

# **Towards Gramscianizing Foucault: a Way of Developing Cultural Political Economy**

**IAS Research Cluster and CPERC  
*'Foucault and Critical Realism Workshop 2:  
Marx, Gramsci and Foucault'***

**Lancaster University  
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Ngai-Ling Sum**

# Four Parts

- **Knowledge and ‘Depth Ontology’**
- **Towards a Productive Dialogue between Gramsci and Foucault**
- **Gramscianizing Foucault as a Way of Developing Cultural Political Economy**
  - **Four Steps**
  - **Six Moments**
- **Some Concluding Remarks**

# **I. Knowledge and ‘Depth Ontology’**

- **Rise of the neo-Foucauldians**
  - **Object of knowledge does not have an existence independent of its constitution in a discursive formation**
  - **Discursive form shapes content to render our ‘reality’**
- **The question is are human modes of being and knowing one and the same?**

- **Cultural Political Economy**

- There is the need to distinguish between the knowledge object and real object
- How to examine the interlocking between discursive and extra-discursive (in uneven social and political terrains)
- What are the heterogeneous elements of a *dispositif*? How to rearticulate *dispositif* with social relations (and materialism)? A critical realist way of understanding language?
- What are the relationship between a hegemonized society and power-knowledge?

## **II. Towards a Productive Dialogue between Gramsci and Foucault**

- **Ways of combining Gramsci and Foucault**
- **Foucauldizing Gramsci and Gramscianizing Foucault**

# Combining Gramsci & Foucault

L&M

Hall

Fairclough

Jessop/Sum



**Foucauldizing/Derridianizing  
Gramsci**

**Gramscianizing  
Foucault**

*Post-Marxism*

*CPE*



# **III. Gramscianizing Foucault as a Way of Developing Cultural Political Economy**

- **4 Steps:**
  - **Recognizing the tensions and resonance between Gramsci and Foucault**
  - **Finding a bridge between Gramsci and Foucault**
  - **Integrating Foucault into an Gramsci's integral approach**
  - **Examining production of hegemonies**

# **Step I: Tensions and Resonances**

- **Tensions in terms of**
  - **Arenas where ‘politics’ happens**
  - **Conceptions of the ‘social’**
  - **Nature of struggles**

- **Resonances in Gramsci and Foucault**
  - **Importance of language, ideas and knowledge**
  - **Key role of common sense and subjectivity**
  - **Rejection of state-centrism**
    - **‘Integral state’ – state as both centralized and diffused**
    - **Governmentality – rationalities of rule, ‘governing at a distance’ and ‘conduct of conduct’**
  - **Improbability of social order**

# **Step 2: Finding the Bridge**

- **Relationship between hegemonies and micro-logical power**
- **Placing governmental power in the hegemony process**
- **The production of hegemonies that are mediated by the micro-logical power related to specific practices and technologies of power**
- **Interface between micro-foundations of hegemony-cum-domination, self-leadership, and assemblages of macro-power**

# Step 3: Integrating Foucault into Gramsci's Integral Approach

- Use Gramsci (and neo-Gramscian work) as the main optic for studying how hegemony as political, intellectual, and moral leadership is produced and reproduced in complex, unequal social formations
- Use Foucault (and neo-Foucauldian work) as *entrypoint* for understanding discursive aspects of subject formation and techniques of subjectivation (or 'technologies of power')

- **Integrate Foucault (and neo-Foucauldian work) into a neo-Gramscian approach because CPE is interested in:**
  - **On what terrains do hegemonies unfold?**
  - **How are hegemonies constituted?**
  - **What role do hegemonies play?**
  - **Who gets involved in (re-)producing hegemonies?**
- **Retain the importance of social relations**
  - **a concern for discourse does not entail denial of an extra-discursive world or the significance of materialities**
- **Examine discursive moment in remaking of social relations**

# **Step 4: Examining Production of Hegemonies**

- **Material-discursive mechanisms, processes, practices and technologies in and through which hegemonies (intellectual, moral and self leadership) get built in diverse social fields and in the wider society**

# **Six Moments in Examining the Production of Hegemonies**

- **Examine how networks of actors discursively frame ‘economy’ (e.g., competitiveness, poverty reduction, crisis, etc.)**
- **Locate these networks in the structure-agency conception - dialectic of readjustment/renegotiations in social relations**
- **Explore this in terms of six moments (some more discursive, some more material) with emphasis on their different forms of selectivity**

# **Six Discursive-Material Moments in the (Re-)Making of Social Relations**

- Discursive-strategic moment of restructuring (e.g., the economy)**
- Structurally-inscribed, strategically selective moment of actors**
- (Inter-)discursive-selective moment in the ordering of discourses**
- Moment in remaking of subjectivities and identities**
- Moment in conditioning and re-regularizing social relations**
- Counter-hegemonic resistance and negotiations**

# IV. Concluding Remarks

- **The rise of neo-Foucauldian studies**
  - **Discursive idealism? ‘shallow/flat ontology’? horizontal order of relations?**
- **Attempts to move away from flat ontology**
  - ***Dispositif* + social relations**
  - **Power is both dispersed and centralized with uneven impact upon class, gender, nature and place**

- **Gramscianizing Foucault via 4 steps and 6 moments**
- **Examine the production of hegemonies**
- **Production of hegemonies is a site of struggle and negotiations in the making of moral, intellectual and self leadership**
- **By asking not only the ‘how’ question but also the ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions in the understanding of cultural political economy**

**The End**  
**Thank You!**