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Abstract

The increasing salience of cultural conflicts in the post-Cold War era brings the problem of peripheral justice, defined as the equal attainment of social justice, to the center of current debates on globalization. Specifically, they force us to directly confront the toughest challenge posed by the Weberian tradition: If the principles of justice and equality are beyond the peculiarity of the Occidental civilization, how then may we give a full explanation as to why in the West-and only in the West-the ideal of public reasoning by private people has been materialized? The present study seeks to address this fundamental challenge by drawing on the Marxist tradition of public hegemony developed by Confucian Marxists and Gramsci. I argue that at the core of the problem of peripheral justice is an intrinsic linkage between Eurocentricism and the liberal paradigm of "civil society." The prospect of equal justice, therefore, hinges on the development of a new conception of the "social" that reverses the liberal interpretation of the relationship between bourgeois subjectivity and the "social" and derives from the primacy of the ethical life for social formation.

Keywords: *Confucian, cultural conflict, empire, globalization, justice, Marxism, Max Weber, Occidental civilization, post-Cold War era*

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LIBERAL GLOBALIZATION AND PERIPHERAL JUSTICE

Weigang Chen

Abstract

The increasing salience of cultural conflicts in the post-Cold War era brings the problem of peripheral justice, defined as the equal attainment of social justice, to the center of current debates on globalization. Specifically, they force us to directly confront the toughest challenge posed by the Weberian tradition: If the principles of justice and equality are beyond the peculiarity of the Occidental civilization, how then may we give a full explanation as to why in the West—and only in the West—the ideal of public reasoning by private people has been materialized? The present study seeks to address this fundamental challenge by drawing on the Marxist tradition of public hegemony developed by Confucian Marxists and Gramsci. I argue that at the core of the problem of peripheral justice is an intrinsic linkage between Eurocentricism and the liberal paradigm of “civil society.” The prospect of equal justice, therefore, hinges on the development of a new conception of the “social” that reverses the liberal interpretation of the relationship between bourgeois subjectivity and the “social” and derives from the primacy of the ethical life for social formation.

The Liberal Empire or Peripheral Justice?

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 stimulated high aspirations for the universal benefits of democratic reasoning and market-oriented thinking (Held, 1993 p. 249). Liberal democracy was proclaimed as the “end of history”—that is, “the final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 3). This sense of exhilaration was most manifest in the phenomenal rise of a variety of theories of liberal globalization that celebrated a new epoch of human history in which, as a result of the erosion of the division between industrialized center/non-industrialized peripheral regions, transnational corporations and global institutions of liberalism would eventually supplant traditional nation-states as the principal agents of world society (Ohmae, 1995, p. 5; Amin, 1997, pp. 2-3). Throughout the 1990s, this perception was used by both neo-liberals and neo-Marxists as the cornerstone of their analyses of the post-Cold War world order (Held *et al*, 1999, p. 3; Hirst and Thompson, 1999).

But even before the ink was dry on paper, these arguments had already been made obsolete by the emerging trends in the post-Cold War world. Since the mid-1990s, it has become increasingly evident that what has replaced the rivalry between the Communist East and the West is not the advance of a global liberal civilization but, on the contrary, the

growing fragmentation of nations into cultural blocs and ethnic enclaves. Indeed, one does not need to embrace Samuel Huntington's theory of the civilizational clash to recognize the increasing salience of cultural and ethnic conflict in global politics today (Huntington, 1996). Recent major developments in the non-Western world, from the spectacular growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Muslim countries to the rapid ascendancy of Confucian nationalism in East Asia,¹ all demonstrate indisputably that culture and cultural identities have become the driving force in the current age of globalization.

Beneath the intensification of cultural and religious conflicts in today's world is a perennial question that has haunted social analysts ever since the nineteenth century: Why does liberal democracy triumph in the West but become a standard recipe for social and economic disasters throughout the peripheral world (de Soto, 2000)? This dilemma of peripheral liberal deformation has found its most powerful expression in our world today. The eager turn of former communist and developing nations to the free-market economy and liberal democracy has not ushered in an unequivocal flowering of capitalism. Instead, the imposition of the liberal orthodoxy, including privatization of the public sector, the emasculation of the state apparatus, and the insistence on electoral reform, has directly contributed to anarchy, civil wars, and economic stagnation (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 175). The disastrous social and political integration in these countries contrasts sharply with the remarkable economic growth of East Asian countries, whose rapid rise into the epicenter of global capitalism has stemmed precisely from their effective implementation of a deliberately illiberal, de-Westernized, and state-centered strategy of development.²

Such a striking contrast, as Fukuyama recently concedes, renders it abundantly clear that the powerlessness and poverty in today's world are due not to the excessive power of nation-states, but to their weakness. "The solution is not to undermine sovereignty but to build stronger states in the developing world" (Fukuyama, 2004). In this regard, globalization defined as the expansion of capitalism to non-Western regions presupposes and simply relies on a structural differentiation between Western democratic states and peripheral developmental states. Simply put, *globalization is actually the new manifestation of the deepening of the core/periphery polarization.*

¹ In 1993, Hanoi published, at great expense, a romanized Vietnamese translation (in fifteen volumes with almost eight thousand pages) of "The Imperially Authorized Compendium of Institutions and Institutional Cases of the Great South" ("The Great South" was the Vietnamese imperial name for Vietnam, adopted in the late 1830s). The "Compendium of Institutions" had been compiled originally in classical Chinese by senior mandarins of the Vietnamese court at Hue in the 1840s. It was supposed to be an encyclopedic handbook of the Vietnamese government on the principles of bureaucratic Confucianism. The communist state translators of this voluminous work bragged of their determination to ensure that libraries, schools, cultural agencies, and even every family library all over Vietnam would obtain copies of their translation. The translation and impressive popularization of this massive work in the 1990s clearly demonstrates a powerful renewal of the national interest in the country's pre-colonial Confucian legacy (Woodside, 1997, pp. 68-69).

² For a more detailed analysis of the dilemma of peripheral liberal deformation and its manifestations in the post-Cold War world, see my article "Peripheral Justice: The Marxist Tradition of Public Hegemony and Its Implications in the Age of Globalization," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 13/1 (2005), forthcoming.

It is in this paradoxical suture of economic globalization and political polarization that we may discern the real source of the most profound contradictions of today's world order. *Due to the persistence of peripheral liberal deformation, de-liberalization or the state-centered model of development constitutes an indispensable precondition for the upward mobility of a peripheral nation within the capitalist world system controlled by Western powers.* The irony is that the more a peripheral nation achieves economic success within the world system, the more it is exposed to the dictation of the global market regulated by liberal norms, and the more it is forced to give up its only means of survival within the system—the ethical State. Not surprisingly, the past decades have witnessed a burgeoning movement across the peripheral world that seeks to “Confucianize” or “Islamize” modernity by effectively resisting Western values, institutions, and practices (Kepel, 1994).

An appropriate point of reference for considering the dilemma of peripheral liberal deformation may be found in the idea of the primacy of justice as explicated by Rawls. Social justice, defined as the basic structure of society, presupposes the existence of a pre-political state of nature *and* the possibility of a public perspective shared by the contracting parties, which, ironically, may least likely exist in the absence of a political order. The perplexity highlights the centrality of the “duality of human existence” for collective action (Durkheim, 1973, pp. 149-166), accounting for the predominance of political society in pre-modern social formations, notably the fundamental contrast between the public realm of the polis and the private realm of economic activities in Greek city-states (MacIntyre, 1984; Arendt, 1954, p. 12f). Seen from this perspective, the primacy of justice presupposes what Arendt has characterized as “the rise of the social” (Arendt, 1954, p. 38f)—the elevation of the private realm of labor into the public realm or, more simply, the institutionalization of private people's public use of reason (Habermas, 1989). Framed as such, the “social” or civil society assumes the possibility that *private* people can reason *publicly*. The question, of course, is how this is possible.

This perplexity allows us to understand why the Kantian notion of moral autonomy or similar constructs about bourgeois subjectivity has been so centrally important to the self-understanding of the modern West. According to this deontological view of the modern selfhood, the bourgeois as the privatized individual is actually two things in one: *bourgeois* and *homme*. On the one hand, the bourgeois as the owner of goods is profoundly caught up in the requirements of the market and thus subject to empirical inclinations. On the other hand, however, the bourgeois as human being is the subject of pure interiority that follows its own laws and not any external purpose. This peculiar human subjectivity promises liberation from the constraints of what exists, whether it refers to the prescription of culture or the necessity of life (Habermas, 1989, p. 55). For this reason, the split between the bourgeois public sphere and the market place, which is constitutive of the bourgeois “social” in the West, is best analyzed as *the institutional expression of bourgeois subjectivity*—i.e., the duality of the bourgeois personality.

It is noteworthy how global uneven development seems to have counter affirmed but at the same time reaffirmed the liberal paradigm of the “social.” While the prevalence of capitalist deformation across the peripheral world has called into question the liberal claim to the priority of bourgeois subjectivity and thus confirmed the Hegelian assertion on the primacy of political society for public life, the same phenomenon— simply by being a *distinctively peripheral* occurrence—has, simultaneously and paradoxically, underscored the decisive role of the bourgeois class in the formation and reproduction of Western democratic societies.

This paradox accounts for the ever-lasting sway of the Weberian civilizational analysis over theoretical analyses of the modern world order. In his famous comparative studies on the “economic ethics” of the Chinese, Indian, Hebrew, and Protestant civilizations, Weber conceded that liberal democracy, defined as a polity on the basis of a consensual contract among autonomous, rights-bearing individuals, may provide little solution to the dilemma of collective action characteristic of a market society. It does not follow, however, that the Kantian theses on the primacy of justice and moral autonomy are purely philosophical speculations. Rather, they are abstract reflections on the concrete cultural and political processes in the historical development of the Occident civilization. Kant is certainly right in asserting that the cognitive evolution from substantive rationality to formalistic rationality, from the primacy of the ethical life to the primacy of justice holds a key to the emergence of legal domination and rational capitalism in the West. What Kant has overlooked is the fact that such an evolutionary process is itself rooted primarily in the particularity of the religious or cultural orientation of the Occidental civilization and, therefore, is historically contingent and culturally specific. It is these unique cultural traits that account for the predominance of civic norms and networks of civic engagement in Western core countries, which breed and sustain “an individualistic ethics of conscience and responsibility” and hence the practice of public reasoning by private people (Ingram, 1987, p. 45; Schluchter, 1981, p. 62f; Putnam, 1993). By contrast, the absence of such civic roots in non-Western societies would create a kind of “uncivic” capitalist system in which “[d]efection, distrust, shirking, exploitation, isolation, disorder, and stagnation intensify one another in a suffocating miasma of vicious circles” (Putnam, 1993, p. 177). In this setting one should only expect a Hobbesian or Hegelian solution, which compensates for instabilities through authoritarian institutions.

The whole point of Weberianism is that, precisely because the transition from political society to civil society as anticipated by classical theorists is *normally* impossible, the developmental history of the West must have arisen out of certain religio-cultural contingencies unique to the Occidental civilization, which alone may breed the crucial precondition for the public reorientation of private wealth— bourgeois subjectivity.

In view of the increasing salience of cultural conflicts in the post-Cold War era, it is hardly surprising the Weberian civilizational scheme has made its dramatic return in recent years. The most visible concretization of this neo-Weberian surge is Huntington’s “Clash of

Civilizations” thesis. “Western concepts,” according to Huntington, differ fundamentally from those prevalent in other civilizations. Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures” (Huntington, 1993). For this reason, peripheral modernization and Westernization cannot but be entirely distinct. The enhanced resources brought about by Third World modernization are thus put at the disposal of a political agenda hostile to the West (Huntington, 1996, p. 20). The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict in the 21st century, accordingly, will be cultural or civilizational.

The rise of neo-Weberianism brings into sharp focus the fundamental limits of peripheral nationalism in general and the “postcolonial” discourse in particular (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Dirlik, 1997). The peripheral and post-colonialist accentuation on the politics of difference bears a striking resemblance to the Weberian scheme of civilizational politics. By characterizing the values of liberal democracy as Western dominant “epistemes” and subaltern nationalism as the site of liberation from Western domination, postcolonial theories in fact coincide and even unwittingly reinforce the Weberian assertion that only the Occidental civilization is privileged to and therefore deserves the ideal of justice as the basic structure of society. In so doing, these theories have the effect of actually endorsing the global hierarchical order, within which only the countries of the First World may afford to harmonize their national interests with the norms that define the universalistic, cosmopolitan aspirations of the United Nations.

This fundamental convergence is of vital importance for our understanding of the present state of global politics. It indicates that peripheral nationalism and Eurocentricism tend to reinforce and intensify each other in a vicious spiral, pushing the West and the rest of the world to inevitable collision, as is evidenced in the post-9/11 world. Almost overnight, the neo-Weberian thesis of the clash of civilizations has replaced the “end of history” scheme to become the focal point of political imaginations in “the new wartime era.”³

This thesis leads logically to the idea and practice of liberal imperialism or “the liberal empire,” which finds its clearest and most unabashed expression in Niall Ferguson’s recent book “America’s Empire” (Ferguson, 2004; also see Harris, 2004). Underlying the rapid growth of cultural assertiveness and “terrorist” organizations in the non-Western world, observes Ferguson, is the prevalent and persistent failure of nation building in peripheral countries (ibid., p. 24). By this term, he refers to the failure to create and maintain “the institutional foundations without which markets cannot function—peace and order, the rule of law, non-corrupt administration, stable fiscal and monetary policies” (ibid., p. 2). This explains why, contrary to the triumphalism of the “end of history” theory, capitalism and democracy are not naturally occurring (ibid., p. 300). What is required today, therefore, is

³ Patrick Healy, “Harvard scholar’s ’96 book becomes the word on war.” *The Boston Globe*, November 11, 2001.

“the imposition of some kind of *external* authority” (ibid.), namely, a *liberal* empire that has the willingness and ability to do what peripheral countries cannot do on their own—create and uphold a liberal political order. “The proper role of an imperial America,” accordingly, “is to establish these institutions where they are lacking, *if necessary, by military force*” (ibid., p. 300; emphasis added).

There is little doubt that “the liberal empire” is bound to invoke an even more powerful anti-Western surge in the peripheral world, thereby making the 21st century a prisoner of “the clash of civilizations.”

These developments demonstrate clearly that the only solution to the deepening crises of globalization lies in the possibility of equal development. In so doing, they bring *the problematic of peripheral justice*, defined as the equal attainment of social justice, to the center of current debates on globalization (see Chen, 2005, forthcoming). Specifically, they force us to directly confront the toughest challenge posed by the Weberian tradition: If the principles of justice and equality are beyond the peculiarity of the Occidental civilization, how then may we give a full explanation as to why in the West—and only in the West—the ideal of public reasoning by private people has been materialized?

The Liberal Logic of Eurocentricism

At the heart of the problematic of peripheral justice is a virtually logical linkage between the liberal paradigm of the “social” and the Eurocentric perspective. This liberal logic of Eurocentricism can be succinctly stated as follows: Given the pivotal role of the Occidental bourgeoisie in the rise of the “social” and given the historical contingency of this class, one may expect a permanent disparity between the Kantian West and the Hegelian East.

A revealing illustration of the effect of this liberal logic of Eurocentricism is in Habermas’ theory of communicative action (see Chen, 2005). The theory represents arguably the most systematic effort in the liberal tradition to demonstrate that the process of rationalization described by Weber is beyond the peculiarity of the Occidental civilization and “lays claim to a universal binding on *all* “civilized men”” (Habermas, 1984, p. 184). The rise of “modern structures of consciousness” in the West, which for Habermas holds the key to the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, is to be explained in terms of the replacement of traditional forms of the ethical life by the unavoidable pragmatic presuppositions of speech and argumentation (Habermas, 1990, p. 170). As these presuppositions of communicative action constitute the very discursive conditions for any mode of social formation, modern moral consciousness rooted in them can be characterized as the self-consciousness of the universalistic properties of human communication and thereby transcends the limits of any system of cultural givens. Habermas, however, has never succeeded in explaining why it is the case that the same process of “de-ethicalization” has led to the “moralization” of the social world in the West but only become the very *raison d’être* of de-moralization anywhere else.

Even more revealing, however, is the effect of the liberal logic of Eurocentricism on communitarian theories. Contemporary neo-Hegelians, such as Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre, are certainly right in arguing that the liberal assumption of moral autonomy is illusory and can hardly work anywhere. As Sandel observes, the liberal notion of the moral self, which is presumably freed “from the dictates of nature and the sanction of social roles,” is conceptually inconsistent and practically infeasible (Sandel, 1982, p. 177). On the one hand, the asserted moral self is bound up with a vision of the moral universe this self must inhabit in order to free itself from the dictates of nature; on the other hand, unlike classical Greek and medieval Christian conceptions, the universe of the deontological ethic must be conceived of as “a world without an objective moral order” (ibid., p. 175). Yet, to imagine a person devoid of attachments and commitments is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent capable of public reasoning, “but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth”—in other words, a person totally at the mercy of the dictates of nature (ibid., p. 179).

The difficulty with neo-Hegelians, however, is that their insistence on the primacy of the ethical life for any social formation makes it virtually impossible to explain the *de facto* presence of liberal modernity in the West. How, after all, can we conceptualize the distinction between the political and the “social” without resorting to the ethics/morality polarity?

Not surprisingly, when forced to explain the dynamics of autonomous public life in modern Western societies, neo-Hegelians have little choice but to tacitly embrace the liberal presumption of moral autonomy by simply characterizing it as “a democratic form of ethical life” (Taylor, 1989; Wellmer, 1990, pp. 235-6).⁴ What is unique to the modern West, thus Taylor advised us, is “the modern identity” (or “the modern inward turn”) that is grounded in the principle of respect in terms of “rights” and characterized by “the affirmation of ordinary life” (Taylor, 1989, pp. 11-13). In this regard, “the modern selfhood” buttresses “the institutionalization of an equalitarian order,” thereby contrasting starkly with the “traditional, Aristotelian ethics” (Wellmer, 1990; Taylor, 1989, pp. 11-13). Some have even gone so far as to suggest that liberalism “has constituted itself as a tradition precisely by creating its own normativity out of itself” (Kelly, 1990, p. 71). In this sense, liberal modernity is also tradition-bound.

This is only a short step from the development of a full account of how, thanks to the emergence of “an unprecedented form of self-governing” in late medieval Europe, the West

⁴ From this perspective, modern identity and bourgeois institutions of self-government derives from “a modern, Christian-inspired sense,” which places ordinary life at “the very center of the good life” and accordingly comes to acquire “civic virtues” or “civic mores” essential to self-rule (Taylor, 1989, p. 13). “To share in self-rule therefore requires that citizens possess, or come to acquire certain qualities of character, or *civic virtues*. But this means that republican politics cannot be neutral towards the values and ends its citizens espouse. The republican conception of freedom, unlike the liberal conception, requires a formative politics, a politics that cultivates in citizens the qualities of character self-government requires” (Sandel, 1996, pp. 5-6; emphasis mine).

has acquired its defining feature—"the civic tradition" or the civic way of life, which is marked by devotion to public affairs (Putnam, 1993, p. 87) and "a steady recognition and pursuit of the public good at the expense of all purely individual and private ends" (Walzer, 1980, p. 64). It follows that, in the non-Western world where the norms and networks of civic engagement are lacking, the outlook for autonomous public life cannot but be bleak (Putnam, 1993, p. 183). The fate of each nation in the modern world, therefore, was sealed centuries ago, if not earlier (ibid.).

The Liberal Self versus the Public Ethical

In view of the intrinsic linkage between liberalism and Eurocentricism, it becomes obvious that no solution to the problematic of peripheral justice would be possible without seriously questioning the validity of the liberal paradigm of the "social," even if it is taken only as a self-interpretation of the West. In other words, a theory of peripheral justice must start with the assumption that the rise of the "social" is independent of and prior to the historical contingency of the bourgeois class. Clearly, such a new conception of the "social" is possible only when two crucial conditions are met. First, the rise of the "social" does not presuppose the role of class subjectivity or any mode of "modern structures of consciousness." Second, the self-activity of the Western bourgeoisie is actually the effect of the public reorientation of social labor rather than its cause. In other words, it must be assumed that *the liberal paradigm of the "social" is an illusory self-interpretation of the West, which simply cannot work anywhere, East or West.*

These formidable challenges provide us with an appropriate framework for assessing the significance of the Marxist theory of public hegemony, which was developed respectively by Chinese Confucian Marxists (Liu, 1939) and Antonio Gramsci (1971).⁵ Central to this theory is the development of an "ethical" conception of the "social" that denies any significance to the role of private autonomy in the public reorientation of material production, representing a radical inversion of the relationship between class and the "social" in the liberal paradigm. In this view, the real source of autonomous public life lies in the ethical substance of traditional political society. The elevation of social labor into the public realm, therefore, is to be understood as a historical process through which the laboring masses re-appropriate the ethical-public sphere of political society. For this reason, the "social" is to be conceptualized as *public hegemony* or *the public ethical*.

The starting point of this "ethical" conception of the "social" is a radical reinterpretation of Marx's analysis of social reproduction. In sharp contrast to a variety of "dominant ideology" or "common culture" theories that have dominated theoretical analyses of culture and state power ever since Marx (Abercrombie et al., 1980), public hegemony theorists identify the mechanism of *hegemony by cultural differentiation* as the key to the analysis of the role of the State in social reproduction in traditional political societies. In this

⁵ For more detailed discussions of this important Marxist theoretical tradition and its implications for global politics today, see Chen 2005, forthcoming.

view, the reliance of material production on the State for its reproduction in these societies arises precisely from a fixed differentiation between social and political reproduction, between structural and symbolic integration. The domination of the State over the toiling masses is achieved through a deliberate creation of “symbolic isolation” of the masses. In other words, it is achieved by a deliberate effort to prevent popular masses from becoming “subjects” or “public selves.” Once political reproduction is secured through the role of the ruling elites as carriers of the ethical (i.e., cultivation), the structural submission of production strata to the public authority would follow. In this sense, *the monopoly of symbolic integration (i.e., the ethical sphere) by the ruling group constitutes the basis of its symbolic power, which in turn paves the way to its access to political and economic power* (Liu, 1939; Gramsci, 1971).

The rise of the social, from this perspective, is to be defined as the private realm’s appropriation of the ethical content (the ethico-political sphere) of the State, which is now estranged from the State and assumes its own existence in “traditional intellectuals” and “classical education.” For this reason, the “civilized” nature or the autonomy of civil society is best understood as the result of a historically unprecedented development: the direct integration of the ethico-political sphere into the private realm of labor. The key to the successful transition from natural society to civil society, therefore, lies in two historical processes: the split between the ethical content (hegemony) and the “political society” within the ethical State *per se* and the subsequent appropriation of the former by the private terrain. “Civil society,” accordingly, is to be conceived as *the ethico-political sphere in the private realm of labor*. It is in this sense that Gramsci suggests to redefine civil society as “civil hegemony” or “the image of a State without a State” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 263).

In this connection, *bourgeois civil society is to be analyzed as a specific form of public hegemony*. The assimilation of the ethico-political sphere into the sphere of the production of material life, in this view, holds the key to the secret of bourgeois subjectivity. This process not only explains why the private realm began to assume public significance in the early modern Europe; even more significantly, it also allows us to specify *the very conditions under which the European bourgeoisie as a modern class was born*. The appropriation of the ethico-political sphere by private sectors had been made *in such a fashion that the sphere became the private property of the dominant economic grouping*, cut off from the rest of society. Public hegemony was thus transposed to the *subculture* of the dominant economic group, under the guise of its “internal” or “intimate space.”

By radically reversing the liberal account of the relationship between class and the “social” and redefining bourgeois subjectivity as the result of the bourgeoisie’s monopoly of the ethical, the theory of public hegemony suggests that *bourgeois democracy is best viewed as a “civic” mode of domination by cultural differentiation*.

The significance of this distinctive approach to bourgeois democracy can hardly be overestimated. It carries a number of implications that are of paramount importance for theoretical attempts to address the problematic of peripheral justice. Since the dual role of the bourgeois class (as the carrier of both *praxis* and *labor*) results from the appropriation of the

ethical domain by the realm of labor as well as the bourgeoisie's monopoly of the ethical as its subculture, the sub society of the dominant economic group constitutes the *de facto* institutional base for the formation of the public of private people in Western democratic societies. What is characteristic of bourgeois publicity, then, is a structural split within bourgeois society between, on the one hand, the private ethical as the institutional base of public reasoning and, on the other, and the bourgeois public sphere as the manifestation of bourgeois publicity.

This split is essential to our understanding of global uneven development on two counts. Firstly, it suggests that ethnic differentiation is in fact rooted in the very nature of bourgeois domination and constitutes an essential component of Western democratic societies. Due to the monopoly of the dominant culture by the bourgeoisie and the subsequent structural split between the mainstream liberal culture and the dominant (sub)culture, acculturation or the assimilation of minorities into the mainstream culture becomes one of the most effective mechanisms through which the symbolic isolation of laboring masses from the dominant culture is created and the submission of non-bourgeois laborers to bourgeois domination is secured.

Secondly, the split allows us to discern how the mechanism of *symbolic isolation through assimilation*, which holds the key to civic ethnicity, has been used by European powers to systematically create the core/periphery disparities at the global level. As in the case of minority groups, the more a non-Western nation incorporates itself into the global culture of liberal democracy, the more it is symbolically isolated from the very culture of the Western bourgeoisie that is actually the dominant culture of the capitalist world order, the more it is marginalized within the world order, and the more it is condemned for its "Oriental" traits. In this sense, uneven development can be properly characterized as a global expansion of racial disparities within the capitalist core. The solution to the problematic of peripheral justice, accordingly, lies in the possibility of constructing a *public-ethical sphere* or what Gramsci terms "the *public* ethical State" that will serve as a school of "State life," in which "each non-ruler" is ensured a free training in the skills necessary for governing" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 268).

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