

**Quiz 1**

**1. Watch the movie 'Agora' (2009).**

**A) Explain the difference in 'paradigms' according to the movie and its impacts on the society.**

Paradigm is the conceptual scheme or frameworks providing the basic assumption and the key concept of the idea. Paradigm or the way we think affects our belief and our behavior. The paradigm in social science can be separated to 4 common paradigms with the different unique ontology and epistemology, the positivism, the social constructionism, the critical paradigm, and the postmodernism. The positivism believe in the empirically and scientifically study. They believe in objectivity, knowability, deductive logic, or the ontology that can be proved and everyone can perceive in the same way. The social constructionism is when the believe is dynamic and socially constructed, the belief can be perceived differently from the different people and different culture. The critical paradigm challenges the positivism where the critical paradigm believe that something which cannot be proved by the scientific process does not mean it is not real, mainly social science such as the inequality, the rights, and the social change. The critical paradigm has the goal or the ontology of social change unlike the social constructionism who focus on the understanding and the phenomena explanation. The postmodernism challenge all of the previous paradigm and believe that there should not be the ontology because all of the concepts are socially constructed.

Agora is the movie setting in Alexandria argued about religion, christianity and science. Before the christianity came, the Alexandria's citizens believed in many gods and philosophy, everything can be debated and criticized. When the christian came, people be separated to christian, the one who believe in one god, and the pagans, the one who believe in many gods and science. The conflict between the christianity and the pagans began, and the pagans be defeated as a result. Everything under the christianization city cannot be criticized because they believed that this is god's creation.

Protagonist of this film is Hypatia, the philosophy, astronomy and mathematics professor of Alexandria. Hypatia believes in philosophy and what can be proved. She believes in positivist framework with the scientific and mathematical process. Because she is Alexandria's professor who teach many student in the city, her framework also be transferred. Her students also have the positivism framework before the christian came. During that period, everything can be criticized, Hypatia analyzes the belief of geocentric where the Earth is in the middle of solar system.

Other main characters of the film are Orestes, Synesius, Davus, and Cyril. Each character has different paradigm framework leads to different action toward society. Orestes is Hypatia's student. At the beginning before the coming of christianity, he was influenced by Hypatia's framework a lot, he was believe in the positivism framework but at the same time, he did not curious to find out everything he suspicious about. Later his paradigm framework shift after he believe in christian's god, from the positivism to social constructionism. When most of people in the society are christianity, Orestes also believe as most of the people believe in. Synesius also Hypatia's student and he is christian from the beginning. At the beginning scene, there was a scene where Synesius arguing with Orestes about the solar system, the orbit where Synesius disagree with Orestes to criticize the god's creation. His strongly belief towards the god which cannot be proved reflect his framework as critical paradigm framework where later he become one of the city's leader. Davus is Hypatia's slave who also believe in christianity after he met Cyril, the christian's leader. He believes in the critical paradigm framework where after Hypatia let him free, he joined the christianity. Cyril is the christianity laeder who come to Alexandria and conflict between the christian and the pagans. He believes in critical paradigm framework which he demanded to change Alexandria to be christianization city.

**B) Analyze the phenomena in the movie with some paradigm frameworks in social sciences.**

At the beginning of the movie, Hypatia taught her student about the solar system and criticized the geocentric framework, at that time, everybody believed that the Earth is in the middle of the solar system. Most people believed in positivism framework, everyone can debated and criticized everything. When the christian came to Alexandria, firstly, Alexandria people still did not believe Cyril's words, he proved by walking through fire. Cyril also gave place for the slaves. Most of people became christian. This create the paradigm shift from the positivism framework to social constructionism framework where the belief of one god and christianity were socially constructed by Cyril and other christian. However, Hypatia still believed in philosophy that can be proved, her ontology did not change with people. When the paradigm of the people changed, their behavior also changed along with their framework. The conflict between christian and pagans became bigger, and the christian destroy Alexandria's books, knowledge, and belief. Alexandria was completely change from the positivism framework that can criticize everything to the social constructionism framework that cannot questioned the god's creation. Several years, the paradigm shifted again, from the social constructionism framework to critical paradigm framework. The goal of

the christianity was to christianize the city, forced everybody to belief, if there were the one who resist, Cyril gave the rights to kill to the guardian to kill them. However, in some point of time after Davus joined the christian and kill the one who resist, he hesitated whether his belief and his action was the right thing to do or not.

**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.**

Development means the process of change or the process of improvement to let the society better. The development had been construct differently in different society from each country's constraint. Some country such as England succeed in the industrial revolution because they had to overcome their labor constraint, used machine and steam engine replace high cost labor. Another main factors for the country's development process is the government and their policy. In the movie, 'Where to invade next', the government in many developed countries provide the good welfare system, for instant, in Finland, their government controlled the education system, announced the education free school policy and the teaching system based on the student's interest. The school in Finland also support the socialization skills through playing with friends. Iceland also empower the women and let the women have the equal rights with men, they were the first country that democratically elect the female president. Moreover, the different in national income in each country also develop in different direction. The developing countries might have to use the different strategies in development from the capitalist countries. The countries with close amount of national income mostly share the common characteristics such as in the developing countries, they mostly have the political instability, the corruption from the government official, and underutilization labor.

The definition of development is the improvement that leads to the better structural change with the sustainability, the reduction of poverty, the better social welfare, and expand the freedom or having the better choice. The change in quantitative aspect is not enough, the social quality or the change should be in the structural form and should be sustain, preventing the society going back in the same undeveloped structure. After the structural change, the people under the poverty line should be reduced and government should provide the better social welfare. With the structural change and the government support, people in the society should various freedom of choice.

**B) Explain which hypothesis [from the class] could explain best the determinant of development level in each society.**

The development level in each society might be separated through the cultural hegemony where the ruling class has the higher power in leading the society. The

development level in the society can be roughly separated to the industrial sector and subsistence sector through the dual-sector model. In the dual-sector model, assume that the subsistence sector has unlimited labor force and the labors do not have the opportunity cost in switching to the formal or the industrial sector. When the income in the formal sector is higher, this will incentivize the rural sector workers or the subsistence workers to work in the formal sector. However, this model still has some constraint where the workers from the rural sector still have the opportunity cost in switching job, the formal work that required the skilled labor, this leads many rural workers become unemployed in the formal sector and create the informal sector in the urban area such as the street food.

**C) Discuss do you believe that development is conceivable without economic growth?**

The national income approach with the statistic data is one of the clearest comparable measurement between the countries, such as the national income approach, the national product approach, and the national expenditure approach. In theory, the number from these three approaches should be equal but in practical it is not. Each country has the different economic condition and the exchange rates also affect the calculation. Moreover, these indicator does not directly reflect the people's standard of living, the poorest group of people in the country might be omitted from the calculation. Later, many economist developed other indicator to take the omitted variable into the calculation, such as the human development index, or the income index. However, these indicators still cannot replace the national income indicator because of the international comparisons and the arbitrary weighting. So, I think the development is conceivable when explain with the economic growth indicator along with the aspects of development, for instance, the standard of living, the economic condition, and the social system.

**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.**

The American Factory is a movie about the glass factory in Ohio went out of the business, many employees in the factory became unemployed for years after this shut down. Then the Chinese company, Fuyao took over this glass company and reopened again, making Fuyao become the global glass manufacturing company. The former employee in Ohio enrolled to the company again. However, the working culture between American workers and Chinese workers along with the Chinese chairman were different, led to the cultural conflict.

Adam Smith believed in the free-market system or laissez-faire which let the market functioning themselves and the government should not intervene. Smith also believed in the capitalist system, based on the trading activities, if firm got surplus, firm should reinvest to get the higher income. No matter people are rich or poor, everybody will obtain the benefit from the higher surplus of free-trade, the free-trade market will create the temporary inequality society, then the society will be able to generate the higher economic surplus and poor people will get the benefit in some way. However, Karl Marx promoted the communist system where everyone should be equal. Marx believed that the firm in capitalist system has higher power to exploit the labor, alienate or discriminate from other class.

### **1) division of labors**

The division of labor from the Smith's idea is that the employee who already trained or specialize in that area should do only that job and let the rest of the works where you are not familiar with to others who are more specialize in that area. Smith believed that the labor should specialize in something, then trade what you can produce with others, he believed that this is the most efficient way to generate surplus where every people from every class in the society can get the benefit or the surplus from the mutual gains. Everybody get better-off from specialization and the self-interest will lead to the win-win situation of employer and employee.

While Smith called specialization, Marx called this as alienation where the human labor have to work for others because they specialize in this area instead of working for self interest. Marx recognized that the capitalist system look at human labor as one of factors of production, not the human being which this exploit and alienate labor. The abstract labor is dehumanization in Marx's view.

From the movie, the Fuyao company recruit the employee based on their ability written in resume, like other company in the capitalist system. This support the division of labor from Smith's idea where the person who specialize in the work do this job then sent the rest of the work to others who are more specialized. In the Smith's view, this division of labor will generate highest productivity and profit to the company, then the company will split those profit to the worker as in the movie when the new chairman from China talk to the American worker, he told them that if the company can generate high profit, this profit will be shared to all workers. However, Marx against this idea. In Marx's view, the division of labor will dehumanize the labor to become one of the factors of production. When the American manager went to see the production in China, the Chinese laborers are all same as they are trained to do what they only specialize. When the firm see the labor as the factors of production, with the fixed wage, firm will extract highest benefit from the worker such as pay the low wage and force the worker to do the over-time job. This will alienate the employer and the employee.

## **2) labor union**

Under capitalism from Smith's idea, labor are being exploited by the firm from the division of labor. Many workers realize that this is unfair to be exploited and all of the profit is not be shared to them. Without the human labor, the capitalist system cannot function or generate the profit. The class inequality is from the capitalism. Marx observed that the firm tend to minimize the wage and extend the working day to maximize profit. Labor union will give the higher bargaining power to labor against the capitalists on wages, fringe benefits, total compensation, wage inequality and the workplace protection.

Labor union will raise the worker's wage compensation especially the low wage worker and the middle wage worker. The wage rate of the union will also raise the wage of the non-unionized company as indirectly set the standard wage. The unionized workers will receive the fringe benefit including health insurance coverage, paid leave, health care deductible, and the pension plans of the retirement benefit. The labor union also provide the workplace protection to the labor and encourage the workers to exercise their rights. Moreover, the union also cover the minimum wage, the overtime pay, the immigrant workers, insurance and other coverage.

From the movie, Fuyao company did not want the labor union to be involved or intervened in the company's operation process. The company's goal is to maximize the profit and minimize the cost. Fuyao look at the labor as one of the production factors, if company pays the fixed wage to the worker, the company will extract the highest benefit from them.

Fuyao company in China also minimize the cost by not giving the sufficient equipment and appropriate workplace to the workers, the worker who has to sort the glass waste receive low quality hand gloves. The American worker also injured from the workplace. They demand the labor union for the company protection and fair wage. In the Smith's view, the intervention of the union will not let the market functioning by themselves which leads to inefficient production. However, in Marx's view, the union will give higher bargaining power against capitalist. If the union intervene, the company have to follow the union. There is a scene in the movie where the Fuyao's manager talk to the employee to vote no for the labor union. The workers who used to the capitalist system and the company's exploitation are not exercise their workplace rights by voting no to the union.

### **3) technological development.**

In Smith's view, the wealth of nation comes from the flow asset based on the trading activities, if the firm has surplus, the firm use that surplus in reinvestment for the better production factors. This is also the way in accumulate the capital. The reinvestment in higher quality in technology will result in the better production process. However, Marx also against this Smith's idea. The free-trade market cannot be applied to especially the labor market. If firm reinvest too much in technology, this will create the excess supply, the technology will replace the human labor, drives the labor wage down, and the labor will become unemployed.

At the end of the movie, the Fuyao company decided to fired some workers and replaced them with the robot and other advance technologies. The investment in technology will result the higher marginal return back to the company while the human labors have higher condition and constraint. Moreover, the human labor in the eyes of capitalist have higher probability of the technical errors. In the Smith's view, the company should reinvest in advance technology, while in the Marx's point, the company should pay more attention to the human laborers.



**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.**

The class struggles from marxist theory shows the conflict between the ruling class in the capitalist system and the labor force class, or the bourgeoisie and proletariat, or the class who oppose each other in the capitalist system. When the working class or the proletariat being educated enough to reconstruct the class, aware of their loss or their alienation, they might rebel against the ruling class, create the contradiction between classes and leads to the revolution and the new form of society. This called dialectical materialism from Marx's theory. When the thesis or the ruling class conflict with the antithesis or the worker, this will lead to the synthesis or the reconstruction of the system, the reformation system.

In the past, around 1940s, Seni Pramoj and Kukrit Pramoj established the Democrat party to oppose Pridi. Lately, before the coup d'état from general Prayut Chan-o-cha, the Democrat party applied the trickle-down effects policy where they support the rich people to generate the higher surplus and share to other class in the society, like the Smith's theory. However, in reality, this theory does not work, the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. The marxist theory against this policy.

For the Thai modern history context, 14 October 1973, there was the conflict between ruling class which was general Thanom Kittikachorn, the prime minister during that period and the people in the country including the students. The cause of this revolution was the resentment of the students from the self-coup of general Thanom to continue ruling the military dictatorship. The goal of the revolution was the student demonstrated about the corruption and demanded the three tyrants including Thanom, Praphat, and Narong go into exile. The result was the exile of the three tyrants, the new constitutional, and the election in 1975. However, lots of people were killed in this day. The resentment of the revolution also urged the labor's resentment, demanded the improvement of the minimum wage and the working condition. In 1974, the Peasants Federation of Thailand or PFT was established. This create the new synthesis.

In August 1976, one of the three tyrant who exiled in 14 October 1973, Praphat returned back to Thailand, Thanom also returned and stayed in Wat Bowonniwet. In early 1976, there were a lot of movement and protested demand their rights. However, with the military propaganda, the rightists killed two workers who putting up the poster protesting

Thanom. On 6 October 1976, there was a conflict between the rightists and the left including the student. This conflict led to Thammasat University massacre. After this conflict, Thailand was governed by a new government, General Kriangsak Chomanan, he returned the Kukrit's policy for the relationship with China.