

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)

Agora is the film set in late 4th-century Roman Egypt about the time of the final stages of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. The movie starts to introduce its audience to the day that Alexandria, Egypt was still prosperous, and The Great Library of Alexandria was full of papyrus scrolls and crowded with lecturers and scholars. At that time, the sacred library was the place for pagans to worship Serapis and their other gods. Meanwhile, the paganism that long-held by the city was challenged by pious Jews and the spread of Christianity. In the movie, It seems like people who have a new faith of the Christians fight against the pagans' old faith, and others who have different perspectives and beliefs from them. Therefore, I decided to classify the way of thought or paradigms into two big groups: People who have faith in Christianity and People who don't. People who believe in Christianity, Christians, believe in a Triune God and accept God in human form. They believe that Jesus is the Christ and professes belief in the teaching of Jesus. In a non-Christian group, I further classified into Judaism, Paganism, and other faiths. Judaism is very close to Christianity because Christianity grows out of Judaism. Moreover, Jesus was Jewish, as also mentioned in the movie. Some differences making Judaism different from Christianity are that Jews believe that there is a single God and reject the Christian's concept of God in the form of a human body. According to the movie, paganism was long-held by the city and referred to many people at the library who worship Serapis and other gods. Other faiths could relate to people who don't believe in gods or believe in other things. According to the religion mentioned above, they all have God but just a different one, leading to the conflict appearing in the movie. The Christians, led by Ammonius, start to insult Serapis and cause one of the pagan priests to burn in a fire under Theon's observation, the director of the Musaeum of Alexandria. Theon then agreed with Olympus to counteract Christian with force and sword. "The insult must be answered," answered Theon. After that, the pagans were defeated by outnumbered Christian and also lost their sacred library. The Christians were successfully in toppling the old faith of pagan and continued to curse and exile the Jews from the city. At the very end of the movie, The Christians attacked Hypatia, who believes in

Philosophy, which is opposed to them. Cyril falsely accused Hypathia of witchcraft "The philosopher Hypatia, a woman who declared in public, her impiety. A witch!" leading to sentencing Hypathia to death. Different paradigms lead to conflict. The cost of conflict is blood and flesh, peace, and especially, in this case, the library and intellectual heritage.

Agora is a movie about ideas; each character has their way of thought. Under the social science paradigm frameworks, Hypathia seems to be the person who most applies positivism to view the world. She believes that what exists are only things that can be proved by using the scientific method, observation, and measurement of phenomenon. And it will become theory and be valid until there is a new idea that has better arguments and evidence to overthrow. Hypathia believes that there is the force drawing objects on Earth toward its center, and there is the force that keeps planets moving around the sun, gravity. She taught her students about gravity and also proved to them by dropping the handkerchief and letting it linearly fall to the ground. She is the kind of person who needs proof to believe in things. Other astronomers mentioned that orbits are circular, but due to the eclipse, Hypathia needs other explanations to explain this phenomenon from studying astronomy. Once she found out that elliptical can give a better explanation, she overthrew circular orbit with elliptical one. Hypathia herself was born pagan, as her father is pagan. However, she was tolerant of Christians; many of her disciples are Christian. Hypathia always emphasizes that everyone in her class is similar and equal, regardless of religion. It doesn't like that Hypathia doesn't believe in God at all. Still, she is against Christian God because there is not enough evidence to overwhelm her. "your God has not yet proved more judge or more compassionate than their predecessors" declared Hypathia. Whether Hypatia believes in God or not, her faith in philosophy and her study is beyond God. She even died because of her ultimate beliefs.

Social constructionism believes in multiple realities and truths exist, but they are so dynamic and depend on the interpretation of different cultures and people. Truth is socially constructed. Therefore, this framework most suits to explain why the pagans and the Christians believe in different things. The Serapeum of Alexandria was built and dedicated to Serapis, a long time before it was attracted and destroyed by the Christians. Assuming that these two religions' origins are different, different social contexts and environments differently construct the way of thought, belief.

The Critical Theories Paradigm believes that reality is subjective and influenced by oppressive experiences. It focuses on social relationships and seeks positive social change driven by the express goal of social change in mind and scientific investigation. Davus can be an excellent example of the Critical Theories Paradigm. Davus is Hypatia's father's slave, so he surely knows what oppressive is. Even Hypatia treats him differently from other slaves, when he assists her in classes, somehow, Hypatia accidentally indirectly discriminates, "Did you remember, the fights are a thing of slaves and rabble." and Davus felt that. After he went to see Ammonius, he saw Christianity as a miracle, heaven, the place that people can get mercy, the place that he could be parabolani or soldier of Christ but not slave. He decided to be on the Christianity side at the riot. When he joined the Christians destroying the library, His soul looked so free, even though he was still a slave. It's like he tried to upright and challenged those pagans who used to oppress him. After the riot, he became a real soldier of Christ and dedicated to protecting his pious fellow Christians.

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)

According to the movie 'Where to invade next,' each country values and pays attention to different things. For instance, In Italy and Germany, they value so much on people's welfare, especially the working class. While Finland and Slovenia pay a lot of attention to education, giving people the same opportunity to get an education. Iceland and Tunisia have enormous power to drive for gender equality. Iceland even got one of the world's first democratically elected female presidents, and Tunisia became one of three Muslim countries where abortion is legal. And in Norway, when it locks up its citizens, it treats them as human beings. They don't think locking up wouldn't make anything better except create more hatred. Instead, they value so much in love and kindness toward each other. According to Myrdal, discussions of development have implicitly been based on a series of modernization ideas or values. The concept of development is inevitably

value-laden. Opinions may differ on how these ideas should be pursued. Therefore, When the countries value different things, the ways they construct the term development are also different. Moreover, under the social constructionist framework, people from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds have different perceptions and construct development differently. Historical patterns, social context, financial readiness, natural resources, geography, the structure of production, technological changes, political and economic influences, institutions, and cultural differences can affect the path a developing country takes. The common definition of 'development' could be the movement to lift people's standard of living in a socio-economic way. And according to Seers, that there should be a decrease in poverty and malnutrition, income inequality should decline, and the employment situation should improve. To do that, we need to make sure that our people meet basic needs and access fundamental infrastructure, Increase economic welfare, Improve health and education. Furthermore, we need to make sure that our people have political and social freedom, more participation of the population in political decision making, better government, and environmental sustainability.

Amartya Sen did an excellent job of explaining the term development. In his perspective, development can be seen as an integrated process of expanding substantive freedoms that people enjoy. Besides wealth that gives people freedom from poverty, famine, and malnutrition mentioned by Sen, Development also depends on other determinants like natural resources, technology, the country's socio-politico-economic structure, and so on. For empirical example, Sen shows that urban African Americans have lower life expectancies than the average Chinese person or inhabitants of the Indian state of Kerala, despite much higher average per capita incomes in the USA. Even though there is higher economic growth, African Americans are still limited freedom to have a longer life expectancy. It emphasizes that only high income isn't enough to lift the standard of living; other factors must be included. Another hypothesis that has an interesting explanation is the Kuznets Curve Hypothesis. It explains that there is a positive relationship between income per capita and income inequality at the early stage of economic development, which means that when the country promotes economic growth, it may face a wider gap between the rich and poor. But when the country develops itself enough and passes through this period, the country will be rich enough. And then, it will focus on closing the inequality gap. However, to tell each

society's development level, we can't come up with Sen's hypothesis because there is no objective definition of development, and there may be basic differences of opinion about the goals of development. Szirmai also stated that even including that of the very goal of freedom may not be the ultimate goal from a variety of religious perspectives. Therefore, It makes more sense to use Sustainable Development Goal, SDGs, as criteria. According to the United Nations Development Programme, SDGs known as Global Goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The country that has better progress on each goal should be considered more developed in that field.

No, I don't believe that development is conceivable without economic growth. Because Economic growth is a prerequisite for development, it provides resources that can potentially be invested in development. Without it, countries will never be able to finance investments in health, education, reproductive health infrastructure, and social protection, which are necessary for improvements in human welfare. Szirmai also emphasizes that without rapid and sustained growth, large scale poverty reduction is not possible. And according to Sen, Economic growth is essential in its potential contribution to a wide range, but it isn't enough in itself. Hence, we should not pay attention only to economic factors but also non- economic factors. Not all people satisfy with growth, due to its drawbacks: disruption of traditional societies and lifestyles, distortion of the environment, pollution, and so on

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)

Adam Smith and Karl Marx are well known as social and economic thinkers in history. However, they both have a different viewpoint on how the economy and society should function. For the division of labor concept, Smith looks at the division of labor concept as the way to improve productivity power-generates an enormous increase in output. As the division of labor generates labor specialization when people do the same task many times, it saves labor time from focusing on one task rather than doing all the tasks by themselves. And the amount of time labor spent on one task helped them figure better ways

of doing their job- innovation, technology. Furthermore, Smith states that increasing productivity also creates universal opulence, which extends itself to the lowest ranks of people, giving them a better standard of living. Contrary to Marx, he looks at the division of labor as something that alienates people from each other and their nature, creates class differences, and destroys the unity of the human race. Despite the division of labor increase specialization, Marx argued that it might lead to poorer overall skill labors and a lack of enthusiasm for their work. As the work becomes more specialized, not many training skills are required for a specific job, and the workforce, compared to when one worker did one job entirely. And people now don't produce things because they enjoy or want to, but they do it to earn wages in return. Humans use money as a means to fulfill life. Marx claims that all human senses are degraded by private property. Humans do everything to get money; hence they keep working and working like robotics and continue to be exploited from the upper class, especially in capitalism.

The film displays a post-industrialized period in Ohio when a Chinese billionaire reopens the auto class factory, Fuyao, in an abandoned General Motors plant, hiring two thousand Americans. Fuyao brings its veteran employees who have experience running a large-scale glass-making operation to train the new American employees. Like other modern factories that adopt the division of labor concept, each of Fuyao's employees is specialized in his/her own tasks. Of course, In this case, veteran Chinese employees are better at their work and also superior to fellow American Employees, as they are assigned to a higher position. There are separate classes and races in the factory and many quarrels between Chinese and American employees. The company exploits labors by squeezing them to be more productive, paying them a low wage, a lot lower than GM's wage. The black female labor, who seems to have lost her purpose in life, couldn't even afford to quit this low-paying job and has to bear lots of workloads. The film also captures a workplace injury due to unsafe working conditions and unfair treatments leading to a unionization battle.

Smith considers labor as one of factor production. And Marx showed that according to Classical economics, the worker becomes a commodity that capitalists use in building up their wealth; hence they treat labor as a commodity, not human being. At the end of the day, when workers are aware and can't bear it anymore, they rise up against labor exploitation,

freeing themselves from capitalism, like in the Fuyao case. Unfortunately, the workers there didn't get a labor union as the company tries to do everything to bust the union even fired union backers.

At the end of the film, a guy accompanied Chairman Cao explaining how he plans to replace workers with Mechanical Arms because the workers work too slow, and automation means standardization. According to Adam Smith, technology is a thing that can increase productivity, gaining the wealth of capitalists. Nevertheless, Karl Marx perceives technology as a thing that simplifies the interaction between human beings and nature. As a change in technology, especially productive technology, the primary influence on human social relations and shape structure of society then revolve around the technological and economic base again and again.

4. Read *Baker and Phongpaichit (2014)* [chapter 6-9] and watch a Thai documentary movie: '*Paradoxocracy*' (2013). Write a short synthetic essay on 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)

In history, There are always people who have power and people who have none. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf. The long history of human beings is full of conflicts, wars, and evolution. When those who are superior abuse of power until one point that inferiors can not bear it anymore, powerless people will rise up for the revolution. And Thailand is not an exception.

Marx's framework, Historical materialism, can be used to understand class relations and social conflict in Thai historical events. Like how Karl Marx explains the conflict between the capitalist and the proletariat, Thailand also has that kind of thing. According to *Paradoxocracy*, After the first world war, The context of the global society began to change. Equality is sweet and alluring. And the absolute monarchy system seems to collapse, starting with the fall of the Austria-Hungary monarch followed by transition of Russia from the absolute monarchy into the communist system, losing the throne of the last emperor Puyi. In addition to that Thailand under the ruling of King Prajadhipok, Rama VII, experienced

troubles from an archaic government confronted with severe economic problems, Social Inequality in Thailand became Bigger, and The social service system still preferred the bureaucrats over lower social status. These things urged the group of students in France to form the People's Party, Khana Ratsadon. The People's Party led by a comparatively small group of civilians and military headed by Pridi Banomyong and Plaek Phibunsongkhram wanted to change absolute monarchy to a democracy. They launched the revolution in 1932 and successfully overthrew the government of King Prajadhipok. After that, the Chakri monarchy's power degenerated. Some royalist exiles and some self-imposed silence. This situation is like when the proletariat, productivity class as the antithesis, realize that they have been exploited by the capitalist, ruling class as the thesis. Then the proletariat cannot bear it anymore and rise up against the capitalist. This class struggle will lead to a new synthesis of society. The productive class will turn themselves into the ruling class instead and destruct the old superstructure.

Throughout the period in history has evolved as a result of conflicts that lead to system evolution. Class struggle is a mechanism that leads to the overthrow of the old society. There are always superior and inferior people, the oppressor and the oppressed, conflicts, and only the winners have the right to rule the country. According to Paradoxocracy, Phraya Manopakorn Nititada was selected from the People's Party leader to be the first Priminister of Siam after the Siamese revolution of 1932 to show that the revolution is not for someone, but everyone. However, the People's Party eventually divided into two factions, a civilian faction led by Pridi Bhanomyong, and a military faction led by Marshal Pibulsongkram. In 1933, Pridi proposed his radical economic plans, which called for the nationalization of land, public employment, and social security. The proposals were rejected by royalists and the cabinet of Prime Minister Manopakorn, and Pridi was even accused of being a communist. A coup ousted Manoparkorn in 1933 under the leadership of Marshal Phibun Due to the conflicts between members of the People's Party, In the same year, Phibun also gained his power from defeating Boworadet rebellion. The rebellion aimed at bringing back the previous royalist regime. Finally, King Prajadhipok abdicated on March 2, 1935. Young prince Ananda Mahidol being asked by the then government to ascend to the throne as King Rama VIII and Pridi was kicked upstairs to be regent. Phibun made his way to Prime Minister and led the country to join the Axis side in World War II. Phibun considered it profitable to cooperate with the Japanese as Japan promised to help Thailand regain some

of the Indochinese territories that had been lost to France. While Pridi, the anti-royalist ideologue of 1932, managed to form The Free Thai Movement, Seri Thai to support the Allies by exercising his relationship with some of the royalists aboard, such as Seni Pramoj, the Thai ambassador in Washington. After the war, Seri Thai helped to save Thailand from being a war-losing country. Phibun and his government fell. Pridi was brought back to the limelight; he continued on founding democracy through constitutional engineering, and purge the army of Phibun's militarists by the support of the Seri Thai group until the beginning of the end of his, Pridi was blamed for the death of the young King by the Pramoj brother. The military seized power by coup plotted by Phin on November 8, 1947, claiming that Pridi's Seri Thai forces were about to launch a republican revolt. Finally, Pridi forever fled due to the failure of his attempt to seize power with the help of Seri Thai, Palace Rebellion.

The rise of the crowd against the government and seizing power using coup didn't end at the revolution in 1932 and the first coup by Marshal Phibul. But it keeps revolving around and around like the loop. Every time people are on the street protesting because they are dissatisfied with their status quo and have resentment against government exploitation. Like in the uprising of 14 October 1973 and the Black May 1992. Coup d'etat is like relay race passing from Phibun to Phin to Sarit, and lately to Prayuth. They use the same pattern every time, starting with being the light giving peace to society then abuse of power. The old power came and was overthrown by the new one. The names of players are different, but the essence is still the same. According to Thongchai Winichakul, we are fortunate to have a Democracy system that allows us to trial and error without such severe damage that makes the nation collapse.

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Time Line



According to A History of Thailand, the result of Thailand's insertion into the ideological contest of the Cold War were complex. In Thailand, the USA underwrote dictatorship, but at home it exemplified ideals of liberalism and republicanism.