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’

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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       Gramscianizing
Gramsci       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!