GLOBAL (POST)STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

Viatcheslav Morozov
UNIVERSITY OF TARTU, ESTONIA

Introduction: what does structuralism mean?

In defining the scope of this chapter, I take Alexander Wendt’s classic 1987 article as the starting point. Introducing the agency–structure problem, Wendt pointed out ‘two truisms about social life which underlie most social scientific inquiry’: the first states that ‘human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors’, while the second highlights the fact that ‘society is made up of social relationships, which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors’ (1987: 337–338). Both are equally necessary to make sense of the social world, yet at the ontological level, according to Wendt, there are three possible answers to the question about the relationship between agents and structures: one can assume that either of them is ‘ontologically primitive’ or give them ‘equal and therefore irreducible ontological status’ (1987: 339). The approach that assumes agents are ontologically primitive is labelled ‘individualism’, while structuralism, in turn, postulates ontological primacy of structure. Wendt himself advocates giving equal status to agency and structure – an approach that he, following Nigel Thrift, among others, defines as ‘structurationist’ (Wendt 1987: 336, fn2).

Another important ontological distinction concerns the view of structure as such. Ferdinand de Saussure’s structural linguistics, as well as Claude Lévi-Strauss’s structural anthropology and Louis Althusser’s political theory viewed linguistic and social structure as fully constituted and sutured: at any given moment, the entire totality of social relationships can be described as a system of clearly defined differences which unambiguously define each position within the structure (such as the meaning of a word or an individual identity). On the contrary, authors such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault emphasise ambiguities always inherent in the structure, rendering it incomplete, subject to contradictory interpretations and thus prone to evolution and development (Coward and Ellis, 1977; Torfing, 1999). Poststructuralism would thus agree with the constructivist assertion that ‘structure is continually in process’ (Wendt, 1999: 186), but would still focus on continuous, structured patterns rather than on contingency and emergence (cf. Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 136).

As long as this volume is concerned with Russian foreign policy, which is an empirical phenomenon rather than a theoretical issue, I cannot possibly draw a clear line between structuralism and structurationism. Similarly, I do not consistently differentiate between structuralist and poststructuralist approaches. These divisions are of secondary importance here in comparison...
with the basic ontological claim shared by the broad structuralist paradigm: that individual action (by a person, a state or any other agent) is always broadly conditioned by the dominant social structures in which the individual is immersed. This also leads to an epistemological preference for explanations that interpret individual action as a manifestation of broader structural patterns.

In IR terms, a structural perspective implies a strong predisposition for ‘third image’, system-level explanations that see each state’s foreign policy as rooted in the structures of power that underlie international society as a whole. At the same time, reducing the structure to the balance of military power and polarity, as in realism and especially neorealism, is no longer the prevailing approach among structuralists. On the contrary, contemporary structuralism is characterised by ontological pluralism: structures can be seen as rooted in the economy or in discourse, sedimented in institutions or even imprinted in human bodies. This keeps open the channels for dialogue with the first- and second-image perspectives.

The key question of this review is about the contribution of structure-based explanations to our understanding of Russian foreign policy. As this chapter demonstrates, there are certain advantages in viewing structure as having an autonomous ontological status and offering a ‘thick’ theoretical description of how structural determination works in international politics, before engaging in the analysis of the Russian case. As with any others, structuralist accounts also have inherent limitations. In fact, the most promising way of using them seems to be by combining structuralist insights with those offered by institutionalist and constructivist approaches.

The Russian case: the general and the specific

An important advantage of the structuralist perspective pertains to the comparative dimension: in the final analysis, structure-based explanations of Russian foreign policy see it as less unique than agency-oriented accounts. This is because nation-level phenomena are seen as conditioned by deeper processes at the systemic level, bringing to the fore parallels between individual countries that are beyond reach for second-image accounts. Constructivists tell us that Europe has always played a central role for Russian national identity construction, but their theoretical tools are ill suited for going beyond this point. One has to look at the hierarchical structure of the international system to appreciate the fact that Russia’s obsession with Europe has to do with the hegemonic position occupied by Europe (or the West) in capitalist modernity.

Another important consideration is that structuralist perspectives tend to embrace a critical approach to social reality. The term ‘Critical Theory’ is usually associated with the Frankfurt School and its leading figures – Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas, among others. It is distinct from positivist science in that it refuses to separate itself from practice and sets the goal of revealing inequality and injustice behind the common-sense ‘truth’, thus making emancipation possible. Most critical theories go back to Karl Marx, who was the first to clearly expose the real inequality and exploitation beneath the façade of liberal capitalist society, where everyone appears to be equal in legal terms.

A comparison with neorealism, on the one hand, and constructivism, on the other, could be instructive (see also a comparative summary of different approaches in Table 2.1). The original assumption of neorealism is that international structure is defined by anarchy, the primary concern of each state is survival and thus it has to rely on self-help (Waltz, 1979). In the Russian case, this implies expansion as the main strategic choice: ‘expand where feasible until you come to a natural geographical frontier or the border of a strong state with which you can establish predictable relations. Take the territory now, we’ll figure out what to do with it later’ (Wohlforth, 2001: 228–229). Such an account is indeed plausible, yet presents only part of the
story: in fact, each expansion cycle has been followed by painful adaptation, which revealed Russia’s relative backwardness in terms of economic and institutional development. Strictly speaking, economic backwardness and domestic institutional deficiencies cannot be addressed from within the realist paradigm. Even less useful is it in explaining Russia’s permanent concern with status: Wohlforth’s (2001: 234) suggestion that Russian and Soviet leaders ‘used status as an index of power’ is not particularly helpful and certainly does not explain why status was invariably defined in terms of recognition by European states.

Constructivist studies of identity became one of the most popular approaches to Russian foreign policy in the post-Cold War era (see Feklyunina, this volume) specifically because of their ability to address the blind spots of neorealist theorising. ‘Thick’ constructivism can be classified as a type of structuralism, since it assumes that discursive structures are independent factors enabling and constraining social action. It is mostly due to this premise that constructivist research on Russian national identity has significantly enriched our understanding of the internal logic of Russia’s actions and of the sources of its domestic legitimacy. The key constructivist finding is that Europe figures as the key Other in the Russian national identity discourse, and as a result, Russia strives to achieve recognition as a European great power.

At the same time, constructivist discourse analysis takes national identity discourse at face value. This is justified if one takes discourse seriously (as one definitely should), but it only works within certain limitations. Most importantly, the constructivist methodological toolkit is of little help in looking at the reasons why certain dominant articulations of national identity have been so stable over several centuries (Neumann, 1996). Consequently, even when cross-country or cross-regional comparisons are made (e.g. Neumann, 1999; Nau and Ollapally, 2012), it is difficult to account for the underlying causes of similarities and differences.

Going beyond (or below) identity requires making a choice between two views on the ontological status of discourse. Theories that gravitate towards historical materialism, such as world-system theory (WST) and the majority of critical approaches in International Political Economy (IPE) adhere to the principle of determination in the first instance by the economy. This means that in the final analysis all social processes are defined by the relations of production, which are reflected, perhaps in an indirect way, in discourses, identities, ideologies and other ‘superstructural’, ‘ideational’ phenomena.

The other, and much more diverse, group has been influenced by ‘the linguistic turn’ in the social sciences (Toews, 1987), as well as by institutional theory, especially by its historically inspired constructivist versions. Some of the more theoretically explicit approaches, such as poststructuralist IR or postcolonial theory, foreground discourse as the primary layer of social reality. Others prefer to focus on norms and institutions as they emerge, solidify and evolve historically. On the one hand, this concerns Russia’s internal development and expansion as an empire; on the other, its interaction with and uneasy (semi-)membership in the Europe-dominated international society is in question. Even though authors working in this tradition agree that economy matters, they maintain that human action can never be reduced to any single factor alone: material production is only one element of a wider array of social reality, which is shaped by discourses, identities and institutions.

It would be premature to attempt a judgement on which of the two structuralist perspectives is more helpful in addressing Russian foreign policy. The reason is that there are hardly any studies that would go all the way from structural preconditions to foreign policy action, showing how the latter is grounded in the former. Rather, what we have at our disposal are individual pieces of the puzzle that are only beginning to fit together as a single whole. I will try to outline such a holistic perspective in the final part of this chapter, after I have reviewed the full range of the existing structuralist perspectives on Russia’s position in international society. In this review,
I will often have to include works which have only tangential significance for foreign policy analysis (FPA) as applied to Russia, and even mention certain literatures that have not focused on Russia at all. This is again due to the fact that more often than not, the task of this chapter is to identify promising directions in the structuralist analysis of Russia rather than to summarise completed research, most of which still lies ahead.

**Historical materialist approaches**

Foundations for a historical materialist understanding of Russia’s role in the world system were laid at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Marxist thinkers began to reconsider certain key elements of Karl Marx’s legacy.

It was the Russian Bolsheviks, however, who – largely out of political necessity – directed their attention to the causes of Russia’s ‘backwardness’ and its effects on institutions, ideologies and politics. Vladimir Lenin (1963 [1917]) was among the first to emphasise Russia’s role as part of the global colonial system and the embeddedness of its economy in the international division of labour.

The question acquired new urgency after 1917, as the new intellectual and political elites were debating the uncertain prospects of the world proletarian revolution and the sustainability of socialism in one country. A genuine conceptual breakthrough in making sense of Russia’s peripherality came with Leon Trotsky’s idea of uneven and combined development, which was formulated in the course of his polemics with a fellow Bolshevik, historian Mikhail Pokrovsky. Trotsky did not invent this concept from scratch, but he certainly deserves to be credited with authorship for the crystal-clear way in which he formulates it on the first pages of *History of the Russian Revolution* (2008 [1930]).

The starting point of Trotsky’s reasoning consists of two basic assumptions that had been widely accepted since Marx: first, capitalism is an ever expanding, universalising type of society which ‘realises the universality and permanence of man’s development’; second, different societies develop at unequal pace. Due to the globalising tendency of capitalism, backward societies face geopolitical competition on the part of the leaders: thus, ‘Russia was unable to settle in the forms of the East because she was continually having to adapt herself to military and economic pressure from the West’ (2008 [1930]: 4). Underdeveloped countries have the advantage of being able to imitate more advanced institutions and technologies (cf. Veblen, 1964 [1915]; Gerschenkron, 1962), but this imitation ‘not infrequently debases the achievements borrowed from outside in the process of adapting them to its own more primitive culture’ (Trotsky, 2008 [1930]: 4–5).

As a result of this chain of reasoning, the trivial fact of the existence of diversity is endowed with the power of a causal mechanism (Rosenberg, 2013) and a defining feature of the international (Rosenberg, 2006, 2016). In Trotsky’s own formulation:

> Under the whip of external necessity . . . backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives . . . the law of combined development – by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms.

*(Trotsky, 2008 [1930]: 5)*

The ‘uneven and combined development’ formula captures a good deal of what other Marxists of the time – most notably, Antonio Gramsci – were writing about peripheral politics and, as shown later, can be integrated as an organic element in the neo-Gramscian and poststructuralist analysis of
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hegemonies and counter-hegemonies (see also Morton, 2007). It helps to make sense of Russia’s
difference in terms of domestic institutions, including the resource economy and the recurrence
of authoritarianism. However, it does not directly translate into a theory of foreign policy.

In as much as a historical materialist understanding of Russian foreign policy is there, it
should be approached through the prism of Pokrovsky’s legacy. In his interpretation, the insti-
tutional growth of the Russian state and its foreign policy were driven not by tsars and their
bureaucracies, but primarily by the power of commercial capital, which was the main economic
force in the country prior to the rapid industrialisation of the late nineteenth to early twen-
tieth centuries. It ruthlessly exploited the pre-capitalist sector of the economy and sustained
the increasingly centralised absolutist state needed to put down the resistance of the masses
(Pokrovsky, 1910–1912, 1933). The interests of commercial capital were also beyond both
colonial expansion into the Eurasian periphery and the rivalry with other imperial powers, lead-
ing to repeated wars (see also Pokrovsky, 1923).

World-systems theory

The key starting point for the world-systemic perspective is international division of labour
(Wallerstein, 1974), and as far as Russia is concerned, this is certainly a valid conceptual frame.
As Boris Kagarlitsky (2008) has shown in his world-systemic (and Pokrovsky-inspired) over-
view of Russian history, the country was slotted into the emerging capitalist global order as
the producer of raw materials: furs, wax, hemp, flax, later (as of late eighteenth century) grain,
and in the twentieth century, oil and gas (see also Etkind, 2011: 72–90). As I have argued in
my own synopsis of Russia’s multifaceted dependency on the core, this pattern has never been

Pointing to dependency and inequality, however, is not sufficient if one’s goal is to analyse
foreign policy action. Even if Pokrovsky’s account might have provided the background for the
understanding of imperial foreign policy, it certainly cannot be applied to the study of the post-
Soviet period without a comprehensive revision. While the Russian empire engaged in colonial
expansion to get access to resources, it seems that Putin’s Russia spends its natural wealth on
purely geopolitical pursuits. Even more importantly, world-systems theory is ill-equipped to
move from structural preconditions to foreign policy steps. Its conceptual compass points in the
opposite direction: it can tell us how Russia’s peripherality affects its domestic developments
(Simon, 2009; Lane, 2013; Christensen, 2013; Robinson, 2013) and even trace the ‘develop-
mental trajectory’ of the Soviet Union from the systemic to the individual level and back
(Derluguian, 2005), but it can hardly say much about the reasons why Russia’s foreign policy
has gone through such dramatic fluctuations, often out of sync with the degree of integration
in the global economy.

A potential way forward could consist in trying to engage with these second-image explana-
tions, taking on board their findings and trying to re-interpret them from a systemic perspective.
There is a solid body of literature covering the impact of resource curse and dependent devel-
opment on Russian society and politics from an institutionalist viewpoint (for most prominent
examples, see Goldman, 2008; Hedlund, 2008; Jones Luong and Weinthal, 2010; Treisman,
2010; Gaddy and Ike, 2013). The debate on these issues is ongoing also in the Russian
scholarly community: apart from Kagarlitsky’s work cited earlier (see also Kagarlitsky 2014),
Simon Kordonsky’s (2007) depiction of Russia as a society of rent-seekers organised in estates
rather than classes has been rather influential. Other Russian thinkers who used to be close
to the world-systems perspective have recently moved towards a more conservative position:
thus, Mikhail Delyagin (2000) and Sergei Glazyev (2003) joined the nationalist Izborsk Club
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alongside such notorious figures like Alexander Prokhanov and Alexander Dugin. There are also studies that try to analyse Russian foreign policy in the context of resource economy and the impact of rents (Baev, 2008; Rutland, 2015; Dawisha, 2011), but these are few in number and far away from engaging with the ‘big’ themes at the systemic level.

In sum, we know how uneven and combined development made Russia a semi-peripheral country, we know what it means domestically, and we have started to explore how it affects its foreign policy. What is missing is a solid theory that would be able to integrate second– and third-image accounts.

Critical IPE

While it is not clear whether WST on its own can deal with these issues, there is no doubt that recent conceptual work in the field of critical IPE makes it well-prepared to tackle foreign policy as an object of study. The latter shares with the former the commitment to historical materialist ontology and to critical social enquiry.

At the same time, critical IPE does assign a significant degree of autonomy to the superstructural factors. The central role in elucidating the interplay between the material and the ideational is played by the concept of hegemony – a Gramscian term which in this line of thought is defined as ‘the way one social group influences other groups, making certain compromises with them in order to gain their consent for its leadership in society as a whole’, the result being that ‘particular, sectional interests are transformed and some concept of the general interest is promoted’ (Sassoon, 1982: 13–14). Hence, a key element of this notion is the wider idea of universalisation of a particular socio-economic and normative order: any social formation is based on a consensual acceptance of this order as embodying certain universal values – values which are, in fact, those of the dominant class. Hegemony is secured by means of controlling the discursive space (not just via the media, but also through education, cultural practices, organisation of urban spaces, etc.), while violent suppression of dissent happens only at the fringes of society (Forgacs, 1999; Morton, 2007: 92).

In his writings on Italian history, Gramsci explores the effects of peripherality, often drawing parallels with Russia. The added value of this approach consists in acknowledging that uneven and combined development also works at the political level: peripheral countries often feature conservative hegemonies in which both industrial and agricultural elites collude in order to control mass common sense, while the intellectual class is unable to formulate a national emancipatory agenda (Morton, 2007).

Another crucial recent contribution of critical IPE consists of the suggestion to view hegemony as a scalar phenomenon, while differentiating between dominant and nodal scales. As Bob Jessop (2006: 426) explains, ‘nodal scales are non-dominant overall but nonetheless serve as the primary loci for delivering certain activities in a given spatio-temporal order or matrix’. While the dominant logic of capitalist development is global, its concrete operation can be detected and examined at the national, regional and even local, micro-social level. The national scale, however, remains of nodal significance, serving as the main playing field for the dominant dynamic that can only be understood globally (see also Morton, 2007).

This opens a way towards examining the Russian case as determined not just by the dominant global capitalist hegemonic order, but also by the national hegemony, conceived as an autonomous socio-political space. Unfortunately, this approach has so far yielded very little empirical research on Russia, with foreign policy remaining virtually unexplored. Jeremy Lester’s (1995) book is very rich empirically and features an excellent theoretical introduction, but focuses exclusively on the inter-party struggle in the early post-Soviet period. The study by
Owen Worth (2005) claims to offer an IPE-based perspective, but in fact concentrates on the role played by the successive political leaders, from Lenin to Putin, while the holistic structural view is almost entirely lost.

Among the few studies that address contemporary Russia from the materialist neo-Gramscian perspective, Ted Hopf’s ‘commonsense constructivism’ (Hopf, 2010) stands out as particularly important. In an obvious departure from his earlier writings (esp. Hopf, 2002), which emphasise the cognitive dimension of identity and its discursive construction, Hopf is developing ‘a neo-Gramscian constructivism, one that . . . puts more emphasis on the material than conventional constructivists’ (Hopf, 2017: 203). Accordingly, he postulates a causal connection between mass common sense and the country’s peripherality: while the elites strive to bring the country closer to the West, ‘common sense is hindering any Russian movement from the semi-periphery to the core of Western hegemony’ and thus ‘has an effect on the distribution of power in the international system’ (Hopf, 2013: 348).

Unfortunately, postulating a strong equivalence between social classes and foreign policy choices does not explain the broad variety of strategies – from bandwagoning to counter-hegemonic balancing and even confrontation – chosen at different moments by semi-peripheral states, including Russia. Suggesting that common sense constantly evolves and drags the state along (Hopf, 2009) solves the problem only partially, since in this case one loses grip of the material causes of such evolution. It is not clear, for instance, why the Soviet reforms of the late 1980s produced a strong pro-Western hegemony, while the Soviet Union remained in the semi-periphery of the world system. In the subsequent decades, Russia hardly became more peripheral, but its politics gradually evolved in the conservative anti-Western direction.

To sum up, the material dimension of Russia’s subordinate place in the capitalist world order remains the single most important problem which is not given sufficient attention in the existing literature on the sources of its foreign policy. The reason for that is not the lack of awareness, but rather the unavailability of conceptual tools that would allow economic and other non-ideational factors to integrate into existing accounts. As far as historical materialist position is concerned, a lot of work remains to be done integrating systemic perspectives with second-image accounts of Russian foreign policy.

**Discursive and institutionalist approaches**

It is remarkable that one of the first major reappraisals of Russia’s post-Cold War standing, framed as a profound theoretical and historicist critique of modernity from a broadly poststructuralist perspective, was published in Moscow as far back as 1998 (Kapustin, 1998). Unfortunately, Boris Kapustin’s book is little known even within Russia, in spite of the fact that he teaches at Yale and continues to publish in both Russian and English. His critique, however, was mostly addressing theories and ideologies rather than social structures, and said nothing about foreign policy. In recent years, discourse-oriented research has been paying much more attention to the economic and social dimensions, while continuing to insist that discourses, norms and identities are at least as less important as ‘material’ factors.

**English School and its critical revisions**

When it comes to the approaches that foreground identities and discourses while remaining on the systemic level of analysis, the most relevant tradition seems to be the one established by the English School. The point of departure here is the work by Headley Bull and others on the expansion of international society. Technological progress led to both military (Howard, 1984)
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and economic (O’Brien, 1984) superiority of Europe, which motivated other states to learn from it by adopting the standard of ‘civilisation’ (Gong, 1984). Even when a non-Western state does challenge Europe’s pre-eminence, the aim is to redistribute benefits within the system rather than to undermine the system as such (Bull, 1984). The Russian case, as analysed by Adam Watson (1984), was a typical example of this trajectory: Russia modernised voluntarily, by its own sovereign decision, but under pressure from the expanding European international society. A similar view is offered by David Lake (2009) in his contractual theory of international hierarchy, where the latter is portrayed as a set of mutually beneficial arrangements between the stronger states safeguarding social order and the subordinates who obey the rules for the sake of predictability and security (see also Bially Mattern and Zarakol, 2016).

This image of a harmonious and one-dimensional international society is challenged by what I have suggested labelling ‘critical international society literature’ (see Morozov 2015: 47–51). It argues that European international society has expanded by means that were anything but peaceful and included the use of force and colonial oppression (Keene, 2002; Keal, 2003). The more powerful non-European states that more or less succeeded in achieving an insider status internalised both sets of norms and went on to engage in their own imperial pursuits (Keene, 2002: 97–119; Suzuki, 2009). Still, as Ayşe Zarakol makes clear, internalisation of the external norm leads to stigmatisation: having accepted Eurocentric hierarchies, the non-Western elites believed that ‘their countries were “behind” the West in every aspect’ (2011: 56). Another factor contributing to anxiety is the instability of peripheral statehood: while they integrate into the Eurocentric international society, many of the non-Western nations struggle to maintain domestic order (Ayoob, 1995, 2010).

Stigmatisation and anxiety can also be conceptualised as manifestations of ontological insecurity (Zarakol, 2010). In the most popular definition, offered by Jennifer Mitzen (who draws on Anthony Giddens), ontological security is rooted in the fundamental human need for cognitive certainty: humans are capable of overcoming the inherent uncertainty of their existence by establishing routines, which provide ‘confident expectations, even if probabilistic, about the means–ends relationships that govern [the individual’s] social life’ (Mitzen, 2006: 345; see also Steele, 2008). In the final analysis, ontological security requires a stable relational identity – a sense of continuous selfhood that is a necessary precondition for any social action.

Both approaches can, in effect, be applied to Russia. Moreover, there are obvious overlaps between Steele’s work, in particular, and the research by Anne Clunan (2009) and Andrey Tsygankov (2012) on the role of emotions, in particular self-esteem and honour, as shaping the background of Russian foreign policy–making. The more fundamental security concerns addressed by Ayoob, in their turn, come down to the fear of a total social breakdown, which has also been a persistent feature of the Russian discourse (Snetkov, 2012, 2015). As recently demonstrated by Andrej Krickovic (2016), internal vulnerabilities (real or perceived) of semi-peripheral countries can generate security dilemmas: Russia’s conflict with the West over ‘colour revolutions’ is the best illustration of this point. Finally, Iver Neumann and Vincent Pouliot (2011) trace Russia’s concern with status back to the early post-Mongol times, when Moscow tsars based their claims to a status equal to the Holy Roman Emperor on the principle of translation imperii from the Golden Horde, i.e. on being direct heirs to Mongol khans. Coupled with the Russian diplomatic habitus, also rooted in the Asian tradition, this created a condition of ‘hysteresis’ – a mismatch between embodied dispositions and the conditions obtaining in the field of European diplomacy. This, in Neumann and Pouliot’s view, explains Russia’s chronic inability ‘to play the field to one’s advantage, through understanding the rules of the game as well as the social dispositions of other actors’ (Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 137).
Few of these studies, however, can be classified as structuralist in the sense of reaching beyond the individual country-case: they continue the constructivist tradition of analysing foreign policy through the prism of identity and thus emphasise the unique over the general. Krickovic’s (2016) analysis is explicitly comparativist, but his view of international structure is relatively thin, which befits his largely neorealist theoretical framework.

As of now, Zarakol’s (2011) book remains the only work that has applied the critical international society perspective to Russia in a comparative context.

Apart from the dearth of literature covering the Russian case from the critical international society perspective, another potential issue with this approach is that its view of structure is rather shallow and does not offer any ontological ground for making sense of the inequalities inherent in the international system. To recap, the sole causal mechanism for the expansion of European international society that the English School can come up with is Western technological superiority. This explains why countries that managed to escape the grip of European colonialism still feel the pressure to modernise. What is not clear is why some nations have managed to integrate into the Western core and overcome stigmatisation (contemporary Japan could be a case in point, along with a number of countries from the European periphery), while others (Russia and Turkey would be prime examples, see Morozov and Rumelili, 2012) continue to struggle with stigma and ontological insecurity. It is also difficult to explain why they cannot modernise independently, importing top technologies while keeping a distance from the Western normative order (some would argue that China has managed to follow this path). Some answers are suggested by the Foucauldian literature on global governance, which is reviewed in the next section.

**Governmentality and Russia’s difference**

In recent decades, the legacy of Michel Foucault has been an important source of inspiration for poststructuralist IR (Kiersey and Stokes, 2011). Russia figures as a significant case in this literature: analysing its foreign policy through the prism of such concepts as governmentality and biopolitics can shed new light not just on the Russian puzzle, but also on the workings of international society as a whole.

Foucault came up with the concept of governmentality while trying to make sense of the qualitatively new form of power typical for the modern state. Its aim is not to ensure obedience, but to improve the conditions of the population. Therefore, ‘it is a question not of imposing law on men but of disposing [of] things’ (Foucault, 2000 [1978]: 211): the task is to make sure that society functions in a desired way without dictating to each and every person what to do at any given moment (Neumann and Sending, 2010: 8–11, 24–29).

The relevance of the concept of governmentality for the international, and for the Russian case in particular, consists in the fact that society organised around this form of power (with dominance and sovereignty still important but in the background) was never fully confined to individual states. Capitalist expansion results in all domains being ever more fully incorporated into a single world order: governmentality reaches down to the most intimate aspects of human life by taking the form of biopolitics and biopower, while international relations are increasingly conceived of in terms of ‘global governance’. As Alexander Astrov puts it, “police” begins as “international police”, premised on the recognition that the conditions of international order impact the conduct of both individuals and national economies’ (Astrov, 2011: 8). According to Foucault, the 1815 Congress of Vienna produced a shared understanding that:
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[t]here will be an imbalance if within the European equilibrium there is a state, not my state, with bad police. Consequently, one must see to it that there is good police, even in other states. European equilibrium begins to function as a sort of inter-state police or as right. European equilibrium gives the set of states the right to see to it that there is good police in each state.

*(quoted in Neumann and Sending, 2010: 70)*

According to Neumann, this was exactly the reason for Russia’s failure to be recognised as a great power. ‘As seen from Europe, a Great Power cannot have state/society relations that are too different from those that at any one given time dominate European politics’ (2008: 147). While it certainly had the material capability and the ambition to partake in the emerging system of great power management, the ways the country was governed were described by other Europeans, as early as in the eighteenth century, as uncivil and inappropriate. Peter I’s reforms did produce a police state modelled on its European counterparts, but for some reason Russia was not able to make the crucial next step in the liberal direction by allowing its civil society to govern itself. Neither was it ever able to catch up with the evolving norms of European diplomacy – most crucially, with the idea of great power as a guarantor of international treaties (Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 126–127). One of the most characteristic consequences of this failure was the eventual breakdown of the Vienna concert and Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War, but it can also be applied to other cases, such as the Russian-Georgian War of 2008 (Astrov, 2011) and the Crimean crisis.

Neumann’s argument certainly helps to understand the constitutive split within Russian national identity and the ensuing stigmatisation. It is not just due to the internalisation of an external normative order; this order remains external regardless of how Moscow behaves internationally, because recognition depends on the way the country is governed domestically. The difference between Russia and Western Europe is rooted in something more tangible than identity politics: it exists at the level of state institutions and civil society structures. It must therefore come as no surprise that when Russia felt that its own central place in the post-Soviet order was threatened by Western expansion (as in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014), the only type of action it could undertake was destabilising the order as such, ‘reconstituting the post-Soviet space as a state of exception’ (Prozorov, 2011: 41). There was simply no alternative order Russia could have attempted to promote.

There is a theoretical complication, which is missed by Neumann and Sending as they discuss the ambiguous interplay of republicanism and pastoral power in liberalism. As Astrov points out, liberal governmentality is:

> an activity distinguished by its ambition to conduct the conduct of individuals themselves recognized as capable of freely conducting their own activities. But as an immediate corollary of this, comes the requirement of a prior distinction, made by way of recognition: distinction between those who, being capable of free conduct themselves, can be governed in this manner and those who, because of their ignorance of or aversion to individual freedom, can only be governed in some other way.

As such, this distinction is nothing but a decision, a decision on the worth of life both as ‘being and well-being’; a decision which . . . is resolutely political in so far as it presupposes the whole and gives it concrete shape by introducing divisions within it.

*(2011: 15)*
This foundational decision implies a differentiation between governance and reign, analogous to the distinction between law and nomos in Carl Schmitt. It emphasises that before any specific act of governance, the order as such needs to be established, which includes not just an ethical-political decision on the criteria of ‘well-being’, but also creating the subjects of governance. ‘Anarchical sovereignty’, required for world governance, does not have any self-evident foundations: it results, at least to a degree, from a usurpation – such as the one that happened at the Congress of Vienna, where the future of Europe was decided upon by a narrow circle of self-appointed great powers (Astrov, 2011: 15–23). Yet this, of course, also implies that Russia’s ‘hierarchical inclusion’ in the European international society (Prozorov, 2009) was not inevitable. Even if Russia’s ‘deviance’ is not purely imagined, the choice of the criteria for belonging and exclusion is not in any way predetermined: this was a choice made by Europeans themselves, based on their own idea of a life worth living.

The value of sociologically inspired re-interpretations of the English School consists in adding unevenness to the otherwise flat ontology of international society. However, they tend to accept Russia being ‘a laggard learner and, in that sense, inferior’ (Neumann and Sending, 2010: 93) as a self-evident fact. The Bourdieu-based account developed by Neumann and Pouliot (2011) is not of much help here: they seem to argue, in effect, that the Mongol habitus has been imprinted on Russia’s diplomacy, and even embodied in Russian diplomats, as the marker of Russia’s non-Europeaness. Postulating a definitive role played by the type of governance and associated individual dispositions, as opposed to material capabilities, in determining the status of great power removes from consideration the question of economic development and material inequality (cf. Neumann, 2008: 149, note 15). Besides, as opposed to the critical international society literature reviewed earlier, the Foucauldian governance approach has so far not engaged in any meaningful dialogue with postcolonial theory and imperial history. This is an obvious gap, given the centrality of the language of civilisation for the way in which Russia’s otherness is being articulated by Western Europeans. Such a dialogue appears to be even more timely given the radical geographical refocusing and conceptual innovation that has taken place in postcolonial studies since the late 1990s.

Postcolonial theory, imperial history and internal colonisation

The idea of applying postcolonial theory to post-Soviet space, which sounded completely novel at the turn of the century (Moore, 2001) has by now inspired a wide and diverse body of scholarly work. For the most part, this research focuses on the nations colonised by Russia and the Soviet Union. While it insists on considering Russia’s colonial expansion as external and thus frames it as part of foreign policy agenda, it is interested more in the consequences than in the driving forces or the relationship with identity politics. As a result, its perspective on Russian imperialism is one-dimensional: neither the causes of such conduct nor its impact on the ‘domestic’ social space are believed to be relevant (cf. Kołodziejczyk and Sandru, 2012).

The concept of internal colonisation, elaborated by Alexander Etkind, as well as by Dirk Uffelmann, Ilya Kukulin and others, reverses this optic by looking at the entire state formation process as a colonial experience. In doing that, it draws (often implicitly) on the vast literature on empire and imperialism. As argued by Geoffrey Hosking (1997), the Russian state had to foster Europeanised imperial elites to defend and administer the enormous overland military empire, while internal development and cohesion were never a priority. Competition with other empires was a major factor here (Lieven, 2000). Internal colonisation literature takes the rift between the elites and the masses as the point of departure and looks at how the former undertook a civilising mission in relation to the latter (Etkind, 2002, 2011).
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What this approach has been able to demonstrate in a convincing way is how empire-building and internal colonisation of Russia shaped the institutional structure and conditioned the process of modernisation in imperial Russia (Hosking, 1997; Etkind, 2011; Kivelson and Suny 2016). This provides at least a partial explanation of Russia’s ‘laggardness’ in learning from the European experience, which, according to Neumann, cost it the recognition as a European great power. It turns out that the problem was not the lack of will or the weakness of civil society as such, but the fact that Russia (all of it!) was governed as a colony. Inter alia, this made indirect liberal governance impossible, since the Russian elites viewed ‘their own’ population in the same way as the Western Europeans viewed Russia as a whole: as not yet civilised, not ready for self-government, waiting to be enlightened from above (cf. Etkind et al., 2012: 15; Hosking 1997: 263–285; Morozov, 2015: 154–157).

Any international problematic, however, is still largely absent from this analysis. What is highlighted is the presence of external threat as a factor contributing to the militarisation of the Russian polity and to the establishment of the empire as such. Thus, it goes along with the research design of ‘second-image reversed’ (Gourevitch, 1978), i.e. of looking at the international factors to explain domestic outcomes. This tradition certainly can yield valuable insights in Russian developments, as demonstrated by a number of studies that, to a greater or lesser extent, share this approach (e.g. Tsygankov, 2014).

However, at least in the case of internal colonisation, the lack of attention to the international implies serious limitations and even conceptual weaknesses. The most critical one concerns the very basic premise of the theory – that Russian colonisation was ‘internal’. From a systemic viewpoint, this assertion is state-centric in its disregard for the fact that the dominant capitalist dynamic is global rather than national. As a result, it is unable to put Russian colonialism into a wider international context: instead, it focuses on how cultural differences within the country conditioned the development of the modern state. The conclusion is largely the same as the one reached by institutionalist accounts: Russian institutional landscape is deeply affected by rent capitalism, which distorts the perception of the national interest and at times leads to irresponsible foreign policy moves (Etkind, 2014).

In other words, while the conventional postcolonial critique, imperial history and internal colonisation all highlight crucially important aspects of how discourses, identities and social structures developed within Russian (and later Soviet) imperial domain, they are unable to account for the global context of these transformations, to see them as part of the large-scale systemic development in which Russia was a constituent part but also an actor. In order to create a coherent structuralist theory of peripheral politics, capable, inter alia, of shedding new light on Russian foreign policy, other structuralist perspectives must be brought into the picture. The concluding section will present my own subjective view of how this can be achieved.

Exploring the way forward: a subaltern empire facing Western hegemony

The overview of structuralist approaches to Russia’s role in the world provided in this chapter indicates that they offer valuable insight, but so far have been unable to come up with a coherent system-level account of Russia’s conduct. We know from historical materialist approaches that uneven and combined development left a characteristic mark on Russian capitalism, as well as on the role of the state and civil society. Foucauldian literature dwells on the latter point by making clear that Russia is governed in a way different from ‘the standard of civilisation’, which makes its long-term goal of getting accepted as a great power almost impossible to achieve. Similar to other latecomers to the Eurocentric international society, Russia ended up with a stigma and ontological insecurity. As this section demonstrates, a synthesis of these approaches could provide
an understanding of the specificity of Russian identity politics in the comparative context, as an
effect of the dominant dynamic of global capitalist modernity. This would amount to a holis-
tic perspective on Russian foreign policy, not in the sense of being able to directly explain all
observable empirical phenomena, but rather by placing these observations in a single, consistent
theoretical framework. The key advantage, as indicated in the introductory part of this chapter,
would be to de-emphasise Russia’s uniqueness and to discern general patterns in the patchwork
of isolated empirical facts.

**Russia as a subaltern empire**

This line from material semi-peripherality to discursive construction of identities and particular
policies seems easy to walk when it is presented as a single brief logical chain, but not a single
study has so far been able to take this way. There are pragmatic reasons for this, such as the need
to cover an enormously wide field, with each segment possessing its own ‘regime of truth’ and
distinct language. Yet more importantly, there is a leap that one has to make here from material-
ist ontology of WST and critical IPE to the idea of the primacy of discourse that underlies the
literature on governance and ontological security. Even while some approaches, such as English
School and mainstream constructivism, pretend to occupy the middle ground, in fact a more
adequate way of describing their position would be as straddling the material-ideational divide
without questioning the dualist ontology that underlies it.

Is there any hope, then, of developing a theory that would be able to unite, on a single onto-
logical foundation, these diverse structuralist interpretations of Russia’s international standing?
It must be clear that such a theory must abandon the material-ideational dualism and embrace a
monist ontology (cf. Jackson, 2008) that would view the material and the discursive as mutually
constitutive. In my view, this can be done by foregrounding the concept of hegemony, which
is equally prominent in historical materialist and discursive accounts of politics.

My starting point for such an endeavour would be Ernesto Laclau’s assertion that ‘the cat-
egory of representation does not simply reproduce, at a secondary level, a fullness preceding it
which could be grasped in a direct way but, on the contrary, representation is the absolutely
primary level in the construction of objectivity’ (2005: 115). There is no ‘determination in the
first instance by the economy’, simply because there are no first and second ‘instances’. Our
ways of handling material objects – indeed, even the knowledge of what it is that we handle,
the objectivity itself – is constituted by discourse to a no lesser extent than identities and norms.

This is a radical assertion, but if it is accepted, it enables one to see how uneven and comb-
ined development works to produce social orders of different scales, from the local to the
global. The mechanism at work here is hegemony, understood, following the suggestion by
critical IPE, as a scalar phenomenon. The dominant dynamic of capitalism never translates into
concrete social practices in a direct way: it must embed itself in identities and institutions mak-
ing sure that even the oppressed and the disadvantaged accept the social order and believe that
their subaltern existence is full of intrinsic value. This is possible only if they perceive their way
of life as part of a certain legitimate universal order – in other words, if their common sense is
hegemonised, if they identify themselves with values and norms that, in an objective analysis,
are not necessarily their own.

The national scale is crucial for the operation of any hegemony: it plays a nodal role in mod-
ern society, which makes the nation state the focal point of identification and decision-making.
Viewed in this light, Russia’s specificity results from the fact that in the course of internal colonisa-
tion the imperial elites simultaneously belonged to two hierarchically organised hegemonic spaces.
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On the one hand, they were on a civilising mission in their own country and identified with Europe against their ‘own’ people; on the other, they belonged to an emerging nation which, as a whole, was disparaged by other Europeans as not fully civilised. The Westernisers advocated reform intended to bring Russia closer to civilisation, but European indirect governance was ill suited to the realities of peripheral, resource-oriented capitalism. The Slavophiles and their successors, contrariwise, entreated their fellow countrymen to embrace Russia’s difference, but the geopolitical ‘whip of external necessity’ forced Russia to catch up and modernise.

In sum, the ‘subaltern empire’ formula seems to capture Russia’s position in the interstice between two hegemonic orders of unequal scale. It emphasises that Russian periphery was colonised on behalf of the capitalist core and continues to be exploited for the benefit of global elites. Russia engages in this pursuit as a sovereign polity, which means that conflicts with the hegemon are almost inevitable. However, it is next to impossible for Russia to take the upper hand in this counter-hegemonic struggle. The reason for this is not just the technological gaps, but also the fact that Russian society and its mass common sense have been part of the global hegemonic order for too long. As the adjective ‘subaltern’ suggests (cf. Spivak, 1988), Russian imperialism has not developed any independent language with which to speak about its mission. Even while Russia is trying to resist Western unilateralism, it has no other language to express its resentment than the language of European civilisation.

Empirical implications

As a result, ‘hierarchical inclusion’ in the Eurocentric international society remains the most fundamental background condition of Russian foreign policy, which can serve as a starting point for bringing the empirical research on Russian foreign policy to a new level. Russia’s development in modern times has been characterised by oscillation between attempts to internalise the global hegemonic order (by trying to follow the norms of ‘civilised’ foreign policy conduct, pursuing domestic reforms or both) and counter-hegemonic resentment. Imperial overstretch invariably resulted in geopolitical defeats, such as the Crimean War of 1853–56, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 or the collapse of the USSR. This typically had a short-term moderating effect on foreign policy ambitions; most importantly, however, these defeats resulted in far-reaching domestic reforms: the liberation of peasants and a profound modernisation of the legal order from 1861 on, the introduction of parliamentarianism in 1906 and the pro-market, democratic reforms of the 1990s.

Nevertheless, Europeanisation always ended in disappointment, since eventually it became clear that Russia remained a liminal, in-between member of European international society. Whenever it voiced a concern about what it perceived as Western unilateralism, it was dismissed as lacking full legitimacy, not because of what Russia said, but mostly because of what it was: a semi-civilised peripheral nation that still had a long way to go before becoming a member of the European family. Disappointment led to resentment and eventually to another round of geopolitical rivalry with the West, as soon as Russia felt strong enough to afford that.

If background structural conditions do not change, and barring a catastrophic scenario such as a nuclear conflict between Russia and NATO, it is very likely that the current round of frantic geopolitical expansion will expire to give way to yet another cycle of pro-European modernisation. This is all the more likely now that the Russian elites, including President Putin, explicitly acknowledge the existence of technological gaps between Russia and the more developed world, even as they claim it is possible to close those gaps by relying on the domestic resources and without initiating any major institutional reforms. It is hardly possible to estimate the timing of the next turnaround or how radical it might be, but given the depth of the
structural crisis in the Russian economy, it might happen earlier than most people expect. The value of the structuralist approach consists in being able to explicitly predict such an outcome by not just extrapolating the previous developments but by analysing their driving forces and thus suggesting that second-image approaches be employed in the search for symptoms of a possible change of course.

The characteristic oscillation in Russian foreign policy discourse and practice has been one of the persistent themes in the constructivist analysis of Russian foreign policy. Approaching it from a structuralist perspective allows one to assess the discursive structure of national identity as conditioned by the interplay of hegemonies and counter-hegemonies at the systemic level, which in itself is rooted in the uneven and combined development of globalising capitalism. Viewed in this light, such counter-hegemonic projects as the BRICS must be approached as based not just on the shallow anti-Westernism shared by its participants, but on a more profound similarity between their positions in the global system of production, including production of meaning (cf. Morozov, 2013b: 22–25). This, however, does not necessarily lead to any optimistic forecasts: as long as counter-hegemonic projects remain framed in the language of Western hegemony (Morozov, 2013a), they do little more than create more comfortable niches for the semi-peripheral states in the existing global order. Hence, a key indicator of potential change regarding the global role of the BRICS would not be the economic ascent of China and India, but the emergence of an alternative hegemonic discourse, whose terms of reference would be located outside the Eurocentric hegemonic field of liberal democracy.

Another characteristic illustration of subaltern imperialist foreign policy practised by Russia is Eurasian integration. This project obviously relies on the legacy of Russian and Soviet colonialism (such as the division of labour, shared cultural codes and a lot more). At the same time, it is driven by the desire to construct an independent ‘pole’ of the future multipolar world, which would ensure Moscow’s leading position in world affairs. And yet, Eurasian Economic Union continues to be modelled on, and justified by, references to the experience of Western European integration, thus demonstrating the lack of symbolic resources at Russia’s disposal and its de facto belonging to the European hegemonic space (Kazharski 2017).

Nevertheless, even though the structural forces moulding the Russian state into a subaltern empire appear to be overwhelming, international politics is never fully determined by structure alone. Early Soviet history provides a good illustration: while the 1917 revolution certainly resulted from imperial overstretch (the exhaustion from the war effort), the resulting political transformation did not fit the usual pattern. The USSR remained dependent on Western know-how and technology, but created a society based on a powerful universalist ideology, which for a while offered a convincing alternative to Western capitalism. The Soviet system eventually could not compete against liberal market democracy, but it was a major factor in global development throughout the twentieth century and left a lasting impact on Russian national identity.

The discursive landscape of contemporary Russia features no identity project even remotely similar in scale to the Soviet one. The Soviet nostalgia is strong but backward-looking, the communist idea is discredited, while the attempts to promote ‘traditional values’ are completely sterile in their continued orientation towards the West. The ideologues of the ‘spiritual bonds’ are desperately trying to prove that ‘Russia is not Europe’, which in fact demonstrates the persistent centrality of Europe for Russian national identity (Morozov, 2015). A structuralist third image approach to Russia’s international role suggests that similar discourses are to be found elsewhere in semi-peripheral countries. Looking through this prism, it is indeed easy to see strong and revealing parallels between Russian traditionalism and nativist discourses in, for instance, South
America. In both cases, opposition to Western hegemony is presented as based on some genuine indigenous knowledge, but the existence of such knowledge seems to be an illusion (Morozov and Pavlova, 2016).

The fact that the promise of nativist discourses seems to be empty at the moment, however, does not exclude the possibility of new alternatives emerging from the semi-periphery in the future. The current moment is experienced by many as one of crisis, and crises sometimes get resolved through revolutionary breakthroughs. As in the times of Lenin and Trotsky, Russia’s predicament as a semi-peripheral, subaltern empire never ceases to generate potential revolutionary situations, and Russia is by far not the only country bearing a grudge against global inequality. Discourse analysis, ethnographic research and other tools developed by constructivist social science and successfully applied in IR must be used to examine the concrete societal situations that generate social tension and might therefore constitute future ‘evental sites’.

Besides, the structure of global hegemony is changing: as economic power is increasingly concentrated in the East, the symbolic power is bound to follow suit. This is acknowledged by nearly everyone in Russia and elsewhere, but it has not so far affected the structural preconditions for Russian foreign policy. The attempts to construct a ‘pivot to Asia’ remain largely formal, especially when it comes to securing Russia’s sovereign standing as a great power or to overcome the Eurocentrism of identity politics (Lo, 2015: 132–164). However, monitoring these developments in the future is going to be an extremely revealing exercise. In particular, it is important to explore to what extent Russia becomes dependent on China as an economic superpower and how this material dependency plays out in identity politics.

Finally, the structuralist approach can offer a new perspective on the state of the debate in Russian IR scholarship. It can be demonstrated that Russian scholars use the critique of Eurocentrism, advanced by decolonial IR, in their own analysis of global affairs (Makarychev and Morozov, 2013). It would be interesting to see whether and how this positioning reflects Russia’s subaltern place in the global hierarchy and which specific additional insights or blind spots it might create in the way Russian academic community contemplates world politics.

Conclusion: promises and limitations of structuralism

It must be clear by now that the main limitation of the structuralist approach, if the latter is defined as a system-level, third-image explanatory framework, is that it can hardly serve as a tool of concrete FPA. The reason for this is that it concentrates on the long-term, deep background factors that shape the conditions for policy action, rather than on everyday decision-making. However, this limitation can be converted into a strength if system-level structuralist and post-structuralist analysis is combined with second-image theories. Both constructivist identity-based accounts and institutionalist FPA could benefit from such a synergy.

On a related note, structuralism can hardly be expected to come up with falsifiable hypotheses that could be tested in empirical research. Its key contribution to the debate is related not that much to explaining specific events, but to understanding their conditions of possibility (cf. Hollis and Smith, 1990). That being said, it does not mean that structuralist approaches completely fail on the Popperian standard: they can be tested indirectly as long as they are used in defining background assumptions for concrete FPA. If and when those assumptions are found to be inadequate in the course of empirical research, this would imply the need to revise the basic premises of the structuralist image.

Another important promise held out by structuralist approaches is opening a much wider agenda for comparative research. Unlike identities and institutions, which are unique
and specific to each historical context, underlying structures are shared by many countries occupying similar niches in the capitalist world-system. That being the case, we still know very little about the extent to which these structural positions are indeed identical or similar, or how they translate into discourses, identities and policies in each specific context.

As this chapter has demonstrated, serious structure-oriented research on Russian foreign policy is still largely a task for the future. There are studies which look at how the international and the domestic are related in the globalised capitalist environment, and these studies offer valuable models that can be applied and developed when looking at the Russian case (see Table 2.1). As for the specific theme of this Handbook, however, the chapter on structuralism is yet to be written.

**Table 2.1 A comparative summary of theoretical perspectives on Russia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Key focus</th>
<th>Key ontological category</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neorealism</td>
<td>International structure</td>
<td>Power, primarily military power</td>
<td>Security-driven expansion as the most typical model of Russian foreign policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivism</td>
<td>National identity</td>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Europe is the key Other in Russian identity discourse; Russia strives to achieve recognition as a European great power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical materialism</td>
<td>World-systems theory</td>
<td>Economic power</td>
<td>Russia is a semi-peripheral country and a rent economy; rents provide resources for expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical IPE</td>
<td>Hierarchically organised hegemonic orders</td>
<td>Economic and discursive power</td>
<td>Russia’s material position is reflected in the discursive field, including foreign policy discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discursive and institutionalist approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical English School</td>
<td>International society</td>
<td>International institutions</td>
<td>Russia strives to join international society and to maximise benefits from membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical international society literature</td>
<td>International society</td>
<td>Institutional hierarchies and resulting insecurities</td>
<td>Russia is a stigmatised player, which produces ontological insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>International society</td>
<td>Governmentality as specifically modern form of power, embodied in institutions</td>
<td>The othering of Russia is due to the fact that it is not governed in a way befitting a European country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial history and internal colonisation</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Institutions and discourses</td>
<td>Russian national identity and domestic institutions are a product of imperial development and internal colonisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poststructuralist theory of hegemony</td>
<td>The interplay between the international and the domestic</td>
<td>Hegemony (as a scalar phenomenon)</td>
<td>Russia as a subaltern empire facing Western hegemony; global hierarchies reflected in the domestic institutional landscape and discursive field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Glossary

**Uneven and combined development** – a law of capitalist development whereby the uneven development of capitalism in different countries and regions leads to the emergence in peripheral, ‘backward’ countries of peculiar, ‘combined’ institutional orders, which create specific social and political problems not experienced by the more advanced nations.

**Hegemony**, in the neo-Gramscian definition adopted by poststructuralists, is a form of rule based on the acceptance by a community (such as a nation) of a particular discursive-political order as consistent with the universal ideal. For example, the rule of a particular party or group is considered as legitimate because it results from a democratic procedure and thus is consistent with the universal ideal of democracy. The concept of hegemony emphasises the importance of the discursive, ideological dimension of power, as opposed to coercion.

Note

1 Another consideration is that Neumann and Pouliot’s position their theory as agency-oriented, although their treatment of dispositions as embodied in behavioural patterns is certainly more structuralist than they are ready to admit.

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Global (post)structural conditions


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