Research Paper / Araştırma Makalesi

Theorizing the Fall of Hegemony: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective[1]

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Abstract

Historically, hegemony has been a vital aim and feature of political units and international systems. The search for hegemony is crucial for the achievement of survival and then domination. In the context of international relations, hegemony refers to the dominant position of a particular state or group of states in the global system. The relationship between subaltern states and the hegemon has changed in proportion to their power. For this reason, the cyclical and actor behaviors of the international system that existed in the past and the current structure also contain similar and different aspects in terms of hegemony. This study aims to firstly discuss the conceptual framework concerning hegemony and the decline of hegemony. This discussion will study the fall of hegemony from a neo-Gramscian perspective. In this research work, we assume that hegemony's emergence, survival, and decline are not only based on material elements, but non-material components also play a prominent role. In this sense, we analyze the fall of liberal hegemony from three aspects: i)the weakness of the hegemon's ideology, iii) divergence among the hegemon's allies, and iii) material and non-material warfare. In conclusion, the fall of hegemony can highlight the importance of understanding the material and conceptual dimensions of power and the need to analyze the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in the global system.

Key Words: Hegemony, Power, International system, War, Ideology

Hegemonyanın Düşüşünü Kuramsallaştırmak: Neo-Gramscici Bir Perspektif

Öz

Tarihsel olarak hegemonya, siyasi birimlerin ve uluslararası sistemlerin hayati bir amacı ve özelliği olmuştur. Hegemonya arayışı, hayatta kalmanın ve ardından tahakkümün başarılması için çok önemlidir. Uluslararası ilişkiler bağlamında hegemonya, belirli bir devletin veya devletler grubunun küresel sistemdeki hâkim konumunu ifade etmektedir. Devletlerin, hegemon devletle ilişkileri, güçleri oranında değişmiştir. Bu nedenle uluslararası sistemin geçmişte var olan konjonktürel ve aktör davranışları ile mevcut yapısı hegemonya açısından benzer ve farklı yönler içermektedir. Bu çalışma öncelikle hegemonya ve hegemonyanın çöküşüne ilişkin kavramsal çerçeveyi tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tartışma hegemonyanın düşüşünü neo-Gramscici bir bakış açısıyla incelemektedir. Çalışma kapsamında hegemonyanın ortaya çıkmasında, devamlılığında ve gerilemesinde sadece maddi unsurların değil, maddi olmayan unsurların da önemli rol oynadığı varsayılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda liberal hegemonyanın düşüşü üç açıdan incelenmektedir: i) hegemonun ideolojisinin zayıflığı, iii) hegemonun müttefikleri arasındaki ayrılık ve iii) maddi ve manevi savaş. Sonuç olarak, hegemonyanın düşüşü, gücün maddi ve kavramsal boyutlarını anlamanın önemini ve küresel sistemdeki çatışma ve işbirliği dinamiklerini analiz etme ihtiyacını ortaya koyar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hegemonya, Güç, Uluslararası Sistem, Savaş, İdeoloji

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Introduction

Hegemony is one of the prominent concepts in International Relations. States' position towards each other is similar to human nature. Accumulation of power and achieving domination are the main stimuli. Sovereignty creates a horizontal improvement in international relations and the connection of each part. Nevertheless, the main issue is that every actor in the system bounds within the sovereign equal state/actor. The actors of the international system are eager for hegemonic superiority based on their power. Hence, hegemony, which means that an actor "rises" and "dominates" over others, essentially aims to become the system's most important actor by instilling fear among another actor/actors and its opponents. The ancient Greek city-states witnessed the hegemonic wars of Athens and Sparta that lasted about 30 years. The quest for hegemony, as an ongoing motive since the period of city-states, still exists in the actors of the current system. For the actor who was dominant and hegemonic in the international system in the past, the existing structure meant creating its order. Throughout history, every political unit has sought superiority over others regarding hegemony. This situation is the same for the great powers in the modern period. Also, the rise of a hegemon depends on its position and advantages in the conjuncture like in the past. The fall of hegemony refers to the decline or collapse of a dominant power or system that has maintained its dominance over a prolonged period. Neo-Gramscian perspectives, which draw on the ideas of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, offer a theoretical framework for understanding the fall of hegemony. Gramsci argued that hegemony is not just a matter of coercion or force but also involves the consent and cooperation of subordinate groups. He suggested that hegemony is maintained by establishing cultural and ideological dominance, which creates a sense of legitimacy for the ruling class and makes resistance more difficult.

The hegemonic state establishes a world order that is compatible not only with its interests but also with the interests of other states (1983, p. 171). World hegemony should not be seen as the exploitation of one state over other states; it must have, or at least appear to be, a universal understanding that benefits all (Gill, 1990, p. 47). On the contrary, it appeals to universal norms and acts on behalf of common interests to maintain its hegemony. On the other hand, according to Münkler, hegemony should be considered "superiority within a group of political actors with legally equal rights". This situation reveals a vertical network of relations between states. A hegemonic power in the system can be status quo or irredentist regarding the system balance, as they will act in line with their interests. Although hegemony is inherent in history, when considered globally, it is open to question to what extent great powers use hegemony as a singular power. For this reason, it creates structures that simultaneously contain the war-peace, order-anarchy dilemmas of international relations. Moreover, we must understand that hegemony is not solely a powerful tool for the state. For instance, the fall of the Soviet Union can be understood in terms of the breakdown of ideological legitimacy and the emergence of alternative visions of society.

Nevertheless, the question arises that is this still valid in the modern world? What are the indicators of the fall of hegemony? Hence, the focus of this study includes theorizing the fall of hegemony. Since this questioning will be in the context of the theories of the discipline of international relations, this is our limitation at the first stage. The focus of working mainly on the axis of foreign policy developments excludes the power focus in domestic politics from this point of view. In other words, our study will be system-based regarding Walt's triple analysis level, which is more of a theoretical discussion. The paper aims to present a first-stage comparison with Gramcian hegemony readings, both classical and neoclassical. The theoretical framework for putting forward our current assumption about the decline of hegemony. The assumption that hegemony does not have a vital aspect as in the past is the primary assumption and focus of the question of the study in this context. Then, the indicators that reveal the fall of hegemony are examined. As a result, it is seen that the power attributions of the existing modern international system, such as the Roman Empire period, have changed. For this reason, whether the structure and power of hegemony have changed or not will be questioned under the third title. The general aim of the study is to provide a theoretical and philosophical discussion area for the readers. In this respect, our study manifests the comparative approach of a historical and theoretical discussion.

Describing Hegemony in IR Theories

In ancient Greece, hegemony was originally referred to as military commanders, but later it was used to describe a type of unique kingdom in Macedonia with unrivalled power (Modelski, 1987, p. 17). In his History of the Peloponnesian Wars, Thucydides used this term for the leadership of Athens and Sparta. In ancient Greece, hegemony was more characterized by military power. For instance, Athens in the Delian

League and Sparta in the Peloponnesian League was referred to as hegemonies (Lentner, 2005, p. 740). In the mid-nineteenth century, the Italian philosopher Vincenzo Gioberti considered moral and civil superiority to be the basic condition of hegemonic power manifested in culture and tradition. By comparing the two Greek principalities, Piedmont and Rome, he came to the conclusion that the former was superior to the latter by having stronger military power and the latter by having higher religious authority. Likewise, other German historians such as Leopold von Ranke and Georg Dehio have mentioned hegemony as the superior military and political power in explaining the relations between the principalities of the time (Kim & Kim, 2017).

This concept was transferred from Italy and Germany to Russia in the late nineteenth century. During this time, Georgi Plekhanov, a follower of the Marx school, was the first Russian philosopher to use this term. He believed that against the Tsar's absolutism, the proletariat should form a leading independent party. Vladimir Lenin was the next Marxist who expanded the dimensions of the concept. According to him, the working class should have political, cultural, and ideological power to win the war against capitalism. It is evident in his letter to Plekhanov (Cox R., 1983, p. 163). The Third International Congresses held after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia underpinned the official use of this concept. Since then, achieving a hegemonic position has been recognized as one of the goals of the working class.

Although the concept of hegemony is rooted in the thoughts of the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), his scope of ideas is typically confined within the state's boundaries. The hegemony that Gramsci puts forward in his Prison Notebooks focuses on explaining the relations between classes and social groups within a nation. However, other International Relations theorists later expanded the theory he proposed. Gramsci considers hegemony a situation in which the dominant class encourages other classes to accept their moral, political, and cultural values (Gramsci, 1991, p. 99). The preliminary assumption of this concept is the consent of the majority. Indeed, this consent does not always materialize peacefully and may combine coercion with intellectual, moral, and cultural motivations. Hence, hegemony is a set of ideas by which the dominant groups try to ensure the consent of the lower groups toward their leadership.

Gramsci handled the concept in a framework to explain the reproduction of bourgeois domination in Western Europe. In this framework, while he questioned the lack of proletarian revolution in Western Europe, he concluded that the reason for the progress of the bourgeoisie in Western Europe is that the sovereignty should be based on the necessity of combining force and consent: "…the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' (dominio) and as 'intellectual and moral leadership' (direzione). A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which tends to 'liquidate' or subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups (Gramsci, 1916-1935, 2000, p. 249)." Also, According to Gramsci (2000, p. 307), sovereignty cannot be achieved by the mere law, army, police, and other similar forces and disciplines; it also requires the subject's consent. Consent is provided by concessions to the moral leadership of the ruling class on the one hand and to the ruled classes on the other. Therefore, the ruled classes become subject to the hegemony of the ruling class. These ruled classes accept the hegemon as a legitimate power and think that interests are intermingled under its rule. Gramsci argues that the state, the institutional form of class domination, is based not only on the administrative, legal, and military bureaucratic forms of organization that will maintain power but also on the hegemony provided by civil society through church, school, and trade unions. These organizations form the basis of the state, which is the instrument of domination of the bourgeoisie in civil society (Gramsci, 1971).

The traditional theories of International Relations also do not omit the importance of the normative aspect of hegemony. Though these theories emphasize the material conditions for the formation of hegemon and establishment of a hegemonic order, intellectual offshoots later added normative characteristics to this concept. Classical realists emphasize hard power by which a state can change or modify other states' behavior. From their perspective, material elements come to the fore in the concept of hegemony, while the factor of obtaining consent based on persuasion remains in the background. The hegemony model envisaged by realism can be read as the imposition of rules and regulations that will maintain the status quo of hegemony. At the same time, the hegemon exerts pressure on other states within the system, especially by using the elements of military power.

John Mearsheimer (2001, p. 40), one of the pioneers of neoclassical realists, considers material power the prerequisite of hegemonic power. He defines hegemony as the acquisition of a level of power by a state to dominate other states in the international system. In such a configuration, no other state has the

military capabilities that would allow it to have a confrontation with the hegemon. Thus, the hegemon is the only dominant force in the system. Mearsheimer does not acknowledge the realization of global hegemony because rival forces by no means have a place in a pure hegemonic order. He denies that the United Kingdom in the mid-nineteenth century was a hegemon as there were four other powers in Europe at the time, namely France, Hungary, Prussia, and Russia. Amongst them, France was considered a major threat to the UK. Indeed, it was a concert or multipolar order in which the UK did not dominate them in any way. It means that hegemony can only be achieved when no rival power can challenge the established hegemon. Yet, Mearsheimer (2004) still categorizes hegemonic powers. According to him, a distinction can be made between global hegemons dominating the world and regional hegemons dominating different geographical regions. The US has been a regional hegemon in the western hemisphere for at least the last hundred years. This assumption is about authority, as Gilpin (1981) states. Because considering the function of the state in domestic and foreign politics, the ultimate nature of its authority makes it the leading actor in the international system. As a result, every state does not respond to a higher authority due to the anarchic structure of the international system. Therefore, this brings us to another neoclassical realist, Robert Gilpin (1981), and the institutional liberal, Robert Keohane (1984); besides emphasizing the importance of material power, consider the will of a powerful state as a precondition for playing the hegemonic role. In this view, it is impossible to apply the concept of hegemony to any state that enjoys material preponderance. Perhaps some states are in a superior position to other states in terms of military and economy, but they are not hegemons. As Charles Kindleberger (1973) explains, between 1929 and 1939, the US was not a hegemonic power in the current sense, having material power but lacking the will. Gilpin and Keohane combine material characteristics with the state's will to undertake the responsibility. Barry Posen (2014) also discusses the importance of the hegemonic state's will to play a superior role in the international system. From his point of view, for a powerful state to achieve a hegemonic position, it has to prove its will in practice. This function, in turn, manifests itself in foreign policy or what is called grand strategy. Therefore, what is inferred here is the declarative feature of hegemony.

Ultimately, Gilpin (1981) favors Hegemonic Stability Theory and considers three conditions for hegemonic power. First, the hegemonic power should be economically superior compared to other actors. In other words, the hegemon should have a significant economic market and technology, natural resources, large capital capacity, and foreign exchange reserves, and be capable of production to guarantee the various rules governing the system by relying on them. The second condition is the existence of ideological commitment to the ruling ideology. Accordingly, power must be committed to the ruling ideology while being ideologically legitimate to lead the system. In the shadow of ideological hegemony, the dominant power attracts the support and cooperation of other powers and adapts them to the system. The members' common interest is the third condition that Gilpin considers necessary to create a hegemonic order. It mainly denotes that the hegemonic power must be able to take actions that will make other countries prefer to cooperate with the hegemonic power.

Neo-Gramscian Analysis of Hegemony

Even though traditional theories share some elements of hegemony with the critical theory of neo-Gramscianism, they are more materialist. They need to explain the normative dimension of the concept. Concerning the emergence and maintenance – stability - of a hegemonic system, Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST), Liberal Institutional Approach, and Critical Theory, which includes both neo-Gramscianism and World System Theory, can be extracted. In the context of this paper, however, the neo-Gramscian theory is deemed applicable. The reason lies in the explanatory potential of the theory for the contemporary world. Initially, presented by Kindleberger, the primary concern of HTS was the economic stability of the international system. According to him, the existence of a hegemon willing to provide public economic goods would protect the world from falling into an economic crisis. Even though with the works of Robert Gilpin, the dimension of HST expanded to include politics and security, the theory's realistic nature limits its application. That is, it is more concentrated on the material sources of power while neglecting whether other states are content with the hegemon. Moreover, from the HST perspective, the hegemon's interests precede the expected gains (Clark, 2011, pp. 16-17; Snidal, 1985, p. 586).

Also, Immanuel Wallerstein, the proponent of World System Theory, excessively focuses on the material aspect of international order as his ideas predominantly revolve around the economic relations of states. His trinity classification of states in the international system, i.e. core, semi-periphery, and

periphery, solely deals with economic relationships. On the other hand, the holistic approach of the theory underestimates the importance of nation-states which are the pillars of the international system. Instead of considering nation-states as the basic unit of analysis, he emphasizes the role of the World System. Moreover, what is evident in World System Theory is the exploitative nature of inter-state relations. (Özekin, 2014, pp. 97-99) According to Wallerstein, the primacy – hegemony – of the core stems from its economic preponderance over the periphery, which is secured by their exploitation. Hence, common interest as the main aspect of the hegemonic system is omitted in his concept.

Robert Cox attempted to apply Gramsci's concept of hegemony on international relations. His ideas about hegemony, known as neo-Gramscianism, added new dimensions to this concept. While neo-realist theories base hegemony on the unbalanced distribution of material power and neo-liberals give weight to will and provision of public good, Cox placed the concept of hegemony on social basis and social relations (Bieler & Morton, 2004, p. 86). According to the neo-Gramscian approach, hegemony is understood primarily as a form of class rule, not a hierarchy of states (Morton, 2007, p. 117). It means that in the hierarchical system, a dominant central power governs other actors in an absolute manner. In the Cox definition of domination, norms, and consent do not have a place, whereas, in the hegemonic order, other states accept the ideology the hegemon provides. Indeed, the new dimension to the concept of hegemony added by Cox conceptualized hegemony as a consensual ideological form of domination.

Contrary to the traditional interpretation of hegemony, Cox cognized that hegemony is based more on consent (Cox, 1981, p. 139). International hegemony is not just an interstate order; it is defined as an established combined social, economic, and political structure. However, global hegemony is expressed in the universal norms, institutions, and mechanisms applied to states and civil society forces acting beyond national borders (Cox, 1981, p. 42). In the world order, Cox (1987, p. 164) defines hegemony as the outward expansion of internal or national hegemony established by the dominant social class. According to Cox a national social hegemony must first be established to establish a worldwide hegemonic order. In other words, world hegemony emerges when the power of the hegemonic class in the state with the most robust economy jumps from the national level to the international arena. Thus, world hegemony consists of universal norms, institutions, and mechanisms that determine the behavior of states and civil society beyond their national borders, encompassing the dominant production model and all of the social relations that support it (Cox, 1983, pp. 171-172). Ideologies and social practices that elaborate and legitimize the thoughts and actions of the ruling state constitute the basis of the hegemonic order.

In the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony, Cox (1981, p. 136) distinguishes three categories of power: ideas, material capabilities, and institutions, emphasizing their interaction. Ideas are collective images of world order, and material capabilities refer to accumulated resources. Institutions, on the other hand, are tools to stabilize a particular order. It is important to note that in this study, this trilateral aspect of hegemony will be considered in the discussion part. Furthermore, the opposite means the fall of hegemony. Material power bolsters the function of norms and institutions. Cox examines British and US hegemony in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to him, Great Britain gradually lost its hegemony when its command over the sea, liberal norms, and institutions declined. It is also argued that due to the need for solid American norms and institutions at the international level in the inter-war period, despite its superior material power, it could not be regarded as a hegemon (Cox, 1981, pp. 140-141).

On the other hand, Cox's work has two mechanisms of hegemony: internalization and transnationalization. In the internalization process, the ruling class tries to establish and maintain an international order based on norms, institutions, and regimes that serve universal interests. In transnationalization, the new hegemonic community opens outward and tries to impose its hegemony over other states. According to Cox, in this way, culture, economic and social institutions, and technology related to national hegemony turn into a model of emulation abroad (Cox, 1983, p. 137). Put another way, what is suitable for the hegemon becomes favorable for the world. The hegemonic state is as successful as other states emulate it. Emulation is the basis of its approval, which lies at the heart of the hegemonic project. Likewise, Cox's neo-Gramscian theory emphasizes a close link between institutionalization and hegemony. International organizations support the expansion of national hegemony on a world scale. Institutions provide facilities for the minimal use of violence to wage war. The strong can pressure the weak when needed (Cox, 1983, p. 137). While powerful states market their interests as universal interests, they can gain the consent of other states and maintain their superiority. Therefore, institutions that are part of the representation of various interests and the universalization of politics can play a central role in

this strategy. These institutions include the UN, NATO, and other international and regional organizations.

Cox also emphasizes that intellectuals play a significant role in the establishment of hegemony. Intellectuals do not only deal with the production of ideas; they are organically linked to the hegemon class and perform certain functions. Their function is to organize social forces and develop a hegemonic project that can transfer the interests of these groups to gain the consent of other forces. In addition, intellectuals undertake the function of developing and supporting the technologies, organizations, and conscious images so that the members of the class and historic bloc connect to the common identity (Ibid, p. 168). This hegemonic project is based on organic ideas of great importance. Bieler and Morton (2001, p. 20) liken these ideas to weapons, used by the ruling class to justify certain policies. Intellectuals harmonize the interests of the ruling class with the interests of the subjects. Organic intellectuals are a small part of society, but they disseminate their ideas to large masses of people. In this sense, the vector of foreign affairs reflects the interests of the elite that oversees domestic politics and the economy and is not accountable to the public.

As a result, to Gramscian and neo-Gramscian thinkers, hegemony is a form of interclass relationship that determines the leadership status of a class or group over other classes with the active consent of these elements. Hegemony is a system created by persuasion, consensus, and widespread cooperation with minimum possibility of resorting to force. Hegemony is first established within the boundaries of a state by certain social forces leading in that state and then spread to the world. It is an expression of consent accepted by other groups, carried out by the acceptance of ideas, and the support of institutions and material resources. Hence, the hegemonic state plays a significant role in the world system by providing leadership to its partners in exchange for respect and dignity. However, it cannot impose or make its own rules without obtaining the explicit or implicit consent of independent states. Therefore, for Gramsci and his followers, hegemony differs from pure dominance. This is the most important element that distinguishes Gramscian theory from Realism and Liberalism. Hegemony is broader than domination; it is a form of domination that conceals coercion with the help of consent, which is accepted as a natural order. Gramscian hegemony is the interface of the material and the immaterial, ethics and politics, action and knowledge. This unification extends to the international community and is based on the consent of the masses.

Theorizing the Fall of Hegemony

Robert Cox states that "theory is always for someone and for some purpose" (Cox & Sinclair, 1996, p. 87). It is time and space that allow researchers to work on conceptualizing events. Based on this assumption and given the research method, which is based on the case study, an attempt will be made to conceptualize the fall of hegemony by having an analogy of Gramsci and Cox's ideas. This research will use concepts developed by Gramscianism and neo-Gramscianism as metaphors.

As discussed above, civil society, class, and the historic bloc are the main concepts that constitute the hub of Gramsci and Cox's works. To further facilitate the conceptualization of the decline of hegemony, these concepts are borrowed in this thesis as metaphors. Civil society can be inferred as an international institution whose function is underwritten by a hegemonic state. Class, conversely, can be a unit of a broader social community, i.e. states in the international system. However, the historical bloc is an ambiguous concept in Gramsci's original work (Gramsci, 1991, p. 31); it is typically attributed to the conjunction of structure and superstructure. Walter Adamson's interpretation of this concept provides a more comprehensive understanding which can be adapted to the context of this research. He states that a historic bloc can be defined through its dual functions. The horizontal function denotes a historic bloc as an "effort to infuse this hegemony throughout society, above all utilizing class alliances" (1983, pp. 176-177). The second dimension is vertical, incorporating economic, political, and cultural dynamics. Therefore, based on the basic assumptions of Gramsci and Cox, we can conclude the following illustration to design a model for the fall of hegemony.
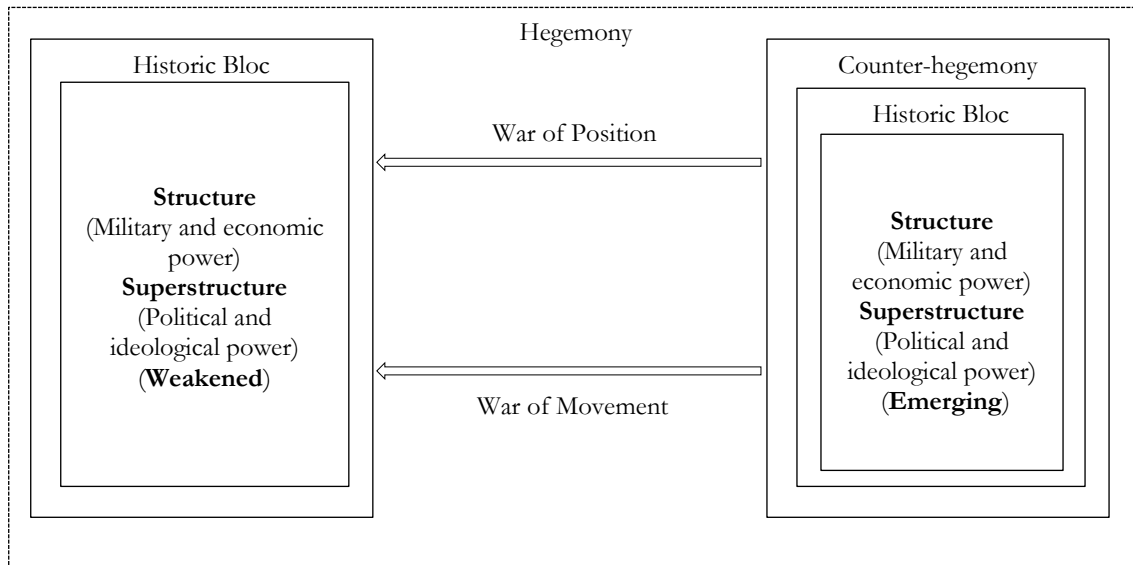
Figure 1. *Neo-Gramscian Model for Fall of Hegemony (*Source: Author's own work)

As shown in the above illustration, hegemony is a broader system that includes its historic bloc and the counter-hegemony. Hegemony is based on structure (military and economic power) and superstructure (political and ideological power). In the Gramscian concept, the weakness of the superstructure leads to disintegration among the members of the historic bloc. However, this process cannot occur merely from within. External factors also contribute to the weakness of the hegemon's ideology, and these are the war of position and movement waged by the counter-hegemony. The counter-hegemony is an emerging power with the characteristics of the hegemony except for its universal essence.

According to Gramsci (1991), a hegemonic order consists of three stages: pre-hegemony, hegemony, and hegemonic crisis. In the pre-hegemony stage, the social group with the will to reach a dominant position must be in an actual leadership position. Even if the class in question achieves a hegemonic position, it must maintain its leadership through political and ideological struggle. In this regard, Gramsci states: "A social group can, indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this is indeed one of the principal conditions for the winning of 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" (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 57-68).

Hence, neo-Gramscian perspectives also emphasize the role of agency and struggle in the fall of hegemony. They argue that subordinate groups can actively challenge and undermine the dominant order and that the outcome of this struggle is not predetermined. Thus, the fall of hegemony is not simply a matter of historical inevitability but a contingent and contested process. Nevertheless, in Gramsci's concept, a hegemon and a hegemonic system suffer a crisis when, in addition to the weakness of its material power, its normative power also tends to weaken. The decline of hegemony is also related to its allies and the network of friendly states. As such, when the hegemon loses the deference of allies in the international system, it may no longer enjoy primacy. The concept, which Gramsci and Cox dub as a historic bloc, well demonstrates how divergence among allies can impact the competency of the hegemon. Hegemon may also lose its authority after the rising powers act as counter-hegemonic and anti-hegemonic actors. The dual concepts of war of position and war of movement best reflect how outsiders play a destructive role in the fall of the hegemony (Gramsci, 1991; 1971). Below, by utilizing the contributions of related kinds of literature, an attempt is made to conceptualize the fall of hegemony.

Hegemony and the Weakening Ideology

The French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy used the concept of ideology for the first time in 1796 to refer to the science of ideology, the study of ideas in their independence (Kennedy, 1979, p. 353). However, Karl Marx used it widely, and Friedrich Engels conceptualized it in The German Ideology. The core of Marx's ideology revolves around the hegemony of the ruling class. Marx holds a pessimistic view of ideology, calling it a set of ideas generated by the ruling class to continue its domination by keeping the

ruled class coherent. According to him, it is necessary to dominate material and mental forces simultaneously (Marx & Engels, 1970, p. 64).

Andrew Heywood (2012, pp. 6–7) summarizes Marx's concept of ideology as false ideas aimed at distorting the fact. Under the guise of ideology, the ruled class is ignored for their exploitation. However, ideology will exist only as long as the ruling class that created it remains in power. The positive point of the concept of ideology, in the view presented by Marx, lies in the fact that power is applied throughout the cultural aspect of society. Ideological systems work to integrate people into social networks of obedience and domination. However, this model of ideology has limitations because it presents a completely "integral" and "holistic" conception of ideology. Given this situation, Gramsci presents a different and more complex interpretation of ideology by focusing on the concept of hegemony.

Ideology is one of the critical tools used by those who hold political power to legitimize their authority. Accordingly, the establishment and maintenance of power can be achieved by spreading the dominant ideology to society or by the society's consent to this dominant mentality. At the same time, the consent shown against the dominant ideology is also crucial in ensuring social integrity. The idea of hegemony defined by Gramsci connects society, acts as an integrating phenomenon, and restructures all institutions in terms of the dominant ideology. Thus, the use of ideology as a means of legitimization is realized by infusing the dominant political system into the minds of individuals (Gramsci, 1991).

While attaching the concept of hegemony to international politics, Cox further reinforced the nexus between ideology and hegemony. He states that hegemony is the 'dominance of a particular kind where the dominant state creates an order based ideologically on a broad measure of consent' (Cox, 1987, p. 7). Therefore, Cox highlights the importance of ideology for hegemony and asserts that the consent of other states is critical. In other words, the mere introduction of an ideology does not mean the emergence of a hegemon and hegemonic order; instead, the presented ideology should acquire audiences whose deference is extended willingly to the hegemon.

Hence, legitimacy results from the socialization of elites in the periphery. In other words, when leaders in other countries accept and internalize the hegemony's proposed norms, the hegemonic ideology's legitimacy will be maintained. Hence, adopting policies consistent with the hegemon's perception of the international order ensures the legitimacy of the prevailing ideology. The exercise of power - and, therefore, the mechanism by which compliance is achieved - involves the injection of a set of norms by the hegemon and their acceptance by the leaders of other countries (Ikenberry & Kupchan, 1990, p. 285). With the weakening of this trend, the international system based on a hegemon is undermined.

Rapkin and Braaten (2009, p. 122) suggest an assessment of its sources, that is substantive and procedural, to measure how ideology loses legitimacy. The first denotes the assimilation of others into the norms and values of the hegemonic power. In the words of Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990, pp. 290–292), this assimilation can be materialized through one of the three strategies. The first is normative persuasion which is the spontaneous normative adaption to those of the hegemon. The second relates to external inducement, including economic and military threats such as sanctions. The last strategy is internal reconstruction, which directly intervenes in other countries' internal affairs. Hence, the first source of legitimacy contains bilateral interactions of both subject and the object. The procedural origin of hegemony refers to the actions of the hegemon and to what extent those actions are compatible with its established rules. By compiling Gramsci's political thoughts, Roger Simon (1991, pp. 66-73) points out three issues in the conversations of hegemonic ideology. Profoundly, these issues contribute to the explanation of the decline of hegemony. As mentioned earlier, the first is ideological influence with persuasion and consent. In this context, the more the element of getting agreement weakens and, by contrast, coercion and coercive measures increase, the more hegemony will decline. Second, ideology is a tool of cohesion among different classes referring to as common sense (Heywood, 2012, p. 12). From Gramsci's perspective, ideology, like cement, connects different classes around a single point. By rejecting the notion that ideology should not be judged based on its goodness and badness, he considers this concept to be result-oriented. If the result of the ideology does not match its rationale, which is the cohesion of different classes, hegemony will lead to a crisis. In this regard, Gramsci argues:

> *There must be a cultural-social unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, as the basis of an equal and common conception of the world (Gramsci, 1971, p. 349).*

The last parameter is the pluralism of the ruling ideology. On the one hand, a pluralist ideology does not negate others; on the other hand, with a combination of historical and social elements of some groups, it can play an essential role in maintaining hegemony. The hegemonic system based on non-pluralist ideology is doomed to failure. In Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, bourgeois ideology kept its victory when nationalism was attached to it. Gramsci's interpretation of the decline of hegemony is called an organic crisis. This crisis occurs when the hegemonic ideology becomes a dictatorship, and other groups' ideas allied with the hegemony are ignored (Gramsci, 1991, p. 70). In this sense, one of the reasons for the decline of British hegemony in the late nineteenth century can be seen as its imperialist ideology. Hence, it is possible to encounter a parallel view of Gramsci's idea of the spread of the dominant ideology in the works of Louis Althusser. In this respect, Althusser (2020) explains that sovereign power is constantly preserving and building its existence with ideological apparatuses on the one hand and repression apparatuses on the other. The state's ideological apparatuses ensure the reproduction of social consent and, thus, the establishment of hegemony.

Historical Bloc (Alliances) and Hegemony

In the neo-Gramscian sense, forming a historical bloc is a prerequisite for exercising hegemony. In its original meaning, the historic bloc referred to the harmony between structure and superstructure. However, this term does not simply denote a political alliance of social forces; on the contrary, it covers many segments of society. In Cox's (1983, p. 9) words, the concept denotes "coalitions of social forces bound by consent and coercion." According to Mark Rupert (1995, pp. 29-30), a historical bloc is a formation that includes the political, cultural, and economic aspects of a particular social production and combines them in a historically coherent way to form a complex community of social relations. Hence, a historic bloc can be referred to as a worldview historically based on specific socio-political conditions and relations of production and legitimizes this particular configuration's social power.

Thus, the historic bloc has the potential to bridge the structural distinctions of state-society and politics-economy in capitalist social formations. Gramsci (1971, p. 366) rigorously argues that political and cultural practices are insuperable to economic forces. In other words, the historic bloc emerges from the interrelationships between the structure (socio-economic relations) and the superstructure (political and cultural frame) and creates an organic bond between them. To put it differently, a historic bloc consists of material capabilities, institutions, and ideologies/ideas that are historically compatible with one another (Gill, 2008, p. 60). In this sense, a successful historical bloc is formed by the political organization of intellectual and moral leadership and the formation of an organic (long-term) link between the political and civil society.

As mentioned, Gramsci argues that when analyzing, it is wrong to focus only on economic or only political relations; instead, it is crucial to consider the interplay between them. Thus, in his analysis, he avoided reductionism by examining the fields of activity of politics, ethics, and ideology at the level of mutual relations with the economy. In Gramsci's historicist approach, ideas and material conditions mutually affect each other and are never reducible to each other. Thoughts become intelligible and meaningful about material conditions. Material conditions include both social relations and physical means of production. Thus, there comes a reciprocal relationship; on the one hand, the superstructure affects the mode of production, and on the other, it is affected by the structure (Cox, 1983, p. 219).

Hence, the concept of a historic bloc refers to a worldview based on specific historical and socio-economic conditions and relations of production, giving ideological coherence to its social forces (Rupert, 1995, p. 30). In this sense, class forces, political organizations, and historical goals are interrelated in Gramsci's concept of a historic bloc. Thus, a historical bloc cannot arise spontaneously or simply out of its economic necessities. In this respect, Gramsci differs from the more positivist (determinist) and reductionist interpretations of historical materialism. Similarly to Cox, the concept of the historic bloc prevents his approach from falling into (economic) reductionism, as it is a mixture of political, ideological, and economic sectors.

In the words of Gill and Law (1989, p. 476), the concept of a historic bloc means a historical alignment between material forces, institutions, and ideologies, or in a broad sense, an alliance of different class forces. Accordingly, a functioning bloc is politically organized around hegemonic ideas that give the constituent elements strategic direction and coherence. Therefore, its leaders must engage in a conscious and organized struggle to emerge a new historic bloc. At this point, Gill and Law emphasize that this process is not simply a result of ideological power or a matter of capturing the state. More is needed for

any new historic bloc to emerge strong in civil society and the economy alone. It also needs persuasive ideas and arguments that shape and catalyze its political networks and organization. The class that assumes the leadership of the historic bloc must define its interests in the way that the coalition members consider themselves its partners. The historical bloc will stay strong if the coalition members become disillusioned with the lack of common interest. The ideology that gives the members common sense holds the historic bloc together.

The second meaning associated with the historical bloc is simply an alliance between different classes. In Cox's (1983, p. 171) theory, the historic bloc concept extends from national to interstate and transnational levels. In the world order stage, hegemony is seen as the international consensus of the capitalist organization established around the bloc that has succeeded in coordinating the interests of allied or subordinate groups within the country and in other states. The hegemon forms a global historic bloc in line with the curiosity and common ideological perspective of the ruling classes of the state. Cox argues that countries with the power and capacity to be hegemons must have realized their own social and economic revolutions before they spread to the outside world (Cox,1983, p. 149).

Eventually, a historical bloc is generally a system of coalitions on which hegemony is based. The usage of the concept can be associated with both hegemon and counter-hegemon groups. First, the established hegemon strengthens its dominance by uniting a coalition of forces and different social classes. On the other hand, the counter-hegemon also needs to mobilize different classes around its axis to overthrow the existing hegemon. A historic bloc may include certain features as an alliance of different states. Thus, an absolute coalition of like-minded subaltern groups may not constitute a historic bloc. Second, history should be based on an egalitarian structure, and the decision-making authority should not be centralized. As such, the distance between the hegemon and the subaltern members should be narrow. In establishing and maintaining a historic bloc, heterogeneity is also a pre-condition. The alliance members should be almost worldwide in terms of diversity. In this sense, there should not be any discriminative exclusion of a state or a group of states. The last feature necessary for preserving hegemony is coherence among the members of the historic bloc. Thus, discord in the alliance will weaken the hegemony (Herkenrath, 2007, p. 190).

The Changing Nature of War and Hegemonic Double Wars

Gramsci thinks that power is necessarily met with resistance. Resistance occurs wherever there is a supreme power. Consistent with the condition and nature of the system, this resistance can be carried out through two strategies. The first is the war of position, and the other is the war of movement. Returning to the main question that Gramsci raised on the revolution in Russia and Western Europe, he concludes that if the hegemony is strong regarding civil society, the strategy to overthrow the hegemonic power will be the war of position. This strategy is a bottom-up view on the one hand and a pluralistic mechanism on the other. In this strategy, the resistance group targets the base of hegemony. In other words, for an established hegemony to lose its foothold, its normative foundations must be targeted by counter-hegemonic group(s) (Gramsci, 1991, pp. 85-86).

For Gramsci, the successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie depends on an adequate analysis of how this class holds power. Thus, hegemony becomes associated with power in forming the organized legitimate basis of political class domination. In this context, hegemony is defined as a form of ideological domination based on consent. This way of understanding leads to considering the concept of hegemony as a strategic necessity in economically developed Western capitalist societies by associating it with a war of position. This strategy is a prerequisite for the fall of an existing hegemony. War of position is a strategy directed to the ideology of hegemony. It can also be considered as an ideological struggle of anti-hegemonic groups aimed at absorbing others and integrating them by utilizing ideas. Thus, creating alternative ideologies and norms is another feature of the war of position. In this regard, the anti-hegemonic group, on the one hand, stand against the ruling norms; on the other, they provide parallel and alternative norms.

In the war of position, the anti-hegemonic power or group must have a pluralistic approach. This approach is achieved by uniting with other groups. The alliance of counter-hegemony with other groups will weaken the foundations of what Gramsci calls civil society. This coalition should adopt a tactic that can subvert the dominant ideology of the ruling system. In this sense, the creation of conflicting ideologies, parallel institutions, and alternative ideas can all take shape within the framework of a counter-hegemonic coalition (Gramsci, 1991, pp. 85-86; Cox & Sinclair, 1996, p. 129). Walter Adamson (1983, p.

10) defines Gramsci's concept of war of position as informal penetration when direct warfare is impossible. In this connection, considering the hegemonic situation of the West, this war is considered the best strategy.

However, the outcome of the war of position cannot be visible overnight. This war is a long-term process that takes place in the superstructure whereby values are attacked. As Gramsci points out:

> *A crisis occurs, sometimes lasting for decades. This exceptional duration means that incurable structural contradictions have revealed themselves (reached maturity) and that, despite this, the political forces which are struggling to conserve and defend the existing structure itself are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts...form the terrain of the 'conjunctural' and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organize (Gramsci, 1971, p. 178).*

Even though the war of position is a gradual process aimed at eradicating hegemonic ideology, its results are long-lasting. The reason is that the existing ideology loses its popularity and is replaced by the alternative one. The counter-hegemonic front's second strategy is called a war of maneuver or movement. Although this concept is rooted in Trotsky's theories, Gramsci recommends it in certain situations. A war of movement considered a full-scale revolution, occurs when the hegemon's civil forces are so weak that they cannot resist the revolution. This strategy shows the coercive aspect of Gramsci's main thesis. A war of movement is a catastrophe where military force is used to overthrow the hegemon (Sassoon, 2019). In a situation where the normative power or the civil society of the ruling class is weak, hegemony can be overthrown with a revolutionary spark by the counter-hegemonic power (Cox & Sinclair, 1996, p. 126). However, public protests against the liberal order, such as globalization, can also be counted among the war of movement (Ashraf, 2020).

At the national level, the most critical condition that Gramsci considers necessary for adopting this strategy is the weakness of civil society. When we extend this concept to the international arena, the weakness of international institutions traditionally supported by the hegemon is considered. Thus, when the international order based on civil institutions weakens and the hegemonic power relies more on coercion and persuasion, the strategy of war of movement will work. This analogy is rooted in Gramsci's analysis of the Bolshevik Revolution. From his point of view, the main reason the Bolsheviks were able to eradicate the Tsar's hegemony was the weakness of civil society and the strength of the Empire (Cox & Sinclair, 1996, pp. 127-128). The main point that can be extracted from this analysis is that the material power of the state by itself will not be helpful against the counter-hegemonic attack. The normative and civil power keeps the foundations of hegemony stable. In other words, having material power does not necessarily guarantee the stability of the hegemonic order.

Another characteristic that can be defined for the war of movement is the speed of its result. Just like military coups in the domestic sphere of countries, a war of movement transforms the hegemon's power with a single blow. War of movement, the last phase of a continuous war of position, determines the outcome instantly. Nevertheless, this result will not always lead to a positive transformation favouring the counter-hegemon power. According to Cox (1983, p. 128), a sudden attack on the hegemon's power can backfire. On the one hand, it shows the weakness of the counter-hegemony's power and on the other, it may also help the hegemon become stronger.

Although Gramsci and Cox consider these two strategies separate from each other, we can use both of them simultaneously. To overthrow the hegemon, Gramsci criticized Trotsky's preference for frontal attack and instead emphasized the war of position strategy. Joseph Femia (1981, pp. 206-207) believes that the war of position and war of movement are necessary for each other, and the war of position paves the way for the war of movement. In the same way, Giuseppe Fiori (1970, p. 245) states that cultural dominance must first be established for the counter-hegemonic class's political dominance. Buci-Glucksmann (1980, p. 281) and John Hoffman (1984, pp. 148-149) focus on the fact that full-scale war is unavoidable, undermining the normative foundations on which hegemony is based are also of importance.

Conclusion

The main issue that this research attempted to address was conceptualizing the fall of hegemony. Unlike the dominant understanding of the concept of hegemony in the traditional theories of International Relations, the neo-Gramscian approach, at least by now, is comprehensive. Realism and liberalism, as the two traditional schools of International Relations, are limited in explaining the fall of hegemony. While realism emphasizes the material aspect of power, particularly military power, as a pre-

condition for the rise and fall of hegemony, liberalism remains uncertain in determining whether economic power is of more importance or normative power. Even though Antonio Gramsci's thesis was about states' domestic politics, other scholars associated with critical theory, such as Robert Cox, transcended the Gramscian concept of hegemony to the international system.

In this paper, while the contribution of prominent scholars of neo-Gramscianism was utilized by referring to the original works of Gramsci, an attempt has been made to conceptualize how hegemony declines specifically. During the discussion, we revealed that hegemony includes primacy in structure and superstructure. It is also evident that a hegemonic system is not established until the superior military and normative power is willing to play the hegemonic role. According to neo-Gramscianism, the ruling hegemony declines when four conditions are met. First, its ideology will no longer be deemed legitimate by other actors, resulting in its lack of popularity. The second condition results in the loss of legitimacy and popularity of the hegemon's ideology. That is the unraveling of the hegemon's allies. Since ideology as a glue loses its quality to hold the bounds of a hegemon's alliance, allies prefer selfish goals over general interests. In the neo-Gramscian perspective, the alliance also denotes incorporating structure with the superstructure. The hegemony may lose its competency when an imbalance occurs in its attention to these two factors.

Also, hegemony is a necessity that contains the concept of domination in its essence and is embedded in the social practices of the uses of the environment. For this reason, the relationship with the hegemon is often alive without the need for force. Due to this, the units make up the environment voluntarily submit to the game instructions of the hegemon. So, hegemony may also fall when counter-hegemonic powers rise. These counter-hegemonic powers act against the hegemony through a war of movement or a war of position. From Gramsci's point of view, war of movement as a counter-hegemonic strategy refers to direct military and revolutionary actions. This strategy will be successful when the hegemon needs to be more vital regarding normative power or civil society. War of position, on the other hand, is a continuous and indirect struggle to overthrow the hegemon and its system. The war of position strategy will be effective when the hegemon's normative power or civil society is sturdy. As a result of these conditions, the system previously based on hegemony will no longer qualify for the conditions of the hegemonic system. While compiling the contributions of dominant theories of International Relations and highlighting their limitations in explaining the fall of hegemony, this research underscored that neo-Gramscianism is more competent in examining the concept of hegemony and its decline. With this work, further research on the concept of hegemony, particularly its decline, would develop this concept in the contemporary changing nature of the international system.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Hegemonya, kavramı tarih boyunca pek çok siyasi birim ve devletinin en temel özelliklerinden olmuştur ki bu durum Uluslararası İlişkilerde öne çıkan kavramlardan biri olmasını sağlamıştır. Bu açıdan kavram, bir devletin yahut devletler grubunun küresel sistemdeki hâkim konumunu içerir. Bu durum aynı zamanda farklı toplumsal güçler ve sınıflar arasında rekabet, egemen ve çatışma gibi durumları da ifade eder. Tıpki bireylerde olduğu gibi devletlerin de güç ve tahakküm ana konuları olması nedeniyle egemenlik ve irade öne çıkar. Bu durum da uluslararası ilişkilerde ve onun her parçasının bağlantısında

yatay bir gelişme yaratmaktadır. Ancak, uluslararsı sistemdeki her aktörün egemen devlet/aktör içinde eşit sınırlar kapsamında olması burada sistemin aktörlerine dayalı hegemonik üstünlük yaklaşımını da arka planda desteklemektedir. Dolayısıyla bir aktörün diğer aktörler üzerinde tahkküm kurması ve egemenolması anlamına gelen hegemonya, temelde sistemdeki diğer aktörler/aktörler ve rakipleri arasında korku uyandırarak sistemin sistemdeki en önemli aktörü haline gelmeyi amaçlamasını da sağlar. Bu durum esasında modern çağların bir getirisi değildir. Geçmiş dönemlerde örnekleri mevcuttur. Örneğin Antik Yunan şehir devletleri, Atina ve Sparta'nın yaklaşık 30 yıl süren hegemonya savaşlarına tanık olmuştur. Şehir devletleri döneminden itibaren var olan hegemonya arayışı, mevcut sistemin aktörlerinde de varlığını sürdürmüş ve uluslararası sisteme hâkim ve hegemonik olan aktör için mevcut yapı, onun düzenini oluşturmak yaratımını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Hegemonya denince akla gelen en önemi isim Antonio Gramsci'dir. Hegemonya, yapıya (askeri ve ekonomik güç) ve üst yapıya (siyasi ve ideolojik güç) dayanmaktadır. Gramsci'nin fikirleri bağlamında bu a, üstyapının zayıflığı, tarihsel bloğun üyeleri arasında parçalanmaya yol açmaktadır fakat süreç sadece içeriden gerçekleşemez sistem boyutu da mevzubahistir. Hegemonyanın ideolojisinin zayıflamasına dış etkenler özellikle karşı hegemonya tarafından yürütülen mevzi ve hareket savaşıdır. Karşı hegemonya, evrensel özü dışında, hegemonyanın özelliklerini taşıyan, yükselen bir güçtür ki bu Gramsci'ye (1991) göre bir hegemonik düzen üç aşamasında görülebilir. Gramsci'ye göre üç aşama: hegemonya öncesi, hegemonya ve hegemonik kriz şeklindedir. Hegemonya öncesi aşamada, hâkim konuma gelme arzusundaki toplumsal grubun liderlik konumunda olması önemlidir. Bunun nedeni Gramsci göre hükmetme gücü kazanmanın temel koşullarından biri olması ve daha sonra gücü kullandığında baskın hale gelmesidir (Gramsci, 1971, s. 57-68). Bu durum aynı zamanda bir hegemonik sistemi, maddi gücünün yanı sıra normatif gücünün de zayıflama eğiliminde olduğu bir kriz yaşadığı anda zayıflık ve yok olma ile karşı karşıya bırakır.

Diğer taraftan hegemonya tarihin doğasında var olmakla birlikte, küresel olarak düşünüldüğünde, büyük güçlerin hegemonyayı tekil bir güç olarak ne ölçüde kullandığı tartışmaya açıktır. Bu nedenle uluslararası ilişkilerin savaş-barış, düzen-anarşi ikilemlerini aynı anda içinde barındıran yapılar oluşturur. Gill'e göre (1990), hegemonik devlet, dünya düzeni kurarken bu durum, bir devletin diğer devletler üzerinde sömürüsü olarak görülmemelidir; herkese fayda sağlayan evrensel bir anlayışa sahip olmalı ya da en azından böyle görünmelidir (Gill, 1990, s. 47). Bunun nedeni evrensel normlara başvurulması ve hegemonyanın devamı noktasında devletin ortak çıkarlar adına hareket etme davranışı gösterebilmesidir. Bu durum özellikle hegemonyanın düşüş ve etki alanları noktasında sorgulamaları da beraberinde getirir.

Dolayısı ile hegemonya özünde hâkimiyet kavramını barındırmakla birlikte, öteki devletlerinya da sistemdeki aktörlerin kullanımların toplumsal pratiklere de etki eder. Bu nedenle de çevreyi oluşturan aktörler hegemona gönüllü olarak, ya da tahakküm bağlamında boyun eğerler. Bu durum modern dönemdeki büyük güçler için de aynıdır. Bunun nedeni hegemon bir statünün yükselişi, geçmişte olduğu gibi konjonktürdeki konumu ve avantajlarına bağlı olmasıdır. Bu durum hegemonya arayışları için küresel statükoyu tek bir süper güç tarafından küresel hâkimiyet kuracağı bir sistem ortaya koysa da her daim bir karşıt ya da rakip söz konusudur. Burada hegemonun düşüşü, hakimiyetini uzun bir süre boyunca sürdürmüş olan hakim bir gücün veya sistemin yok oluşu veya çöküşünü ifade eder. Bu noktada Marksist düşünür Antonio Gramsci'nin fikirlerinden yararlanan Neo-Gramscian bakış açıları, hegemonyanın düşüşünü anlamak için teorik bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Bu durum çalışmanın da esasında temel odaklandığı noktadır. Gramsci (1971/1991) hegemonyanın sadece bir baskı veya kuvvet meselesi olmadığını, aynı zamanda tabi grupların rızasını ve işbirliğini de içerdiğini savunarak, hegemonyanın, egemen sınıf için bir meşruiyet duygusu yaratan ve direnişi zorlaştıran kültürel ve ideolojik hâkimiyet kurma aracı oluşundan bahseder. Modern uluslararası sistemin güç atıflarının değiştiği bir süreçte hegemon yapısı ve gücünün değişip değişmediğinin sorgulanması da çalışmanın bir diğer sorunsalıdır. Bu açıdan teorik bir düşün çalışması olmakla birlikte çalışmada tarihsel ve kuramsal bir tartışmanın karşılaştırmalı yaklaşımını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu durum çalışmanın daha çok teorik bir tartışma olan Walt'un üçlü analiz düzeyine göre sistem tabanlı yaklaşımının da temel hareket noktasıdır. Makale, hem klasik hem de neoklasik Gramcici hegemonya okumalarıyla ilk aşamada bir karşılaştırma sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu, hegemonyanın düşüşüne ilişkin mevcut varsayımımızı ileri sürmek için teorik çerçevemizi, hegemonyanın eskisi kadar hayati bir yönü olmadığı noktasında taşımaktadır. Bu durum hegemonyanın düşüşünü ortaya koyan göstergelerin incelenmesini elzem kılmıştır.