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TITLE: Using Hegemony as a sociological tool for the analysis of ideology within popular culture

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This paper attempts to create a sociological tool for analysing the ability of popular cultural texts to reproduce, critique, challenge and contest dominant ideology. While some background in Antonio Gramsci's hegemony is needed, this paper focuses on the ideology that supports the rule of a dominant class. Adding the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, this paper explores how ideology can be broken down into the constituted nodal points of ideological components (including the relationships of articulation between the points themselves, the societal events and social groups). The analysed ideology is then able to be compared to the ideological content of popular cultural products from the same time and place of the hegemony. Taking into account the changes in articulation between ideological components over time and therefore change to the ideology itself means that the comparison to the popular culture product can be more nuanced, exploring in more detail the ability of popular culture to reproduce, critique, challenge and contest dominant ideology. American society from 2001-2008, the ideology of the American Dream and superhero comic books will be used to demonstrate this process.