

Quiz I

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) Paradigm is the frame that we use to perceive the world and it shapes the belief and behavior of people. How we live our lives depends on how we look at the world. The movie, *Agora*, portrays Alexandria as the province in Egypt that has three major groups of people: those who worship Greek gods, Christian, and Jew.

The resemblance among these three groups of people is that most of them view people in different groups as enemies. Christian curse Greek god severely and it leads to a fight that makes the side of those who worship Greek gods and goddesses lose.

The paradigm of those who believe in Greek gods and goddesses (polytheists) shifts from the original to the belief in Jesus because of the loss from the fight. It has a total impact on the people that most of them change their worship, belief, and even the religion to Jesus of Christianity. However, some of them change it because of survival. After the destruction of the library, the Roman Empire is separated into two parts by the Christian and the Jew.

The Christian view the separation of the province as the end of the world. Therefore, they have to be more strict and intense when it comes to religious things. This is the paradigm shaping their belief and behavior, which they believe that it can lead them to heaven when it comes to after death.

Focusing on the conflict between the Christian and the Jew, although it is believed that the province is in peace, the Jew ambushes the Christian that makes many Christian guards dead. The Christian who do not like the Jew originally because of the crucifixion of Jesus decides to kill many of the Jew. It makes Christianity dominant in the province.

Moving onto the last paradigm, as the story progresses, Hypatia is seen teaching and involve in the early astronomical and scientific study. She is considered as an epistemologist as she always questions when it comes to teaching and lets her students attempt to find methods by themselves. To exemplify, the astronomical paradigm, in that time, was from the theories from philosophers and astronomers such as the spherical Earth and the model of Ptolemy explaining the Earth is the center of the universe. While various men in the movie are mainly focusing on the

religions, Hypatia is questioning towards the scientific works such as why at different times, people view the Sun, not the same size. When the story progresses, Hypatia finds out that the Earth revolves around the Sun in ellipse shape that is why people see the Sun in different sizes in different times and it leads to the discovery from Johann Kepler 1200 years later in the seventeenth century that one of the curves that have ellipse shape controls the way how planet move. This is a new paradigm that people these days still believe.

B) *“Who could trust the god, need a flower pot for a crown”* said Ammonius, a mainstay of Christianity trying to excite and blame the main religious symbol of Greek. It manifests one of the cultural phenomena showing in the movie that is the stereotype of those who believe in Greek gods and goddesses through the lens of the Christian that they try to challenge the opposite side as pagans.

After the fight at the library, Greek symbols are prohibited from the town. Only Christian and Jewish rites are allowed. When the Christian attempts to occupy and control the province, they think that those people who believe in Greek symbols are tribal and barbaric that they have to lift them with religion and other people who do not believe will be punished. For example, when Orestes does not kneel to the belief of Biblical teaching, he is attacked by those who is strict to Christianity. It indicates the behavior that is shaped by the paradigm of not following Biblical teaching.

Focusing on the next phenomenon, when Hypatia finds out the answer to astronomical questions, she tries to explain to the chief and a group of governors. However, they do not give attention to what she is trying to explain. They are all giving their interest in following the teaching of Jesus. It implies the different lens of the social scientist that looks at the same phenomenon in the different aspects. For example, Orestes who is the governor of the town focuses on the governing mechanism and views gravity as a normal fall, but Hypatia as an educator views science as her life.

Another phenomenon occurring in the movie comes to the end of the movie. It happens when Orestes wants Hypatia to admit Christianity that she has to follow the women-abusive rules. As a governor, Orestes has to abandon Hypatia due to the political and religious motive even though he is in love with her while Hypatia as a philosopher cannot admit the instructions. These exemplifications differentiate the paradigm frameworks in social sciences.

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)

A) Development had been constructed through different hegemonies. "Cultural Hegemony is the idea that the dominant ideology of society – the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values, and morals – reflects that of the ruling class", said Gramsci (1891-1937) indicates the dependence on the paradigm or school of thought toward development.

From the movie, it is stated that a lot of expenditure of the United States' government had been spent toward the military budget even though the narrator tries to say that they never had a victory against other countries since the end of the Second World War. It implies a sense of sarcasm against the USA that their hegemony remains in violent or battle views. On the other hand, people in the country are facing numerous problems such as crimes, a variety of discrimination, or even unemployment, the government still spends much more expenditure on weapons, which they think that it would lead them to be dominant.

The narrator introduces the audience great points of view of many countries and these illustrate the term "development". The hegemony that depends on development has many aspects. Italy legislates to give a lot of welfare for employees such as many holidays and extra leaves. France focuses on the lunch of students at schools even in rural areas. Slovenia lets students study for free to the end of university. Finland aims to be the best in education in the world even though they do not have to study hard. Germany focuses on the happiness of employees and the history lesson that they admit and be responsible for the past. Portugal solves the problems of drugs even though it is legal in the country. Norway facilitates prisoners, gives them enfranchisement. Tunisia gives women rights. Iceland has a female dominance. You can see from these examples that every country has its meaning and perception of development and it differentiates paradigm already. They all construct the development in different interpretations depending on their cultural hegemony in each country.

There are various meanings of development. Some people define in more specific ways as you can see in Szirmai (2015), chapter 1.3 e.g. economic growth development and modernization development. From my perspective, the common definition toward the term “development” should be the movements that make the hegemony of the society thrive in a great path.

B) Each hypothesis from the class can explain the determinant of the development level in each society in different ways. The concept that we talk about the development paradigm that the early period after the Second World War, most countries in the world tried to focus on how to promote economic growth in their country. Finally, they learned that they could not neglect the factor of human development.

When it comes to the best hypothesis to explain toward development level in each society, it is “development as freedom” by Amartya Sen. He tries to redefine the term of development and comes back again to the basic that development should be interpreted as “freedom”. Therefore, the true concept of development is to expand the boundary of freedom.

From the movie, each country aims to have a quality of life. The people were taught to realize in equality of every human being. For example, Norway views prisoners as guilty people and facilitates them as normal people. It returns to the country that the rate of coming of prisoners has the lowest percentage in the world.

Many CEOs try to develop their employees’ quality of life. For instance, the CEO of Lardini gives many holidays to their workers as freedom. It is not about money only.

C) The economy had been engaging with the society and shaping paths of our lives. Development Paradigms explains the hegemony shaped by ruling classes in each society.

Back to the period at the end of the Second World War to 1960s, industrialization, and ISI were mainly focused to develop the country. When the time progresses, basic human needs and export things promoted in each society. It gives a sense of equity and shows some dependency theory by Wallerstein. To clarify, Every sector including the core, the semi-peripheral, and the peripheral need to depend on each other even though the core dominates periphery. Later on, good governance and the term of inequality was promoted. Macro factors were also focused in the next period. You can see that economy penetrates in every period and it shapes our lives in different ways. To give an example, when the second World War ended, many countries collapsed due to a

lot of problems e.g. financial problems and a lack of resources. It led to the failure of the economy that shaped people in the country in bad ways. It took time to recover and shift the development paradigm to the Industrialization era.

Since the economy has been engaging in every period of human lives and shaping the way how we live, I do not believe that development is conceivable without economic growth.

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 debates between Adam Smith and Karl Marx on the true concept of the economy had a great impact and influenced the global movement in society. These two schools of thought are significantly different from each other.

The movie starts with the shutter of GM, a broad car production company due to the accumulated problems that cause economic failure since the Great Depression. It leads more than 10,000 lives to unemployment.

Focusing on the division of labor, Fuyao company has a great influence on Adam Smith's concept of economy. The company uses this idea to manage all of its employees including, which most is American and some of Chinese. The responsibility is so obvious that the company let the American be the operations and the Chinese as managements. To clarify, it indicates what will equip the employee to the job market that is specialization and labors who cannot do what the firm needs will be dismissed. On the other hand, Karl Marx challenged this idea of Smith as the division of labor generates social struggle that makes the proletariat powerless and that is accurate when the movie progresses.

Capitalism is presented entirely. The concept of "Abstract Labour" by Marx shows the employee's exploitation that the company only thinks that how much the workers can contribute the product economically and does not care about anything else such as safety. To exemplify, when the movie introduces the factory in China, the workers have no glasses to wear when they are collecting dangerous broken glass. Another idea of Capitalism takes place when it comes to employee's interview and the end of the movie, the employee said that she had \$14 an hour when

the story begins. Skipping to the end of the movie, the starting wages remain \$14 an hour even though the company can make a profit more.

The idea of a labor union is shown since the beginning of the movie. When this idea is stated by the senator at the opening ceremony, the chairman is upset because it affects the efficiency of works and leads to the negative effects of the company.

The concept of production and exchange comes up as Smith thought said that there will be costs needed to deduct when it comes to selling. These costs are capital, production, land, and especially labors. The laborers who do not specialize enough will be dismissed. The labor union (UAW) is formed to deal with these problems. To illustrate, the organization helps those unskilled workers not to be fired.

When the movie continues, the labor union are greatly mentioned by the employees to threaten the company as they have an idea of being exploited by powerful people. By consulting the UAW, there will be an election whether to get into the labor union. Afterward, the company tries to impress the employees by increasing wages by \$2. It implies that the company is afraid of employees as well.

Marx tried to come up with an idea that the working class should realize how Capitalism works to enslave them from the goal. The concept of “Dialectical Progress” from him is presented when employees’ pressure comes to the climax that clashes Capitalism. However, the result of voting does not fall to the proletariat side. It is not huge enough to be a new synthesis that not everybody is brave enough as well.

Both schools of thought by Smith and Marx also have an impact on the concept of technological development in American Factory.

For Smith, as a classical economist, he stated that labor is a factor of production. It is normal to draw a circular flow in Macroeconomics. However, when the labor cannot produce as many as the automation does, the capitalist needs to replace them with technology. While Marx tried to promote that it is impractical to the labor market. To clarify, when there is an excess supply for laborers, it leads to the unemployment that makes the market wage decrease. When the capitalists reinvest that economic surplus on technology, it will replace the demand for labor that makes the wage significantly lower. It creates a lot of cheap labor that results in a major economic problem, which is unemployment.

Focusing on the movie, it flows with the idea of Capitalism that at the end of the movie, many workers at Fuyao are dismissed due to non-specialization. For example, the old worker can use computers at a slower rate while automation is much more developed.

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)

Marxist theory of historical development is a dialectical process representing the evolution of the form of society. The concept was originally influenced by Hegel that Marx tried to adapt to the material world. Marx stated that social evolution is the result of class struggle. The school of thought can be used to explain the history of mankind. Therefore, Thai historical development can be focused on the base of Marxist theory.

Marx believed that all the struggles and transformations can explain it in the pattern of a struggle between the ruling class and productive class. The concept of superstructure refers to things that remain and educate everyone in the society what are the difference between the ruling class and productive class. It is a default, which we need to follow as normal that result from the education system, media, policy from the government that tries to teach people that the class exists and if you want to be in the upper class, you must have higher education, you must get married with some upper class. If you want some political power, you should approach some elite to work with them. However, the productive class does not have a chance like these previous examples to lift them up to the upper class due to limitations. When the productive class has consciousness enough toward what superstructure had done, it will create class struggle. There will be an uprising because they realize the awareness of the problem of the class enough. It will lead to some shift and flip of the power between the old ruling class and the productive class leading to the class struggle. The clash between the thesis and the antithesis and will create a new synthesis as the productive class returning themselves to become the ruling class instead. Therefore, there will be a destruction of the old superstructure.

Focusing on Thai modern history, there was the Siamese revolution of 1932 that shifted the regime significantly from Absolute Monarchy to Democracy. By Marxist theory, the monarchy

was the thesis that has the state power and capability of setting up the rule. People's Party (Khana Ratsadon) was the antithesis as a productive class. When the antithesis side realized the class struggle, it led to the new regime which is Democracy.

From Paradoxocracy, there were many criticisms toward the shift in the governing system. Most of them mentioned about unreadiness of Thai people at that period of time. They believe that the change was too rapid. However, some critics think that it depends on what had shaped the people in society at that time. Many skepticisms came up questioning why Thai people were not ready enough to the system of Democracy.

In summary, when the productive class realizes that all the existed are unfair and there is an exploitation of the ruling class, it will create the new consciousness that is class awareness and they will bring up the movement against the ruling class leading to the new synthesis of the society.