

Ideology, the World Economic System, and Revitalisation Movements

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Introduction

Those who live in capitalist communities have, over the past century, introduced their ways of organising and interacting with the environment to people throughout the world. In doing so, they have set about re-organising other communities to conform to the requirements of life in a capitalist world. Vast amounts of 'aid money' have been spent in other communities assisting them to develop capitalist institutions and practices. Development experts, trained in Western universities, have dedicated their lives to improving the lot of 'under-developed' and 'less-developed' communities ¹. Yet, the consequences of all the dedication, effort and resources committed to 'Third World development' seem to have produced very mixed results around the world.

To understand the process of 'development' and its consequences in non-Western communities, we need to understand the ways in which people organise themselves and their surroundings.

Human beings are natural model builders. Before they can begin to interact with their world it must be imbued with meaning and that requires a set of criteria for categorising and classifying experiences, and for connecting the classified experiences with each other. If every individual had, from birth, to invent his or her own categorizational criteria, human beings would forever be trapped at the dawning of sentience and meaningful communication between people would be severely limited. So it should be no surprise that newborn babies are not left to develop their own criteria for categorising experiences.

Just as human beings teach their young to speak their native language, so they teach them, from birth, the indigenous criteria for categorising their experiences and interconnecting those categorised experiences. The criteria used in building a community's categorizational models are historically determined and so, to the extent that the community is isolated from other communities, its categorizational models will be unique to the community (just as a community's language is unique). This is one of the reasons why anthropologists recognise that they should handle apparent similarities between communities with extreme caution and should never assume that 'models of kinship' or any other forms of social organisation and structure can be applied across communities.

Consider, for example, the kinship categorisation between the elder brother—the younger brother and the presumed relationships between them in Confucian Chinese families. The categorizational criteria that produce these related categories of persons are quite different from those that determine the definitions of older and younger brothers in, say, Anglo-Celtic Australia. Few people in Anglo-Celtic Australia recognise the kinship elements 'elder brother' and 'younger brother' as categorically distinctive, carrying their own prescribed characteristics and sharing formalised rights and responsibilities (or reciprocal duties) that are distinctive to those two categories of persons. Both sets of communities recognise the existence of older and younger brothers. After all, brothers, as male siblings of the same parents, exist in all communities. However, the characteristics they recognise and the relationships they presume between them are very different. Kalman Applbaum (1998) sums up the Western understanding of 'horizontal' (see [Reciprocity and Exchange](#)) relationships:

We will use the generic term 'Western' to refer to communities that have their hegemonic roots in the Western European historical experiences outlined in [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#)

... [Western] individuals may be seen in relation to other individuals as free actors, free choice makers, whose unflinching goal of satisfying primordial needs and achieving the construction of self-identity are not compromised by such interferences as filial duty or custom.

(Applbaum 1998)

The chief characteristics of such persons are that they are autonomous, independent and recognise rights and responsibilities as incentives and constraints channelling the pursuit of their independent 'needs and wants'. The focus is on individuals attaining 'needs and wants' and the regulatory structures defining legitimate attainment of them (i.e. in economic terms—or is it *Star Trek* terminology?—the 'rules of acquisition'). The focus is only secondarily on other persons (whatever their kinship relationships might be) with whom one might or might not interact in achieving one's needs and wants.

The consequences of accepting the centrality of filial and other forms of reciprocal duty, as in Confucian China, may however, (as Confucius 500 BC (or possibly K'ung Chi, grandson of Confucius) suggested) require that individuals are not seen as *free actors* pursuing individual needs and wants but as *interdependent members* of a community who can only understand themselves and ensure their needs and wants through understanding and accepting their kinship and other communal responsibilities:

The duties of universal obligation are five and the virtues wherewith they are practiced are three. The duties are those between sovereign and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder brother and younger, and those belonging to the intercourse of friends. Those five are the duties of universal obligation. Knowledge, magnanimity, and energy, these three, are the virtues universally binding. And the means by which they carry the duties into practice is singleness.

Some are born with the knowledge of those duties; some know them by study; and some acquire the knowledge after a painful feeling of their ignorance. But the knowledge being possessed, it comes to the same thing. Some practice them with a natural ease; some from a desire for their advantages; and some by strenuous effort. But the achievement being made, it comes to the same thing.

(Confucius 1893)

If a Western person is not aware of the very different relational presumptions built into Confucian ideas of reciprocal duty, he or she is likely to presume that the independent pursuit of needs and wants is central to involvement in such relationships. Robert Westwood does this when he sums up the Confucian position from a Western perspective, assuming that all individuals are 'free actors' who 'lose freedom' when they are required to accept super-ordinate or subordinate hierarchical status. It is this that allows him to speak about relative 'power' in hierarchical, interdependent relationships:

Challenges to authority and the 'natural' order are not countenanced. This is encapsulated in the Confucian precepts of the so-called 'Five Cardinal Relationships' or *wu lun*, which delineate a hierarchical power structure over key societal relationships. The *wu lun* are dyadic sets of unequal, mostly hierarchical relationships between emperor–minister, father–son, husband–wife, older brother–younger brother, friend–friend. Although the power structure is differentiated and unequal (except for the latter), mutual obligations and reciprocities are inherent in the relationships. The person in the dominant position expects and receives obedience, deference and compliance, but in return should respect the dignity of the lower party and provide appropriate care and concern.

(Westwood 1997, p. 459)

Tsui, Farh and Lih, however, sum up the differences in the following way:

... Chinese often view themselves interdependent with the surrounding social context, and it is the 'self in relation to other' that becomes the focal individual experience. This view of an interdependent self is in sharp contrast to the Western view of an independent self. The latter sees each human being as an independent, self-contained, autonomous entity who (a) comprises a unique configuration of internal attributes (e.g. traits, abilities, motives, and values) and (b) behaves primarily as a consequence of these internal attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This divergent view of self has implications for a variety of basic psychological processes (e.g. cognition, emotion and motivation) and may be one of the most fundamental differences between the East and the West in social relations.

(Tsui et al. 1997, p. 59)

The categorizational models held in different communities not only have distinctive sets of categories and idiosyncratic placement of elements within categories, they also have unique combinations and qualities of relationships through which categories and their elements are interconnected. It is very easy for a researcher or commentator to apply his or her own understandings of the nature of relationships to those observed in other communities, as Westwood (1997) does when he assumes that hierarchical relationships must involve dominance and subservience, relative power and powerlessness. These are features of relationships between individuals who define themselves as 'free actors' and who view relationships of dependence in terms of costs and benefits and degrees of loss of independence.

The independent self is quintessentially Western. The interdependent self, in one guise or another, is found in communities where individuals know who they are through the forms of relationship they recognise between themselves and other members of the community. They perceive rights and responsibilities as qualities of the interactants rather than inhering in the 'objects' of interaction (as rules of acquisition). In such communities the rights and obligations of individuals in exchange relationships remain with the interactants rather than being attached to the objects of exchange. So, the other party in an exchange is the focus, rather than the needs and wants of the interactants. In one case, the process of exchange (or interaction) tends to emphasise the separate identities (and, therefore, motivations) of the exchangers (leading to a stress on *independence*). In the other, it tends to emphasise their relatedness and reciprocal responsibilities (stressing *interdependence*). The qualities of the relationships invoked in exchange in the two orientations are very different.

For an examination of the historical movement of Western Europeans from *interdependence* to *independence* see [Emergence of Capitalism](#)

Such interactional orientations tend not only to 'flavour' recognised relationships between people but permeate relationships connecting both elements within categories and categories themselves throughout the primary ideological frames (see next section 'Primary ideology') of the communities. Not only are perceived relationships specific to communities, so too are the perceived qualities that inhere in relationships. By definition, two individuals living in different communities will, therefore, have quite distinctive 'understandings' from each other. How similar their understandings are will largely depend on the nature of the historical connections that have existed between their communities and the degree to which the hegemonies of their communities have interacted over time. Throughout their lives, people in communities are constantly corrected and disciplined whenever their interactions or their understandings do not conform to those considered accurate in their community. To quote Confucius, 'some acquire the knowledge after a painful feeling of their ignorance' through a process of 'teaching and learning'.

The nature of hegemonies (which should not be confused with neo-Marxist use of the term) is discussed in [Subsistence and Status](#)

In order to understand the ways in which communities build their categorizational models and then from them construct models of community organisation and individual interaction, we are going to address two related sets of structures. These determine how human beings, in any community, see 'reality' and then organise their communities in the 'best possible ways' to make the most of the reality they live in.

Primary ideology

The first set of structures is the set of categorizational models that all members of a community (or set of related communities) hold in common. If they did not hold these models in common they would find it very difficult to make sense of each other's organisation, interaction, behaviour and communication. We are going to call these fundamental organisational models *primary ideology*. Processes of categorisation require frameworks of categories and rules (in language these would be called 'grammars') for both the placement of elements of experience in those categories and the interconnection of the categories and of the elements of experience contained in them. The interconnections are, of course, 'relationships'.

Not only are the categories and the framework of those categories unique to a community (or set of related communities), so are the sets of interactional relations and the 'qualities' that are invested in those relations. The criteria that produce both the categorizational framework and its internal categories and relations are *primary ideological presumptions*. These are the most basic understandings people have of their worlds, in terms of which categorisation proceeds. Any attempt to alter these understandings attacks the ability of people who hold them to think, and therefore to interact meaningfully with their environments.

See [Common classificatory principles of metaphor and proverb](#) for more on processes of categorisation

Most people, when asked to explain their understanding of primary ideological presumptions, find it very difficult (just as they find it difficult to explain why they place words in a particular order in their sentences or why certain words should always, never or only in certain contexts appear together). One of the features of the presumptions is that they are so taken for granted that those who hold them often find it difficult to identify their features and usually presume that they are so 'self-evident' that they need no explanation or justification. This makes it very difficult to research primary presumptions since people, anywhere, will consider questions related to the definition of the assumptions to be inane. One should not question the obvious, particularly when the people being questioned find it difficult to express their understandings or even focus on the issues being raised. It needs to be remembered, however, that primary ideological presumptions are not universally held understandings of the world, they are the understandings that are required by the most basic categorizational models of the community and so, not only should not be questioned, but cannot easily be altered. Changes in such assumptions occur over hundreds of years and produce strains and tensions in communities experiencing the changes (see [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#)).

People in any community inherit the primary ideology of their community in the same way that they inherit the language of their community. It is taught to them from birth or as Confucius put it 'some are born with the knowledge...'. Every time a child makes inappropriate connections between objects, people or experiences, those around the child, who feel responsible for its upbringing, correct the child to ensure that its 'understanding' (i.e. its sets of categories, categorisation within those sets and their inter-relationships) of the world approximates the understanding of the world held by the responsible people in the community (members of the hegemony).

All communities develop a range of acculturative processes and structures squarely aimed at ensuring that the primary ideology of the community is learned and that people, throughout their lives, live by and conform to the presumptions of the fundamental categorizational models of their community. Even minute deviations will be subjected to correction, in much the same way as people are corrected when their speech patterns deviate from accepted practice in their community.

Where the models are not held consistently or life is not organised in ways required by the primary ideology of the community, those involved are usually defined as socially or mentally defective in some way and therefore, to one extent or another, in need of re-education or 'correction'. Those who do not readily respond to correction are often considered dangerous—very often isolated from the rest of the community, or even killed (especially when community cognitive models are under attack and people feel a need to reassert the fundamental certainties of life, as in the *revitalisation movements* we will consider shortly). For some three to four hundred years Western Europeans became increasingly aware and fearful of the effects of madness, as the fundamental presumptions of their primary ideologies were challenged and altered (see [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#)). As Laura Nader put it:

Foucault (1967) demonstrates how changes in the concept of madness led to changes in diagnosis and treatment of the insane and of social attitudes toward them. He describes how changing perceptions of madness in parts of Western Europe from the Middle Ages to the end of the 19th century led to the separation of 'mad' persons from the rest of society, their classification as deviants, and finally their subjection to social control. He focuses on the cultural controls that led to the social controls; ideas about madness led to asylums for the mad.

(Nader 1997, p. 719)

In any community, members are certain that their primary ideology is not simply a set of categorizational models but is, in fact, the way the external world is ordered. After all, they have viewed and interacted with their world through that model since birth. Whenever something in the 'real' world seems not to fit their models (i.e. their understanding) they, usually subconsciously, change it so that it does (this is what Westwood 1997 does in his description of relationships in Confucian Chinese communities). There is a constant and continuous *ideological management of reality*. So, whenever people in a community investigate the 'real world' to see whether it fits their most basic understandings of life, they, inevitably, find that it does. As Nader says of the ways in which people understand 'the body' in different communities:

Images of the body appear natural within their specific cultural milieus.

(Nader 1997, p. 719)

Because the primary ideology of individuals and communities is fundamental to the way they think and understand themselves and their worlds, they instinctively apply their primary ideological presumptions in classifying new experiences and objects. Human beings, in applying their primary presumptions to new phenomena, inevitably reorganise 'reality' to fit their models rather than reorganising their models to fit 'reality' (i.e. they act to *conserve* their understanding of their world and themselves). This is a fundamental problem for anthropological research, since anthropologists are no less prone to reorganising what they find in their research communities to fit their own primary ideologies than any other human beings.

Secondary ideology

The second set of structures is derived from the common primary ideology of members of a community. These structures start from the presumption that the primary ideology is not a subjective set of categorizational models held by members of the community but is, in fact, the way the external world is organised, it is 'objective reality'. The purpose of this second set of structures, which we will call *secondary ideology*, is to spell out the best possible ways of organising community life, given the constraints of 'objective reality'. There can be any number of secondary models in a community. What they all have in common is that they take the primary ideology and its presumptions, from which they are built, for granted. It is the unquestioned, *organised*, backdrop to life. This second level of model building, as Claude Levi-Straus explained, is not only designed to ensure that communities are organised and individuals interact in the 'best possible ways', but is also designed to reinforce and perpetuate the fundamental features of their primary ideologies. According to Levi-

Strauss:

[C]onscious models... are by definition very poor ones since they are not intended to explain the phenomena but to perpetuate them. Therefore structural analysis is confronted with a strange paradox well known to the linguist, that is: the more obvious structural organization is, the more difficult it becomes to reach it because of the inaccurate models lying across the path which leads to it.

(Levi-Strauss 1963, p. 282)

Many of the 'explanatory' models of communities confirm Levi-Strauss' observation. They affirm and reinforce the central presumptions of the primary ideologies of the communities in which they are built (e.g. the various **economic and social exchange models**, which are assumed to explain human interaction but actually reflect and reinforce belief in the universal validity of the 'independent self'—the individualistic acquisition of needs and wants within a regulatory framework).

Since community members 'instinctively' understand, and are cognitively committed to the basic presumptions upon which the secondary models in their community are built, they can readily weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the models available to them and so choose which of the models they will support and which they will oppose. This, in Western communities, is known as 'political', 'social' or 'economic' (or any mixture of these) deliberation, debate or activity. These are the models of which community members are conscious and about which they enter into dispute with and support one another. It is taken for granted by those who espouse a model and organise life by it that their model is all about organising the real world to maximise benefits to community members and protect the most important basic principles of life in their communities (the fundamental presumptions of their primary ideology). It is the other models, those they do not endorse, which are defined by them as 'ideology'. As Philip Williamson explains of the British conservative movement of the late 20th century:

Conservative politicians, intellectuals and publicists confused matters by denying they had any such thing, whether ideology, creed or doctrine; their concern was the real and the practical, 'ideology' being an infection among their opponents which it was their task to resist.

(Williamson 2003, p. 270)

In Western communities, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there is one dominant secondary ideology—capitalism, with a variety of derived models that offer variations on the major themes of capitalism (e.g. emphases on the relative responsibilities of the public and private domains, see Geddes & Crick 1997, chapter 6).

People in Western communities, convinced that their dominant secondary ideologies are not ideologies but are the best ways of organising objective reality, have imposed and continue to impose them, often with considerable force, on the rest of the world.

This set of imposed Western secondary ideological models underpins and constitutes the world economy, perpetuated and reinforced by the almost irresistible hegemonic

forces of globalisation. This imposition of Western secondary ideological models on communities, which have very different primary ideologies, leads almost inevitably to their disruption. Since human beings require a primary ideology in order to think and interact with their worlds, the imposition of secondary models which do not fit their primary ideological understandings, leads to mental and social confusion.

But, because both those imposing the new models and those on whom they are being imposed do not recognise the existence of primary ideological models, both assume that the Western secondary models are the most efficient and 'practical' ways of organising a shared objective reality. So it is assumed, the problem for the victims of this hegemonic imposition is one of lack of 'education' and/or lack of 'discipline'. They, therefore, sponsor and accept educational and restructuring programs (which are based on the primary ideological understandings of the hegemonic powers) to tackle the burgeoning chaos. This exacerbates the problems of social and mental confusion in the receiving communities.

Many communities around the world, suffering the consequences of enforced reorganisation of their worlds to fit the requirements of capitalism, are in various stages of disintegration—victims of the globalising forces of international capitalism. As [Wallerstein \(1991\)](#) claims, the imposition of economic organisation and activity on the rest of the world by Western nations is not new. Since the 16th century Western Europeans (and those First World countries that have their hegemonic roots in Western Europe) have become increasingly militarily dominant around the world and have required the rest of the world to accept reorganisation of their models and understandings. In doing so they have established and maintained a 'world economic system'.

World economic system

To understand the ways in which people live and organise their lives in the early 21st century we need to understand the nature of this world economic system. Unless we do, many of the most important influences on the lives of people in communities we study will be missed or misinterpreted.

Over the past fifty years there have been many attempts to explain the presence of this system. As Immanuel Wallerstein (1991) has said: 'its peculiar feature is that it has shown itself strong enough to destroy all other [world-systems] contemporaneous to it'. Wallerstein provides a brief discussion of the nature of the 'world-system' as he understands it. His article is a response to an earlier article by Andre Gunder Frank, which was, itself, a critical response to a 1990 article by Wallerstein.

Wallerstein says that his 1990 article '[L'Occident, le capitalisme, et le systeme-monde moderne](#)' was written as a rebuttal of the belief that the world-system is an 'economic miracle' of Western industrialism. He says, those who claim this:

believe two things simultaneously: (a) something distinctive occurred in (western) Europe which was radically new somewhere in early modern times; (b) this

'something' was a highly positive or 'progressive' happening in world history. My position is that (a) was true but that (b) was distinctly not true.

(Wallerstein 1991)

Capitalism is based on an individualised, status-driven, open-ended accumulation and consumption of goods and services, requiring open-ended production. The basis for social status and self-definition in Western communities is peculiar. Systems of status and self-definition in other communities are equally peculiar to them.

Imposition of Western secondary models: The breakdown and revitalisation of communities

Feudalism, while unique to medieval Europe, shares many of the characteristics of patron–client forms of communal organisation and interaction around the world. It was a territory-based, patron–client system in which those higher in the hierarchy took responsibility for those below them. They 'parented' those who depended on them (i.e. feudal communities presumed an 'interdependent self' rather than an 'independent self'). The political organisation directly mirrored the social system, and councils of people of similar hierarchical position met to determine affairs of their dependents (see [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#) for more on this).

On the other hand, capitalism is based on individual independence; the acquisition of an ever-expanding set of needs and wants and promotion of the individual rather than his or her responsibility for dependents. Its political frame, therefore, is democracy. If one insisted on a feudally organised community accepting democracy as its political frame, this would directly undermine the 'parenting' responsibilities of hierarchically superior members of the community. Democracy requires communities to be organised in terms of an 'independent self', not an 'interdependent self'. It is no more a universally applicable model of governance than is feudalism, and when communities are compelled to reorganise in 'democratic' ways, all their other understandings of life are automatically challenged.

If, in patron–client organised communities, those in superior hierarchical positions were freed from their parenting responsibilities, those who depend on them would find the world a very insecure and inhospitable place. Far from improving the lot of the poor, the imposition of democracy can disenfranchise them and strip them of those supports that have protected them in the past. Interdependent relationships are disrupted, redistributive processes dismantled, and poverty, anomie and violence escalate in their communities.

Thomas More (1516), in his book *Utopia*, described the consequences of such disenfranchising of the peasantry of England in the early 16th century, during the shift from feudalism to capitalism. The hero of his book, Raphael, was the guest of the 'Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal, and Chancellor of England':

One day when I was dining with him there happened to be at table one of the English lawyers, who took occasion to run out in a high commendation of the severe

execution of justice upon thieves, who, as he said, were then hanged so fast that there were sometimes twenty on one gibbet; and upon that he said he could not wonder enough how it came to pass, that since so few escaped, there were yet so many thieves left who were still robbing in all places.

Upon this, I who took the boldness to speak freely before the cardinal, said there was no reason to wonder at the matter since... 'The increase of pasture,' said I, 'by which your sheep, which are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men, and unpeople, not only villages, but towns; for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a softer and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men the abbots, not contented with the old rents which their farms yielded, nor thinking it enough that they, living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good.

They stop the course of agriculture, destroying houses and towns, reserving only the churches, and enclose grounds that they may lodge their sheep in them. As if forests and parks had swallowed up too little of the land, those worthy countrymen turn the best inhabited places into solitudes, for when an insatiable wretch, who is a plague to his country, resolves to enclose many thousand acres of ground, the owners as well as tenants are turned out of their possessions, by tricks, or by main force, or being wearied out with ill-usage, they are forced to sell them.

By which means those miserable people, both men and women, married and unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families (since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing whither to go; and they must sell almost for nothing their household stuff, which could not bring them much money, even though they might stay for a buyer. When that little money is at an end, for it will be soon spent, what is left for them to do, but either to steal and so to be hanged (God knows how justly), or to go about and beg? And if they do this, they are put in prison as idle vagabonds; while they would willingly work, but can find none that will hire them; for there is no more occasion for country labor, to which they have been bred, when there is no arable ground left. One shepherd can look after a flock which will stock an extent of ground that would require many hands if it were to be ploughed and reaped. This likewise in many places raises the price of corn.'

(More 1516)

A major problem in Third World countries is now not simply the grinding poverty of the poor, but the continuing costs of the conspicuous consumption of the rich. The imposition of forms of democracy (based on presumed independence rather than interdependence) and economic organisation required by the world economic system have reduced increasing numbers of people in Third World countries to penury, with diminishing political, economic and social protection. It has been responsible for dismantling traditional forms of land tenure and utilisation; has eroded and disrupted social organisation and communal support mechanisms and in patron-client systems of governance has disrupted the parenting responsibilities of hierarchically superior members of the community. This, in turn, has allowed those in positions of responsibility to accumulate wealth with less and less acceptance of patron-client responsibilities for former dependents (i.e. for *redistribution* of goods and services). ²

There has been a considerable inflation of expectations and a very great increase in conspicuous consumption amongst some groupings in non-Western communities. This

inflation of the material requirements of status positions is in many ways, though not all, similar to that which occurred in Western Europe from the late 15th century with the denial of hierarchical feudal responsibilities by those who controlled resources (see [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#)). As the effects of the 'trickle down' development policies of the 1960s and 1970s show, it is possible to inflate the requirements of status positions, which are primarily determined through non-economic criteria but reinforced by the acquisition and/or consumption of material goods and services.

One of the unfortunate consequences of the 'trickle down' policies of Third World Development projects and programs and the 'globalization' activities of the past 50 years has been that high-status people in many Third World communities have had the material requirements of their positions greatly inflated by the massive injection of capital into their countries. Since they were not primarily geared to Western forms of open-ended production (see [Subsistence and Status](#)), the injected capital was diverted into existing social template activity and those of high status found themselves able to buy Mercedes Benz cars, live in mansions, have overseas assets, and engage in many other forms of excessive conspicuous consumption. Over the past half century the ownership and consumption of these luxury goods has become institutionalized.

As the injection of outside funds dried up with the failure of 'trickle down' policies, those who require these possessions to underscore status have had to find other sources of funds to obtain them. This has resulted in a 'trickle up' effect. Those of low status, dependent on high-status people in a variety of ways, have, through lowered wages, decreased returns on produce, decreased welfare support, and increased pressure on land and other income generating possessions, borne the brunt of the inflated expectations of elites.

The designation of the apex of patron-client hierarchies as 'dictatorial' is ethnocentric, based on presumptions of independence rather than interdependence. Most hierarchically organised communities can identify a person or small group that is at the apex of the hierarchy and therefore, in a manner similar to

In many non-Western communities and countries, as a result of the 'development' activities of the past half century, the relationships between lower and higher ranks of hierarchically ordered systems of status and community organisation have become severely distorted. By insisting on the 'democratisation' of communities run by 'dictators', the lowest ranks of hierarchical systems have effectively been disenfranchised.

In almost all traditional patron–client systems wealth initially flows from the base (the peasantry in feudal Europe) upward through the hierarchy, creating concentrations of wealth in the higher reaches of the pyramid. Patrons, having accumulated wealth, take responsibility for the well-being of those below them, redistributing goods and services as needed and, in doing so, ensuring the continued and strengthened interdependence of patrons and clients in the hierarchy.

feudal kingships in European history, 'own' or at least 'hold' superior title to all the land and resources available to the communities they head. That person or group is, by definition, not democratically elected to the position.

When such communities are 'emancipated' by Western development enthusiasts, the land and resources, having been vested in the upper reaches of the hierarchy, become their possessions and clients find themselves no longer entitled to the land and resources on which they have always relied. The lowest rankings of status hierarchies therefore find themselves facing very similar problems to those faced by the peasantry of Western Europe during the transition from feudalism to capitalism (see [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#)).

Revitalisation movements and fundamentalism

The consequences, in many non-Western regions, of this impoverishing distortion of status requirements and the erosion of communities, as their primary ideological presumptions have been challenged and organisational features of their secondary models dismantled, have been profound. Increasing numbers of people see the growing problems of their communities and uncertainties of their individual lives as stemming from Western-based activities in their countries and involvement of national leaders in Western forms of organisation, activity and consumption. More generally, they perceive the breakdown of law and order and the escalating violence that surrounds them largely as a consequence of Western intrusion and influence in their countries and communities. Inevitably, as the perceptions crystallise, resentment of and resistance to Western forms of organisation and activity mount. This, in turn, is reflected in Western attitudes and Western peoples become increasingly aware of a world of:

mortal enemies who will seize upon our vulnerabilities to bloody us, to murder our citizens...

(Hyde 2001).

Having lived through the second half of the twentieth century in Western countries, with their increasingly hedonistic biases, I am impressed by the mounting

fundamentalism of both Western and many non-Western communities. When life becomes increasingly difficult and apparently dangerous, then communities and individuals search for the reasons and for ways of reasserting order and security in their worlds. Just as people in the later medieval period in Western Europe became aware of, and increasingly vociferously denounced corruption and simony in their communities (see [History of the Emergence of Capitalism](#)), leading to the 16th century reformation wars, so very commonly the problem in non-Western communities is seen as 'corruption': the loss of morality and/or commitment to the central principles of life in their communities. The answer is seen to lie in determination to 'reform' their communities, to reaffirm and recommit themselves to the most important fundamental understandings of life, the central presumptions that underpin and give coherence to their primary ideologies, spelt out in one or more sets of secondary ideological models.

When those presumptions that are central to people's lives are perceived as being threatened, people everywhere reaffirm their commitment to the values, which they know are necessary to ensure that life remains secure and ordered. They very readily become involved in activity aimed at reinforcing the forms of organisation, interaction and understanding that are required by the fundamental presumptions of their cognitive frames or primary ideologies. They attempt to *revitalise* both communal and individual life. Inevitably, they do so through commitment to and enforcement of secondary ideological models derived from their primary ideological presumptions. These models are usually developed and promoted by a *charismatic* leadership, which demands and obtains from the bulk of the population unswerving loyalty to the principles of the espoused secondary ideology.

In writings on the late medieval world of Western Europe, the revitalisation models and the movements associated with them have been referred to as 'The Reformation'. Their leaders were, almost without exception, identified with religious causes. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, examples of such movements abound in both Western and non-Western communities and countries: from the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Taliban (identified as religiously motivated), to George Bush in the United States in its early 21st century commitment to rooting out terrorism around the world and reaffirming and reasserting Western values wherever they appear to be under challenge.

Revitalisation and dissident groups

The fact that the revitalisation leadership promotes a particular secondary ideological model means that, however committed the bulk of the population might be to that leadership and the requirements of the model it promotes and protects, there will always be opposition from community members holding alternative secondary ideological frames. Outside forces can, and do, exploit those minority groups in attacking the legitimacy of the movement. This, in turn, can result in the oppositional groups being considered in league with immoral, corrupting external forces. As Khomeini described of the emergence of factions within Iran, promoted and supported, he claimed, by foreigners:

[U]nfortunately we see that some differences are created within the opposition, that is between the secular and the Islamic factions. I must point out that the origin of these parties which have appeared in Iran since the beginning of the constitutional revolution, as one understands it, is that they were, without themselves knowing it, founded by foreigners, and some of them have served the foreigners... When the foreigners see that there are people who are useful (for the country), people who, it is hoped, will be able to reform the country, they use all their energies to set them against each other; consequently, these people quarrel with one another, each one's writings oppose the other's, and they reject one another's ideas. Some of them have done such things knowingly and were the primary agents of the foreigners, while others were not aware of what was happening, were not aware that they were being dragged down a road which went against the interests of their own country.

(Khomeini 1979 - accessed 21 Nov. 2009)

The 'Coalition of the Willing', comprising the United States, Great Britain and sundry camp followers, in its war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and in its fomenting of opposition to the fundamentalist leadership in Iran, has exploited such dissident groups. However, to conclude that these dissenting groups are committed to Western secondary ideological principles, as many commentators in both the United States and other Western countries have, leads to unrealistic presumptions about the consequences of backing their overthrow of fundamentalist regimes. They also build their secondary ideological models from the basic presumptions of the common primary ideological frame, which informs the models of the revitalisation movement they oppose. They might, in order to win and maintain support from outside forces, speak the language of those forces from which they want support, but it is foolish and naïve to believe that the rhetoric employed for this purpose is indicative of the principles and models they are committed to promoting.

See Geddes and Crick 1997, Chapter 9 and [Capitalism and Third World Nations](#) for discussion and illustration of Western imputation of their own commitments onto the Third World groups they armed and supported in the Cold War era.

This failure to realise that the motivations of opposed factions within a country are derived from their particular understandings of themselves and the world is not recent in Western engagements with the rest of the world. It underlies most Western support of particular warring factions against others since the dissolution of Western empires following World War II. A great deal of the Western literature on the Western invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrates the continued presumption by commentators of commitment by dissident groups within those countries to the fundamental capitalist principles of the countries they are courting for support.

Non-Western revitalisation movements

Among the many non-Western revitalisation movements of the past fifty years one must include both the fundamentalist movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran from 1979 and the Taliban movement of Afghanistan in the 1990s. In one of his 1979 speeches Khomeini describes those who supported the Shah and would try to reintroduce Western ideas to Iran:

Xenomaniacs, people infatuated with the West, empty people, people with no content! Come to your senses; do not try to Westernize everything you have! Look at the West, and see who the people are in the West that present themselves as champions of human rights and what their aims are. Is it human rights they really care about, or the rights of the superpowers? What they really want to secure are the rights of the superpowers.

(Khomeini 1979 accessed 15 November 2009)

Revolutionary Iran became an enemy of nations and communities that have their hegemonic roots in Western European history. The United States, with Western European and Soviet support, fomented a war between Iran and Iraq, and supplied both weaponry and military training to Iraqi forces. For ten years revolutionary Iran endured a prolonged and savage war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq in which deaths, on both sides, numbered more than a million people.

It is the nature of revitalisation movements that they often go to extremes. Those involved feel deeply threatened by 'corruption' within and by outside forces that promote immoral values and threaten their security and well-being. They root out immorality among their own people and introduce often draconian measures to ensure compliance with the central presumptions of their moral code. They look for traitors—the enemy inside the walls—and attempt to weed them out. In the process there is, all too often, great human suffering. So long as the threat of outside intervention continues to be perceived as real, hard-line fundamentalists gain a ready audience and strong support from the populations they lead.

See Ray Takeyh (2002) for a discussion of the process of routinization of the Iranian revolution over the past 10 years.

Western leaders are as driven by their understandings of reality as are the leaders of non-Western revitalisation movements, and are as committed to protecting and reinforcing what they see as the most important fundamental principles of life, which are often identified by revitalisation leaders as forms of corruption against which they must fight. So all-too-often they react to the extremes and make the perceived threat a reality—as happened to Iran from 1980 to 1989 (and is now happening again) and as happened to the Taliban in Afghanistan in the first years of the 21st century. When they do so they ensure the prolongation of the fundamental extremism they oppose. As the perceived threat from outside forces diminishes and the revitalisation leaders become increasingly secure in their leadership, fundamentalist movements tend toward moderation. Max Weber (1947) described this process as the *routinization of charisma*.

The ultimate democratisation of Iran is an almost universal theme in Western literature dealing with the liberalising tendencies in Iranian society (i.e. the processes of *routinization*). Nader Hashemi addresses this widespread belief in the Western press and among Western academics, as he says:

Robert Dahl: in responding to the question of how a democratic culture can be created in a non-democratic society, ...observed that ...few would seriously contest

[that] an important factor in the prospects for a stable democracy in a country is the strength of the diffuse support for democratic ideas, values, and practices embedded in the country's culture and transmitted, in large part, from one generation to the next.

(Hashemi 2003, p. 30)

Western revitalisation movements

The Western preoccupation with terrorism in the early 21st century is a fundamentalist reassertion of basic Western values. So is the declared determination to stamp it out by reimposing democratic principles of social and political life on those countries and communities that display or encourage anti-Western sentiments. As with all such movements, the leadership demands loyalty not only from its followers but from all within the boundaries of its control. Alisa Solomon describes the domestic climate of the 'war on terrorism' in the United States:

Like any avalanche, this one started at the top, and likely dates back to the moment after 9/11 when President Bush warned the world's nations, 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists'. From Bush on down, in the months that followed, government officials drew limits around acceptable speech. White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer told Americans to 'watch what they say'. Such words gained force when the Patriot Act gave the government extensive new powers to spy, interrogate and detain. When civil libertarians began to protest the curbing of constitutional rights, Attorney General John Ashcroft offered a forbidding rejoinder: 'To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists'. These kinds of remarks from our government's top leaders, says Anthony Romero, executive director of the ACLU, have granted ordinary people license 'to shut down alternative views'. The Administration has fashioned a domestic arm of its new doctrine of pre-emption.

(Solomon 2003 -accessed 21 Nov. 2009)

An editorial in *The Economist* (2003) described the mindset of the neo-conservatives who wielded considerable clout in the second George Bush presidency, 'They see the world in terms of good and evil. They think America should be willing to use military power to defeat the forces of chaos'. Martin Sieff, in a *United Press International* (2003) commentary on the aftermath of the Iraq invasion of 2003, explained the ambition of those who have championed the 'war on terror',

[S]o confident were Office of the Secretary of Defense planners and their neo-conservative allies of the coming oil bonanza from Iraq that they openly advocated using it, as Judis wrote in *The New Republic* 'to remake the Middle East in our democratic, capitalist image...'

(Sieff, United Press International 2003)

Neo-conservative leaders of the United States of America, and their allies in other Western countries, *know* that capitalism and democracy are not ideological models, but the way the objective world is (or must be) organised. They have a duty to ensure that wherever dark, dangerous and irrational forces are at work, attacking democracy and capitalism, those forces are challenged, their supporters eliminated (whether going by the name of Taliban, Ba'th Party supporter, Communist, Islamic

Fundamentalist, Al-Qa'eda operative or any other of the terms that will come to prominence and join the pantheon of evil-doers in the years to come).

As Western communities feel themselves threatened by the growing influence of what the United States' President George W Bush called 'the axis of evil' they know that, at all costs, the evils of anti-capitalism and anti-democracy must be challenged and beaten back. As Henry Hyde, Chairman of the US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations said, on October 3 2001, weeks after the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York:

Let us begin by accepting there is no single enemy to be defeated, no one network to be eliminated. Al-Qa'eda is but our most prominent opponent, but its outlook is shared by many others who are equally committed to our destruction. If we believe that our safety can be secured by destroying any one organization or any single person, we will only ensure that we will remain unsafe and unprepared once again. For we know now that we have permanent, mortal enemies who will seize upon our vulnerabilities to bloody us, to murder our citizens, to commit horror for the purpose of forcing horror upon us.... Our strategy, plans, and actions must be comprehensive, deliberate and formulated for the long-term. We must be prepared not only to protect ourselves from new assaults, not only to intercept and frustrate them, but to eliminate new threats at their source. This must be a permanent campaign, similar to the ancient one humanity has waged against disease and its never-ending assault upon our defenses.

(Hyde [October 3 2001](#) - accessed 21 Nov. 2009)

In such times, human beings feel the need to reassert and reinforce those principles that they instinctively know to be central to a properly ordered and secure world. Equally, they know, beyond any doubt, that unless they resolutely and uncompromisingly confront the enemy, intent on destroying it, it will destroy them.

As Henry Hyde (2001) claimed, one of the major terrorist threats against Western nations at the start of the 21st century has been perceived as coming from Al-Qa'eda (meaning 'the base', its intent: to reaffirm and reassert the most basic understandings of life as understood by those who have committed themselves to its goals). For Hyde and most other Western leaders the organisation is a network of terror and evil, master-minded by a Saudi Arabian, Sheikh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ladin. Bin-Ladin (in the text cited below) spells out his reasons for seeing the activities of the United States (and Western countries in general) as a plague, destructively consuming the resources of his country, undermining the most important central understandings of life, and threatening the unity, security and well-being of his people and his world:

The Arabian Peninsula has never—since God made it flat, created its desert, and encircled it with seas—been stormed by any forces like the crusader armies now spreading in it like locusts, consuming its riches and destroying its plantations. All this is happening at a time when nations are attacking Muslims like people fighting over a plate of food.

([Bin-Ladin 1998](#) - accessed 21 Nov. 2009)

Just as Henry Hyde insists that the enemies of democracy and capitalism must be eliminated, so Bin-Ladin insists that those who threaten the existence of his world

must be eliminated. The more threatened people feel, the more strongly they recommit themselves to those fundamental primary ideological principles, which they *know* will reassert order and security within their communities and lives.

In the West, people during the threatening years of the 1970s and 1980s recommitted themselves to fundamental economic doctrines. In the early years of the 21st century, under the fundamentalist leadership of the second George Bush and his coterie of ‘born again’ believers in the efficacy of ‘Western democratic principles’, Western communities remained committed to globalisation, privatisation, economic growth; reducing public expenditure; re-imposing democracy (the political frame of Western capitalism) wherever it has been weakened or displaced and to eliminating those who most vociferously oppose their activities. Because Western people organise their lives through economically focused social templates, the forms they re-emphasise in times of stress and threat focus on economic issues and are aimed at rectifying economic processes and bolstering economic performance on the presumption that this will alleviate the perceived problems.

In the last decades of the 20th century Western countries and communities recommitted themselves to the fundamental principles underpinning free-market capitalism. Since that time they have also recommitted themselves to ensuring that the fundamental principles of capitalism and its political frame—democracy—are enforced and reinforced wherever ‘anti-Western’ sentiments seem to be mounting and capitalism seems to be losing its influence.

The first Western leader in the second half of the 20th century to steer her country determinedly toward a Western fundamentalist future as a means of arresting and reversing the moral decline of the nation was the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

As a prime minister representing the newly energetic right wing of the Conservative Party (the ‘Dries’, as they later called themselves, as opposed to the old-style moderate Tories, or ‘Wets’), Thatcher advocated greater independence of the individual from the state; an end to allegedly excessive government interference in the economy, including privatization of state-owned enterprises and the sale of public housing to tenants; reductions in expenditures on social services such as health care, education, and housing; limitations on the printing of money in accord with the economic doctrine of monetarism; and legal restrictions on trade unions. The term Thatcherism came to refer not just to these policies but also to certain aspects of her ethical outlook and personal style, including moral absolutism, fierce nationalism, a zealous regard for the interests of the individual, and a combative, uncompromising approach to achieving political goals.

([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

The following readings provide an insight into the kinds of social reorganisation that Western people felt they had to undertake in order to ensure that life was secure and that the world remained ‘sane’ in the latter part of the 20th century.

[Milton Friedman](#) (with Rose Friedman) (1980), the theoretical mind behind a great many of Margaret Thatcher’s policies in the early years of her British government

(1979–1990), provides an explanation of the essential requirements for:

... building a society that relies primarily on voluntary cooperation to organize both economic and other activity, a society that preserves and expands human freedom, that keeps government in its place, keeping it our servant and not letting it become our master.

(Friedman & Friedman 1980)

Stelzer (1992) describes the 'decline' of Britain between 1945 and 1979 and gives a very positive summing up of the achievements of the Thatcher Government in reversing that decline. As Irwin Stelzer says:

It was individual responsibility, rather than reliance on government, that now became the accepted standard against which to measure policy initiatives.... Thatcher restored to the UK a sense that appropriate policies and driving entrepreneurialism can produce steady increases in material well-being.

(Stelzer 1992)

Stuart Hall's (1988) analysis of Thatcherism provides a Marxist perspective on the precursors and consequences of Margaret Thatcher's privatisation policies.

As we suggested earlier, within any community of people who share a common primary ideology, there will be a range of secondary ideological models. Friedman and Stelzer provide explanation of how the world should be organised and people interact with each other from the perspective of one set of Western secondary ideological models, Hall presents an alternative, dissident way of organising the world. Both perspectives share a common set of primary ideological understandings. Underlying both neo-conservative (right) and Marxist (left) emphases and perspectives is a level of common understanding:

- All share similar understandings of the nature of time and of the ways in which it should or should not be 'used'.
- All accept that there is an economic sphere or domain or environment within which people interact in order to achieve greater personal well-being.
- All accept that the aim of government is to organise the 'public arena' to ensure improved economic organisation and performance.
- All assume that there is a 'private' realm or environment within which individuals interact. The disagreements concern the relative duties and responsibilities of private and public spheres.
- All assume that human beings are 'free actors' and that human relationships are based on independence not interdependence.
- All assume that prime aims in life include earning a cash income; improving one's material position; 'developing' oneself.

- All assume that there is a 'formal' economy and that, necessarily, people will interact in terms of that economy in the ways which are spelt out as 'legitimate' and 'appropriate'.
- All presume the 'rule of law'.

Conclusion

Commentators on life in non-Western communities and countries always have, and always will, be faced with the problem of disentangling themselves from their own primary and secondary ideological commitments in order better to understand the primary and secondary ideological presumptions and commitments of the people amongst whom they are undertaking research. This has never been more important than it is in the early 21st century. Despite (or, more likely, because of) the driving commitment of Western communities to globalisation and democratisation in countries and communities around the world, increasing numbers of people in non-Western communities are seeing people of the West not as harbingers of good, but as exploitative, immoral, and intent on destroying the most important fundamental understandings of life in their communities.

People in the West are certain that their understandings and forms of organisation and interaction are derived from the nature of objective reality and provide the most efficient, equitable means of ensuring individual (and therefore communal) development and well-being. Forces that oppose Western forms and understandings are therefore irrational and dangerous to the well-being of human beings everywhere. So, they are determined, wherever they find 'fundamentalism' and its associated 'terrorist' activity to oppose them and finally displace these evils by those forms of organisation and interaction to which they are committed. That Western determination to impose their own fundamentalist agenda on the rest of the world, if the reasoning contained within this discussion is valid, ensures the perpetuation and deepening of the forces they oppose.

Like it or not, Western people live in a world of diverse primary and secondary ideologies (which only make sense in terms of the primary ideologies from which they are derived). Every attempt to impose Western secondary ideological models on people who do not share Western primary ideological understandings guarantees the disruption of their communities and ultimately the emergence of revitalisation movements aimed at reasserting and reinforcing their own understandings of life.

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End Notes

¹ See [How Born Again Christians Rescued Capitalism](#) for the origin of this.

² Yet, we must not fall into the trap of imputing too great a set of effects to the world economic system. It is very easy, when examining the blatant intrusiveness of the forms of entertainment, education and exploitation, which come from the West, to assume they are swamping the lives of people everywhere; turning them into cardboard cut-outs of Western people—with all the aspirations and acquired 'needs'

of an affluent capitalist world, while not giving them the income that is necessary to fulfilling those new demands in their lives.

It is true that the intrusions of the world-system in the lives of people everywhere are great, and that they are being barraged with advertisements, soap operas, game shows, manufactured goods, 'news', opinion and 'documentaries' of life elsewhere. However, human beings are not simply slates on which the latest influences can scrawl their graffiti, erasing the past and eliminating other influences. Human beings always have to interpret their worlds, and their interpretations always stem from the primary ideologies of their communities. Left to their own devices, human beings take what is offered and translate it in ways that are meaningful to them. In the process, what Western people think they're understanding may well be very different from what is being understood in those communities. Human beings also have the ability to filter garbage, to impute greater or less significance to events to which they are exposed.

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