The Three Dimensions of Ideological Hegemony and Its Practical Implications

Huiyan Chen

Zhaoqing University, 55 Zhaoqing Ave., Duanzhou District, Zhaoqing, 526061, China

Abstract: **When defending class and national interests through "soft" strategies to resist ideological infiltration by other countries, the term egemonia in Gramsci's discourse is understood as "ideological hegemony." Conversely, when "soft" strategies are used to spread ideology abroad and defend a superpower's global "leadership" and "dominance," egemonia is perceived as "ideological supremacy." Popular culture, science and technology, and modernization form the three dimensions of ideological hegemony, serving as crucial arenas for both the domestic ruling class to defend ideological hegemony and for international superpowers to maintain ideological supremacy. Drawing on these three dimensions, in the global information age, universities must enhance the ideological leadership of educational institutions by highlighting the "two cores," modern information technology, and modernization efforts in higher education to ensure effective leadership in ideological work, with a focus on three essential points.**

Keywords: **Ideological hegemony; universities; three essential points.**

I. EXPLORATION OF THE CONNOTATION OF *EGEMONIA* IN GRAMSCI'S DISCOURSE SYSTEM: IDEOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP AND SUPREMACY

In his *Prison Notebooks*, written between 1929 and 1935, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) frequently used the term *egemonia*, sometimes interchangeably with *direzione*, to articulate his political philosophy. Scholars regard *egemonia* as a core concept within Gramsci's political thought (Sun, 2012, p. 55), with a thorough understanding of this term seen as essential to grasping Gramsci's ideas accurately. However, interpretations of *egemonia* among scholars, both domestically and internationally, vary, necessitating a closer examination of its connotations to form a more accurate understanding.

A. Perspectives of Domestic and International Scholars

The English equivalent of the Italian term *egemonia* is "hegemony." Scholar Chen Yangu contends that Gramsci's use of *egemonia* largely divests it of the traditional connotation of "dominance," while Kong Ming'an posits that Gramsci, reflecting on the failure of proletarian revolutions in Western Europe, asserted the proletariat's need to attain leadership in a positive sense. Both scholars agree that translating *hegemony* as "leadership" better aligns with Gramsci's ideological intentions (Chen, 1995, p.116). Conversely, Zhou Fan suggests that translating *egemonia* as "supremacy" is more fitting (Kong, 2005). Yang (2009) notes that Gramsci occasionally viewed *egemonia* as a synthesis of *dominazione* and *direzione*, thus expanding its original meaning, which he argues is better translated as "supremacy." After extensive examination, Raymond Williams suggested that "hegemony" parallels the ancient Chinese concept of "dominance" (*ba*), favoring "supremacy" as a more suitable translation (Li, Huibin et al., 2007). Scholars in Taiwan, along with many mainland Chinese scholars, advocate translating "hegemony" as "cultural supremacy" to convey a non-violent sense and mitigate the negative connotations of "supremacy" alone. Sun (2012) examines the entirety of Gramsci's thought and contends that translating "hegemony" as "ideological leadership" is most appropriate (Sun, 2012, pp. 56-57).

ISSN 2394-9716

International Journal of Novel Research in Interdisciplinary Studies
Vol. 11, Issue 6, pp: (1-9), Month: November – December 2024, Available at: **www.noveltyjournals.com**

These varied perspectives on the term *egemonia*/hegemony reflect scholars' interpretations across three linguistic and cultural lenses—Italian, English, and Chinese—and their understanding of Gramsci's comprehensive philosophy. While these interpretations convey aspects of Gramsci's ideological essence, each has certain limitations.

B. Examination of the Connotations of *Egemonia*

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci occasionally uses the verb *dirigere*, translated as "to lead," "to address," or "to command," along with its noun form *direzione*, which corresponds to *dominazione*, meaning "domination" or "control." In English, *direzione* translates to "leadership," while *egemonia* translates to "hegemony." Both terms are derived from Greek and Latin origins—*egemon* and *egemonia*, respectively—with an original meaning referring to "a leader or ruler of a state." *Egemonia* thus denotes both a form of ideological transformation where a class's beliefs become dominant values for the populace and a political relationship between nations, where a stronger state subjugates a weaker one, translating to "supremacy" in Chinese. Gramsci's interchangeable use of *direzione* and *egemonia* reflects nuanced meanings that cannot be conflated; an understanding of these terms requires an in-depth exploration across four dimensions: Gramsci's theoretical foundations, class stance, political objectives, and strategic approaches.

Firstly, Gramsci was a revolutionary for the proletariat, a Marxist theorist, and a communist "fighter." His work was heavily influenced by early Western Marxist theorists, Lenin's theory of leadership, and the practicalities of the Russian October Revolution. Inspired by Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch's assertion that proletarian consciousness was key to the revolution's success, Gramsci emphasized the necessity of proletarian culture, viewing it as a prerequisite for revolution. The Russian October Revolution and Lenin's ideas furthered Gramsci's understanding of Marxism and proletarian revolution. Gramsci expanded upon these influences by (1) defining Marxist philosophy as a "philosophy of praxis," insisting that Marxism is not dogmatic but should be treated dynamically; (2) highlighting revolutionary will, or "collective will," as a driving force in revolutionary practice; (3) asserting that the proletariat's awareness and class consciousness are essential for a successful socialist revolution; and (4) interpreting Lenin's concept of leadership as "domination plus moral and intellectual leadership," which complements physical force (i.e., proletarian dictatorship). Consequently, Gramsci's concept of *egemonia* extends beyond mere "supremacy," embodying unique connotations that warrant further examination of its native theoretical roots and historical context.

Secondly, Gramsci's political philosophy is also rooted in Italy's indigenous theories and cultural traditions. During university, he was influenced by Benedetto Croce's emphasis on ideological and moral reform movements, fostering a focus on the philosophy of spirit. Post-graduation, Gramsci prioritized the cultural and educational aspects of revolutionary activities, emphasizing the importance of revolutionary education for the public. Influenced by Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Gramsci argued that the proletarian revolution hinges on two pillars: (1) establishing the collective will of the people, with the modern prince as the proactive embodiment of this will, and (2) fostering ideological and moral reform (Gramsci, 1973, p. 113). In 1922, as Italian fascism took the political stage, Gramsci opposed the violent tactics of fascism, advocating for a united front of anti-fascist forces. Throughout his career, Gramsci remained committed to exploring the theory and strategy of proletarian revolution from the perspective of the masses. He argued that the "modern prince" or political party leading the proletarian revolution should exercise *direzione* or ideological leadership through "soft" cultural strategies to unite the collective will. Once power is seized, leadership (domination) should embody the collective will, fostering obedience among the people through ideological and moral reform. In sum, acting as "benevolent leadership" (as opposed to tyranny) is essential to gaining and maintaining authority. When leadership (*direzione*) reflects the collective will, it embodies "benevolent leadership," whereas oppressive rule that disregards the collective will is considered "tyranny." These distinctions capture the three layers of meaning that *egemonia* assumes in domestic governance and leadership practices.

Thirdly, Gramsci's firsthand experience of World War I influenced his perspective on international relations and politics. From his position on the global proletarian and international communist fronts, Gramsci regarded the conflict as an "imperialist war between factions," in which the proletariat should remain neutral while leveraging the war to further revolutionary causes—just as World War I had catalyzed the Russian October Revolution and China's May Fourth Movement. Gramsci viewed imperialist nations' attempts to dominate and extract concessions from weaker states as a "hegemonic" pursuit of power to secure global "leadership" and "supremacy" in their favor. In the current era of peace and development, Western developed nations have revised their strategies, using economic and military power as well as

political, cultural, and technological influence to promote their ideologies and values globally. Given these shifts, with the changing themes of the times and international relations, *egemonia* has not only retained its traditional meaning of "supremacy" but has also expanded in its implications. In the realm of international politics, *egemonia* encompasses ideological supremacy and embodies the "cultural supremacy" that Gramsci emphasized.

C. A New Understanding of *Egemonia*

In the latter half of the 19th century, amidst the age of war and revolution, free-market capitalism evolved into Fordist (organized) capitalism, with increasing state political and cultural intervention in the economy. Lenin, Lukács, Korsch, and Gramsci, responding to these historical shifts, rejected economic determinism and economism, emphasizing that the proletarian revolution in developed capitalist nations should adapt its strategy from traditional violent revolution to ideological leadership. This approach highlights the importance of class consciousness, ideology, culture, and collective will—non-violent "soft" strategies—for advancing the proletarian revolution and ensuring political stability. In Gramsci's discourse, whether *egemonia* translates as "leadership," "supremacy," "ideological hegemony," or cultural/ideological supremacy, it must be considered within key domestic and international political frameworks.

For the domestic political context, three key points emerge: (1) whether the "modern prince" or political party positions itself as a representative of the majority's welfare and interests, (2) the degree to which ideology or culture contributes to the exercise and stability of political authority, and (3) whether the methods used to govern reflect the collective will of the people, gaining their approval and support. Around the 1930s, the United States regained its strength after an economic crisis, underscoring the importance of the bourgeois state's use of "soft" strategies to maintain ideological leadership, which became critical for capitalism's survival and growth.

Following the deliberate initiation of World War II by Germany and Japan, the post-war period saw two dominant blocs emerge: socialist states, led by the Soviet Union, and capitalist nations, led by the United States. In this Cold War era of peace and development, ideological supremacy became a contested ground between the two superpowers. Reflecting on Gramsci's stance against Italian fascism, understanding *egemonia* in the international political context requires attention to three points: (1) the strategies powerful nations employ to secure core global positions, (2) the means by which such powers extract benefits from other countries, and (3) the tactics Western developed countries use, relying on "soft" power, to globally promote their ideologies and values in an era characterized by peace and development.

Based on the thematic transformations of our times and historical shifts, this study considers *egemonia* as "ideological leadership" when discussing a nation's "modern prince" and regime that prioritizes the interests and collective will of the populace, consolidates national unity through "soft" strategies, strengthens national power, protects legitimate interests, and resists ideological infiltration. Alternatively, *egemonia* is interpreted as "ideological supremacy" when examining how certain superpowers use "soft" power and strategies to spread ideology and defend their global "leadership" and "dominance."

II.   THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY

Since Gramsci established the theory of ideological hegemony in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the thematic focus of the times has shifted from war and revolution to peace and development, with the global order evolving from a US-Soviet bipolar structure to one of a dominant superpower alongside multiple strong nations. Consequently, the realm of ideological theory has continuously expanded, presenting diverse and multifaceted modes of operation. Building upon the work of Gramsci and neo-Gramscian scholars, as well as the theories from the Frankfurt School, Habermas, and Michael E. Latham, the application of ideological hegemony has moved from traditional ideological consciousness to new domains—namely, culture, science and technology, and social science theory. These three dimensions serve as critical arenas where the ruling class domestically defends ideological leadership and where international superpowers maintain ideological supremacy.

A. The Dimension of Popular Cultures

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci defines ideological hegemony as "a worldview implicitly expressed within art, law, economic behaviors, and all facets of individual and collective life" (Gramsci, 1973, p. 238). This worldview comprises four interconnected levels: philosophy, religion, common sense, and folklore. The latter two form the cultural backdrop of

everyday practices and represent the "common-sense" worldview of the masses. This level of belief belongs to "spontaneous philosophy" and constitutes a "non-reflective" ideology embedded within daily life. The former two levels, on the other hand, represent a critical elevation of common-sense worldviews by intellectuals. This "systematic thought" worldview falls under "conscious philosophy" and serves as a component of "organic" ideology (Yu, 2009, pp. 237-238). During the era of Fordist (organized) capitalism, the integration of ideological subjects with individuals (intellectuals and the masses) and the organic fusion of "systematic thought" with "common sense" allowed the worldview and values of the ruling class to become the "core value system of society." These values not only govern the public consciousness but are also accepted and internalized by "society as a whole."

The ruling class skillfully employs ideological apparatuses under its control—such as education, family, mass media, unions, political parties, and various civil society organizations—to permeate everyday norms with its worldview and values, transmitted through intellectuals to establish "common sense" as the foundation of social order. These "norms" and "common sense" possess deep cultural significance, intricately intertwined with popular culture, which serves to enhance societal cohesion, integration, and stability.

Gramsci recognized popular culture as an essential domain for the exercise of ideological hegemony. He argued that the proletarian revolution must first achieve cultural leadership to attain ideological and political leadership. Inspired by Gramsci's focus on popular culture as a field of ideological hegemony, neo-Gramscian thinkers such as Adorno and Horkheimer argued that "popular culture is an ideological instrument of control in Fordist capitalist society." Kolakowski noted that "workers can only gain political power by first securing cultural 'leadership'" (Yang, 2009, p. 2). From this perspective, to seize and maintain class power, it is essential not only to rely on "hard" strategies such as economic and military power but also to leverage popular culture as a "soft" strategy to defend ideological hegemony.

B. The Dimension of Science and Technology

In Gramsci's discourse, intellectuals encompass not only traditional cultural producers and disseminators of scientific knowledge but also "technical intellectuals, managers, practical scientists, and technical experts directly involved in production and state policy formation" (Aronowitz, n.d.). These professionals, with specialized roles as modern "organic intellectuals," permeate all levels of economic life. For Gramsci, intellectuals' "systematic thought" represents a form of "science" distinct from the "common sense" of daily public practice, with ideology functioning as a fusion of "common sense" and "science." Intellectuals, as the agents of ideological production and dissemination, are thus multifaceted talents with both scientific knowledge and technical expertise. In this framework of ideological hegemony, science and technology themselves assume ideological functions.

Structuralist Western Marxist Althusser argued in *For Marx* (1956) that scientific theory develops on the basis of "abandoning ideological frameworks," advancing as "free science within the inevitability of history" only by "breaking away from the ideologies that observe, attack, and encircle it." According to Althusser, scientific knowledge progresses from the abstract to the concrete, whereas ideology works inversely, extracting "pure essence" from "many specific individuals" (Yu, 2009, pp. 281-282). The evolution of science from rejecting and transcending ideology marks a qualitative leap, a continual "struggle" wherein "theoretical practice" plays a central role. Such practice includes both "scientific" and "pre-scientific" or "ideological" dimensions, suggesting that scientific activity is cultivated within a critical, reformative ideological process. Thus, from the perspective of its formation and evolution, science can also be viewed as an ideology.

In the late 19th century, the ideological framework based on free exchange began to unravel as the free-market economy led to a breakdown in social order and national functions. This culminated in the 1929 economic crisis in Western capitalist nations, which prompted increased state intervention in the free-market economy and fostered socioeconomic development through scientific and technological progress. In *Technology and Science as "Ideology"* (1986), Habermas argued that the growing autonomy of technology rendered it and science the "primary productive force," with the bourgeoisie positioning science and technology as a rationalizing "compensatory mechanism." This newly legitimated ideology replaced "free exchange" as it compensated for the market's failures and regulated "dysfunctional state activities" (Yu, 2009, p. 288). Under the influence of science and technology, capitalist societies further developed their productive forces, thereby transforming previously chaotic social production, exchange relations, and national functions into

regulated structures. Based on this, Marcuse asserted that "technology and science also function ideologically" (Yu, 2009, p. 289).

After World War II, science and technology increasingly merged, intensifying their regulatory influence across economic, political, cultural, and social domains. Their impact on human production, lifestyles, and modes of thinking has grown considerably, signifying humanity's entry into the technological age. Consequently, the design, selection, and execution of scientific and technological systems—as well as the intentions of designers, policymakers, and implementers—are inevitably influenced by ideological stances. Although science and technology, as tools, may not inherently possess ideological characteristics, they are now integrated into the realm of ideological hegemony. They serve as instruments for the ruling class to sustain authority and consolidate power, fulfilling ideological functions in this context.

C. The Dimension of Modernization

Following World War II, nations divided into two competing ideological blocs—capitalism and socialism—ushering in the Cold War era. Ideological leadership, initially a prerequisite for domestic class rule, became a central battleground for global supremacy between these divergent social systems, extending the scope of ideological leadership from national politics to the international arena. To counter the ideological challenge posed by Soviet communism, American scholars developed a uniquely American modernization theory. This model of "non-communist" modernization was intended as an arena for ideological hegemony, bolstering the global appeal of American political institutions, culture, values, and national image to protect and consolidate U.S. global dominance.

In his work *Modernization as Ideology*, American scholar Michael E. Latham observed that U.S. policymakers viewed political instability and poverty as fertile grounds for Marxist revolution. Latham cites economist Walt Rostow, who argued that the Soviet-led international communist movement "exploited the inherent instability of underdeveloped regions" to breach the Cold War stalemate after WWII, spreading communist ideology globally and undermining the U.S.-established "political-economic alliance system." To meet this challenge, sustain capitalism's global influence, and curb communism's spread, Latham, again drawing on Rostow, contended that the United States had to go beyond traditional economic and military aid by engaging directly and proactively in the "entire creative process of modernization" in underdeveloped nations. This approach was designed not only to influence these nations' psychological landscapes but also to control the minds and policies of their governments. According to Lerner (2003), Rostow's discourse marks a shift in "modernization" from an academic model to a social science paradigm, transforming it from a theoretical framework into policy recommendations, ultimately serving as a strategic tool for the U.S.-led capitalist bloc to confront communist ideology.

Latham contextualized this approach within the Kennedy administration's policies and the global context of the time, positing that the greatest threat to the U.S.—"the world's strongest economic and military power"—was "an antagonistic, subversive foreign ideology," namely Soviet communism. Modernization theorists of the Cold War era argued that the most effective means to counter communism was to leverage America's technological, economic, political, cultural, and social modernity to assist underdeveloped regions in achieving economic growth, political democracy, and merit-based social ethics. By encouraging these regions to adopt and replicate the American model of modernization, the United States aimed to "promote America's liberal social values, capitalist economic structures, and democratic political systems," thereby accelerating the "natural progression from 'traditional' societies to enlightened 'modernity'" (Lerner, 2003, pp. 8-10). This alignment would create a community bound by shared institutions, culture, and values, positioning American-style "non-communist" modernization as an ideological counter to Marxist communism.

This discourse on American-style "modernization" frames it as a "non-communist" ideology created by bourgeois intellectuals, which leverages the aspirations of impoverished nations and regions for a better life to foster identification with the nature of American capitalist society. By tightly linking U.S. national security and international standing with the modernization potential of other countries, this framework allows the U.S. to infiltrate other nations ideologically, downplaying overt political overtones and covertly extending its ideological reach. Thus, through modernization theory, the U.S. bolstered its ideological appeal and influence worldwide, strengthening its ability to secure ideological dominance in the ongoing contest between socialism and capitalism, ultimately serving its goal of achieving global supremacy.

III. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: GRASPING THREE KEY POINTS TO ESTABLISH IDEOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As dimensions of ideological hegemony, popular culture, science and technology, and modernization operate within a complex, interdependent framework in today's globalized era of information revolution, technological transformation, and globalization. These dimensions have become increasingly significant for forming, disseminating, and shaping ideological hegemony. In this global information age, to establish ideological leadership within higher education, it is essential to focus on these three dimensions, emphasizing the central role of the Socialist Core Value System and Socialist Core Values (hereafter referred to as the "Two Cores"), modern information technology, and China's modernization efforts in ideological work within higher education institutions (hereafter referred to as "universities") in China. This requires concentrating on three core points.

A. Universities as the Primary Platform and Channel for Ideological Leadership

Gramsci maintained that the essence of "ideological hegemony" is "education," asserting that "cultural and ideological operations" of hegemony must occur through "education, family, church, popular media, and various forms of popular culture" within civil society's institutions, which serve as the "places where ideological hegemony exists" (Strinati, 2003). In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser observed that "today, schools have replaced churches as the dominant ideological state apparatus" (Althusser, 1984, p. 131). In modern society, both public and private educational institutions that perform positive educational functions are ideological state apparatuses and act as crucial sites for the operation of ideological hegemony. Within Gramsci's framework, "organic intellectuals" serve as the creators and disseminators of the ruling class's worldview and values. They are the backbone of ideological leadership, serving both to fulfill and to enact cultural organization functions, playing a central role in the formation and transmission of ideological hegemony.

As the 16th Document of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China noted, "most disciplines within philosophy and social sciences possess distinct ideological characteristics" (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 2004). Universities, which have advantages in philosophical, social scientific knowledge, and talent cultivation, are tasked not only with the educational duty of disseminating advanced ideological and cultural knowledge to young students but also with the responsibility of conducting scientific research and technological development. In other words, universities gather "organic intellectuals" who create and transmit ideological hegemony while also amassing the "talent resource reserve" essential for defending ideological leadership. As primary sites for ideological work, Chinese universities are the "main positions, classrooms, and channels for ideological and political education." Securing ideological leadership requires controlling ideological work within universities, maximizing their role as the principal platform and channel for ideological hegemony. This involves positioning university intellectuals as key contributors and transmitters of ideological leadership, transforming the student body into committed successors and carriers of ideological hegemony.

B.Grasping the Three Core Points of Ideological Leadership in Higher Education

Universities are the primary platforms and channels for the operation of ideological hegemony, and one of the essential ways to secure ideological leadership is to establish control over ideological work within universities. This involves leveraging the three dimensions of ideological hegemony, focusing on three core points: emphasizing the "Two Cores" as content, "new media" as a medium, and "modernization" as the objective of ideological work in universities.

i. Strengthening the Leading Role of the "Two Cores" in University Ideological Work

The first core point in securing ideological leadership in universities is to strengthen the guiding influence of the "Two Cores"—the Socialist Core Value System and the Socialist Core Values—by grounding ideological work within the dimension of popular culture and highlighting their central position in university ideological content.

Joseph S. Nye, an American scholar, argued that "soft power"—composed of "culture, political values, domestic practices, and legitimate foreign policy"—serves as a source of attraction for both a nation's own citizens and other countries. Soft power acts as "the second face of power" beyond the "hard power" of coercion (Nye, 2005, pp. 6-7), playing a critical role in shaping ideological appeal and influence, as well as domestic and international political goals. On

ISSN 2394-9716

International Journal of Novel Research in Interdisciplinary Studies
Vol. 11, Issue 6, pp: (1-9), Month: November – December 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

November 8, 2012, in its report at the 18th National Congress, the Chinese Communist Party proposed the political goal of "firmly securing ideological leadership and dominance," under a strategic plan to "build a socialist cultural power that is national, scientific, and popular." The Party emphasized that the Socialist Core Value System (referred to as the "Core Value System") is the "soul of the nation, determining the direction of socialist development with Chinese characteristics" and guiding social ideologies to "forge a consensus among the people."

In its *Guidelines on Cultivating and Practicing Socialist Core Values*, the Party identified two aims: to "consolidate the guiding role of Marxism in the ideological sphere" and to "consolidate the common ideological foundation of unity and struggle for all the people." This was structured through national value goals, social values, and individual value principles, categorizing the "24 characters of the three advocacies" as the core content of the Socialist Core Values (hereafter, "Core Values") and requiring their integration into the entire educational process. The "Core Values" are seen as the "core" of the Core Value System, serving as "a condensed and concentrated expression" of the latter. Not only do the Core Values reflect the Core Value System's "fundamental attributes and essential characteristics," but they also embody its "rich connotations and practical requirements." As articulated in foundational Party documents and guidelines, the "Two Cores" encompass not only China's culture, political institutions, and values but also the norms of domestic political practice and foreign policy.

Considering the unique advantages and roles of universities in operating ideological hegemony, securing leadership in university ideological work necessitates highlighting the "Two Cores" as a central component of ideological work. This entails fostering the following roles for the "Two Cores" in philosophical and social scientific research, as well as educational guidance in universities:

First, incorporate the "Two Cores" into the broader planning of social science research, discipline development, and ideological-political education within universities.

Second, encourage intellectuals engaged in social science research and teaching to support the "Two Cores" by advancing research, building relevant disciplines, and improving instruction. Research should aim to popularize the Core Values, discipline development should seek to strengthen young students' ideological commitment, and these three areas should collectively support the "Three Integrations" of the Two Cores—integrating them into "textbooks, classrooms, and minds."

Third, ensure that Party organizations, the Communist Youth League, and student organizations play a leading role in guiding and organizing efforts to study the Core Value System and to cultivate and practice the Core Values. Fourth, foster the cultivation and practice of the Core Values within all aspects of university research, teaching, and educational management services. This involves embedding the Core Values into the managerial and service functions of universities to align the thoughts and behaviors of intellectuals, students, and administrators with the ideological leadership of socialism with Chinese characteristics. By doing so, they become organic carriers of ideological hegemony, facilitating its transmission, formation, and continuation in society.

ii. Maximizing the Role of Modern Information Technology as a Medium in University Ideological Work

The second core point in securing ideological leadership within universities is to leverage the science and technology dimension of ideological hegemony by fully utilizing modern information technology. This includes establishing online channels for ideological dissemination, innovating the methods of ideological work, and highlighting the central role of information technology as a medium for ideological initiatives in higher education.

In discussing "the production of thought, ideas, and consciousness," Marx and Engels outlined four interconnected principles: first, ideas are products of "the minds of active, living people"; second, these ideas, along with "imagination, thought, and mental communication," are directly interwoven with "material activities," "material interactions," and "the language of real life," being direct products of human material actions; third, they change along with changes in productive forces and the forms of communication associated with them (Marx & Engels, 1995, pp. 72-73); and fourth, consciousness possesses a "constructive" capacity only when based on division of labor, with material and intellectual work's separation enabling it to "detach from the world and create 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc." (Marx & Engels, 1995, pp. 82). In other words, "a people's politics, law, morals, religion, metaphysics," and "other ideologies"

are spiritual productions reliant on language, influenced by the development and interrelationship of productive forces, communication forms, and labor division within human society.

French philosopher Jacques Ellul contended that technological advancements have generated a range of techniques focused on efficiency, which exert decisive influence across politics, economics, management, and entertainment (Han, 2010, p. 270). As science and technology evolve alongside human social interaction and division of labor, they have emerged as the foremost productive forces in modern industrial society. They have transformed not only the modes of spiritual production, life, and communication but also the operational methods of national and societal organizations. This transformation extends to the mediums, forms of existence, and dissemination and shaping methods of ideological hegemony. Nye pointed out that in the information age, Internet-driven information technology, characterized by "liberating technology," has expanded the channels for transmitting popular culture and values. This medium offers an unprecedented "space for the individual," wielding considerable influence in interpreting national issues (Han, 2010, p. 270) and further emphasizing the importance of soft power in shaping ideological hegemony.

In the information age, ideological hegemony has increasingly shifted to the virtual network space. Securing ideological leadership in universities, beyond effectively utilizing traditional media, requires understanding the dynamics of network information technology. Universities must undertake the following three tasks:

First, university IT departments should offer technical guidance for ideological work, providing technical support to relevant departments to construct online platforms for promoting the "Two Cores." Second, modern information technology should be integrated into the teaching of ideological and political theory courses, the work of counselors and class teachers, and the ideological education efforts of Party committees and youth organizations within the university. Third, within the division of roles and responsibilities, emphasis should be placed on the allocation and structured duties of ideological staff. This includes strengthening the dissemination, management, service, and maintenance of ideological work on virtual platforms, ensuring effective operation and influence of university-based ideological initiatives online.

iii. Focusing on the Cultivation of Key Talent to Serve Socialist Modernization with Chinese Characteristics

The third core point in establishing ideological leadership within universities is to prioritize the dimension of modernization, fostering key talent dedicated to advancing China's modernization. This highlights the strategic importance of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics as the primary objective of ideological work in universities.

Modernization theory, developed within American academia during the Cold War, has functioned as a tool of ideological hegemony, affording the U.S. "significant institutional influence." With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and significant shifts in the global landscape, modernization theory has gained increased importance among national planners and policymakers. It plays a crucial role in shaping national identity, fostering support for cultural and political institutions, and framing issues of national security and strategy. Adapting to the tides of historical development, China's socialist modernization has embraced four fundamental principles and the "Three Benefits" standard as guidelines, selectively incorporating elements of modernization theory and practical models. This has allowed China to formulate a modernization theory suited to the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, creating a model that reflects the country's unique context. Accordingly, Chinese national policymakers have set forth a strategic goal to "advance socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics."

In line with this modernization framework of ideological hegemony, establishing ideological leadership in universities requires cultivating key talent committed to socialist modernization. This entails three primary requirements:

First, universities should encourage research-oriented intellectuals to deepen their understanding of modernization theory. Second, universities should support teaching-oriented intellectuals in disseminating modernization theory through their teaching. Third, Party committees and the Communist Youth League should actively promote social practice activities centered around the theme of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics.

These efforts ensure that universities not only foster talent equipped to serve the goals of socialist modernization but also reinforce ideological leadership by grounding educational objectives within the framework of China's strategic development.

REFERENCES

[1] Althusser, L. (1984). *Essays on Ideology*. London: Verso.

[2] Aronowitz, Stanley. (n.d.). On Intellectuals. In Robbins, Bruce (Ed.), *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, and Academia* (p. 34).

[3] Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. (2004). Document No.16, *Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Education for University Students* [Z]. Beijing: Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

[4] Chen, Yangu. (1995). Hegemony (Dominance and Leadership), in Reading [2].

[5] Gramsci, Antonio. (1973). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

[6] Han, Lianqing. (2010). *Against the Tide: Historical Reflections on the Philosophy of Science and Technology* [M]. Changsha: Hunan Science and Technology Press.

[7] Kong, Ming'an. (2005). A Critique of Post-Marxist Political Philosophy, *Journal of Nanjing University (Philosophy, Humanities, Social Sciences)*, 4.

[8] Lerner, Max. (2003). *Modernization as Ideology* [M], trans. Niu, Ke. Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press.

[9] Li, Huibin, et al. (2007). *Research Report on Western Marxism* [M]. Shanghai: East China Normal University Press.

[10] Marx, Karl, & Engels, Friedrich. (1995). *Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Volume 1* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House.

[11] Nye, Joseph S. (2005). *Hard Power and Soft Power* [M], trans. Men, Honghua. Beijing: Peking University Press.

[12] Strinati, Dominic. (2003). *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press.

[13] Sun, Min. (2012). *Ideological Leadership in the Perspective of Political Philosophy* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House.

[14] Yang, Haifeng. (2009). *Practical Philosophy and Hegemony—Gramsci's Philosophy in the Contemporary Context* [M]. Beijing: Peking University Press.

[15] Yu, Wujin. (2009). *On Ideology* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House.