

Definition

Netwystem

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Comprehensive Definition of Netwystem Theory

Conceptual Foundation

A **netwystem** represents a theoretical-methodological framework pioneered by [S.A. Hamed Hosseini](#) that transcends the traditional dichotomy between network and system theories while preserving their complementary strengths. *This integrative approach simultaneously captures the fluid, heterogeneous connections emphasized in network analysis and the emergent properties, patterns, and transformative dynamics central to systems thinking.*

Core Principles

1. Dynamic Boundary Formation

Unlike traditional systems theory that posits self-enclosed, autopoietic totalities with predetermined boundaries, netwystems conceptualize boundaries as permeable, contested, and continuously negotiated through social practices and discourse. Yet unlike pure network approaches, netwystems recognize that *temporary stabilizations and patterns do emerge*, creating "bounded openness" that enables both structure and transformation.

2. Distributed Agency with Emergent Properties

Netwystems integrate network theory's emphasis on distributed agency across heterogeneous actors while acknowledging system theory's insights into emergent collective properties that transcend individual nodes. This dual focus facilitates analysis of how decentralized actions can produce coherent systemic effects without necessitating centralized coordination or control.

3. *Transversalism and Pluriversality*

At the ‘normative’ core of the netwystem framework lies Hosseini’s concept of **transversalism**—the capacity to bridge diverse movements, discourses, and practices without homogenizing their differences or imposing hierarchical structures. This fosters **pluriversality**, where multiple worldviews coexist and cross-fertilize within a shared ecological and social justice framework, challenging Eurocentric and capitalist hegemonies.

4. *Commonist Value Creation*

Netwystems also corresponds with Hosseini’s **commonist value theory**, which prioritizes collective value creation oriented towards sustaining a *commons-based status of well-living* over capitalist extraction. This involves designing participatory platforms and “open data/knowledge/information commons” that democratize knowledge production and resource governance, enabling communities to self-organize according to principles of sustainability and equity.

5. *Complexity and Accommodative Consciousness*

The netwystem approach embraces complexity *without reducing it to either purely structural determinism or chaotic relativism*. It fosters what Hosseini terms “**accommodative consciousness**” and “**critical open-mindedness**”—cognitive capacities that allow actors to navigate complexity strategically while maintaining ethical commitments to justice and transformation.

Methodological Innovation

Hosseini’s netwystem framework combines diverse methodological approaches:

- **Social Network Analysis (SNA)** to map relational structures
- **Discourse Network Analysis (DNA)** to track ideological formations
- **Big Social Data Analytics** to process large-scale social phenomena
- **Mixed Methods Integration** incorporating Q methodology, structural equation modeling, and qualitative approaches

This methodological pluralism enables comprehensive analysis of complex social phenomena across multiple scales—from local initiatives to global movements.

Implications for Social and Ecological Theory

1. *Post-dualistic Analysis*

The netwystem framework transcends traditional theoretical binaries:

- Structure/agency
- Local/global
- Micro/macro
- Human/nature
- Theory/practice

Instead, it focuses on their interpenetration and co-constitution within complex socio-ecological systems.

2. *Transformative Politics*

By identifying leverage points for systemic change while mapping networked interactions, the netwystem approach enables more effective strategies for post-capitalist transformation and a more powerful approach to comprehending the ways through which capital (mal)functions. It reveals how seemingly disconnected initiatives (e.g., degrowth movements, solidarity economies, eco-feminism, indigenous resistance) can form potent coalitions without sacrificing their distinctive identities. See: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14747731.2024.2433835>

3. *Ecological Integration*

The netwystem concept provides theoretical tools for analyzing human-nature relationships as co-evolving networks with emergent systemic properties. This overcomes both anthropocentric approaches that separate humans from nature and deterministic frameworks that overlook human agency in ecological systems.

4. *Knowledge Democracy*

By emphasizing open data commons and participatory research methodologies, the netwystem approach democratizes knowledge and praxis production—allowing communities to generate, analyze, and apply

their own knowledges rather than relying on external experts. This challenges epistemic hierarchies while creating more responsive and contextually appropriate solutions.

5. Multi-scalar Politics

Netwystems enable analysis of how transformative initiatives operate simultaneously across multiple scales—from hyperlocal to global—without privileging any single level as the primary site of change. This multi-scalar perspective is particularly crucial for addressing contemporary challenges like climate change that manifest across different temporal and spatial dimensions.

6. Integration with Compartmentality and Commonist Tendency

The netwystem framework provides a theoretical architecture that directly addresses the tension between what Hosseini terms **compartmentality and commonist tendency**. Compartmentality—the systemic fragmentation of life domains (ecological, economic, political, and cultural) into rigidly isolated categories—represents a pathology of modern capitalist societies that obscures interconnections and hinders transformative action. This fragmentation serves to maintain capitalist growth imperatives by isolating ecological concerns from economic decisions, political governance from community needs, and so forth.

The netwystem approach, by contrast, operationalizes the **commonist tendency**—the counteracting impulse that acknowledges domain interdependence and works to overcome compartmentalization. As a meta-theoretical framework, netwystems provide analytical tools to identify how compartmentality manifests in social initiatives while simultaneously revealing pathways to strengthen commonist tendencies. Through methods like meta-mapping surveys and social network analysis, netwystems illuminate the organizational and social determinants that either reinforce compartmentality or nurture commonist potentials within pluriversal politics.

By integrating network insights (which can reveal hidden connections across seemingly separate domains) with systems thinking (which identifies emergent patterns across these connections), netwystems enable both the diagnosis of compartmentality's pathological effects and the cultivation of

commonist alternatives. This dual capacity makes netwystems particularly valuable for transformative social change that seeks to reconnect what modernist ontologies have artificially separated.

Synthetic Definition

A **netwystem** is a dynamic, interconnected configuration of actors, discourses, and institutions analyzed as both a network of heterogeneous relations and a complex adaptive system with emergent properties. This hybrid conceptual framework combines empirical mapping of relational ties with normative critiques of power structures, identifying pathways for socio-ecological transformation. Grounded in transversalism and commonist principles, it helps better explore decentralized collaboration, ecological resilience, and equitable value distribution while fostering pluriversality—the coexistence of diverse worldviews within shared ethical commitments to justice and sustainability.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.