

# **World Orderism and Political Economy: Analysis and Synthesis in the Light of Gramsci's Conception of Hegemony**

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Among specialists in international relations it is commonplace that theory in their field of expertise is woefully inadequate. Herein lies the importance of world order studies. The world order movement is a bold attempt to evoke, responsible, critical scholarship in international relations. It offers considerable intellectual nourishment to scholars and students seeking alternatives to conventional avenues of inquiry.

Proponents of world orderism are a small minority within that segment of academe whose chief concern is foreign affairs. They have come under fire from a variety of quarters ranging from traditional realism to Third Worldism. Mainstream observers have sallied forth to assail the world order enterprise on the grounds that it is naive, utopian, and devoid of a coherent theory of social change.<sup>1</sup> At the other end of the ideological spectrum, detractors find it ahistorical, atheoretical, and elitist.<sup>2</sup> Within the world order movement itself, scholars have defended themselves against these bruising charges, but also have advanced principled self-criticism, including an admitted failure to break the grip of the realist school over the reigning agenda of research.<sup>3</sup> In addition, internal critics have contended that world orderism is, at bottom, a liberal ideology, or more pointedly, a vehicle of Western domination and a genere of cultural imperialism.<sup>4</sup>

Advocates of the world order approach to international relations have by and large been embroiled in a debate with each other and with liberal observers. This is a discourse confined to narrow parameters. The world order movement has not yet foursquare engaged the problematic of political economy which emanates from premises fundamentally apart from liberal tenets.

Of course, both world order studies and political economy encompass

heterogeneous interpretations. The copious writings of Richard Falk, Johan Galtung and Ali Mazrui, or of Samir Amin, James Petras and Immanuel Wallerstein defy easy characterization. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify core arguments — contending epistemologies and methodologies — that distinguish world order studies and political economy. My aim here is to evaluate the broad contours of world order thought — not individual works per se from the perspective of a political economy analysis.

For the purposes of this essay, the World Order Models Project (WOMP) will serve as a prototype of world order studies because it is the most ambitious and probably the most fully elaborated effort in the field. From the standpoint of political economy, notwithstanding its several version, a comprehensive analysis must focus on the social laws that govern the production and distribution of goods to satisfy human needs, as well as on the state's capacity to exercise ideological hegemony, both within a social formation and at the global level. By addressing some central subjects covered by these avenues of inquiry, I hope to initiate a dialogue between the world order movement and political economists, leading to a clarification of major theoretical issues.

### **Avenues of inquiry**

Before evaluating world order studies, it may be useful to elucidate the bare logic of divergent branches of social inquiry. What are the starting points of world order studies and political economy? What do these approaches have in common? And how do they differ?

In its first phase, WOMP, the product of efforts that began in 1966, developed a critique of traditional approaches to international relations, originating with the view that the positivist distinction between facts and values is misleading. WOMP rejects behaviourism on the ground that it often serves as an unacknowledged *status quo* ideology. For WOMP, the realist school is flawed, too, because it fetishizes power. Realism, which embellishes Machiavellian imagery positing the autonomy of politics, is regarded as unidimensional and reductionist. The old state-centric paradigm, seen, from WOMP's angle, fails to explicate the incapacity of nation-states to remedy the multifaceted and interconnected problems of war, scarce resources, population pressure, and environmental decay.

To analyze global problems, a world order approach embraces an array of values — peace, economic well-being, social justice, and ecological balance which are meant to provide the basis of inquiry and action. These values are advanced not merely within a national setting, but primarily within a global context.

Informed by both this value framework and diagnostic research on planetary dangers, world order scholars design models of envisaged futures. These models are not straight—line projections of current trends and patterns. Rather, authors are encouraged to be inventive their research draws on poetry, plays, novels, science fiction, and films — and to hypothesize about the links between the values posited at the outset and contingent futures. The modeling process thus entails testing hypotheses and developing scenarios for social transformation.<sup>5</sup>

The next step is to propose transitional strategies to move from the present to the preferred world. The scholar is asked to turn his (her) attention to praxis and serve as a vanguard of change. In a later phase of WOMP, the emphasis, at least in its official pronouncements, shifted more to working with mass-based groups. Throughout WOMP's history its hoped—for result has been to spawn a planetary outlook among a global citizenry. Most WOMP researchers also call for a “central guidance system,” which involves planning on a world-wide basis.

The strengths of the world order movements are manifold. From its inception, this team of cosmopolitan scholars, among whom women and youth are well represented, has taken concerted steps to expunge from its ranks American provincialism.<sup>6</sup> Theoretically, it has mounted a powerful critique of mainstream international relations. It has, for example, roundly exposed the aggregate and self-serving notion of national interest, which I am normally employed as a reified and vacuous concept. Practically, it has heightened awareness of, and mobilized support for, national liberation struggles. In its efforts to combat complacency, world order studies has made a mark by educating students and, to some degree, the public about the dangers of nuclear war and the need to detegitimize the arms race.

But how does world order thinking compare to the problematic of political economy? Both classical political economy and Marxist political economy are rooted in a trenchant attack on the orthodoxy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In

*Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith, who held the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, pointed out moral judgments which counteract or withstand self-interest, narrowly construed. In championing the eighteenth-century belief in the inevitable triumph of order over chaos, he arraigned the mercantilist, trade, and regulatory doctrines of his day. Thereafter, in his magisterial *General Theory*, John Maynard Keynes pondered effacing inequalities of income and wealth by radical action: "the euthanasia of the rentier, and consequently the euthanasia of the cumulative oppressive power of the capitalist to exploit the scarcity—value of capital."<sup>7</sup> Keynes's preferred order included "a somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment," which he considered "the only means of securing an approximation to full employment."<sup>8</sup>

More recently, the followers of Keynes have converted his ideas into incremental techniques, matrices of marginal options in resource use, output decisions, pricing policies, and consumer tastes. The new orthodox economics is preeminently concerned with equilibrium in "free" markets. Taken as given are resource endowment, specialization, and the division of labor. The trouble with this way of thinking is that it neglects social processes which establish and maintain world-wide structures of inequality. Marginal analysis abstracts rational choice from history and thus from the basic dynamics of class and power. Without examining the causes and structures that underpin global inequalities, neoclassical economics is ill-equipped to illuminate the current and future directions of the world political economy.

Today, the resurgence of the study of political economy reflects the profound structural metamorphoses under way in the global arena. Some liberal scholars appreciate the interdependence of the market and the state, and have compiled sophisticated research, particularly sectoral studies, on discrete aspects of international political economy.<sup>9</sup> They have attained high standards of empirical inquiry, which is the chief strength of their work. But these observers have failed to meld economic and political analyses. Most of them still regard economics and politics as separable spheres of activity rather than as braided aspects of a total ensemble of social relations grounded in an exchange between man and nature, i.e. the production process, which is the key to understanding the world political economy.



Given the drawbacks to the main-line genre of research, the ensuing discussion conflates a political economy analysis and Marxist inquiry. This conflation, while certainly arguable, is not amenable to easy proof or disproof, and, having made clear my biases, let us now turn to the essential features of Marxist political economy.

In barest outline, Marxist political economy takes as its starting point what is fundamental to all human society, namely, that man must produce in order to subsist. Production entails the appropriation of nature which creates value and is called labour. The activity by which man satisfies his needs is consumption. The production of material means to satisfy human needs is always a social activity. The relations between people who jointly procure subsistence is the basis of society, which assumes definite political forms and distinct varieties of social thought. In capitalist and precapitalist formations, man appropriates not only nature but also surplus labor. This is the process of exploitation.

From this perspective of political economy, it is essential to trace in detail the classes that develop in the labour process and the contradictions that are the motor force of history. Propelled by antagonistic class forces, capitalism is historically the first mode of production to encompass the entire globe. The international political economy thus rests on self-expanding value and is wrought with tension<sup>10</sup> Following from this, the task of a political economy analysis is to highlight the structural variations and the specific historical transformations within the capitalist mode of production and the hegemony of the state.

## **Convergence**

World order studies and Marxist political economy converge and diverge in certain fundamental respects. At issue in identifying these zones are core assumptions, not merely pronounced attitudes, for there is considerable intramural variance, especially among world order authors in respect to Marxism.

Galtung, in a revised version of his well-known essay on imperialism, raises and then evades the question of the adequacy of Marxist theory by declaring his preference for "an agnostic position" on the primacy of economics and by eschewing "any analysis" that decipheres global conflict in terms of two classes only.<sup>11</sup> This is a simplistic way to pose the issue of the complex articulation among relatively autonomous levels of

the social order. This order is comprised of only two classes, if order refers to a mode of production. But a mode of production is purely a theoretical construct. In Marxist analysis, a social formation is an empirical category replete with a multiplicity of classes.

Falk adopts a nuanced view towards Marxism, at one stage endorsing aspects of Marxist outlook and announcing his intention to shift his emphasis.<sup>12</sup> But his recent work, which is decidedly attuned to world-wide structures, does not yet reflect a materialist epistemology or methodology. Ajami, himself an unorthodox liberal critic from the Third World, explicitly counterposes Marxism and liberalism.<sup>13</sup> Mazrui, a seasoned Africanist, goes further, attempting to discredit Marxism by making believe that it is an artifact of Western culture transplanted to Africa.<sup>14</sup>

Some of these world order authors insist on the spurious term "neo-Marxism," which connotes that Marx was wrong in some fundamental way. Authors who adopt this term rarely indicate where Marx went wrong, nor do they spell out the distinctions between Marxism and neo-Marxism.

More importantly, it is true, for reasons other than those Mazrui argues, that discrepant versions of Marxism are Western-centric. Leon Trotsky and his followers, for example, have denied the possibility of socialistic development except in the advanced capitalist countries, which in turn are supposed to provide the necessary support for the Soviet Union and the entire Third World to set a socialist course.<sup>15</sup> Yet, to dwell on this is to miss the point. Unlike Mazrui, Marxist dialecticians believe in the universality of ideas, broadly defined. Now presumably Mazrui, as a member of WOMP, subscribes to the view that world order values are universal, at least in aspiration if not in actuality. But why are some values universal and not others? Exactly what criteria are employed to make this judgment? On what grounds is it claimed that world order values, essentially liberal notions enshrined in Western political philosophy, can adorn the mantle of universality whereas Marxist values cannot be regarded as part of the heritage of all mankind, irrespective of culture or nationality?

Take the culture of contemporary Africa, for example. There, the national bourgeoisie and its intellectual leaders who articulate class interests stoutly assert that Marxism is an imported ideology. All the while, they ignore the historical evidence

which suggests that it is home-grown.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, if Marxism is an imported ideology in Africa in the twentieth century, was representative democracy *an* imported ideology in the US in 1776 and in France in 1789? Is social security alien to American values, as opponents of the New Deal claimed during the 1930s?

Next, the points of convergence between world order studies and the problematic of political economy: Both modes of inquiry disavow compartmentalizing knowledge into specialized disciplines, preferring instead a holistic approach to the several dimensions of human existence. They share a belief in the fatuity of gradualist solutions to such global problems as the spread of nuclear weaponry and affronts to human dignity like racism *in* southern Africa. Their common concern about practice encourages a policy-oriented and problem-solving approach. Various broadsides against world order studies and Marxist political economy notwithstanding, both avenues of inquiry are anti-utopian. They do focus on the future and on transitional strategies, but renounce concocting imaginary blueprints, viewing that as a sterile exercise.

A yardstick for gauging divergence: hegemony Inasmuch as these points of convergence are fairly palpable, it was possible to provide a synoptic sketch of them. In comparison, the major zones of divergence are more difficult to uncover. So as not to overstate the differences between world order studies and the problematic of political economy, first we will bring into sharp relief that aspect of Marxism especially concerned with value conflicts — the Gramscian concept of hegemony. Given the great interest of world order scholars in value analysis, it is surprising that they have attached slight importance to Antonio Gramsci's novel insights into ideology as a driving force in preserving and transforming the basis of society. The reason for this neglect is probably that Gramsci said relatively little about international relations *per se*. His thoughts on the subject are expressed tersely:

Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? There can be no doubt that they follow. Any organic innovation in social structure, through its technical-military expressions, modifies organically absolute and relative relations in the international field, too.<sup>17</sup>

In reality, the internal relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is original' and (in a certain sense) unique; these relations must be understood

and conceived in their originality and uniqueness if one wishes to dominate them and direct them. To be sure, the line of development is towards internationalism, but the point of departure is national' — and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise.<sup>18</sup>

Hence, beginning with the internal ensemble of social relations and projecting outward to international relations, Gramsci developed a theory of hegemony.

He took issue with classical Marxists who had inadequately theorized political power and underestimated the importance of consciousness, causing them to fail to appreciate properly the role of individual actors in history. For Gramsci, historically great upheavals, particularly in their initial phases, are above all an ideologically driven process. Ideology, in his schema, is neither false consciousness nor an epiphenomenon, but a battleground, a terrain of struggle. Ideological control is maintained by the agencies of the dominant class—schools, the media, the family, etc. "Common sense," including myths, philosophy, morality, culture and religious beliefs, embodies ideological hegemony.

In the Gramscian usage, hegemony is the formation of a "collective will." One class has the ability to articulate its values as much as those of other social groups. A hegemonic system identifies the apparent interests of a subaltern class with those of a fundamental class which is able to exercise political leadership because of its intellectual and moral leadership.

A vivid example of hegemony may be drawn from Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. The play centers on a small town economically dependent on tourists who are attracted to the area by springs with reputed curative powers. The town's doctor discovers that the water supply is inficted by organic matter from a nearby tannery, also a mainstay of the local economy. The mayor — the doctor's brother — warns him not to disclose this information, couching the issue in terms of "moral authority," white imploring: "The public doesn't need new ideas — the public is much better off with old ideas."<sup>19</sup>

Having failed to persuade the town elders of the impending danger, the doctor appeals to the public to take decisive action. In the end, the liberal press and the townspeople, along with the businessmen and the politicians, heap scorn upon the doctor. Hegemonic interests and the collective will are one.

Integral to this conception of hegemony are the material and institutional structures of ideology. Intellectuals play a crucial role in pronouncing and spreading ideologies through hegemonic apparatuses—among others, cultural forms, even architecture and street signs. These apparatuses enable a class or allied classes to rule through a mix of consent and coercion, consent being preeminent.

The state is neither a singular instrument of class interests nor an autonomous agency among plural groups. Rather, the capitalist state is the seat of bourgeois hegemony. Hegemony is vested there insofar as the state is “the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules...”<sup>20</sup> The definition of the state is thus expanded to engird the basic mechanisms of political power in civil society and is ultimately inscribed by the interests of a fundamental class.

Since class interests are never static, the exercise of hegemony must include a dynamic historical dimension. Consciousness is periodically marked by a “crisis of authority.” The masses become detached from their former ideologies and the ruling class loses consensus. To convert a crisis of this sort into a revolutionary transformation, a new social group must exercise leadership — i.e. moral and intellectual hegemony — before grabbing state power. Establishing a counter hegemony entails dissolving the ideological cement holding together the ruling class and the popular classes. In other words, the values spawned by social struggles are not mere reflections of economic forces but rather are aspects of material structures that shape class forces.

Under exceptionally tumultuous conditions, a “war of movement” might permit revolutionary elements to capture state power by a direct assault. But where the hegemonic state is resilient (namely, in the West, unlike in Russia before the Bolsheviks seized power) the struggle has to be carried out in civil society. In that case, a “war of position” steadily lays the foundation of a new state under the leadership of the working class by establishing alternative institutions and new cultural forms.

The Gramscian strategy to bring about ideological transformations, at least in the West, calls for the proletariat and allied strata — not least intellectuals — to build coalitions and to struggle for hegemony in all sectors. The top priority is the “organic”

phase, rather than the “conjunctural” instance, of struggle, thereby underlining the cardinal importance of changes in, life-styles and popular culture. A relentless process of corroding the established norms of civil society and building a new counterhegemony ultimately challenges the intellectual and moral bedrock of the bourgeois order.

To recap briefly, hegemony — the political, as well as the intellectual and moral, leadership exercised by the fundamental group in civil society over allied strata — is maintained to the extent that consent takes precedence over coercion. Interwoven in the concept of hegemony are the following themes: (1) *ideas, or values*, in civil society are diffused, and reinforced by (2) *structures* which meld the interests of the fundamental class and those of subaltern strata; (3) *transition* from a prevailing hegemony to a new social order may, in exceptional cases, take the form of a “war of movement,” allowing a revolutionary vanguard to seize (4) *state power*; but a more apposite (5) *strategy* in the advanced capitalist countries is a “war of position,” an erosion of hegemonic structures and a determined process of mounting a counterhegemony.

To be sure, Gramsci’s explanations of social change are powerful. Because his framework furnishes value analysis, it holds enormous appeal for students of ideology and culture.<sup>21</sup> Some of them are attracted to Gramsci’s work because it provides a possible bridge between mainstream and Marxist approaches.

This, I believe, is a false reconciliation. Notwithstanding the enormous utility of the concept of hegemony, Gramsci gives short shrift to the mainspring of Marx’s critique of political economy: Capitalism can be best understood as a totality. This perspective requires encapsulating the double nature of commodity production, use value and exchange value, in a unified framework. Gramsci’s contribution, though built upon this foundation, is excessively sociological. Gramsci gives scant attention to the growth mechanisms of capitalism as a system, hitherto the most developed and most complex organization of production. It is a self-expanding value, the taproot of a capitalist mode of production, that requires full elaboration in a well rounded analysis of various spheres of human activity.

It is not enough to bemoan the divorce of the study of politics and of civil society from the study of capital accumulation. Marxists are wont to din that we must grasp

the interconnections among realms of human activity. Still wanting, however, is a thoroughgoing integration of the mutual determination between politics and economics.

## **Discrepancies**

Against this background, we may consider the confusions in world order studies. The specific themes embedded in Gramsci's concept of hegemony will serve as signposts in the discussion that follows.

## **Ideas**

In both world order studies and political economy, it is taken for granted that ideas can illuminate a struggle. There is no debate over the proposition that ideas do have consequences. However, an approach that adopts world order values as a point of departure is essentially Hegelian, and decidedly not materialist, to the extent that it premises that history must realize what Hegel called "the idea of Spirit," a principle of a different order from that prevalent at transitory moments in history. In the introduction to his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel postulated that "world historical individuals" lead the drive toward actualizing a universal principle. For Hegel, these individuals share subjective insights into what is veritable in the realm of morality, ethics, and religion.

From another vantage point, this line of reasoning is muddled because it is arbitrary. By what criteria are values selected? How are we to choose among a multiplicity of values? Speculative idealism, which springs from an articulation of unconnected and invariant values, is at bottom subjectivist.

Just as Hegel contended that the object of history is to attain "World-Spirit" (in the form of "national spirits" comprised of organic members), world order authors underscore the importance for social analysis of spirituality. Taking issue with Marxism and liberalism alike, Falk argues: "Both [outlooks] underestimate the religious or spiritual dimension of human personality."<sup>22</sup> In this vein, the main reason why scholars have not given sober attention to global civilization, Saul Mendlovitz explains, is the immense difficulty of coming to grips with the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of culture (in conjunction with power and wealth).<sup>23</sup> Intrinsic to world order inquiry is "to think, feel and act as a global citizen....," Mendlovitz adds.<sup>24</sup> This claim follows from "the

understanding that global citizenship is a prerequisite for investigating, predicting, and exerting control over social and political processes.”<sup>25</sup>

In lieu of such apriority, what is sorely needed is detailed historical analysis of the root causes of global problems. This would entail examining the dual process of the internationalization of capital, on the one hand, and the countervailing forces of national and subnational hegemony which continue to fragment the globe, on the other. In place of indignation and moralistic injunctions to achieve world unity, what is wanting is rigorous inquiry into the determinants of the social ills which WOMP so acridly describes. The moral appeals, religion, and ethics can be linked to concrete phenomena and plied as tools for mobilization and the attainment of socioeconomic goals. In advance of hortatory argumentation, what ought to be adduced is more thoroughgoing evidence concerning the malleable interests of the conflicting groups that comprise the unfolding world—wide division of labor. Once WOMP delves into such deep structures, the project could truly begin to integrate its preferred values and social relations, which is the fundamental objective of world order studies.

Who are the groups that fashion global public policy? In much of world order studies and in political economy in general, there is an appreciation for the pitfalls of focusing on agents themselves and for the importance of extending analysis beyond interpersonal relations. However, despite this clarion call for structural analysis, world order studies frequently revert to a limited and static notion of structure. Notwithstanding its critique of realism, WOMP, especially during its first phase, took structure to mean formal authority, chiefly in the relations among states or between states and transnational organizations. This myopic view, springing as it does from timeless and abstract norms, blurs vistas of other kinds of structure, particularly production relations.

To understand the dynamics of the creation of world order, it is imperative to grasp the heterogeneity of distinct social formations. Setting apart these formations are fundamental inequalities. The inequalities of nations are anchored in imperialism and a set of classes in the advanced capitalist countries and the underdeveloped countries whose own advance and position are enhanced in the process.<sup>26</sup>

Who among the authors of the world order approach has carried out systematic



empirical research on the interaction between nations and classes? Galtung, whose *métier* is conceptualization, has come under fire because his work is excessively structuralist. He provides a static and schematic description of social stratification, a mummified rendition of the trappings of imperialism. In his usage, imperialism is disjoined from class analysis, without grounding in the processes of production and distribution under historically concrete conditions.<sup>27</sup> Other world order scholars have followed on the heels of the senior authors within this circle. Gernot Kohler, for example, seeks to apply the concept of “global apartheid” to the world system in an effort to reach “a just, participatory, peaceful and humane global society.”<sup>28</sup> He defines apartheid as a structure of society,<sup>29</sup> and submits: “Whenever a minority race dominates a majority composed of other races in a society, that society exhibits a structure of apartheid”<sup>30</sup> ‘Kohler holds that “the global society is a mirror reflection of South African society.”’<sup>31</sup>

For supporting evidence, Köhler provides tables of quantitative data on world income distribution, life expectancy and per capita gross national product in selected countries, and the distribution of deaths attributable to (presumably political) violence. Nowhere does he cite any—not one book or article — of the extensive historical literature on South Africa.<sup>32</sup> This documentary research shows that the catchy analogy, global apartheid, is profoundly mistaken, for in the white redoubt, the root cause of apartheid is a shortage of labor, which is certainly not the situation at the world level. Kohler fails to comprehend that apartheid is a vast system of labor control — Afrikanerdom is the expression of a racial monopoly over the means of production.

Nor does Köhler grasp that underlying the apartheid state is the contradiction between a rapidly expanding productive capacity and a narrow internal market. Although black labourers are the backbone of the South African economy, their opportunity for consumption is throttled. South African policy—makers attempted to escape this contradiction by intensifying repressive practices at home and by intervening in hinterland countries. The specific class relations that stir this process, while intermeshed with global imperialism are not in any sense a replica of world-wide structures.

Without going into detail, it is evident that the shortcomings that mar Köhler’s

study are widely ramified in the world order literature. Even on the question that WOMP handles most adeptly, the arms race and strategic policy, the project fails to cast its analysis beyond the incapacity of the nation—state system to respond to global needs. Clearly, world order scholars recognize political economy dimensions of the relationship between the state and war. And they may be right to argue that to end war, mankind must consign the state system to the dustbins of history. But this argument begs the question: What are the structural underpinnings of the state? Moreover, can the state system be eliminated without transforming the class bases of exploitation? As noted, Marxists believe that to answer these questions, the first step is to grasp the contradictions that stem from the dynamics of the production process.

From this perspective, world order studies is jointly flawed by the elemental failing to launch analysis at the level of social relations and the built-in rigidities of model building. The idealist method is intuitive, whereas what is at stake are counterintuitive, structural processes. Put differently, common sense can be a bad guide to understanding.

The method of modeling is to select a segment of the universe and to boil it down to a preferred image. The choice of facts assembled in the model is not only reductionist but also random, because the selection process is not governed by theory. In this positivist tradition, the facts are external to theory, introduced by assertion rather than demonstration, not produced and determined by theory.<sup>23</sup>

The defense of the idealist method is linked to an avowed need for eclecticism :

The world order effort is eclectic because it is a collective effort. It is the work of an in-dependent and stubborn group of scholars and thinkers, and it would be both futile and undesirable to try to force orthodoxy and conformity upon their work. Looking at the individuals involved and the work that they have produced, there is discernible agreement over broad values and goals, over the political means to be used, but there are important enough differences to preclude establishing an orthodoxy, a line by which all must abide. Eclecticism is also reflective of the fact that the grand ideologies of the past no longer have the appeal, the assurance, they had before. 'One hundred flowers' are encouraged to bloom within the movement. The trick here is to let these flowers bloom, but also to have enough ideological and intellectual coherence to tell

the difference between a flower and a weed, to be able to draw the line somewhere between proper and improper politics.<sup>34</sup>

IWO's dissatisfactions with the responses to a rapidly changing reality outlined above viz., managerial, confrontational, and self-reliant positions leads it to adopt a radically different response that I would characterize as one that combines globalism, humanism, and populism—concerned with the world as a whole, working for the humanity and dignity of each being, and aiming at the freedom and welfare of the poorer, deprived and exploited strata of the human family.<sup>35</sup>

The argument for eclecticism as methodology is the counterpart of a preference for political pluralism. This correspondence between methodology and political ideology obtains even if world order modelers are critical, at one level, of the pluralist camp. Eclecticism, amalgamating as it does bits and pieces in an “on the one hand, on the other hand” form of logic, substitutes irresolute thinking for the dialectical interaction of politics and economics, a process of double motion, moving from the abstract to the concrete and from the concrete to the abstract. The point is not to counsel one-track or narrow-minded reasoning — on the contrary — but to encourage fight and exacting theorizing.

## **Transition**

Proceeding eclectically, world order modelers entertain wishful visions of, but fail to theorize, the transition process. To wit, Mendlovitz, seeking to “blend” perspectives and to accommodate Third World critics, indicates “the first and foremost need” of world order inquiry and “the heart of the issue of transition” is “to insinuate a struggle theory of history.”<sup>36</sup> This calls for listening to the voices of the oppressed:

...speeches and writings of that leader—martyr against apartheid, Steve Biko, must become part of the movement for a just world order. The brutalized of Kampuchea and Idi Amin's Uganda, the thousands, of courageous men and women tortured in Korea, the Philippines and Chile, the starving and degraded peasantry of Northeast Brazil and other areas of the world, the blacks in The South Bronx, Miami and other parts of the United States who are shut from access to minimal material decencies in one of the richest societies in the world, the dissidents of Eastern Europe, and Mother

Teresa's flock — the people unable to even speak for themselves — must become the cornerstone of inquiry and action.<sup>37</sup>

This populist and Third Worldist appeal is meant to animate a passage “to global community from a Western—dominated nation—state system, “<sup>38</sup> which Mendlovitz charts thusly: “I believe that circa 2100 the likelihood of World government is almost 100%. I do not see the human race surviving until 2100 without some kind of centralized institutional structures on the globe.”<sup>39</sup>

Central to the world order view of the transition period is the importance of establishing humane government. Falk comes closest among world order modelers to conceptualizing transition when he formulates an explicit definition of the process: “planned and value—directed change that deliberately facilitates the shift from one system of world order to another.”<sup>40</sup> In another *context*, Falk candidly states that the study of transition amounts to and “an inventory of representative attitudes” about the future since “there is no coherent body of theory to draw upon.”<sup>41</sup> He and Sam Kim go so *far* as to claim that “it would be misleading even to search for a master key to the transition process,” which they perceive as a value-optimizing process.<sup>42</sup>

Notwithstanding (or because of) the prominence given to humane governance, Falk avers that transitional eddies ought to move in a nongovernmental and a nonstatist direction. This follows from a persistent theme in his (and other WOMP writers') work: The state is simultaneously too big to satisfy human needs and too small to provide effective guidance for global inter-dependence.<sup>43</sup> Thus the quest for humane governance converges with radical anarchism, the antistatist tenets of which Falk endorses: “For those of us who view our era as one of transition between the state system and some globalist sequel, the anarchist perspective becomes increasingly relevant and attractive.”

Let us take another tack. Whereas the humility of world order modelers on the vexing issue of transition is admirable, they ought not to disavow theory in this vital area of inquiry.

I have developed the thesis elsewhere that transition can best be understood by comparing it to revolution. As an abrupt change in the social and economic order, revolution is a rupture in history marked at the national level by the victory of a new

class over an old one, potentially opening up a period of transition. The political instance is crucial precisely because in this conjecture the voluntarist aspects of class struggle have their greatest scope. Transition, on the other hand, is a long-term phenomenon. Transition means that one mode of production is destroyed and replaced by another; the economic, political, and ideological instances of the social structure that comprise a given formation are transformed.<sup>45</sup>

Seen in this light, the moralistic preferences embellished by world order scholars are all too iffy. Hypothetical scenarios deal only with what might be. This basis for projecting preferred futures is clouded and unclear.

Given Mendlovitz's *bona fide* sensitivity to exploitation and oppression, a quality which has invigorated the Institute for World Order, why must he only "insinuate" a struggle theory into the world order perspective? Taking issue with the Narodnik reformers of his day, Lenin contrasted subjectivism and materialism: "the subjectivists.. insinuated their utopias instead of 'investigating the social group'".<sup>46</sup> One would like to say to the subjectivist and the wistful idealist, go further, eliminate intuitive impressions; investigate definite periods in history; and show the class contradictions that under given conditions, can give rise to a transition to a new order, understood as a higher mode of production.

Notwithstanding its genuine attempts to overcome provincialism in the study of international relations, the US—based Institute for World Order remains disconnected from enduring work in other countries, particularly in the socialist ones. The contribution of a single Romanian specialist on international relations<sup>47</sup> does not compensate for the surprising neglect among world order modelers for an extensive and rich literature on the transition process. Although Falk and other world order authors stress the need for global planning, who among their cohorts has carefully examined the seminal debates on installing the planning mechanism in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s?<sup>48</sup> It is revealing that they never mention these debates. World order modelers give the impression that they are entering this field *de novo*. At the same time, they fail to derive lessons of experience from past transitional epochs and thereby render their work timeless.<sup>49</sup>

A centralized guidance system, according to Falk, must be coupled with

decentralized structures molded by voluntary action, as called for by radical anarchism. In his view, whether the anarchist prospect can be achieved is a matter of appropriate politics. Seen differently, it is wrong to reduce the concept of anarchy to ideas and politics. Anarchy denotes the contradictions inherent in capital itself. There is an irreducible conflict between the forces of production that are increasingly technically intermeshed, scientifically advanced, and administratively centralized, on the one hand, and the relations of production that are ever more atomized, brutish, and factious, on the other. Although the precise timing cannot be known in advance, a breakdown will occur because capitalism generates technical forms of production that outstrip its ability for social control. This wilt by no means be an automatic process. The conditions are contingent.

The political determinism characteristic of many world order studies is a major deficiency. WOMP's preoccupation with the nation-state system has resulted in the neglect of economic phenomena. This emphasis on politics has slighted the complex interactions among all three levels of social structure — economics, politics, and ideology. Political determinism is analogous to the bias towards economic reductionism in some branches of Marxism. This one sidedness gave Gramsci cause to take exception to much of the intellectual work of his day. Writing about the Western world, he stressed that the state is inscribed by class contradictions, is permeable, and produces a diversified ideological discourse. Since the publication of Gramsci's notebooks, political economists have developed a wide-ranging literature on the increasing intervention of the capitalist state in the economy and the growth of political movements for social change outside of the economic struggle between capital and labor at the point of production.

## **The State**

Stripped to its essentials, the state is the means by which the political conditions of reproduction of a mode of production are assured in the class struggle. The capitalist state is an order of pervasive force. Pervasive not in the sense of total control over coercive institutions. Nor in the sense of organized violence. Rather, pervasive in that it penetrates extensively. All societies are subject to the economic power of capitalist relations.

The mechanisms of coercion are lodged in political institutions that under certain conditions, are relatively independent of social classes, including the hegemonic class. The compulsion of capitalist production presupposes that workers view their situation as though it were not attributable to force. Thus “citizens” — a bourgeois concept encasing both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat — are “free” to sell their labour power to whichever capitalist employer they choose. This illusory freedom allows only that they vend their labour to the capitalist class as a whole. There is no voluntary disposition of commodities in contractual agreements freely entered.<sup>50</sup>

Embroidering on the theory of the state, Marxists feature differing emphases. Instrumentalists take as a cornerstone of their analysis the thesis that the state apparatus is not a neutral arbiter among competing interests, but is suffused with a class character wielded by different social elements to their own advantage. This version of Marxism regards the state as a quantum of domination, the sum total of the respective powers of the agents of state apparatuses. In this view a transition requires a change in the agents who manage the state.<sup>51</sup>

But the state is more than a tool of domination. It is in this regard that the structuralist critique of economism and other forms of reductionism has provided the theoretical foundations for the extension of Marxism into new realms of inquiry. In his earlier work Poulantzas saw the state as a factor of cohesion for the unity of society and as a guarantor of bourgeois class hegemony. The state is thus the site of internal conflicts within the dominant classes as well as of contradictions between popular sectors and dominant classes.<sup>52</sup> In a later formulation, Poulantzas elaborated the thesis that the state is not an intrinsic entity but, like capital, a relationship of social forces mediated and expressed in its institutions. State policy is not the singular project of the hegemonic class but rather a field outside of which and against which social forces struggle.<sup>53</sup>

Moving beyond Poulantzas, the current debates over the autonomy of the state call for the development of an independent Marxist theory of politics which would comprehend, in a non-reductionist manner, the specificity of different types of political struggle and the ultimate transformation of the class character of the capitalist state. But to introduce these debates here would divert us from our fundamental purpose of making clearer the issues at stake between world order modelers and dialecticians.<sup>54</sup>

World order studies and political economy alike seek to demystify the state. Both approaches recognize that the state is not a set of static institutions. What separates the two schools is the insistence by world order scholars that the nation-state system is doomed because it blocks the realization of human values. A multitude of sovereign states under the heel of self-serving elites cannot effectively cope with global problems, the argument runs. States differ in their priorities, giving rise to diverse perceptions. Such differences fuel statism, which, from the world order standpoint, is indissolubly linked to violence and warfare and threatens human survival itself.

This is murky. It cannot be otherwise until world order scholars develop a theory of the state. They depict the inadequacy of the state primarily as a problem of organization and leadership. They misconstrue the problem for they have not imparted theoretical meaning to the symbiotic relationship between the nation-state and capitalism, whose origins in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are inextricably intertwined without an accurate diagnosis, the world order modeler, like the physician, cannot prescribe appropriate remedies to cure ailments.

We do not live in a political world dominated by outmoded national units whose basis is the principle of sovereignty. We live in a capitalist world marked by the anarchy of the market, which actuates the fundamental contradiction between increasingly internationalized production and the narrowing of private appropriation by the few. What makes this world tick is not the need to optimize honeyed values but the relentless drive to accumulate capital. It is this drive, harnessed, by political institutions and hegemonic ideologies, that in a nuclear age generates unprecedented crises that imperil human existence.

## **Praxis**

What does world order thinking contribute to a strategy of global transformation? The enterprise's effort to craft a strategy seldom focuses on revamping foreign policies that fail to satisfy human needs and endanger the planet." WOMP's few attempts to spell out alternative foreign policies are informed by the belief that if only the organizational forms and loyalties of a global citizenry were transmuted, violence would diminish and the prospects for human survival would increase exponentially. To this end, world order strategists develop scenarios, plan pedagogical innovations, and exhort their audiences.<sup>56</sup>



WOMP's avowed interest in alternative policies may be at odd.; with, its promised emphasis on structural change. Unless one takes the position that reformist solutions will pave the way to a structural transformation, the tension in world order thinking between reformism and nonstatist or anarchist goals must be sorted out. In doing so, it is important to demonstrate that the suggested alternatives will not merely be put in the service of class agents whose interests are opposed to fundamental structural change. So, too, one must delimit the coalition of groups which would enlist to bring about a social transformation.

Heretofore, in their attempt to engineer a global transformation, world order scholars have failed to derive their strategies from an analysis of an organic system whose inner logic requires the subordination of nations and the repression of classes in order to expand. The threat to human survival is therefore treated as a superstructural phenomenon inasmuch as it is not grounded in the real relations of production. An analysis of world order centering on superstructure underrates the structural limits to global reform.

It is one thing to call for structural analysis. It is another to see the causes of world disorder as the peculiarities of tricksters and self-serving elites' policies rather than as distinctive features of the social organization of production, the crucible in which public policies are molded. Given the social system of production that now prevails at the world level, would global reform lead to something other than a change in the form of capital? Under prevailing conditions, global planning is not a magic solution to the ills of capitalist life. As envisaged, it would only marginally affect capital, the opus of social labour organized by commodity production.

Radical social science — which ought not to be confused with political economy as understood here — has a certain cachet. It intermingles terms such as class, imperialism, revolution, and exploitation with idealist epistemology and methodology. It does not offer a distinctive or rigorous theoretical framework. The danger is that radical social science can obscure rather than facilitate analysis. This is especially apparent when it comes to formulating strategy. Guessing about the future is no substitute for pains— taking study of the concrete processes that find expression in a transition period.

## **The Potential of World Order Studies**

World order studies, despite its weak theoretical and methodological foundations, has made an important contribution to international relations research. Scholars within its ranks have produced incisive works, in some cases far more incisive than some of those which rest on the strongest of theoretical foundations. The world order movement is likely to gain currency, for at its core is an integrative effort. It is best understood as an ideological intervention that calls into question an array of cherished values and procedures. As such, it incorporates counterhegemonic potential. World order studies has the ability to implant and nourish embryonic seeds of protest and revolt.

The main line of criticism developed here is not that the world order enterprise lacks decided socialist content. Lest there be misunderstanding, my concern is not to vaunt a "pure" Marxist political economy. On the contrary, it is to learn from and contribute to other traditions. This entails something apart from eclectic pluralism. What is required is consistent and coherent theorizing.

The chief weakness in world order studies is its elemental failure to transpose questions. How a question is formulated sets the bounds of an answer. World order scholars largely pose questions whose categories of analysis are set by policy-makers. The world order scholars who do not fall into this trap still work within the inhibiting compass of liberal discourse, of which radical social science is a variant. If terms of reference are drawn from what is given by mainstream opponents, one loses a chance to pose questions that produce far-reaching, alternative strategies and policies.

To ensure that a discussion does not hinge on sterile hopes, one would like to say: Disclose the antagonisms in the society and the state that condition the lofty ideals propounded by intellectuals. Put in the forefront the connections between hegemonic ideologies and the commodity organization of an economy. As for practical matters, indicate in graphic detail how the militarization of foreign policy is not due to a psychological drive, a death wish, but serves the interests of fractions of the bourgeoisie. Try not to dwell on professorial flourishes about wistful desiderata. Argumentation should not transcend the specificity of countries, historical periods, and classes. Locating the roots of global problems in international and local production relations minimizes the possibility that highfalutin argumentation will overshoot particular classes.

More careful attention should be given to the following topics:<sup>57</sup>

1. What is the proper role, of empirical research in world order studies? How will this research be carried out without reverting to positivism and empiricism?
2. Is it possible to theorize world order holistically without being reductionist either in the economist or idealist sense?
3. Within a world order framework, how does one examine historical development and underdevelopment as totalities, taking into account dialectical and analytic reasoning? This focuses inquiry on, what are the reproductive capacities and social structures and the state?
4. Barring subjectivism as a guide to global transformation, what are the concrete processes that accelerate and retard the transition process?

It is important to remember that the world order movement is not new. Among its forerunners were the Futurists of Gramsci's day. They did not define themselves as revolutionary socialists, but attacked the old order, especially the academic establishment and culture (religion, literature, dance, etc.), in Italy in the 1920s. Gramsci viewed the Futurist movement as a form of romanticism, yet nonetheless supported it before the war in an attempt to build a counterhegemonic coalition.

For Gramsci, politics is a collective struggle that musters mass energies in the effort to actualize new ideals. This was the province of Machiavelli whose Prince sought to establish a new order. In a discourse on how transformation is wrought by the modern prince — a metaphor for a collective agent, the revolutionary party — Gramsci describes Machiavelli as a man of passions concerned with “what ought to be,” albeit not in a moralistic sense. Further, Gramsci derives the following lesson from *The Prince* in respect to the ought question:

It is one, that is to say, of seeing whether what “ought to be” is arbitrary or necessary; whether it is concrete will [sic] on the one hand or idle fancy, yearning, daydream on the other. The active politician is a creator, an initiator; but he neither creates from nothing nor does he move in the turbid void of his own desires and dreams. He bases himself on effective reality, but what is this effective reality? Is it something static and immobile, or is it not rather a relation of forces in continuous

motion and shift of equilibrium? If one applies one's will to the creation of a new equilibrium among the forces which really exist and are operative — basing oneself on the particular force which one believes to be progressive and strengthening it to help it to victory — one still moves on the terrain of effective reality, but does so in order to dominate and transcend it (or to contribute to this). What 'ought to be' is therefore concrete; indeed it is the only realistic and historicist interpretation of reality, it alone is history in the making and philosophy in the making, it alone is politics.<sup>58</sup>

If Gramsci is right in saying that the question of "what ought to be" in politics and economics must be considered concretely "on the terrain of effective reality" in order to transcend that reality, it comes down to this: The world order movement should reject the thesis that the morality and universality of values is the starting point of inquiry. Gramsci's message may serve as an invitation to world order scholars to excoriate a value-centered approach that runs aground on the scholars of disembodied abstractionism and mechanistic model building. It would be well if these scholars joined in the struggle to develop a rigorous analysis of global problems, in which the top priority is to explicate in a unified, framework the concrete processes — economic, political, and ideological — that would give rise to a transition to a new world order.

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