of the political in regards to the economic base (as seen in the Bolshevik experience in Russia). In other words, one can be the carrier of proletarian consciousness and stand on the side of the laboring class for a just society even while being at the heart of bourgeois society. Everything depends on the intellectuals’ choice. Hegemony is thus a matter of conscience.

Gramsci himself came to such conclusions based on his analysis of political processes in Italy in the 1920’s-30’s[vi]. During this period, according to his analysis, the conditions prevailing in Italy were quite ripe for socialist revolution in terms of both the base (developed industrial capitalism and the sharpening of class contradictions and struggle) and the superstructure (the political successes of consolidated leftist parties). But, despite these seemingly favorable conditions, according to Gramsci’s further analysis, leftist forces failed in the intellectual field. It was here that Italy was most oppressed by bourgeois hegemony, who constantly introduced bourgeois stereotypes and clichés into popular consciousness even though these contradicted economic and political realities and the popularity of active, anti-bourgeois circles. In Gramsci’s view, Mussolini applied hegemony in his favor (fascism was disgusting for communists, who saw it as a form of domination by the bourgeois classes) and prevented an “artificial” socialist revolution from appearing in accordance with the natural historical course of events. In other words, despite waging (relatively) successful political battles, the Italian Communists overlooked “civil society”, the intellectual sphere, and the “metapolitical” fight. Gramsci saw this as the cause of their defeat.

Gramscianism has since been adopted by the European Left (especially the New Left) and left-wing movements in Europe have applied Gramscianism in practice since the 1960’s. The Leftist (Marxist) intellectuals (Sartre, Camus, Aragon, Foucault, etc.) were able to implant anti-bourgeois concepts and theories in the center of social and cultural life, thus taking advantage of publications, newspapers, clubs, and university departments which were integral parts of the capitalist economy, and they acted in the political context of the domination of the bourgeois system. They went on to prepare the events of 1968 which swept across Europe and the left turn of European politics in the 1970’s. Just as Leninism proved in practice that the political segment of the superstructure has a certain degree of autonomy, in the sphere of which activism can accelerate the processes unfolding at the base, so did the Gramscianism of the New Left demonstrate the efficacy and practical value of an active intellectual strategy in practice.

Gramscianism in Critical Theory: the Left Pivot

The Gramscianism which we have described has been integrated into IR Critical Theory by its modern representatives such as Robert Cox[vii], Stephen Gill[viii], etc. In Postmodernism, the autonomy of “civil society” was furthered and, consequently, the phenomenon of the intellectuals’ choice of hegemony and the placement of epistemological straggles above political processes and economic structures in general preserved the continuity of Marxist, leftist discourse. In this view, capitalism is regarded as generally better (more “progressive”) than pre-capitalist socio-economic systems even if it is obviously worse in comparison to any post-capitalist (socialist and communist) model by which it is to be replaced. This explains the structure of the project of counter-hegemony[ix]. IR Critical Theory remains leftist in its understanding of the historical process. One can describe this perspective in the following way: according to the representatives of Critical Theory, hegemony (bourgeois society culminating in the hologram of bourgeois consciousness) replaces that which “hegemonized” it (types of pre-bourgeois formations with inherent forms of pre-modern collective consciousness) only then to be subverted by counter-hegemony which, upon victory, is to establish post-hegemony. In the Communist Manifesto[x], Marx and Engels themselves insisted on the different ways in which communists’ opposition to the bourgeoisie has nothing to do with the claims against the bourgeoisie advanced by anti-bourgeois feudalists, nationalists, Christian socialists, etc. Capitalism is pure evil which concentrates in itself (albeit not so clearly and explicitly) previous forms of social exploitation. In order to defeat this evil, it must first be allowed to fully manifest itself, and only then can it be eradicated, instead of retouching its most odious features which only delays the horizon of revolution and communism. This must be taken into account when considering the structure of the neo-Gramscian analysis of international relations.

This analysis divides all countries into those in which hegemony is obviously strengthened (developed capitalist countries featuring industrial economies, the domination of bourgeois parties in parliamentary democracies organized in accordance with the example of the nation-state, a developed market economy, and a liberal legal system) and those in which, by virtue of various historical circumstances, such factors have not appeared. The first group of countries are called the “developed democratic powers” and the second are “borderline cases,” “problematic areas,” or even categorized as “rogue states.” The leftist (Marxist, neo-Maxist, and Gramscian) analysis is totally applicable in the countries in which hegemony is strengthened. However, in the case of countries displaying “incomplete hegemony”, things should be regarded in a different way.

Gramsci himself places these countries under the “Caesarist” category (seeing the experience of fascist Italy as a clear reference). “Caesarism” can be regarded in a broad sense as any political system in which bourgeois relations exist in fragmented form while their full political arrangement (in the form of classic bourgeois-democratic states) has been delayed. In “Caesarism,” the main point is not authoritarian rule, but the delay of the full realization of a fully-fledged, Western-style capitalist system (both base and superstructure). The reasons for this “delay” can vary from dictatorial styles of government, clan elites, and the presence of religious or ethnic groups in power to the cultural characteristic of a given society or the historical circumstances of a particular economic or geographical location, etc. What is first and foremost important is that in such a society hegemony acts both as an external force (from bourgeois states and societies) and as an internal opposition, which in one way or another is connected with external factors.

In IR, the neo- Gramscians insist that “Caesarism” is “incomplete hegemony.” Thus, its strategy is to ensure a balance between external and internal hegemonic pressures by granting certain concessions, all the while doing so only selectively in order to maintain power and prevent seizure by bourgeois political forces of the political superstructure presiding over the economic base of society. Caesarism is thus doomed to “transformism” (from the Italian transformismo), i.e., the permanent adjustment of hegemony, that very force which Caesarism constantly desires to delay or deflect down a false trajectory, the end of which is steadily approaching.

In this regard, IR Critical Theory considers “Caesarism” to be something that will sooner or later be eliminated by hegemony, as this phenomenon is nothing more than a “historical delay” rather than an alternative, i. e., a counter-hegemony in itself.

According to the representatives of modern IR Critical Theory, such“Caesarism” is obviously represented by most of the countries of the Third World and the major powers included in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

Taking into account such characteristics, the limitations in such a conceptualization of counter-hegemony presented by the IR Critical Theory become clear as does the pure utopianism of alternative projects, such as Cox’s “counter-society”, which represents something expressionless and undefined. They proceed from the vague project of socio-political world order, which is supposed to appear “after liberalism”[xi] (Immanuel Wallerstein) and conform to the usual left-wing communist utopia. A similar version of counter-hegemony is also limited by the fact that it hastily pushes numerous other political phenomena, which are obviously unrelated to hegemony and lean towards alternative versions of world order, into the category of “Caesarism”, and thus “incomplete hegemony.” This deprives these alternatives of any consideration as to their development towards an effective counter-hegemonic strategy. Nonetheless, it is this general analysis of the structure of international relations in the light of neo-Gramscian methodology which constitutes an extremely important trajectory for developing the TMW.

However, in order to overcome the limitations inherent to Critical Theory and fully exploit the potential in neo-Gramscianism, we should qualitatively expand this approach, going beyond left (and even “leftist”) discourse, which places the entire structure in the zone of ideological sectarianism and marginal exoticism (where such is currently found). In this regard, invaluable assistance can be found in the ideas of the French philosopher Alain de Benoist.

“Right Wing Gramscianism” – Alain de Benoist’s Revision

Back in the 1980s, the French representative of the “New Right” (“Nouvelle Droite”), Alain de Benoist, directed attention towards Gramsci’s ideas from the point of view of their methodological capacity[xii]. Just like Gramsci, de Benoist revealed the centrality of meta-politics as a special area of intellectual activity that prepares (in the form of a “passive revolution”) further political and economic changes. The success of the “New Left” in France, and in Europe in general, only confirms the effectiveness of this approach.

Unlike the majority of French intellectuals of the second half of the 20th century, Alain de Benoist was not a supporter of Marxism, a fact which isolated his position. However, de Benoist nonetheless built his political philosophy upon a radical rejection of liberal and bourgeois values, a negation capitalism, individualism, modernism, as well as a rejection of geopolitical Atlanticism and Western Eurocentrism. Moreover, he contrasted “Europe” to the “West” as two antagonistic concepts. For de Benoist, Europe is the field of deployment of a special cultural Logos handed down from the Greeks which intensely combined the richness of the Celtic, Germanic, Latin, Slavic, and other European traditions. The “West”, on the other hand, is equivalent to the mechanistic, materialist, rationalist civilization based on the predominance of technology over other spheres. Alain de Benoist, like Oswald Spengler, understood the “West” as the “decline of Europe” and, along with F. Nietzsche and M. Heidegger, he is convinced of the need to overcome modernity as nihilism and “the abandonment of Being in the world” (Seinsverlassenheit). In this regard, the “West” is identical to the very liberalism, capitalism, and bourgeois society against which the New Right strove to fight. At the same time, although not being materialists, the New Right agreed with the key significance assigned by Gramsci and his followers to “civil society.” For example, Alain de Benoist came to the conclusion that the phenomenon which Gramsci called “hegemony” is a set of strategies, attitudes, and values which he considered to be “pure evil.” This led to the proclamation of the principle of “Gramscianism from the Right.”

This Gramscianism “of the right” means recognizing the autonomy of “civil society” as understood by Gramsci as well as identifying the phenomenon of hegemony in this sphere and the personal choice of one’s ideological position on the opposite side from hegemony. Alain de Benoist has published a programmatic work entitled Europe and the Third World – One and the Same Battle[xiii] which entirely bases itself on the parallels between the struggle of the peoples of the Third World against bourgeois neocolonialism and the will of European nations to free themselves from the dictatorship of the bourgeois market society and the morality and praxis of traders, and replace such a system with heroic ethics[xiv] (Werner Sombart).

The crucial importance of this “right-wing Gramscianism” for TMW is that such an understanding of “hegemony” that allows one to transcend leftist and Marxist discourse and reject the bourgeois order at the base (economy) and the superstructure (politics and civil society) not after hegemony has become a total planetary and global factor, but in spite of it. Hence the extremely importance nuance imbued with meaning in the title of de Benoist’s second programmatic work, Against Liberalism[xv], which contrasts to the neo-Marxist Immanuel Wallerstein’s After Liberalism[xvi]. For de Benoist, the “after” cannot be counted on. In any case, one must not let liberalism be allowed to become an accomplish fact. Liberalism must be opposed here and now and must be fought from any position at any point in the world. Hegemony attacks on a planetary scale and finds its bearers in the developed bourgeois societies as well as in those societies in which capitalisms has not yet been definitively established. Therefore, counter-hegemony should be perceived as something beyond sectarian ideological restrictions; if we want to create a counter-hegemonic bloc, then it must include all anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist forces whether of the left, right, or those without any kind of definitive classification (Alain de Benoist himself has constantly emphasized that the division between “left” and “right” is not only outdated, but also does not correspond to the real choice of position – today what is significantly more important is whether one acts for or against hegemony).

Alain de Benoist’s right Gramscianism takes us back to the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels despite their rather exclusive and dogmatic appeal for the formation of a Global Revolutionary Alliance without “fellow travelers”. In contrast, we are dealing with one which unites all opponents of capitalism and hegemony and everyone who is essentially against this force. It is thus unimportant what is taken to be the positive alternative, since in this situation the presence of a common enemy is more pressing. Otherwise, according to the New Right (who in fact refused to call themselves “right”, the label which was given to their movement by their opponents), hegemony will be able to divide its opponents on artificial grounds and pose them against each other for the purpose of successfully dealing with everyone separately.

Denouncing Eurocentrism in Historical Sociology

The modern scholar of International Relations and one of the main representatives of historical sociology in International Relations, John Hobson, presents a completely different approach to this problem. In his key work, The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics[xvii], Hobson analyzes nearly all of the approaches and paradigms of IR in terms of their hierarchies which are founded in principle on the comparisons of states, their roles, structures and interests to Western society as the universal referential standard. John Hobson concludes that all IR schools, without any exception, are based on an implicit Eurocentrism which recognizes the universality of Western societies and believes European history to be a phase compulsory for all other cultures. Hobson rightly considers this approach to be a form of European racism which gradually and imperceptibly passes from biological theories of the “superiority of the white race” to notions of the universality of Western cultural values, strategies, technologies, and interests. The “White Man’s Burden” becomes “the imperative of modernization and development.” At the same time, an indigenous society and culture are subjected to “modernization” by default – no-one asked whether they agree that Western values, technologies, and practices are universal of if they are an object of rejection. Only being faced with violent forms of desperate resistances in the forms of terrorism or fundamentalism does the West sometimes bring itself to ask the question: “Why do they hate us so much?” But the answer is a preconceived one: “The savagery and ingratitude of non-European peoples for all the blessings which Western “civilization” brings with it.”

Hobson importantly and convincingly shows that racism and Eurocentrism exist not only in the bourgeois theories of IR, but also in Marxism, including IR Critical Theory (neo- Gramscianism). The Marxists, despite their criticism of bourgeois civilization, remain convinced that its triumph is inevitable and thus share a common Eurocentrism in regards to Western culture. Hobson shows how Marx himself partly justified colonial practices insofar as they led to the modernization of the colonies and, thus, hastened the onset of proletarian revolutions. Thus, from historical perspective, Marxism is an accomplice of capitalist globalization and an ally of racist civilizational practices. Decolonization is regarded only as a prelude to the construction of the bourgeois state, which has yet to embark on full industrialization and move towards the future proletarian revolution. Very little separates this from the theories of the neo-liberals and trans-nationalists.

John Hobson thus proposes to begin to construct a radical alternative, a development of IR theory that is not based on Eurocentrism or racist approaches. He stands for the project of a “counter-hegemonic bloc” which, while being indeed nominated by neo-Gramscianism, would liberate itself from all forms of Eurocentrism and thus be qualitatively expanded.

The project of a non-Eurocentric theory of IR leads us directly to the Theory of the Multipolar World.

The Transition to Multipolarity

We can now bring together all of the above said on counter-hegemony and situate such in the context of the Theory of the Multipolar World (TMW) which is a theory of IR that is essentially, consistently no-nEurocentric, and which rejects hegemony on its own grounds and calls for the creation of a broad counter-hegemonic alliance or counter-hegemonic pact.

In TMW, counter-hegemony is understood in a similar way as neo-Gramscian theories and the Critical School of International Relations. Hegemony is the domination of capital and the bourgeois political system of society expressed in the intellectual sphere. In other words, hegemony is first and foremost a discourse. At the same time, the three segments of society designated by Gramsci, the base and the two components of the superstructure (politics and “civil society”) are considered by TMW to be predominant on the level of discourse, i.e., the intellectual sphere, in accordance with post-modern and post-positivist epistemology. Thus, questions of hegemony and counter-hegemony are central and fundamental to the construction of the TMW and its effective realization in practice. The sphere of metapolitics is just as important as politics and economics and does not eliminate them, but rather logically and conceptually precedes them. Man ultimately deals with his mind and and its projections. Therefore, the arrangement or reorganization of consciousness automatically entails a change in the (internal and external) world.

The TMW is a fixation of the concept of counter-hegemony in the concrete theoretical field. Until a certain point, TMW strictly follows Gramscianism. But when it arrives at the expression of the content of a counter-hegemonic pact, there arise certain divergences. The most important of such involves the rejection of left dogmatism; the TMW refuses to consider the bourgeois transformation of modern societies to be a universal law, which thus brings the Gramscianism and metapolitics of the TMW closer to the “New Right” (Alain de Benoist’s) version than that of the “New Left” (of R. Cox), but without excluding Marxism to the extent that it is an ally in the common struggle against capital and hegemony. Strictly, speaking, the term “right Gramscianism” is not entirely correct – it would be more correct to speak of an inclusive Gramscianism, i.e., in which counter-hegemony is widely understood as including all types of hegemonic confrontation and etymologically generalizing the otherwise rigid “counter”). This stands in contrast to exclusive Gramscianism (in which counter-hegemony is narrowly understood as “post-hegemony”). The TMW advocates inclusive Gramscianism. This position overcomes right and left and transcends the conceptual borders of the political ideologies of modernity, thus unfolding in the form of the Fourth Political Theory which is inextricably linked to the TMW.

J. Hobson’s contribution to the development of inclusive counter-hegemony is extremely important in this regard. His call to build a non-Eurocentric IR theory precisely coincides with the purpose of the TMW. International relations should be interpreted from a plurality of positions just as the construction of any universal theory must take into account different cultures, civilizations, religions, ethnic groups, societies, and communities. Every society has its own values, anthropology, ethics, regulations, identity, and understanding of space and time, and the general and the particular. Every society has its own “universalism” or at the very least its own understanding of “the universal.” What the West thinks about “universality” is well known, even too much so. It is time to give the rest of humanity the right to their own voices.

In its fundamental dimension, multipolarity means the free polylogue of societies, peoples, and cultures. But before this polylogue can actually appear, it is necessary to define general rules. Hence the a theory of International Relations, one which will involve an openness of terms, concepts, theories, notions, a plurality of actors, and the complexity and polysemy of expressions. In this case, TMW is not an end, but a beginning, the basic spatial preparation for the future world order.

However, the call for multipolarity is not sounded in empty space. Discourse on international relations and global political, social, and economic practice is dominated by hegemony. We live in a strictly Eurocentric world in which only one superpower (the USA) together with its allies and vassals (the NATO countries) are the imperialist dominants and in which market relations dictate all the rules of business practices, where bourgeois political norms are considered to be compulsory, where the technique and level of material development are considered to be the highest criteria, and in which the values of individualism, personal comfort, material well-being, and “freedom from” are extolled above all other factors. In other words, we live in a world of triumphant hegemony which has spread its network on a planetary scale and has subordinated all of mankind. Therefore, we need a radical opposition, struggle, and confrontation in order for multipolarity to be made real. In other words, we need a counter-hegemonic bloc (in the inclusive sense). We should now consider what resources this potential bloc has.

The Syntax of Hegemony and the Syntax of Counter-hegemony

In its conceptual hologram, hegemony is based on the belief that modernity excels over antiquity (the past), that modernity triumphs over pre-modernity, and that the West dominates the non-West (the East and the Third World).

Thus we have the structure of the syntax of hegemony in its most general form:

The West=Modernity=the goal=welfare= progress=universal values=the USA (+ NATO)=capitalism=human rights=market=liberal democracy=law

VS

The Rest= backwardness (pre-modernity)=the need for modernization (colonization/aid/lessons/external control)= the need for Westernization= barbarism (savagery)=native values=pseudo-capitalism (non-capitalism)=violation (less respect) of human rights=unfair market (State role, clans, group preferences)=pseudo-democracy=corruption

These formulas of hegemony are axiomatic and self-referencing, a kind of “self-fulfilling prophecy”. One term is justified by another one of the equivalent chain and is opposed to any term (symmetric or not) of the second chain. This unpretentious rule creates the discourse of hegemony. While it may have the appearance of causality, illustration, descriptiveness, analysis forecasting, historical research, opinion polling, debate, opposition, etc., in its structure, hegemony is in fact built on this backbone supported by millions of variations and disclosed experiences. If we accept these two parallel, equivalent chains, we find ourselves within hegemony and fully codified in its syntax. Any objection will be extinguished by new suggestive passes galloping through one or another term in order to arrive at hegemonic tautology. Even the most critical formulas of discourse sooner of later slip into these constantly repetitive semantic synonyms and dissolve. It is necessary to recognize at least one of these identifications, and then everything else is preordained. Hence why the creation of counter-hegemony begins with the retraction of both of these chains. Let us create the symmetrical syntax of counter-hegemony:

The West≠Modernity≠the goal≠welfare≠ progress≠universal values≠the USA (+ NATO) ≠capitalism≠human rights≠market≠liberal democracy≠law

VS

The Rest≠ backwardness (pre-modernity) ≠the need for modernization (colonization/aid/lessons/external control) ≠the need for Westernization≠ barbarism (savagery) ≠native values≠pseudo-capitalism (non-capitalism) ≠violation (less respect) of human rights≠unfair market (State role, clans, group preferences) ≠pseudo-democracy≠corruption

If the equal signs hypnotically enter the collective consciousness as something matter of fact, then the detailed justification of each equal sign requires a separate text or group of texts. To one degree or another, the TMW and its parallels in the forms of the Fourth Political Theory,[xviii], Eurasianism, the “New Right” (A. de Benoist), non-Eurocentric IR theory (J. Hobson), traditionalism, postmodernism, and so on fulfill this task in their own way, but what is important is presenting this schema as the most generalized form of counter-hegemonic syntax. The denying of a meaningful expression is in itself meaningful due to its negation of the fact, which means that each inequality is in fact imbued with meaning and connections. In questioning the chain of the identification of hegemony, we obtain a semantic field free of hegemony and its suggestive “axiomatism.” This completely unties our hands and allows us to deploy counter-hegemonic discourse.

In this case, we have retrieved such basic guidelines for a specific purpose: the preliminary and most generalized estimation of the resources that can be theoretically expected in the construction of a counter-hegemonic pact.

A Global Revolutionary Elite

The counter-hegemonic bloc is built by intellectuals. Therefore, at its core should be a global revolutionary elite which rejects the “status quo” at its deepest level. In trying to understand one’s position at any point of the modern world – in any country, culture, society, social class, professional function, etc. – man sooner or later arrives at an understanding of the basic theses of hegemonic discourse in searching for deep answers to the deep questions of the social arrangement in which he lives. Of course, this is not possible for everyone even though according to Gramsci every man is an intellectual in one way or another. However, the only real intellectual is he who represents man in a holistic sense, a kind of delegate to the parliament of thinking humanity (homo sapiens) on behalf of the more modest representatives (those who cannot or do not want to realize the fullness of man in the form of the possibility culminating in the opportunity to think, i.e., being an intellectual). We have such an intellectual in mind when we speak of identifying hegemony. At the point when he is faced with a choice, i.e., realizing his opportunity to become an intellectual, he can say “yes” to hegemony and accept its syntax, thus continuing to act within its structure, or he can say “no.” If he says “no”, he is sent on the quest for counter-hegemony; he searches for accession to the global revolutionary elite.

This search can stop at the intermediate stage. There are always local structures (traditionalists, fundamentalists, communists, anarchists, ethnocentrists, revolutionaries of different types, etc.) who, realizing the challenge of hegemony and rejecting it, operate at the local level. At this point we are already dealing with the level of organic intellectuals who do not yet realize the need for culminating the rejection of hegemony in the form of a universal, planetary strategy. However, joining the real (not imaginary) fight against hegemony means that a revolutionary will sooner or later discover hegemony’s transnational, extraterritorial nature. To realize its goals, hegemony always resorts to the combination of internal and external factors, attacking whatever it considers to be its enemy or an obstacle to its imperial domination (the elements of the second chain, “the rest”). Thus, the localized resistance to the global challenge at one point reaches its natural limits. Hegemony may retreat at one time only to come back. No one can ever merely dodge its attacks.

When such a realization is acquired, the most intellectually developed representatives of local counter-hegemony will feel the need to pass to the level of a fundamental alternative, i.e., mastering counter-hegemonic syntax. This is the direct path to the Global Revolutionary Alliance which will be objectively and quite naturally formed by the global counter-hegemonic elite, which is destined to become the core of counter-hegemony. Herein lies the necessity of the Theory of the Multipolar World.

[i] Dugin, A. The Theory of the Multipolar World, Moscow, 2012.

[ii] Before the end of the Cold War, Waltz took the example of the fight between the USA and the USSR as a fight between two hegemons. Now, his adherents promote the idea that a there will be a new bipolarity in which American hegemony will face China as the new candidate for the second pole.

[iii] “What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural “levels”: the one that can be called “civil society”, that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called “private”, and that of “political society” or “the State”, said Gramcsi. “These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of ”hegemony” which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of “direct domination” or command exercised through the State and “juridical” government.” Gramsci A. The Prison Notebooks vol. 1. Columbia University Press, 1992

[iv] Werner Sombart. Der Bourgeois. München und Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1913

[v] Hegel G. W. F., The Phenomenology of Spirit, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977

[vi] Gramsci A. The Prison Notebooks. Columbia University Press, 1992

[vii] Сох Л. Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method// Millennium. 12.1983.

[viii] GUIS. Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[ix] The Neo- Gramscian, Nicola Pratt defines counter-hegemony as the “a creation of an alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society in preparation for political change”. Pratt N. Bringing politics back in: examining the link between globalization and democratization// Review of International Political Economy. Vol. 11. No. 2. 2004.

[x] Marx K., Engels F. Manifesto of the Communist Party. 1955.Маркс К., Энгельс Ф. Манифест Коммунистической партии // Маркс К., Энгельс Ф. Сочинения. 2-е изд. Т. 4. М.: Государственное издательство политической литературы, 1955. С. 419-459.

[xi] Wallerstein I. After Liberalism. New York: New Press. 1995

[xii] BenoistdeA. Vude droite. Anthologie critique des idees contemporaines. P., Copernic, 1977.

[xiii] Benoist deA. Europe, Tiers monde, тёте combat. P.: Robert Laffont, 1986.

[xiv] Sombart, Werner (1915): Händler und Helden. München: Duncker & Humblot. 1915.

[xv] de Benoist A. Against Liberalism. To the Fourth Political Theory. S.-Petersburg, 2009

[xvi] Wallerstein I. After Liberalism. New York: New Press. 1995

[xvii] Hobson J. The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010. Cambridge: Cambridge Umoniversity Press, 2012.

[xviii] Dugin A. The Fourth Political Theory. S.-Petersburg. 2009

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