

Description of the Module

Items	Description of the Module
Subject Name	Sociology
Paper Name	Contemporary Social Theory
Module Name/Title	Neo marxist perspectives – Antonio Gramsci
Pre Requisites	Basic concepts and theories propounded by Antonio Gramsci
Objectives	This module seeks to highlight the prominent cultural and political writings of Antonio Gramsci. In particular, it looks at Gramsci's perspectives on civil society, hegemony, the role of intellectuals in society, different types of crises in capitalist society and the impact of American influence on Europe, which he called Americanism and Fordism.
Key words	Civil Society, Hegemony, Intellectual, Crisis, Passive Revolution, Caesarism, Americanism, Fordism

Module Structure

Neo Marxist Perspectives: Antonio Gramsci	Introduction, Civil Society, Hegemony, Role of Intellectuals, Crisis, Americanism and Fordism, Summary, References, Learn More.
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NEO MARXIST PERSPECTIVES

Antonio Gramsci

1. An Introduction

Antonio Gramsci, born in Ales, Italy in the year 1891, is known the world over for his writings on politics and culture. Gramsci's work on the role of the intermediate sphere of civil society and its institutions in preserving the leadership of the ruling classes is considered one of the most unique contributions in political theories. Though Gramsci has borrowed ideas such as base and superstructure and Caesarism (Bonapartism) from Marx and Lenin, respectively, however, he has given his own, very original interpretations of these concepts, in his own writings.

Gramsci is known also for his writings on the hegemony (leadership) of the ruling classes and how the ruled or subjugated classes can counter-hegemonize for a progressive (socialist) society. His works fall within the Neo Marxist framework, given that Gramsci has been influenced by some of the assumptions and arguments associated with Marx.

This module is divided into five parts and includes some of the most influential works of Gramsci, which he covered in his most original contribution to political theory 'The Prison Notebooks' (written between 1929 and 1935). They are:

1. Civil Society
2. Hegemony
3. Role of Intellectuals
4. Crisis and
5. Americanism and Fordism

2. Civil society

Gramsci borrows the terms used originally by Marx, i.e., base and superstructure, to explain class relations in capitalist society. However, his definitions of base and superstructure differ from that of Marx. For Marx, the economic base gives form to the ideology of the state (superstructure), where the political and legal apparatus is centred. Gramsci, on the other hand, introduced the concept of an intermediate sphere, between the economy and the state. This intermediary sphere, which is located in the superstructure, comprise of civil society and hegemony.

All institutions of civil society are located in the intermediate sphere. These institutions include religious (the Catholic Church), political (trade unions and political parties), cultural (literature, arts, mass media), social (family) and everyday activities (membership of clubs, social get-togethers). It is in this sphere that the ideas that can guide the society are 'created'. Therefore, Gramsci, unlike Marx, gives importance to the superstructure rather than the economic base, as the source of the state's ideology.

According to Gramsci, the state cannot be understood without first understanding what constitutes civil society. Gramsci also makes a distinction between political society and civil society. Political society is the domain in which one can locate the hegemony of the state through its political apparatus whereas civil society is the domain where the more invisible forms of power are located through the institutions of education, culture and religion.

While the constituents of civil society are always in operation, the apparatus of the state, which includes the police, the judiciary and the armed forces, are put into operation only when the system itself is threatened. Civil society is the sphere where the practices of both the ideological and cultural superstructure and the state's coercive nature are negotiated. Through the reconciliation of these two processes, the state obtains the consent of the people for its policies and programmes.

Gramsci classifies states through their civil societies, i.e. though he accepts that coercive power structures are usually characteristic of all states, it is states with civil societies that can be considered as truly democratic and accountable entities. In this way the very existence of civil societies, through which consent of the people can be obtained for the state's programmes and policies, provides a protective buffer for the bourgeois state. On the other hand, the individual in Gramsci's theory has no such protection either from the state or from civil society. For Gramsci, both the state and civil society have to be transformed to protect the civil liberties of individuals.

Using the intermediate sphere of civil society, the ruling class builds consent for its hegemony or leadership over the masses. Gramsci urges the working class also to use the intermediate sphere to build a solid foundation for its values, ideas and aspirations, namely, the creation of a socialist state. According to him, the ruling classes (or the bourgeois state) are already using civil society to ideologically indoctrinate the masses into believing that their policies are just and fair, and thereby building consent for these policies. In this way, the ruling classes maintain inequalities in society by making the masses believe that preserving the status quo is good for them.

An example of the ruling class implementing an unjust policy, according to Gramsci, was the educational policy of 1923 in Italy, which debarred schools from teaching courses in standard Italian, which is the language spoken by the national elite. The national elite of Italy came predominantly from the Northern part of the region. The result of this policy was the exclusion of and denial of access to good jobs for the masses, which mainly came from Southern Italy, since employers preferred workers who spoke standard Italian. With the dialect-speaker and the standard-Italian speaker unable to communicate with each other, no political bond could also ever develop between the two. This resulted in the latter continuing to exist in a subjugated manner, unable to comprehend or be part of the cultural milieu created and maintained by the national elite. Lack of a political bond between the elite and the masses and non-preference in jobs, were some outcomes of the promotion of the dialect as the medium of instruction in educational institutes. Gramsci used the term 'Southern Question' to explain this situation.

Another problem that arose as a result of the bifurcation of what was considered standard (elite/Northern) and local (mass/Southern) culture was the lack of development of indigenous Italian literature or popular culture. Popular culture allows perceptions of the world and realities to be shared by all members of a society. In Italy, the elite preferred to write literature which only they could identify with. Therefore, there were no original or Italian genres of romance, thriller, children's literature or science fiction, which the elite and the masses could connect with. The masses relied on translations from English and French literature, whose worldview they could better understand, as it resonated with their own realities.

Despite this lacuna, two forms of indigenous popular culture had developed in Italy, which appealed both to the elite and the ordinary masses. These were the opera and folklore. Both being non-literary, they could be understood by people who inhabited the South of Italy, who were largely illiterate. According to Gramsci, the opera is a useful medium of articulating people's feelings. As a result of its extravagant and opulent style, the opera enabled the masses to escape their degraded lives and enter the exclusive realm of noble feelings and passions, otherwise considered a preserve of the elite. Since the opera operated in the realm of 'feeling' rather than that of thought, it closely resembled folklore, which was the other important component of Gramsci's extended definition of popular culture. For Gramsci, folklore was important because it was a 'living' representation of reality as opposed to the 'official' representation (elite writing).

Folklore could help bridge communication between the elite and the masses since its representation of reality could be the opposite of the official representation of reality, incorporating the traditional, transitional and modern aspects of society.

Both the opera and folklore are two important ways of constructing the 'national-popular', which is a situation, for Gramsci, where the cultures of the North and the South can come together, without one imposing itself on the other. The national-popular is thus a situation:

- a. Where the Italian nation comprises of the cultures of both the North and the South
- b. In which the worldview and conception of the South are different from and sometimes opposed to that of the North, and
- c. Where the North does not view Southern culture as inferior and the South does not view Northern culture as unique and superior

Therefore, identities are not merged; rather everyone is aware of their own distinct identity. This difference is what, for Gramsci, makes for 'successful nation-building'.

Gramsci mentioned two other concepts related to people's perceptions of reality. These are 'common sense' and 'good sense'. On the one hand, common sense is similar to philosophy in that both are grounded in reality, and on the other hand, common sense is similar to folklore in terms of the wide range of areas that comes within its fold, including history, science and philosophy. Therefore, the Gramscian definition of common sense is unlike the English usage of this term; rather common sense, for Gramsci, refers to the conceptions common to a society or community.

Good sense, on the other hand, is closer to the English usage of the term. It refers to the realistic sense of the world which helps people survive on a day-to-day basis. This type of understanding is common to both the dominant and dominated groups. In addition to realism, good sense also has the emotive or affective side. This simply means that people must be able to combine the philosophical understanding of a situation with some feeling for that situation, i.e. the affective side. In other words, they must be able to feel for the situation as it is only in this way that the gap between the subjugated people and the working class can be bridged and a mutual exchange of ideas, objectives and aspirations take place.

To summarize, for Gramsci civil society refers to the political and cultural hegemony of one class or social group over society. This hegemony is achieved either by force, which is the sphere of political society, through the use of armed forces, police and the law, and by consent, which is the sphere of civil society, where consent is obtained through the Church, the educational system, and the press. It is the ruling social group which leads both political and civil society – since consent has to be obtained for hegemony, it is obtained by the hegemony of the social group within civil society. Gramsci uses certain terms to explain the dynamics of civil society. These include the Southern Question, the 'national-popular', and good sense and common sense.

Using the example of the Italian government's unjust educational policy of 1923, Gramsci explains the emergence of the Southern Question and shows how the ruling classes can perpetuate policies that favor them, by indoctrinating and thereby obtaining the consent of the masses. He laments the resultant lack of development of a popular culture in Italy whose meanings can be shared by both the elite as well as the masses. Gramsci notes the importance of folklore and opera in creating a shared 'national-popular', where the cultures of both North and South Italy are appreciated without merging into one. Finally Gramsci notes the importance of 'common sense' and 'good sense', both of which play a role in shaping the individual's perception of reality.

3. Hegemony

Gramsci's interest in the concept of hegemony arose as a result of the rise of fascism in Italy and the failure of working class movements in Europe. According to Gramsci, any struggle for a progressive society must involve not just armed struggles (wars of manoeuvre), but ideas and ideologies, which guide that struggle (wars of position). So, for Gramsci, though unequal economic relations constitute an important factor in any movement for a progressive society, they are just one aspect of that movement. Culture and ideology, both of which occupy the intermediate sphere of the superstructure, are equally important and autonomous constituents of any struggle or movement.

The importance of culture and ideology is seen in the fact that consent of the masses to the aspirations of the working classes who want a new socialist state, is obtained not by coercion, but rather, by consent. To obtain the consent of people, the working classes must provide them with intellectual and moral leadership, which incorporates their worldview, aspirations and needs, into the working class' revolutionary struggle.

It is through ideological indoctrination that the bourgeois ruling class gained hegemony over the others. They attained supremacy because they were economically more powerful and secondly, using the institutions of civil society, they were able to convince people that their intellectual and moral leadership was proper. The process of obtaining the consent of the ordinary masses was not a top-down approach; rather it involved protracted negotiations, which ultimately gave rise to consensus – both ideological and political – around the aspirations of the dominant group and the dominated group.

To come out of the ideological indoctrination of the ruling classes, Gramsci urged the working class to form alliances with other subordinate groups to defeat the bourgeois state. According to Gramsci, it was the failure to form such alliances that led to the defeat of the working class movements in Europe. Forming the right alliances would have enabled them to overcome the misunderstandings and hostilities that existed within the dominated group, comprising of the working class, the peasantry and the intellectuals in this group.

The alliance of the working class and other subjugated groups would be led by the industrial working class, who would be able to provide the intellectual and moral leadership to overcome differences within the group and create a political organization accepted by all, which would defeat the fascist state. The leadership, intellectual and moral, provided by the industrial working class, is the core of any progressive movement. This is what is meant by hegemony.

So, for Gramsci, hegemony was not exclusive to the bourgeoisie, it could also be a strategy adopted successfully by the industrial working class, by incorporating its interests with those of other allies within the dominated group. In this way, the working class can lead the formation of a network of alliances which will eventually overthrow the bourgeois Fascist state. So, the basis of unity of the subjugated groups is their weaker economic status and the incorporation of the cultural aspirations of all segments of this group.

Gramsci noted that while the hegemonic group led the other subjugated groups in the struggle for a socialist state through consensus, it could also impose its aspirations and will on antagonistic groups. To do this, it may even go to the extent of liquidating these groups, by using armed force if necessary. Therefore, while direct consent is sought from the subalterns who allow themselves to be led by the hegemonic bloc, coercion is forced upon those who are antagonistic to the hegemonic bloc's aspirations to struggle against the bourgeois state.

Therefore, hegemonic leadership involves a combination of both coercion and consent. While consent is obtained in the sphere of civil society, it is the sphere of political society which exercises coercion. Political society comprises the legal and political machinery of the state through which it enforces the rule of law in society. This sphere dominates society when there is no consent on certain issues. As mentioned earlier, this can sometimes result in the use of armed forces to obtain consent by force. This, for Gramsci, is the war of manoeuvre, when consent has to be obtained quickly. The war of position, on the other hand, is long-term and involves the intellectual and moral leadership through which consent is obtained over time.

Gramsci distinguished between two types of hegemony – limited and expansive. An expansive hegemony is one in which people spontaneously give their consent to the hegemonic bloc. Limited hegemony, on the other hand, refers to a situation where the hegemonic bloc dominates the dissenting voices through coercion and obtains their consent by force. This type of hegemony is limited because the hegemonic group has failed to genuinely incorporate the aspirations of the subjugated people and therefore, does not enjoy strong support.

Expansive hegemony is what results in a national-popular, where a wide range of views and aspirations, sometimes differing, are incorporated by the hegemonic leadership, within the progressive project for a better state. Here, common sense again comes into the picture because the conceptions common to different groups are amalgamated into one common conception of the world. However, the common sense of the masses can also be shaped by the hegemonic class to meet its goals. Since the common sense of different social groups is ever-changing, groups which have an expansive hegemony by tying together various threads of common sense into one, are potentially unstable. This is because some of the subjugated groups, with their differing world-views, can try and challenge the authority of the central hegemonic group. So, there is always a potential threat to the continued hegemony of the ruling class.

Hegemony is, therefore, a strategy employed by the ruling class, through ideological indoctrination, and by the working class using cultural, moral and intellectual leadership, over the masses, through the institutions of civil society. Hegemony can be accepted by the people through consent (expansive hegemony), and at times, by coercion (limited hegemony).

To summarize, Gramsci uses the term hegemony to explain the dominance of the bourgeois class over the masses, not by means of force alone, but through their cultural and ideological indoctrination. In this way, people accept as ‘common sense’ and ‘good sense’ what the bourgeois state, through the intermediate sphere of civil society, propagates as natural. However, ‘common sense’ is not static; this means that the hegemony of the ruling classes cannot last forever. Rather, it must be constantly reworked to present ruling class ideology as the characteristic trait of an equal and just society. In this way, the ruling class uses its hegemony, according to Gramsci, to achieve the ideological indoctrination and subjugation of the classes, in order to retain its power over them.

4. Role of intellectuals

According to Gramsci, ‘all men are intellectuals’. However, not everyone can be professional intellectuals in society. ‘Intellectual’ in the Gramscian sense of the word, refers to the manner in which social relations are structured in society at any point in time, where certain types of activities are categorized as intellectual and others as practical knowledge. In addition to the individual intellectual, there can also be the collective intellectual, which for Gramsci was the revolutionary political party which would lead society in achieving a socialist state.

Gramsci made a distinction between organic and traditional intellectuals. According to Gramsci, every group, be it the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, the peasants or other subjugated groups, can develop its own set of intellectuals. In capitalist society, the intellectuals include the bureaucrats, lawyers, business men, engineers and industrial technicians. It is amongst the engineers and the industrial technicians that Gramsci saw potential for the rise of an intellectual group which would lead the labour movement. These are, according to Gramsci, the organic intellectuals.

Engineers and industrial technicians are important for Gramsci because only they can understand the technical and administrative workings of an industry and help the working class gain control by overthrowing the bourgeoisie. However, it is not sufficient for organic intellectuals to have only technical knowledge. They must also be willing participants in the revolutionary struggle to gain hegemony. Therefore, in addition to being technically sound, engineers and industrial technicians must guide the struggle for a progressive society. It is in the ability to convert technical knowledge into politically useful language that the authority of organic intellectuals lies. The traditional intellectual, on the other hand, is someone who stays away from the web of social life. Examples of the traditional intellectual, for Gramsci, are writers, philosophers and artists. The traditional intellectuals consider their work to be autonomous of political connotations.

Gramsci did not distinguish between physical and intellectual activity. According to him, no work can take place without the involvement of the brain, therefore, just as learning is a type of physical activity, physical labour is also a type of intellectual activity. In this way, he explained that acquiring knowledge is not the sole preserve of the intellectual; anyone who works sufficiently hard can acquire knowledge. This understanding of the learning process as a form of work that is not unique to any one group is very important especially in the field of education. Otherwise, education will be seen as something which only a few (the elite) are capable of achieving through intellectual labour. Such a perception of the learning process would only result in creating persisting inequalities in and through the education system by denying entry to children of the lower classes.

An example Gramsci gave of the enforcement of a difference between intellectual and physical activity, by the bourgeois state, was the educational policy related to vocational education. While vocational education would aid children from the poor sections to improve their prospects, provided they got the right training, such an education would determine once and for all their economically weaker status in society. This would consequently make them unsuitable for a more rigorous, standard education. It is made worse by the fact that traditional education is considered intellectually more demanding, and therefore superior. In this way, educational reforms also play a role in maintaining inequalities and deciding who is intellectually superior and who is inferior.

For Gramsci, in a progressive society, the learning process is a constantly evolving dialogue between the intellectuals and the masses. The intellectuals must develop a feeling for the values and aspirations held by the masses, since they do not know how to articulate it effectively to the political class. According to Gramsci, intellectuals must make a 'sentimental connection' with the masses, by first understanding their worldview with empathy, and then relaying this worldview to the ruling classes. Subsequently, a superior conception of the world must be conveyed to the masses, which they must voluntarily give their consent to, as this new worldview has considered their aspirations as well. This can help the hegemonic bloc and the subjugated class realize a common synthesized worldview, which is essential if the hegemonic bloc wants to lead the peasants and other subalterns successfully towards a progressive society.

To summarize, Gramsci distinguished between 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals are the men of letters, artists and intellectuals whose interests are more universal than class-specific. Organic intellectuals, on the other hand, are the ideological vanguards of a revolution that seeks to overthrow the capitalist state. Organic intellectuals are found among those who have technical

knowledge and who are aware of the inner workings of the capitalist system. Moreover, they should be able to convert their understanding of the capitalist system into non-technical language, which will help the masses understand that they are essentially victims of an oppressive capitalist state. Gramsci did not distinguish between physical and intellectual activity – for him, any physical activity uses the brain, just as use of the brain also entails some physical activity.

5. Crisis

Hegemony, for Gramsci, means the process by which the working class obtains the consent of the subjugated by, first of all, understanding their worldview and then accepting and representing that worldview as part of the overall project for a more progressive society. So, hegemony is a peaceful process whereby direct consent of the people is obtained in this manner. However, there are also times of dissent towards the intellectual and moral leadership of the dominant group.

This occurs when there is limited hegemony during which time the hegemonic bloc, through force, tries to obtain the consensus of groups which do not want to participate in the struggle. Trying to obtain acceptance for its leadership by force can have a detrimental effect on the credibility of the dominant hegemonic group. This type of hegemonic activity in which the hegemonic group tries to stay in power by using force is called crisis by Gramsci. It is a time when the subjugated class, despite their awareness of the political, legal and economic might of the ruling class, is prepared to take on that might, in order to make way for a new leadership that would be more sensitive to their own aspirations. Gramsci distinguished between two types of crisis - organic and conjunctural.

A conjunctural crisis is one which can restore status quo to some extent, such as when a powerful ruling class, which has lost some of its credibility, is able to restore power by making use of its political, legal and economic strengths against the comparatively weaker counter-hegemonic forces. An organic crisis is more difficult to overcome and the state is dependent upon armed forces to preserve its hegemony (thereby losing credibility). In this case, the state is no longer a neutral party – it is interested in retaining its lost credibility, and thereby, its power.

The reason for the dissensus could be many – the ruling class may not have delivered upon the political promises it had made to the masses before ascending to power or an otherwise passive populace has suddenly become politically active and has raised new demands upon the ruling class, with the potential to lead a revolution that can overthrow the state.

5.1 Passive revolution

A crisis, be it organic or conjunctural, can ultimately restore the power of the ruling class. However, its credibility is not the same as before, because it has restored hegemony by force. Therefore, the hegemony is limited and power can be temporary. This is so because it is unlikely that the counter-hegemonic forces, which have seen avenues for upward movement, will suddenly back down. To this process, Gramsci gave the name 'passive revolution' – which is a situation where a ruling class, which does not enjoy the genuine consent for its leadership, makes itself vulnerable to crises.

5.2 Caesarism

According to Gramsci, there are times in history when the two fundamental classes in society, (the bourgeois and the proletariat), are in a situation where the power of the ruling class is neutralized by its

lack of credibility or leadership by genuine consent. So, neither class is in a position to hegemonize the other. This Gramsci called an 'interregnum' or 'static equilibrium'. In such a situation, where the old leadership has lost its credibility but there is no new leadership either, according to Gramsci, 'morbid symptoms' appear in society.

An example of a 'morbid symptom' for Gramsci is the emergence of charismatic leaders. They provide leadership to the masses during the interregnum period to construct a new society - based solely on their personality. Gramsci used the word 'Caesarism' to explain this situation. These charismatic leaders play out their role in the intermediate sphere of civil society. Caesarist leaders can be both political parties and individuals, who try to win the approval of people. Caesarism is progressive when charismatic leadership allows emerging social groups to come to power and reactionary when a conservative (Fascist) force comes to power.

To summarize, a crisis occurs when the masses oppose or reject the ideological leadership of the ruling class. This occurs when the ruling class enjoys only a limited hegemony, which means that it does not enjoy the full support of all the groups in society. At this time, the hegemonic group can resort to force, which can further damage its leadership. Gramsci termed this situation as crisis. A conjunctural crisis is easier for the dominant group to control, as it has not lost all its credibility yet. An organic crisis, on the other hand, has the potential to lead to a revolution, as the dominant group, having lost its credibility, resorts to the use of force to retain power. Gramsci uses terms such as passive revolution and Caesarism to denote the situation in a society where the ruling class has lost some of its credibility, the ruled class has had a taste of power and looks for opportunities to overthrow the ruling class leadership, and this gives rise to 'morbid symptoms' such as the emergence of charismatic or Caesarist leaders, who will take advantage of such a situation to overthrow the existing leadership.

6. Americanism and Fordism

Gramsci sought to understand the expansion of the bourgeois state through his study of Americanism and Fordism. According to Gramsci, Americanism refers to certain important changes taking place in the base (economy) of the system, which in turn results in some significant changes at the level of the superstructure. To signify the changes taking place in the base, Gramsci emphasises upon two management methods, i.e. Fordism and Taylorism, used in American enterprises, which he felt would drastically alter the modes of production in Italy, and make that country more capitalistic.

The reason that Americanism and Fordism acquired prominence in Italy, according to Gramsci, is because the working class movement has lost the struggle for a more progressive (socialist) society against the capitalists. In this scenario of defeat, Americanism and Fordism emerge, since they were not opposed by any indigenous hostile force. The working class population was not as such against these capitalistic principles in their totality, though they were concerned about the economic and cultural subjugation these will entail.

Americanism and Fordism¹ are the processes by which an economy which previously focused on individualism, gradually becomes a planned economy. Gramsci asks whether these processes mark the beginning of a new historic epoch given that the changes they brought about are so new, or whether they mean an intensification of the already-existing struggles that culminated in massive changes in the economy and polity. For Gramsci, it is the latter – i.e., Americanism and Fordism are a form of passive revolution since they are outside elements which have been allowed entry into the Italian culture and

¹ Fordism is named after the American industrialist Henry Ford and refers to a standardized form of mass production in industries.

economy, without any hostility from the locals. Americanism has impacted the cultural life of Italy in fields as diverse as cinema and psychoanalysis and by introducing new forms of popular culture such as jazz.

The new mode of production established under Americanism and Fordism entailed changes in the superstructure as well. For example, employers could conduct enquiries into the private lives of the workers and try to control their morality, as necessary elements of the new methods of work. The aim of these enquiries was to create a new type of worker, a new type of individual who could be trained to perform certain specific kinds of physical actions². Americanism and Fordism tried to create a new type of worker who would not be required to use his brain, who would not require any professional qualification, and who would develop a mechanical attitude towards work.

Enquiries were meant to ensure that the workers' psycho-physical equilibrium is maintained and they would not collapse under the brutality of the new methods of production. Companies also looked into the manner in which wages paid to workers were being put to use. In other words, was enough money going towards acquiring proper nutrition and fitness? It was with this in mind that the state regulated the drinking of alcohol and implemented the Prohibition, because alcohol was considered to be the top destructive force, antagonistic to the efficiency of the labourer and if alcoholism were to be widespread, it would spell the death of the industrial labour. Similarly, it was in the interest of the industrial bourgeoisie that sexuality also be regulated so that it would not wreak havoc on the 'muscular energies' of the labourer. So, Americanism and Fordism resulted in changes in the modes of production (base) at one level, and subsequently to changes in some laws and regulations (superstructure) to ensure a steady supply of trained and fit workers for employers.

To summarize, Gramsci used the terms Americanism and Fordism to denote the changes taking place in the economic base of Italian society, which had its impact on the superstructure of that society as well. Americanism and Fordism are elements of a passive revolution that entered Italian society, without much resistance from its people. Americanism has made its impact felt in Italian culture resulting in the introduction of new forms of popular culture. Fordism, on the other hand, created a new type of employer and worker – an employer interested in the private lives of his employees to ensure that his activities do not affect his industrial output. This entailed changes in the superstructure, such as the introduction of new laws like the Prohibition, for example, to regulate the lives of the working class.

7. Summary

- This paper highlighted some of Gramsci's most influential political and cultural writings. Some of the concepts used by Gramsci, such as, 'hegemony', 'national-popular' and 'Southern Question' are of particular significance in tackling issues related to diversity and multiculturalism. How can aspirations of the marginalized be taken into consideration to create a 'national-popular' and to avoid uprisings of the kind seen in armed struggles against the state or in civil wars between different ethnic groups?
- Another important question in current times can be seen in relation to civil society – how effectively has civil society emerged as a sphere where intellectual and moral leadership can shape and guide the aspirations of the masses?
- To answer these and other related questions effectively, one cannot but go back to Gramsci's ideas, which, though shaped in the first half of the twentieth century, are even more relevant today, as:

² Training workers to perform specific physical function is called Taylorism. It originated in the works of American engineer and pioneer of scientific management, Fred W. Taylor.

- Capitalism establishes itself more forcefully around the world
- New political structures emerge in the wake of greater regional alliances such as SAARC, BRIC and the EU, to name a few, and
- Migration of people for a better life towards areas where financial capital is concentrated has resulted in diversity being a way of life in otherwise homogenous societies, especially in the western hemisphere.

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