

Quiz 1

1. Watch the movie '*Agora*' (2009). A) Explain the difference in 'paradigms' according to the movie and its impacts on the society. B) Analyze the phenomena in the movie with some paradigm frameworks in social sciences. (10 points)
 - a) Explain the difference in 'paradigms' according to the movie and its impacts on the society.

Paradigm is a way of framing our knowledge. It shapes our belief system and perception toward people, situations, and so on. Individuals have their own paradigm or different ways of framing what they know, what they can know, and how they can know, leading to difference in paradigms. Even in the movie '*Agora*', difference in paradigms also exists.

From my perspective, there are 2 main different groups of people representing 2 different paradigms in the movie '*Agora*' (for other groups of people, I will mention on part B). The first group is superstitious people (Christians and part of Pagans). For Christians, they believe in Jesus. Everything, every situation, and every action happens as gift or command of god. God is the reason behind everything. For Pagans, they believe in Greek and Roman gods. Both belief systems of Christians and Pagans were shape by invisible or unexplainable things (gods). For the case of Christians, in the movie, it is very inappropriate for women to study, interest in politics or even play important roles as men. Those prohibitions are sound because they are god's words.

The second group is science people (another part of pagans). This group of people (especially Hypatia) seek for truth and knowledge based on science and astronomy. Inductive logic is required in order to form paradigm. They observe what's going on, then, analyze and draw conclusion from the data. What they believe is what can be proved.

There is no right or wrong in every single paradigm, but difference in paradigms will surely have impacts on the society both positive and negative impact. For the positive impacts, I perceive the word 'difference' as 'newness', hence, difference in paradigms will lead to invention and discovery of innovations, truths, theories, etc. The final result is 'prosperity'. For example, the way Hypatia set hypotheses to the question about astronomy leads to many facts and theories. The way Christians believe in god's word lead to caring and sharing for other people (the scene that Davus shares all his breads to poorer people).

For negative impact on the society, I clearly see that difference believes leads to conflict. From the movie, Pagans think that Christians insult their Greek and Roman gods, so, they try to drive out or kill Christians leading to kind of religious war.

- b) Analyze the phenomena in the movie with some paradigm frameworks in social sciences. (Hypatia, Davus, Orestes, some scenes)

In order to use paradigm frameworks for clearly analyzing the phenomena in the movie, I will pick some characters and scenes.

Hypatia of Alexandria, the daughter of Theon (curator of library), is a teacher who believes in philosophy, science, and truths. From my point of view, positivism paradigm can be used to explain her thought, since she interests in mathematics, science, and astronomy and try to figure how our planet, moon, sun, and other stars move. In term of ontology, truth (about astronomy, mathematics and science) is real and she use scientific and mathematics measurements and experiment to examine. However, I also think that pragmatism paradigm can be used to explain too. At that time of the movie, there is no technology advancement, so the real truth about astronomy had not been discovered yet. Hypatia sets hypothesis and use mathematics and science to solve her question (how world moves, is world the center of the universe, etc.).

Davus, Theon's slave, has social constructionism paradigm shaping his belief system. In social constructionism, the truth depends on individuals and has to be interpreted. Part of him loves learning mathematics, science, and astronomy. He also proposes the theory that the earth is the center of the universe and other stars moves around the earth and around themselves. Although he is quite a positivism kind of man, another part of him is Christian. After Davus exposes to Christians, he prays to something at night for Hypatia not to accept Orestes's love. After Hypatia rejects Orestes's love, Davus believe more in god's words (being a Christian). Davus' action shows that whether god's words are reliable, if they take side on him, they are real (truths).

The Christians are the group of people who have critical paradigm. Real is influenced by the historical truth, outside forces, or material subjectivity. For Christians, god's words shape their believes system. They even think that why stars are above them or not falling to the earth is because of god's plan.

The conflict between Pagans and Christians is because of difference in paradigms. Some Pagans have positivism paradigm and Christians have critical paradigm. Difference in paradigm leads to different thoughts, lifestyles, and how people perceive the world. People have to accept and live peacefully with difference. If not, conflicts will surely happen.

2. Read Szirmai (2015) [chapter 1] and watch the movie '*Where to invade next*' (2015).
 - A) Explain how the discourse of 'development' had been constructed differently in different societies and what the common definition of 'development' (in your own interpretation) should be.
 - B) Explain which hypothesis [from the class] could explain best the determinant of development level in each society.
 - C) Discuss do you believe that development is conceivable without economic growth? (10 points)

The word 'Development' is perceived differently in different societies. Each society has its own culture, people, social structure, specialization, resource endowment, propose of development. It may be constructed to fulfill what the society lacks of, for example, the society that citizens have no freedom may perceive 'development' as to have more freedom. The society that citizens are very poor and have nothing to eat may perceive 'development' as to get rid of poverty and famine. Furthermore, development may be constructed to be better off something that society already has. The society which is wealthy may enhance quality of human capital in terms of social welfare and education to increase achieve higher productivity and get wealthier.

In my own interpretation, development should be both ways to fulfill what we lack of and ways to make the society more prosperous. The development has to be focused on many aspects such as poverty, health, education, environment, economy, equality, and freedom.

In order to determine level of development in each society, each society have to meet sustainable development goals. Each goal of SDGs represents what society should achieve for development in many aspects for example, no poverty, no hunger, good health, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, clean energy, good jobs and economic growth, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, and so on. Suitable measurements are needed to measure whether the society meet each goal. To illustrate, we can use per capita income to measure level of poverty in of that society (whether each society is low income, lower-middle income, higher-middle income, or high-income country). The culture hypothesis can also be used as a determination of development level (has impact in how economy develops)

Economic growth provides resources especially money (wealth) which can be invested further in development in terms of social welfare, education system, healthcare system, income distribution, environmental sustainability, and so on. From the movie '*Where to invade next*', European countries which have high economic growth invest a lot in social development. Italy allows workers to leave for holidays very often (they still get paid) making happy workforces and high productivity. Schools in France provide nutritious foods for students. In Finland and

Slovenia, all schools have the same standard (high quality education system), parents can send their children to the nearest school and do not have to worry about school's quality. Moreover, there is no tuition fee and homework. In Germany, workers work only 36 hours a week and companies provide healthy working environments. Portuguese officers do not arrest people who use drugs in order to reduce drug addiction. The government also provides free healthcare system because its citizens have rights to access to healthcare system. In Norway, prisons have just few prisoners. Those prisoners are treated very well in good facility prisons. The key concept is that the state wants to rehabilitate prisoners' mind and instill good things to them, so the state only takes away their freedom and does not punish them. In Iceland, women play an important role in politics, companies, and so on.

On the other hand, some countries with high economic growth do not invest in development for example United States. Workers work a lot harder comparing to those European countries. Schools do not provide nutritious foods. There are severe punishments for people who violate the law. Another example is China, a country with very high productivity and economic growth. Workers work extremely hard in unfavorable working environment, get paid very low, and barely have time to rest.

On the bright side, without economic growth, development is conceivable. Tunisia, a country in North Africa, is a good example. Tunisia is an upper-middle income country and does not have that high economic growth. It potentially invests large amount in development especially in human capital. An abortion is legal and free because women have a right to decide. There is very high gender equality. Government promotes moral and democracy. The state does not interfere human rights.

3. Watch the documentary film, '*American Factory*' (2019). Explain the debates between Adam Smith and Karl Marx portrayed in the movie regarding these concepts of 1) division of labors 2) labor union and 3) technological development. (10 points)

The GM car manufacturing company located in Ohio was closed due to the financial and economic crisis. All workers were automatically unemployed. They lost their jobs, house, and car. They barely had money. The company has been replaced by Fuyao, a giant Chinese glass manufacturing company. Labors who have been laid off have hope again. Fuyao pays \$14 per hour as a wage which is much lower than GM company. Moreover, labors have to work 8 hours a day in a very high temperature and unsafe factory. Even the company originated in China which is a socialist country, I perceive that owner of Fuyao is a capitalist. He keeps accumulate labors in order to gain more profit by surplus from what they sell and what they pay for labors. Division of labors help the company's owner gain more income. Each labor is assigned to work in different glass manufacturing processes, in other words, each labor specializes in the job that he/she is assigned to do. Specialization plays a crucial role for substantial increase in productivity. In contrast with Karl Marx, Marx perceive division of labors as poor workers' overall skills leading to less skilled labors.

After Fuyao's labors are treated unfairly as mentioned previously, labors upraise and ask for labor union. As capitalists, employers foresee that if there is labor union, it will decrease work efficiency and productivity since labors will have more bargaining power. Employers do every way i.e. lobby employee in order to prohibit labor union. Labors can do nothing but keep on working even they get paid very low, are treated unfairly and have toxic and unsafety working environment. That is because they need money for living their lives. In the part of socialism, the company's culture is quite socialism. They have to do everything they are assigned to do, have no power, have to follow company's rules and regulations, they are influenced their thinking system by company's culture. The company owns everything and distribute some small part to labors for instance lunch meal and equal wage.

Finally, in order to solve the problem, Fuyao decides to lay off more and more workers and develop technology and replace them with very advanced machines. In perspective of capitalism, machines are factors of production. They are more efficient than labors because using machines is faster, safer, and considerably cheaper. On the other hands, in perspective of socialism, technological development will not be fruitful. Replacing labors with machines, unemployment rate will rise. Those unemployed workers have to find new job under operation of capitalists (interfered by capitalism, state may not have full power).

4. Read *Baker and Phongpaichit (2014)* [chapter 6-9] and watch a Thai documentary movie: '*Paradoxocracy*' (2013). Write a short synthetic essay how applicable the framework of 'Marxist historical development' [keyword: class struggle] could be in the context of Thai modern history. Draw a conceptual timeline if necessary. (10 points)

During 2469 Buddhist Era, Equality was the world's issue. Absolute monarchy system in Thailand was about to collapse because of wider social gap between ruling class and proletariat class. Transformation of political system (collapse of Austria and Hungary dynasty, Russia became communist, etc.) inspired group of Thai students in France (คณะราษฎร) leading by Pridi Banomyong to reform Thailand from absolute monarchy system to Democracy system. In June 2475 B.E., some students and military (civilian, navy, and army) completed coup d'Etat seized power from the King Rama XII. They successfully changed Thailand from absolute monarchy system to Democracy system (with constitution). With the limitation of Thai people (educational level, awareness of new political system), democracy did not completely (successfully) established (there are representatives for Thai people).

People have been more educated and aware of newness (new system), people (especially students) started to play roles in politics. During 2475-2490 (probably 2475-2500), there were revolutions and coup d'Etat because people fought for their favorable political regime. The revolution degenerated because military who were parts of 2475 coup d'Etat had more and more power (paradox of democracy).

The framework of 'Marxist historical development' can be applied in the context of Thai modern history. Class struggle is a key driver of revolution. Royal family, nobles, military, company owners are the ruling class of Thailand (thesis). They have all controls and power (superstructure). Most of Thai people (farmers, student, labors, so on) are viewed as productive class (antithesis) who are being exploited by ruling class. They are mean of production of elites and have no control over everything. As politics were world's context at that time, productive class eventually gained consciousness of elite exploitation (I interpret that group of Thai student in France who wanted to turn Thai to democracy are symbols of productive class who aware of exploitation). They want to get out of exploitative system to live better life. When they reach the climax, they act by upraise for revolution. Revolution is the product of proper condition of change. As productive class is more conscious of class struggle. The situation is getting more intense as well as development in thesis leading to material conditions for

synthesis. After the revolution, productive class becomes ruling class, production and economic structure change, superstructure (ruling class) degenerates. In Thai modern history after coup d'Etat in 2475 B.E., Thailand has had democracy, people have voices. Until now, Thailand does not reach that favorable results of revolution as mention previously (synthesis), Democracy is not that ideal democracy but a Thai style democracy. It is a paradox between class, belief system, power, democracy and military, etc. At least revolution as mentioned in 'Marxist historical development' and previous Thai situations raise both political and social awareness of people and lead to changes (both big and small).