

**NEOREALIST AND NEO-GRAMSCIAN HEGEMONY IN  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION DURING THE 1990's**

Sezai ÖZÇELİK

George Mason University, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution,  
3330 N. Washington Blvd. Truland Building,  
5th Floor Arlington, VA 22201  
sezaiozcelik@gmail.com

**1990'LU YILLARDA ULUSLARARASI İLİŐKİLER VE  
ÇATIŐMA ÇÖZÜMÜNDE NEOREALİZM VE NEO-  
GRAMSİYAN HEGEMONYA KAVRAMI**

**Abstract**

The article aims to explain international relations and conflict resolution in combination with the neorealist and neo-Gramscian notions of the hegemony during the 1990s. In the first part, it focuses on neorealist hegemony theories. The Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) is tested for viability as an explanatory tool of the Cold-War world politics and conflict resolution. Because of the limitations of neorealist hegemony theories, the neo-Gramscian hegemony and related concepts such as historic bloc, passive revolution, civil society and war of position/war of movement are elaborated. Later, the Coxian approach to international relations and world order is explained as a critical theory. Finally, the article attempts to establish a model of structural conflict analysis and resolution.

**Keywords:** Neo-realism, Neo-Gramscian, Hegemony, Conflict Resolution, International Relations

**Özet**

Bu makale uluslararası ilişkiler ve çatıŐma çözümleri kuramlarını neorealist ve neo-Gramsciyan hegemonya kavramlarını çerçevesinde 1990'lı yılları kapsayacak şekilde açıklamayı hedeflemektedir. Birinci bölümde, neorealist hegemonya kuramlarını odaklanılacaktır. **Hegemonik istikrar kuramı (HİT)** Soğuk Savaş sonrası dünya politikası ve çatıŐma çözümleri ile ilgili olayları açıklayabilme kabiliyeti test edilecektir. Özellikle neorealist hegemonya kuramlarının Soğuk Savaş sonrası dünya düzenini açıklamakta yetersiz kalması sonucu, neo-  
88

Gramsciyan hegemonya kavramı ile birlikte Gramsci'nin siyasi düşünce tarihine kazandırdığı öteki önemli kavramlar – tarihsel blok, pasif devrim, sivil toplum ve pozisyon savaşı/hareket savaşı – açıklanacaktır. Daha sonra uluslararası ilişkiler ve dünya düzeni hakkında önemli çalışmaları bulunan Cox'un kuramı, kritik teori olarak incelenecektir. Makalenin sonunda yapısal çatışmaların çözümü ve analizi konusunda bir model oluşturulmaya çalışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Neorealizm, Neo-Gramsciyan, Hegemonya, Çatışma Çözümü, Uluslararası İlişkiler

## **1. Introduction**

From a structural-systemic point of view, the international system has entered a new phase in which conflict resolution has hold priority and is much more applicable. Since the end of the Cold War, perceptions of international conflicts have changed dramatically. In the post-Cold War era, international politics has revolved around internal and intrastate conflicts, including the collapse of states, ethno-nationalism, and separatism. Some theorists argue that the end of the Cold War ushered in the end of history that might have brought peaceful, stable, and cooperative world order. However, many realists have predicted a return to a Hobbesian world where the fragmentation of international order and the emergence of rivalry among atomistic national units exist. (Kupchan, 1998: 40)

The decline of the US as a world power in the 1970s and 1980s has given birth to many studies on the rise and the decline of “hegemonies” (Wallestein, 1984, Keohane, 1984, Gilpin, 1981), “world powers” (Modelski, 1987), and “great powers.” (Kennedy, 1987) In these studies, they focus on the term of hegemony as it relates to dominance and the rise and the decline of a state's power.

Interestingly, the international community is at the intersection of structural change in international relations system. Charles Doran (1995) argues that “conflict resolution is more necessary today because the structure of the international system is changing with more uncertain consequences than in recent decades.” (179) From the realist point of view, structural change occurs when there are sudden, unexpected, and nonlinear shifts in power relations among major states in the international system. In any systemic transformation, one international

system (balance of power, unipolar, bipolar, multipolar, or hegemonic) gives birth to another system. Historically, many systemic transformations have all ended in massive regional and global warfare. Therefore, conflict resolution promotes peaceful change during systemic transformations of international systems and is essential as “a strategy to help manage the ensuing systems transformation.” (Ibid: 180)

This paper aims to bring hegemony theories into the study of the peaceful structural change of the international system in order to derive from a theoretical explanation that makes the term of hegemony more applicable in the field of conflict resolution. In International Relations literature, the studies of hegemony have been closely associated with the neorealist and neo-Gramscian schools. This paper is also an attempt to bridge neorealist and neo-Gramscian approaches to contribute to the discussion of and construction of a “new world order” in the post-Cold War era.

It is certain that the deficiencies in neorealist notions of hegemony and in hegemony theories that are based on coercion and domination to understand the post-hegemonic world order exist. This is made clear when one applies the Gramscian/neo-Gramscian ideas of hegemony that emphasize more consensus and leadership to explain why the disappearance of American hegemony has not lead to hegemonic wars but rather the relatively peaceful transformation of a bipolar international system. In other words, this paper aims to assess whether the explanatory power of the neo-Gramscian concepts of hegemony, historic bloc, war of position/war of movement, and civil society provides a basis for understanding the new international system.

In the first section, the article will shed light on the neorealist concept of hegemony and the hegemonic stability theory. Also, it will explain the limitations of these theories. In the following section, it will focus on the Gramscian/neo-Gramscian idea of hegemony. In order to understand Gramsci’s idea of hegemony, it is necessary to examine other Gramscian concepts such as war of movement/war of position, political/civil society, passive revolution, and historic bloc. This section will also summarize Robert Cox’s neo-Gramscian analysis of the role of social forces, form of state, and world order so to re-conceptualize and re-define the state-centric international order. The last section will introduce a structural conflict resolution model that combines both structural neo-realist and neo-Gramscian ideas and concepts.

## **2. Neorealism, Hegemony, and Hegemonic Stability Theory**

According to realist/neorealist theory, power is the key variable shaping international behavior. However, the concept of power has many different meanings. In its basic meaning, power connotes the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do. (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 11)

In his book “Peloponnesian War”, Thucydides (400 B.C.) wrote, “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.” (Thucydides, 1999: 222-230) Similarly, Thomas Hobbes viewed power as crucial in human behavior: Man has a “perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death.” Hobbes asserted “covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all.” (Hobbes, 1999: 35-38) Furthermore, Max Weber put power at the center of politics. For Weber, the principal characteristic of politics is a struggle for power. (Weber, 1986: 28-37) One of the modern realists, Hans Morgenthau (1966) assumed that states would act to protect their power positions: “International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power.” (25) He argues that international politics can be understood through the concept of interest defined as power. (Ibid: 5) When realists discuss about power and hegemony, they refer to dominance, coercion, and force.

### **2.1. Neorealism and Hegemony**

Neorealism is mostly based on the realist approach of international relations theory. Its aim is to redefine and refine classical realism in order to develop more empirical and systemic approach. Neorealism shares three most fundamental assumptions of classical realism:

- (1) States are the principal actors of the world politics (the state-centric assumption);
- (2) States’ behavior can be explained rationally (the rationality assumption);

(3) States primarily seek power and they define their interest in terms of power (the power assumption). (Keohane, 1984: 164-165, Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1997: 58)

Neorealism focuses on the international system as a structure that shapes the political relationships among its members. For the structural realism, international politics can be explained from patterned relationships among actors in a system that is anarchical. According to Waltz, structure has three connotations. First, it is defined as international system that characterizes as an anarchic one. Second, it is an interaction among units with similar functions. Finally, structure is defined by the distribution of capabilities across states in the system. (Waltz, 1959; Waltz, 1979: 93-101)

For Waltz, structure is the principal determinant of outcomes at the system level. Structure encourages certain actions and discourages others. It leads to unintended consequences. The ability of states to obtain their objectives is constrained by the power of others. (Ibid: 104-111) In Waltz's perspective, an international system is shaped by changes in the distribution of capabilities among their units. When a structure changes, interactive patterns among members and outcomes of such interactions also alter the international system. As the power of a state changes, so does the anarchical nature of the international structure and world order.

Neorealist theories of hegemony suggest that order is a result of the concentration of power capabilities in a single state that uses its commanding position in order to maintain order. The decline of hegemonic power means that order will decay. (Gilpin, 1981; Keohane, 1984; Ikenberry, 1998) Robert Keohane defines hegemony as "preponderance of material resources." (1984: 28) Hegemonic powers must have control over three things: raw materials, sources of capital, and markets. They must hold comparative advantages in the production of highly valued goods. (Ibid) For Gilpin, a hegemon "controls or dominates the lesser states in the system" thereby unites the other states into a single international system. (1981: 28)

## **2.2 Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST)**

The hegemonic stability theory (HST) attempts to combine two theories of international relations: realism/neorealism and liberalism/neoliberalism. It asserts that international economic openness and stability occur when there is a single dominant power. In other words, the HST argues that a dominant hegemon is necessary for: (1) the existence of a liberal international economy; (2) a relatively peaceful and secure international system. (Gilpin, 1987: 88) As Charles P. Kindleberger has said, “for the world economy to be stabilized, there has to be a stabilizer, one stabilizer” (1973: 305). Historically, the emergence of a hegemonic power and of a liberal world economy has occurred only twice: “the *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Americana*, like the *Pax Romana*, ensured an international system of relative peace and security. Great Britain and the United States created and enforced the rules of a liberal international economic order.” (Gilpin, 1981: 144)

Robert Keohane (1984) argues that hegemony is a necessary and sufficient condition for creating a hegemonic order. Hegemonic leadership creates cooperation. The decline of hegemony does not mean that liberal world economy and peaceful and stable world order are collapsed. When a hegemon declines, the international system and a hegemonic leader establish international regimes that make possible post-hegemonic cooperation. (Ibid: 31-32)

There are two versions of the HST: the collective good version and the security version. (Webb and Krasner, 1989: 184) The security version of HST holds that world order is created and maintained by a hegemonic state that uses its power capabilities to organize relations among states. The preponderance of power held by a state allows it to offer incentives, both positive and negative, to the other states. As a result, states agree to participate a hegemonic order. According to Gilpin, an international order is the reflection of the uneven distribution of power in the states system. (1981: 40) He asserts that even though a hegemon is motivated by cosmopolitan economic goals, the United States as a hegemon has been more motivated by enlightened self-interest and security objectives. (Ibid: 88) In the next section, this paper will highlight the limitations of these theories.

### **2.3. Limitations of Neorealist Hegemony and Hegemonic Stability Theory**

The critiques of neorealist hegemony theories are based on its theoretical as well as its empirical validity. The first critique argues that “hegemony is less important for the continuation of cooperation, once begun, than for its creation. (Keohane, 1984:12) Similarly, Snidal concludes that, “there is no reason to expect that a decline in hegemonic power lead to the collapse of current economic order.” (1985: 612) Second, neorealist hegemony theories do not account well for the rise of hegemons in the first place. Third, neorealist hegemony theories have several problems to explain the beginning of hegemonic war. Even if there is a challenge the hegemon, it may not lead to a challenge to the system. Also, war is not the only means to resolve such challenges. The explanation confuses possibility with causality. A second problem is the nature of evidence. Even if the hegemonic theory would explain the onset of World War I, it cannot answer the question why the US became the number one power after the War. Last, the theory has a number of empirical and logical problems with the few cases. For example, Vayrynen claims that significant major power warfare occurs in all stages-ascending hegemony, hegemonic victory, and hegemonic maturity except hegemonic decline. Similarly, Boswell and Sweat find no statistical relation between war intensity and hegemonic ascent, victory or decline. (Vasquez, 1993: 97)

### **3. Gramsci, Hegemony and World Order**

This section introduces the main ideas, issues and themes that are related to the neo-Gramscian concepts of hegemony and world order in international relations. It is based on not only Antonio Gramsci’s writings but also the neo-Gramscian school of IR especially Robert Cox’s works. The revival of neo-Gramscian perspective in IR contributes to the explanation and understanding of the post-Cold War conflicts. Especially, the concepts of hegemony and ‘world order’ are helpful to examine protracted and deep-rooted violent conflicts.

Before elaborating Gramscian approach of hegemony and world order, it is useful to discuss the Marxist insights on international hegemony. For Marxists, the fundamental forces behind world politics

are class struggle and uneven development. International history is dynamic and dialectical rather than cyclical process. In order to discuss the Marxian notion of hegemony, it is fruitful to understand the contemporary world system within a capitalist context.

For Marxists, the theory of hegemony is partial since world history is based on the contradictions of capitalist relations of production. Nevertheless, Marxists have often used the concept of hegemony as dominance. Both Marxists and Mercantilists assume that wealth and power are complementary; each depends on the other. Like Realists, Marxists emphasize the role of U.S. hegemony in creating world order after the Second World War and the effects of the decline of American power. (Keohane, 1984: 42)

Robert Cox has undertaken the most important study of Gramscian concept of hegemony.<sup>1</sup> As a pioneer, he introduced the neo-Gramscian analysis of world order and international relations. For Cox, Gramsci's concept of hegemony differs from neorealist usages. Neorealist hegemony refers to the dominance of one state over other states. For Gramsci, hegemony was more than dominance through coercion, sanctions, punishments and inducements. It also involved "intellectual and moral leadership." (1971: 182) Gramsci emphasized the national level, the supremacy of a social group manifest itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'. A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to 'liquidate' or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred or allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (it indeed is one of the principal conditions for winning such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well. (Ibid: 57-58)

Robert Cox stressed the difference between dominance and Gramscian's "ideological hegemony": Antonio Gramsci used the concept of hegemony to express a unity between objective material forces and ethnic-political ideas-in Marxian terms, a unity of structure and superstructure-in which power based on dominance over production is rationalized through an ideology incorporating compromise or consensus between dominant and subordinate groups. (1977: 387) Hegemony is a structure of dominance, leaving open the question whether the dominant power is state or group of states or some combination of state and private

power, which sustained by broadly based consent through acceptance of an ideology and of institutions consistent with this structure. (1986: 251)

The objectives of following paragraphs are to assess the application and the explanatory usage of the neo-Gramscian concepts of hegemony, historic bloc, political/civil society, passive revolution, war of position, and war of maneuver that provide the basis for an understanding of the global state system and ‘new world order.’ (Rupert, 1993: 76; Arrighi, 1993)

### **3.1. Hegemony, Leadership and Civil Society**

For Gramsci, the concept of civil society offered an historical generalization to reflect the experience of the Bolshevik Revolution and to explain the revolutions in the Western Europe. He concluded that experiences and revolutions in the Western Europe were different from those in Russia. In Russia, the state is the main force for the revolution because civil society was undeveloped. Thus, “war of movement”, as an active revolution was more appropriate for the less developed East. The notion of war of movement is one of Gramsci’s frequent military metaphors. It indicates a frontal confrontation or the kind of struggle associated with the 1848 revolutions in Europe or the 1917 revolution in Russia.

In the Western Europe, on the contrary, civil society was much developed and enabled to play a revolutionary vanguard role. The alternative strategy was the war of position that slowly builds up the strength of the social foundations of a new state. (Cox, 1993: 53) In the war of position, all wide-ranging social organizations involve in the movement. Because of the hegemonic state-societies of the Western Europe, “passive revolution” was succeeded with the help of civil society: In Russia, the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. (Gramsci, 1971: 238)

In Gramsci, the superstructural levels, “civil society” and “political society” constitute the domain in which force and consent operate to combine power: What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural levels: the one that be called ‘civil society’, that is the

ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’, and that of ‘political society’ or ‘the State’. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of ‘hegemony’ that the dominant group exercises through society and on the other hand to that of ‘direct domination’ or command exercised through the State and ‘juridical’ government. (Gramsci, 1971: 12)

For Gramsci, “civil society” consists of the various forms of voluntary associations and it constitutes the moment of transition from economic structure to political society. Because civil society is the primary political realm, all of the “dynamics of identity formation, ideological struggle, the activities of intellectuals, and the construction of hegemony” take place. (Augelli and Murphy, 1993:129) Civil society would include parties, unions, churches, education, journalism, art and literature etc.

On the other hand, Gramsci located “political society”, the institutions regulating society, above civil society. Although Gramsci’s political society seems to be equivalent of realists’ concept of the state, he combines political society and civil society that constitute Gramsci’s “extended or integral state”. (Rupert, 1993: 79). It defined as the unified site in which Western bourgeois classes have established their social power as “hegemony protected by the armour coercion.” (Gramsci, 1971: 263) In other words, realists assume that force and the threat of force are the necessary and sufficient condition for state formation. However, Gramscian approach assumes that coercion as well as the consent of subordinate groups creates the basis of hegemonic leadership and Gramsci’s expanded or integral state.

### **3.2. Passive Revolution and Historic Bloc (*Blocco Storico*)**

According to Cox, the concept of passive revolution is a “counterpart of the concept of hegemony.” (Cox, 1993: 55) It describes the condition of “non-hegemonic society in which no dominant class has been able to establish hegemony (intellectual and moral leadership).” (Ibid) In short, Gramsci uses it to describe both specific historical developments, the establishment of an Italian nation-state, and a style of politics that preserves control by relatively small group of leaders. At the

same time, he refers to economic, political, social, and ideological changes.

Another concept that is related to hegemony is the concept of a “historical bloc.” Gramsci referred to the social formation of an intellectual-mass dialectic as an “intellectual and moral bloc.” The moral-political bloc helps to create a new “historic bloc” in which proletarian leadership of the various classes and groups subordinated under capitalism could be organized and expressed. The construction of a historic bloc is a precondition for the exercise of hegemony in the Gramscian sense, and entails a “reconstruction of state/society relations through organically related processes of political, economic, and cultural change.” (Rupert, 1993: 80) When he describes the complex way in which classes and factions of classes are related in society and the complicated relationship between economic, political, and cultural aspects of reality, he referred to an “historic bloc.” As a Marxist metaphor, state and society together constituted a solid structure. In the Gramsci’s writings, a historic bloc replaces any simple notion of an economic base or structure that gives rise to a political and ideological superstructure. The historical bloc is a dialectical concept:

Structures and superstructures from a ‘historic bloc’. That is to say the complex contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructure is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production. (Gramsci, 1971: 366)

A historic bloc cannot exist without a hegemonic social class. Where the hegemonic class is the dominant class in a country or social formation, the state (Gramsci’s integral state) maintains cohesion and identity within the bloc through the propagation of a common culture. A new bloc is formed when a subordinate class (e.g., workers) establishes its hegemony over other subordinate groups (e.g. small farmers, marginals). Moreover, Gramsci rejects the idea that a historic bloc is only a simple alliance of classes or class fractions. It encompasses political, cultural, and economic aspects of a particular social formation. For example, a bourgeoisie class creates a historic bloc through education and media. Its self-interest is accepted by subordinate classes as being its own interest. (Adamson, 1980)

In short, hegemonies always grow out of historical blocs, but not all historical blocs are hegemonic. A social group or class that establishes

an “intellectual and moral bloc” is by definition hegemonic vis-a-vis itself, but its political alliances with other such groups may or may not develop into a hegemonic relationship.

### **3.3. Hegemony and World Order**

The concept of the neo-Gramscian hegemony is applicable to analyzing conflicts at the international or world level. Robert Cox presents the most important implication of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. Cox developed the notion of hegemony out of Gramsci’s ideas in *Prison Notebooks*. (Gramsci, 1971)

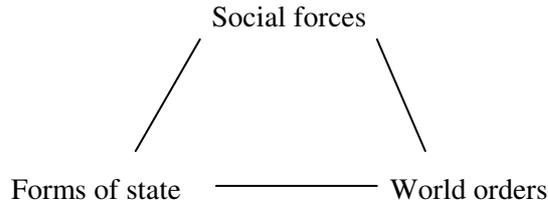
Cox’s approach to the study of hegemony is different from the conventional meaning of the term “hegemonic” that refers the dominant state’s relationship with other less powerful states. He prefers to use “dominance” to define hegemony in a neorealist sense. Instead, he uses hegemony as a “structure of values and understandings about the nature of order that infuse a whole system of states and non-state entities.” (Cox, 1992: 140) In a hegemonic order these values and understandings are relatively stable and unquestioned. They appear to as the natural order for most actors. Such structure of meanings is underpinned by a structure of power, in which most probably one state is dominant but that state’s dominance in itself is not sufficient to create hegemony. According to Cox,

*hegemony derives from the ways of doing and thinking of the dominant strata of the dominant state or states insofar as these ways of doing and thinking have acquired the acquiescence of the dominant social strata of other states. These social practices and the ideologies that explain and legitimize them constitute the foundation of hegemonic order. (Ibid: 140)*

In his article, Cox impressively analyzed the role of social forces, the form of states and the world order (Figure 1). (Cox, 1986, 1987) He aims to identify the potential for structural transformation and the determination of breaking points between successive structures. His framework is oriented to a study of strategic consciousness and ideology formation at the ruling class level linking such formation to the historical cycles of successive world orders. The framework is an attempt to escape

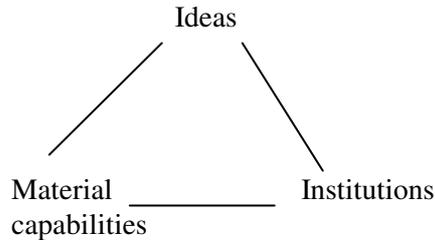
the state-versus-society centered political realist and neorealist analysis. It provides a structural concept of power where the constitution of a stable order is the result of a manufactured compatibility between dominant ideas, institutions, and material capabilities.

**Figure 1.** Hegemony and World Orders (adopted from Cox, 1986: 221).



Cox theorizes that all structure is the outcome of interaction between these three variables (ideas, institutions, and material capabilities) each of which possesses a real autonomy-“no determinism need be assumed.” (Figure 2) (Cox, 1986: 218) Hegemonic structures are distinguished from non-hegemonic inasmuch as those in control of institutions do not predominantly resort to the use of force. The consent is strengthened if the controllers make concessions to the dominated and express their relationship in terms of a universal general interest. While the power basis of hegemonic structures is implicit, the management of power relations in non-hegemonic orders is always to the forefront.

**Figure 2.** Structural forces (Cox, 1986: 218)



At the international level, Cox’s triad is translated into the historical study of social forces generated by the production process, forms of state derived from state/society complexes and world orders. Each level is interrelated but with no universal causality assumed.

Historical phases are identified when a coherent fit has occurred between material power, the development of collective world images and the administration of an order through a set of institutions claiming universality. (Burnham, 1991: 75) These are hegemonic phases-periods of relative stability in the international order-distinguishable from non-hegemonic phases where “state advance and protect the interests of particular national social classes” (Cox, 1987: 8), no single power can establish its legitimacy and international instability is the result.

Cox theorized world hegemony as an outward expansion of internal national hegemony established by a dominant social class. In the reading, world hegemony is not simply another order but one in which a “dominant mode of production, culture and system of social institutions” penetrates all countries.” (Cox, 1996: 137) World hegemony is describable as a “social structure, an economic structure, and a political structure; and it cannot simply be one of these things but must be all three.” (Cox, 1993: 62)

Coxian understanding of hegemony implies that the necessity of global structural change and world order in terms of “the dynamics and dialectics of their normative [ethical, ideological, practical] as well as their material dimensions.” (Gill and Law, 1993: 94) Cox’s theory emphasizes the structural and macro level of variables to understand the triad relationship of social forces, form of state, and world order.

For Cox, the creation of world order is result of hegemon and the formation of a “historic bloc.” A historic bloc is organized around a set of hegemonic ideas—a dominant ideology—that forms the basis for an alliance between social classes. Therefore, a successful historic bloc is organized through the exercise of “intellectual and moral leadership” and forms the organic link between political and civil society (the extended or integral state). (Cox and Sinclair, 1996) As we indicated above, Gramscian idea of state consists of not only the government but also “civil society”—press, church, mass culture— that stabilizes existing power relations. The emergence of a new historic bloc is the result of passive revolution (war of movement). Moreover, it needs “persuasive ideas and arguments (Gramsci’s ethnic-political level) which build on and catalyse its political networks and organisation.” (Gill and Law, 1993: 94) In neo-Gramscian sense, hegemony is based on consent and consensus rather than coercion:

*Between consent and force stands corruption/fraud (which is characteristic of certain situations when it is hard to exercise the hegemonic function, and when the use of force is too risky). This consists in procuring the demoralization and paralysis of the antagonist (or antagonists) by buying its leaders—either covertly, or, in case of imminent danger, openly—in order to sow disarray and confusion in its ranks. (Gramsci, 1971: 80n)*

A hegemonic order therefore emerges out of the successful formation of an international historic bloc of social forces that in turn is premised upon the articulation of a dominant ideology accepted by subordinate classes. The hegemonic world order (intellectual and moral leadership in international system) is created by the interactions between the dominant state and dominant social forces and the subordinate states and social forces. In other words, it is a product of a universal dominant society and civilization. (Cox, 1992: 141) For example, during the post-war years, a neoliberal form of state took shape in the European countries based on a negotiated consensus among the major industrial interests, organized labor, and government. The neoliberal historic bloc is represented by the G-8 countries.

There is a controversy over the nature of new world order. Cox argues that fundamental changes in global social structures and global processes of structural changes may be understood by Antonio Gramsci's term historic bloc. (Gramsci, 1971) He stresses that there are three issues that affect the future of world order:

(1) the globalisation of the world economy and the reactions of it may provoke (post-globalisation); (2) the transformation of the inter-state system as it has been known since the Westphalian era (post-Westphalian); (3) the problematic of a post-hegemonic world order [post-hegemonic]. (Cox, 1993: 259)

#### **4. A Model for the Conflict Analysis**

Conflicts occur when separate parties realize that they have incompatible goals. Many armed conflicts have taken place in less developed countries because the countries undergo rapid modernization, political transition, and the collapse of internal political structure. Incorporating Burton's description of basic needs, we can translate Gramsci's theory of hegemony into the familiar terms of conflict analysis. When social systems deny participation in the decision-making processes among social groups, non-negotiable conflicts over deprivation of human needs of identity, recognition and security exist. Conflicts may surface at the inter-group, interpersonal, or superstructure levels, but it cannot be resolved at those levels. Conflict can best be meaningfully addressed by changing the social structures that maintain the conflicts.

Realist/neo-realist theories have emphasized direct violence and the absence of war. Direct violence refers to physical violence that can be resolved through military means. The Gramscian ideas of IR theory help theorists to analyze "structural violence" (Galtung, 1969) or indirect violence that includes economic, cultural and environmental violence. In the case of structural violence, people harm other people indirectly by way of their social system. For example, the push factor of immigration moves many people to the slums and some of the people already living there may suffer from the rising housing costs or the job competition. It is hard to observe structural violence because it is an indirect, slow and steady process, and the victims and perpetrators are hard to identify. The Gramscian and Coxian concepts of hegemony and power assume that it is possible to resolve structural violence and overcome political repression. With the help of the Gramscian concepts, it becomes easy to take a snapshot of structural violence or at least extrapolate patterned effects. The victims of homelessness and street children are victims of structural violence. As a result, conflict resolution practitioners have advocated the view that it is necessary to include the concepts of structural violence and structural conflict in the area of conflict analysis in the new world order. It is evident that there is a need for a structural change that can be achieved through economic and cultural hegemony in the international system. It becomes obvious that negative peace-protecting human life and ending wars- is not enough. Therefore, the conflicts should be analyzed using a holistic approach. There is a need

for introducing positive peace that advocates the elimination of both structural and direct violence. By eliminating structure-generated social, political, and cultural violence, conflict resolution can attain justice, protect human rights, eliminate exploitation, provide basic needs (food and shelter), and give rise to equal power and equal opportunity. (Galtung, 1969, 1996: 67)

The realist/neo-realist theories of hegemony and hegemonic stability theory have been applied to understanding how negative peace (the absence of war) could be achieved and maintained. The theories argue that the absence of a hegemon results in war, chaos, and instability in the international system. From a different angle, conflict resolution theories believe that conflict is necessary for the engine of social change, but in fact a system of the constructive, not destructive conflicts must be created. When foreign policy-makers understand that the resolution of conflict requires both negative and positive peace (the absence of structural conflict), it become easier to eliminate the conflict cycle and propose post-peace building strategies and policies that address not only the interests of the states but also their needs and goals.

Long-term, intractable conflicts that result from the deprivation of needs such as identity, recognition, and security may be caused or maintained by the institutionalization of the values and norms of a dominant social group. If this is the case, the institutional structures supporting the deprivation must undergo change in order for the conflict to be resolved. (Burton, 1997) Modifications brought about through passive reform will not affect the core structure of social institutions and will not change the hidden structures that triggered the conflict, and the conflict will repeatedly re-emerge.

In the Coxian analysis, there are three principles that can be used in conflict analysis and resolution in the new world order A post-hegemonic order should move into the common ground that consists of three distinct and separate principles:

- (1) recognition of the requisites for survival and sustained equilibrium in global ecology;
- (2) mutual acceptance of restraint in the use of violence to decide conflicts - not that this would eliminate organized political violence, though it might raise the costs of resort to violence;
- and (3) common agreement to explore

the sources of conflict and to develop procedures for coping with conflict that would take account of distinct coexisting normative perspectives. (Cox, 1992: 142)

It is not enough not to examine immediate causes of conflict. The structure of the prevailing civil and political systems supporting and containing the parties in conflict must also be reviewed. The best hope for transforming relationships between parties in conflict is a full and informed dialogue; the dialogue must include discussions concerning the core causes and sources of the conflict. The Gramscian and Coxian concepts and theories are helpful to explain the dialogue in conflict resolution. The dialogue is possible only with a fully responsive “antithesis” that identifies the hidden messages and implicit assumptions. The antithesis must understand the deeply embedded that structures support and empower the systems, such as the meaning created and reinforced by a state’s language and prevailing mythology. (Sassoon, 1982) The goal of dialogue in conflict resolution is not absorption, domination, or conversion by either side, but rather synthesis. Synthesis is not a compromise combination of the thesis (existing structure) and antithesis (counter-hegemony) but a completely new, third. When structural violence is the cause of conflict, the resolution –the synthesis– will be something as different and separate from the existing structure and from the counter-hegemony.

One of the applications of the concepts of hegemony and hegemonic stability theory is water conflicts and the “theory of hydro-hegemony.” (Zeitoun, 2005) The theory asserts that the power of a state and its capabilities determine how it obtains and uses a scarce resource like water. If a state has hegemonic power over a water issue, it can control the agenda of the water conflict, determine how the water conflict is framed and analyzed and propose a resolution parallel to its interests and power. (Ibid) The theories of conflict resolution help us to explain how a hydro-hegemon may use its capabilities and can achieve a “durable stability” together with “a principle of equity and interdependence.” (Ibid: 9)

Another characteristic of the Gramscian theory of hegemony in the field of Conflict Resolution is that the war of position can be subtle and nonviolent and is conducted by the press, media, non-governmental institutions, educational and religious institutions in the domestic and

international political arenas. Similarly, conflict resolution practitioners have often called for peaceful and nonviolent social change (the Velvet Revolution). They apply counter-hegemonic concepts, theories and tools. Therefore, the struggle can be with military means as well as with ideas and institutions. The conflict resolution is a critical theory that counter-balances the dominant hegemonic ideas. Also, conflict resolution practices emphasize multi-track diplomacy, track-two diplomacy, the involvement of non-governmental organizations and the empowerment of the individuals.

The benefits of the conflict analysis model supported by social structures are two-fold. First, conflict analysis and resolution theorists must acknowledge that they cannot address deep-seated, intractable conflicts without examining underlying structural systems that support and maintain the conflict. Second, they must acknowledge that structural conflict can only be addressed at the expense of the structure of the social systems that support it. In these types of conflicts, researchers should look at: 1) the power relations between and among individuals, groups and social institutions; 2) the sources and circumstances giving rise to and supporting the power relations (coercion, force, consent, etc.); and 3) the impact of the power relations on the conflicts.

## **5. Conclusion**

The article attempts to summarize the literature related to the neorealist and the neo-Gramscian ideas of hegemony with an emphasis on the historical developments of the two schools. The purpose is to show the reader how the ideas and concepts of two schools can be used in the explanation and understanding of the conflicts. The resolution of deep-rooted, protracted, and violent conflicts requires the implementation of negative and positive peace. The neorealist theories can be used to explain interest-based and violent conflicts. The neo-Gramscian school can be instrumental for shedding light on structural violence and idea-based conflicts.

The neorealists believe that international conflicts are mostly between states and are based on the struggle for power. The solution of international conflicts is either based on a balance of power or the existence of a hegemon in the international system. By using war as a

means, states aim to obtain ends such as interest-maximization, survival, power and wealth. The neorealist theorists argue that a hegemon is a necessary and sufficient condition for a stable world order and a peaceful international system. The hegemonic stability theory asserts that a hegemon breeds stability in the system. A hegemon creates, maintains and shapes international institutions which in turn function as stabilizers of the international system even in the decline of a hegemon. When international institutions and regimes emerge, the system functions without a hegemon that in turn creates stability and peaceful international environment.

Keohane believes that post-hegemonic cooperation is possible because of interdependence, institutions, and regimes. He identified complex relations between cooperation and institutions such as international regimes and global governance. Successful hegemonic leadership depends on a certain form of asymmetrical cooperation. Cooperation may be fostered by hegemony, and a hegemon creates an environment for cooperation and creates and enforces rules. For Keohane, hegemony and cooperation have symbolic relationships with one another. (Keohane, 1984, p.46)

This article introduces Gramsci's ideas as an alternative to mainstream international relations approaches such as neo-realist, neoliberal, institutionalist, and world system theories. It outlines the core Gramscian concepts as well as the main arguments contained in them. The concept of hegemony is used to highlight theoretical, political and normative differences between mainstream approaches and neo-Gramscian concepts. While mainstream theories are static and constant, Gramscian concepts are dynamic, and they explain that structural changes occur in complex relationships among social forces, forms of states, and world orders. The concepts of historic bloc and civil society are important to expand a theory of the state and instrumental to explain the relationship between state and civil society and the integration of different class interests. Various social forces form historic blocs that lead to a complex and dynamic ensemble of social relations and domestic as well as international orders with political, economic and cultural aspects. The historic bloc first creates a hegemonic social class that expands to international arenas via ideas and institutions. For example, the European Union was created by the pro-EU historic bloc. It can be argued that there is a European civil society and a European order. The

Gramscian theoretical framework can be used to analyze the role of global civil society and historic bloc that helps to build normative structures (rules and rights) and international regimes (norms and decision-making procedures). The neo-Gramscian approach to IR provides a critical framework that enables analysts to assume that interstate cooperation is possible without a single hegemon. For example, a regime emerges as a result of not only institutional bargaining among states and state elites but also industry and business representatives, environmental interest groups, non-governmental organizations, and progressive movements (global civil society). The neo-Gramscian school of IR reveals that the political, economic and cultural struggles among states and social forces explain the emergence of global civil society and international regimes.

The neo-Gramscian idea of hegemony introduces ideas and institutions. Instead of emphasizing power and material capabilities for the international behaviors and policy-making as in the neorealist IR approach, the Coxian approach attaches an importance on ideas and how hegemonic ideas define states' actions, shape policymakers' acts and explain their policy-making choices. Also, the Coxian approach tends to emphasize the impacts of a state's institutions and structures on the international policy-making processes. Certain institutional structures and forms of states are necessary for a peaceful world order. For example, it has been observed that democracy and a liberal political economy are instrumental in creating peace and in resolving conflicts in post peace-building and conflict transformation processes. In addition, the Gramscian ideas in international relations theory are important to progress from one-dimensional analysis (national interest and power) to multi-dimensional analysis (ideas and institutions) for international issues and conflicts. It is important to combine international and domestic factors, societal forces and state institutions, and power and ideas, in analyzing international relations. It can be argued that the United States has structural power and is still a cultural hegemon. It has dominance on hegemonic ideas such as free trade, democracy, the rule of law, and liberal economy.

For Cox, the first condition for a post-hegemonic order would be "mutual recognition of distinct traditions of civilization." (Ibid: 141) The hegemon has to receive its "normative content in a search for common ground among constituent traditions of civilization." (1993:

264) In other words, a post-hegemonic era would be one in which different traditions of civilization could co-exist. The assumption of the co-existence of different civilizations has become more important since the new world order has disproved the old international system theories' assumptions and introduced new forces such as ideas and institutions (globalization, terrorist organizations, civil society, etc) in the international system.

In order to examine about peace and conflict resolution, it is necessary to think in systemic terms. The analysis of hegemony may provide some structural foundation on which to construct conflict resolution theory and practice. According to the neorealist hegemonic theory assumptions, whether the conflict will end or not depends on the hegemonic world order that can be created by the dominant state or the leadership of social forces (class, civil society, war of movement, and passive revolution).

The presence or absence of hegemony may make a difference in the international system. In the neorealist discourse, the term "hegemony" is reduced to the single dimension of dominance, i.e., a relationship among states that is defined by their physical capability. However, the Gramscian meaning of hegemony that Cox has used (1993) introduced new dimensions and levels of analysis. Cox stresses that in a hegemonic order, the dominant power makes a certain concessions or compromises to secure the consent of lesser powers to an order that can be expressed in terms of a general interest. The Coxian ideas of hegemony have applications for the analysis of international regimes, particularly on the environmental, trade and economic issues. For example, the success of the ozone regime negotiations or the world trade negotiations can be attributed the concessions of powerful economic blocs and the compromise between the North (the developed countries) and South (the developing and the less developed countries). (Cox, 1986: 246)

In the conflict resolution theories, the complex domestic and international structures have contributed the emergence of the violent conflicts. The causes of the structural conflicts can be understood with the help of neo-realist and neo-Gramscian hegemony concepts. It is obvious that most of the post-Cold War conflicts have had roots in post-globalization, post-Westphalian and post-hegemonic structures in the

international system. For example, it is necessary to resolve intra-state conflicts not only by peacekeeping and military forces but also social-psychological and cultural means such as the media and civil society. It has become more obvious that we need to first understand how and why the domestic and international structures and systemic forces affect the conflict processes and outcomes and then how to implement both negative (absence of war) and positive (the elimination of structural violence) peace.

The relationship between the concept of hegemony and conflict analysis is that not only power is important but also ideas and institutions. In a complex world environment, international relations theorists cannot explain and understand the new challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by using only neo-realist or Gramscian hegemony. There is a need for integrative and comprehensive theories that aim to achieve both negative and positive peace and to eliminate both physical and structural violence. The conflict resolution field may be instrumental to introduce the idea of nonviolent social change that aims to change interests, needs and goals of the conflicting parties.

## **References<sup>2</sup>**

- Adamson, Walter L. (1980) *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. (1993) "The three Hegemonies of Historical Capitalism", in Stephen Gill (ed.), *Gramsci, Historical Materialism, and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 148-186.
- Augelli, Enrico and Craig N. Murphy. (1993) "Gramsci and International Relations: A General Perspective with Examples from Recent US Policy toward the Third World", in Stephen Gill, (ed.), *Gramsci, Historical Materialism, and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 127-148.
- Burnham, Peter. (1991) "Neo-Gramscian hegemony and the international order", *Capital&Class*, August 1991, n. 45, pp. 73-93.
- Burton, John. (1997) *Violence Explained*, Manchester University Press: Manchester.

- Cox, Robert W. (1977) "Labour and Hegemony" *International Organization*, (31), pp. 385-424.
- Cox, Robert W. (1986) "Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", in Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*. Cambridge: Columbia University Press, pp. 158-204.
- Cox, Robert W. (1987) *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in Making of History*. Cambridge: Columbia University Press.
- Cox, Robert W. (1992) "Towards a Post-hegemonic Conceptualization of World Order: Reflections on the Relevancy of Ibn Khaldun", in James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel, (eds.), *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 132-160.
- Cox, Robert W. (1993) "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method", in Stephen Gill, (ed.), *Gramsci, Historical Materialism, and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 49-67.
- Cox, Robert W. and Timothy J. Sinclair (1996), *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doran, Charles (1995) "The Power Cycle and Peaceful Change: Assimilation, Equilibrium, and Conflict Resolution", in John Vasquez, et. al., *Beyond Confrontation: Learning Conflict Resolution in the Post-Cold War Era*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, pp. 170-211.
- Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (1997) *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. New York: Longman.
- Galtung, Johan (1969). "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, v. 6, n. 3, pp. 167-191.
- Galtung, Johan (1996) *Peace By Peaceful Means: Peace, Conflict, Development and Civilization*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Gill, Stephen and David Law (1993) "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital", in Stephen Gill (ed.), *Gramsci*,

- Historical Materialism, and International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 93-127.
- Gilpin, Robert. (1981) *War and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilpin, Robert. (1987) *The Political Economy of International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, translated by Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, New York: International Publishers, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hobbes, Thomas (1999) "Relations among Sovereigns", in Phil Williams, et. al., *Classical Readings of International Relations*. New York: Harcourt Brace Publishers, pp. 35-39.
- Ikenberry, John G. (1999) "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order", *International Security*, v. 23, n. 3 (Winter 1998/99), pp. 43-78.
- Kennedy, Paul (1987) *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. New York: Random House.
- Keohane, Robert (1984) *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Keohane, Robert O. and Joseph S. Nye, eds. (1989) *Power and Interdependence*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Kindleberger, Charles P. (1973) *The World in Depression 1929-1939*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kupchan, Charles A. (1998) "After Pax Americana: Benign Power, Regional Integration, and the Sources of a Stable Multipolarity", *International Security*, v. 23, n. 2 (Fall 1998), pp. 40-79.
- Modelski, George (1987) *Long Cycles in World Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. (1966) *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Knopf.
- Rupert, Mark (1993) "Alienation, Capitalism, and the Inter-state System: Toward a Marxian/Gramscian Critique", in Stephen Gill (ed.),

- Gramsci, Historical Materialism, and International Relations.* New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 67-93.
- Sassoon, A. S. 1982 "State and Political Strategy", in A. S. Sassoon, (ed.), *Approaches to Gramsci*, Writers and Readers Press: London.
- Snidal, Duncan. (1985) "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory", *International Organization*, 39, pp. 579-614.
- Thucydides (1999) "Reflections on the Peloponnesian War", in Phil Williams, et. al., *Classical Readings of International Relations*. New York: Harcourt Brace Publishers, pp. 222-231.
- Vasquez, John A. (1993) *The War Puzzle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. (1959) *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison- Wesley.
- Weber, Max. (1986) "Domination by Economic Power and by Authority", in Steven Lukes, (ed.), *Power*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 28-37.
- Webb M.C. and S. D. Krasner (1989) "Hegemonic Stability Theory: An Empirical Assessment", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 15, pp. 183-98.
- Zeitoun, Mark (2005) "Hydro-Hegemony Theory: A Framework for Analysis of Water-Related Conflicts" Accessed on October 2005,  
<http://www.up.ac.za/academic/libarts/polsci/awiru/pdfDocs/Zeitoun%20-%20HydroHegemony%20Theory%20Orientation%20Paper%20May%202005.pdf>

### **Endnotes**

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Cox extensively has written about the subjects and has a profound influence on recent developments in thinking in international relations theory, world politics, and political economy. Most of studies and important essays about the theme of world order led to new book. In the book, all of his essays that I used can be found. See Cox, Robert W. and Timothy J. Sinclair (1996), *Approaches to world order*, Cambridge University Press: New York.

<sup>2</sup> There are some Turkish resources on neo-realism, neo-Gramscian, hegemony, and international relations. See Deniz Ülke Arıboğan, *Globalleşme Senaryosunun Aktörleri (Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Mücadelesi)*, Der Yayınları: İstanbul, 1996; Tayyar Arı, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri: Çatışma, Hegemonya, İşbirliği*, Alfa Yayınları: İstanbul, 2003; Tayyar Arı, *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Dış Politika*, Alfa Yayınları: İstanbul, 1999; İhsan Dağı, *Türk Dış Politikasında Gelenek ve Değişim*, Siyasal Kitabevi: İstanbul, 1999; Atilla Eralp, *Devlet, Sistem, Kimlik: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Yaklaşımlar*, İletişim Yayınları: İstanbul, 1996; Antonio Gramsci, *Hapishane Defterleri*, Çev: Adnan Cemgil, Belge Yayınları: İstanbul, 2003.