

In this thesis, the author deals with the World-system theory by I. Wallerstein et al. In the first part, the theories are reconstructed and systematized. The circumstances of the development of the theories are analyzed and the World-system theory is shown from the perspective of its structure and dynamics. The author analyzes the development of the World-system at the time of its existence and interprets the position of the particular regions in it. The World-system perspective is employed to interpret such trends as the rise of Western Europe and North America, the downfall and the following rise of Eastern Asia, the stagnation of South America and the downfall of Africa. The author also describes the dynamics and the structure of today's world from the World-system theory point of view. In the second part, the author focuses on the critical interpretation and tries to put the World-system theories in the context of other sociological theories. He also compares the World-system theory with Marxism and the systemic approach. The most frequent critical objections to the World-system theories are systemized. Besides interpreting the past and the present, the theories aim to predict the future development of the human society, which is criticized here. By showing other theories inspired by Wallerstein, the author argues that the World-system perspective is more than a theory - it is rather a paradigm consisting of many, often very contradictory, theories. The author comes to the conclusion that the World-system theory is an approach useful for interpreting rather the past than the present. Its ambition to predict the future is considered to be very problematic.