Sociology of development
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Undergraduate study in
Economics, Management,
Finance and the Social Sciences

This is an extract from a subject guide for an undergraduate course offered as part of the University of London International Programmes in Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences. Materials for these programmes are developed by academics at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What is the sociology of development?

The sociology of development is concerned with understanding the ways in which people in poorer countries try to improve the quality of their lives. As such it is an important and evolving area of investigation. Studying the sociology of development will allow you to understand the world in a more global context, and will give you the tools to analyse solutions put forward by policymakers who are making decisions about poorer countries. Since the leaders of most poorer, or ‘developing’ countries try to raise standards of living by industrialising, the sociology of development tends to look at the social and political effects of this economic process. In this guide, we will examine theories that try to explain development and look at specific examples from developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. This chapter reviews the aims and learning outcomes of the course, as well as its main texts, journals and resource materials. It also provides you with study guidance for the examination paper including ideas for answering specific questions, and tips on how to do well on the exam.

If taken as part of a BSc degree, you must have passed 21 Principles of sociology before attempting this course.

Aims

The purpose of this subject guide is to help prepare you for the Sociology of development examination paper. The aim of this is to show you how sociological theories and concepts can be used to examine the problems of development and underdevelopment in general, and the problems of industrialisation, in particular, in the countries of the ‘Third World’ (also referred to as ‘developing societies’). The main theories of development and underdevelopment will be evaluated in the light of some of the empirical research that has been carried out on, and in, Third World countries.

This course is designed to:

• enable you to place the sociology of development within the overall study of sociology and other subjects you are studying
• introduce you to a variety of theoretical models that can be critically examined in relation to different cases of development
• provide you with the tools necessary to make a sociological analysis of the main issues of the sociology of the development to which you are likely to be exposed through the mass media, personal connections and travel.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, and having completed the Essential reading and activities, you should be able to:

• describe the main theories and concepts in the sociology of development
• explain the connections between these theories and concepts and selected cases of development
• demonstrate that you have developed independent critical facilities based on careful examination of the study materials.

How to use this subject guide

The subject guide must be used along with at least one of the recommended textbooks. Most chapters begin with Essential reading drawn from these texts. This will be followed by a list of further reading that will cover additional materials either not covered at all or not dealt with extensively in the essential readings. All chapters include a number of activities designed to help you to:

• focus your study on the key issues within each topic
• apply what you are learning to concrete examples of Third World development.

Each chapter will conclude with a set of learning outcomes, which will help to assure you that you have studied the chapter materials effectively.

There is no one way to learn the material in this course; a great deal depends on your own study habits and preferences. Some students may find it useful to scan the entire guide first to get an overview of the subject, then work through the chapters one by one from beginning to end. Others may prefer to work on the chapters that focus on problems of development (Chapters 5–10) first, then read the more theoretically-oriented chapters (Chapters 2–4). The guide has been written assuming that you will work through the guide from beginning to end, but this will not necessarily suit all of you.

• Chapter 1 of the guide reviews the aims and outcomes of the course, and signposts the structure of each chapter so you can use it as a study tool. It also covers the main texts, journals and resource materials for the course, and gives study guidance.

• Chapter 2 begins the exploration of theories of development by comparing and contrasting neo-evolutionary, modernisation theories of development, which were first prominent in the 1960s. It also discusses the emergence of neo-modernisation theory in light of the success of the East Asian newly industrialising countries and the fall of the Soviet Union.

• Chapter 3 looks at Marxist theories of development. The chapter traces the growth of the Marxist development perspective from its roots in classical Marxism, to Lenin’s theory of imperialism, which later informed neo-Marxist underdevelopment theory in the 1970s and 1980s, such as dependency and world-system theory. This is followed by an examination of the orthodox Marxist mode of production response to underdevelopment, including the work of Laclau and Warren. The chapter also considers some of the empirical investigations based on the theories.

• Chapter 4 examines global approaches to development. It emphasises the importance of understanding the role of the transnational corporation (TNC) in global theories, including those theories that prioritise economic, political or cultural factors. Examples of some of these perspectives are considered, including global system, global commodity chains, global politics and global culture. The chapter lays particular emphasis on the importance of understanding processes and groups that contribute as well as resist globalisation in the Third World.
Chapter 5 moves away from theories of development, to some of the problems that these theories can inform. The chapter investigates key issues in rural development. The focus is on understanding the spread of capitalist agriculture and the decline of numbers of peasants in rural areas of the Third World. It also looks at peasant society and peasants’ role in social change.

Chapter 6 examines theories and processes of urbanisation in the Third World. It emphasises the rapid growth of cities, and looks at the social problems associated with urban expansion in relation to specific case studies. It also considers the economic aspects of urbanisation, including the growth of the informal economic sector, and the role of Third World cities as the local centres of global capitalism.

Chapter 7 compares economic and social aspects of the development paths of Latin American and East Asian newly industrialising countries (NICs). Furthermore, it considers the strengths and weaknesses of the NICs’ development, and the extent to which they provide a ‘model’ to other Third World countries of how to develop.

Chapter 8 looks at political processes and social change in developing countries. Specifically it considers the link between the economy and politics in the Third World. Areas examined include the theory of the ‘developmental state’, the role of social classes in bringing about change, authoritarianism and development, and re-democratisation in the Third World.

Chapter 9 examines the ways in which various versions of feminist theory and research have informed the sociology of development. It also evaluates social aspects of the role of women workers in the industrialisation processes of Third World countries.

Chapter 10, the final chapter, investigates alternatives to development. Areas highlighted are the socialist path to development, including case studies of Tanzania, Mozambique, Cuba and China. The other issues considered are sustainable development, the extent to which environmental issues can be linked with development objectives in the Third World, and the ‘anti-’ or ‘post-’ development debate which is a critique of the whole notion of development.

Theory and evidence

The guide covers aspects of theory and evidence in the sociology of development that are very much interrelated. Chapters 2 to 4 examine the major theoretical approaches in the sociology of development relevant to the processes of industrialisation, in order to familiarise you with some basic concepts and debates. Chapters 5 to 10 consider some substantive problems of development that have been raised as a result of the theoretical debates and their application to issues in Third World societies. Even though a chapter may be dealing with a theory or problem of development, keep in mind that:

- All useful theories in the sociology of development point to the empirical research necessary to confirm or disconfirm them.
- All useful empirical research in the sociology of development serves to confirm or disconfirm one theory or another.

Each chapter reviews some of the most salient aspects of the topic, and while you are advised to consult the essential reading for each chapter, it is understood that you will make a selection from these along with some relevant further reading for detailed study and exam preparation.
Internal and external factors

The course encourages you to evaluate the extent to which problems of development can be solved within the context of specific societies. It also considers the extent to which solutions to problems depend upon the external factors, principally the position of each country in the world economy. It is certainly possible that some types of problems are better approached in terms of the internal structures and dynamics of a particular society, such as relations between classes, while other types of problems are better approached through the study of the effects of external agents.

Reading

Essential reading

The syllabus is not based on a single textbook, but there are four books that between them cover all of the main themes of the course. These are:

Harrison, D. The Sociology of Modernisation and Development. (London: Macmillan, 1988) [ISBN 9780415078702]. This very clearly written book presents the main theories in the sociology of development and the criticisms of them. It is possibly the most accessible textbook on development theories for the beginning student and it has an extensive bibliography.


Sklair, L. Sociology of the Global System. (London: Prentice-Hall, 1995) [ISBN 9780134329642]. This is a critical discussion of how capitalism works transnationally, with special emphasis on the global effects of transnational corporations, classes and consumerism. It discusses, although sometimes quite briefly, all of the development issues raised in the subject and has an extensive bibliography.


You are advised to read these books carefully.

Detailed reading references in this subject guide refer to the editions of the set textbooks listed above. New editions of one or more of these textbooks may have been published by the time you study this course. You can use a more recent edition of any of the books; use the detailed chapter and section headings and the index to identify relevant readings. Also check the virtual learning environment (VLE) regularly for updated guidance on readings.

There are, of course, many other textbooks, case studies and books of readings in the sociology of development that discuss some of the issues raised in the course, but no single one covers all the issues. A selection of these is listed under the heading General introductions in the next section. You may choose to substitute one or two of these books for the two texts recommended above for careful study and purchase. You are also strongly advised to complement this textbook reading with readings from the books and articles that are cited in the Further reading for each topic. The reading lists are deliberately long because books and articles are often
difficult to find and the more alternative readings there are, the more likely it is that you will find something of relevance to the topic. Sample examination questions, activities, and learning outcomes are also given in each chapter and this should help you to organise your reading and study. If you cannot get hold of any essential item, it is still worth reading other items, especially those whose titles are similar to the essential items. You are encouraged to follow your own interests in deciding which Third World countries to study.

**General introductions**

Please note that as long as you read the Essential reading you are then free to read around the subject area in any text, paper or online resource. You will need to support your learning by reading as widely as possible and by thinking about how these principles apply in the real world. To help you read extensively, you have free access to the VLE and University of London Online Library (see below).

You are advised to read one or two of these books, either in addition to or as substitutes for the two recommended texts discussed above. All these books are useful as textbooks for one or more parts of the course and all are very worthwhile to read. All the books are identified by ISBN numbers (at the end of each reference).

Alavi, H. and T. Shanin (eds) Introduction to the Sociology of ‘Developing Societies’. (London: Macmillan, 1982) [ISBN 0333275024]. This is the first volume of a series of books of readings, mostly reprinted material, on development. Several other regional volumes have been published.


Hopkins, T. and I. Wallerstein The Age of Transition. (London: Zed, 1996) [ISBN 185649439X]. This is a collection of essays on how the world-system perspective can be applied to a variety of topics in development.


Preston, P.W. Development Theory: An Introduction. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) [ISBN 0631195556]. The textbook is a helpful introduction to the main theories and cases in the sociology of development, linking them to their roots in social theory.


**Further reading**


Cotton, J. ‘From authoritarianism to democracy in South Korea’ in Political Studies 37(June) 1989, pp.244–59.
Chapter 1: Introduction


Im, Hyug Baeg ‘The Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in South Korea’ in World Politics 39 (January) 1987.


Chapter 1: Introduction


Scott, J. Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernisation and Dependency Theory. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1995) [ISBN 155587410X].


Skocpol, T. States and Social Revolutions. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) [ISBN 0521294991].


Specialised sources of data and discussion


Volumes are issue-based, and each one has the ‘World Development Indicators’ tables, ranking most of the countries of the world by gross national product per capita on various indicators. A great deal of the data and analysis from the most recent reports is now available on the World Bank’s website, see below.


An alternative source of analysis and data, focusing less on economic and more on ‘human development’ indicators. Again, see the UNDP’s website, listed below, for information from the latest reports.

Journals

Much of the best and most useful reading on questions raised in the course is published in academic journals. Most of these journals have excellent book review sections where you will find critical discussions of the most recent books on development.

The list that follows gives details of the most important journals:

Bulletin of Latin American Research.
Development and Change.
Economic Development and Cultural Change.
Journal of Development Studies.
Finally, the monthly magazine:

New Internationalist is written for a wide audience and has a great deal of up-to-date news about changes in the developing world.

**Online study resources**

In addition to the subject guide and the Essential reading, it is crucial that you take advantage of the study resources that are available online for this course, including the VLE and the Online Library.

You can access the VLE, the Online Library and your University of London email account via the Student Portal at: http://my.londoninternational.ac.uk

You should have received your login details for the Student Portal with your official offer, which was emailed to the address that you gave on your application form. You have probably already logged in to the Student Portal in order to register! As soon as you registered, you will automatically have been granted access to the VLE, Online Library and your fully functional University of London email account.

If you forget your login details at any point, please email uolia.support@london.ac.uk quoting your student number.

**The VLE**

The VLE, which complements this subject guide, has been designed to enhance your learning experience, providing additional support and a sense of community. It forms an important part of your study experience with the University of London and you should access it regularly.

The VLE provides a range of resources for EMFSS courses:

- **Self-testing activities**: Doing these allows you to test your own understanding of subject material.
- **Electronic study materials**: The printed materials that you receive from the University of London are available to download, including updated reading lists and references.
- **Past examination papers and Examiners’ commentaries**: These provide advice on how each examination question might best be answered.
- **A student discussion forum**: This is an open space for you to discuss interests and experiences, seek support from your peers, work collaboratively to solve problems and discuss subject material.
- **Videos**: There are recorded academic introductions to the subject, interviews and debates and, for some courses, audio-visual tutorials and conclusions.
- **Recorded lectures**: For some courses, where appropriate, the sessions from previous years’ Study Weekends have been recorded and made available.
- **Study skills**: Expert advice on preparing for examinations and developing your digital literacy skills.
- **Feedback forms**.
Some of these resources are available for certain courses only, but we are expanding our provision all the time and you should check the VLE regularly for updates.

**Making use of the Online Library**

The Online Library contains a huge array of journal articles and other resources to help you read widely and extensively.

To access the majority of resources via the Online Library you will either need to use your University of London Student Portal login details, or you will be required to register and use an Athens login: http://tinyurl.com/ollathens

The easiest way to locate relevant content and journal articles in the Online Library is to use the **Summon** search engine.

If you are having trouble finding an article listed in a reading list, try removing any punctuation from the title, such as single quotation marks, question marks and colons.

For further advice, please see the online help pages: www.external.shl.lon.ac.uk/summon/about.php

**Websites**

**Development agencies and groups**

Increasingly, there is much useful and current information available on the worldwide web. A number of these sites are aimed at people logging on from developing countries, and would support older web browsers.

Unless otherwise stated, all websites in this subject guide were accessed in April 2011. We cannot guarantee, however, that they will stay current and you may need to perform an internet search to find the relevant pages.

- Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org
- Baby Milk Action: www.babymilkaction.org
- Corporate Watch: www.corpwatch.org
- Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN): www.dawn.org.fj
- Global Exchange: www.globalexchange.org
- Hoover Institute: www-hoover.stanford.edu
- Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First): www.foodfirst.org
- Institute for International Economics: www.iie.com
- Inter-American Development Bank: www.iadb.org
- The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development: www.ichrdd.ca
- International Development Network: Sources: www.idn.org
- International Institute for Sustainable Development: www.iisd.ca
- International Labour Organisation: www.ilo.org
- International Monetary Fund: www.imf.org
- Multinational Monitor: www.essential.org/monitor
- One World: www.oneworld.net
- Overseas Development Council: www.odc.org
- Pan-American Health Organisation: www.paho.org
- Rainforest Action Network: www.ran.org
- Sustainable Development and the Americas: www.txinfinet.com/mader/ecotravel/sustain.html
- Third World Network: www.twnside.org.sg
- UNICEF: www.unicef.org
Study time

In managing your study timetable, you should keep in mind that this course should take about 100 hours, or 10 hours per week for 10 weeks. This includes time reading the chapters, becoming familiar with the Essential and Further reading, and completing exercises. The time you take to complete the course may be more or less than this estimate, however the guide is written with this time commitment in mind. Ideally, each week you should spend an hour or two reading and reviewing the subject guide, and about eight to nine hours reading, taking notes and completing exercises.

Examination guidance

Important: the information and advice given here are based on the examination structure used at the time this guide was written. Please note that subject guides may be used for several years. Because of this we strongly advise you to always check both the current Regulations for relevant information about the examination, and the VLE where you should be advised of any forthcoming changes. You should also carefully check the rubric/instructions on the paper you actually sit and follow those instructions.

In the examination, you will be required to answer three questions from around eleven possible choices in three hours. At the end of this guide, you will find an appendix with a Sample examination paper, and some ideas about how you could tackle specific questions. The ideas are not ‘model answers’. They are intended to give you some tips on how to prepare for your examination and how to approach the types of questions you will be asked. They represent a minimum framework within which you can show the Examiners that you have read relevant material and that you have organised your thinking on your chosen topics. There is, of course, always room for you to demonstrate your own original approaches, ideas and use of materials you have found for yourself. As long as these are well argued and relevant to the question asked, you will get extra marks.

Remember, it is important to check the VLE for:

• up-to-date information on examination and assessment arrangements for this course
• where available, past examination papers and Examiners’ commentaries for the course which give advice on how each question might best be answered.
Chapter 2: Neo-evolutionary, modernisation and neo-modernisation theories of development

Essential reading


Further reading


Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, and having completed the Essential readings and activities, you should be able to:

• describe modernisation, neo-evolutionary and neo-modernisation theories of development
• discuss the strengths and limitations of these theories.
Introduction

In this chapter we consider neo-evolutionist, modernisation and neo-modernisation theories of development.1 We also look at the resurgence of modernisation theory in light of the success of the East Asian newly industrialising countries. Neo-evolutionist and Modernisation theories in general refer to a variety of perspectives applied by non-Marxists to the Third World in the 1950s and 1960s. The roots of many of these theories were in classical sociological theories of social change, such as the ideas of Emile Durkheim, which had been greatly influenced by nineteenth century evolutionary thought, for example, the work of Charles Darwin.

Evolutionary theories were seen as being able to explain how the First World (North America and Europe) progressed over time into modern industrial societies. The important part of the link with nineteenth century theories of evolution was the view that societies ‘evolved’. Furthermore, this process was a ‘good thing’: it was natural and it was inevitable. ‘Blockages’ in evolution, why some societies developed, and others did not, therefore needed more explanation than the process of evolution itself. Modernisation theories tried to explain and predict how Third World countries might become ‘modern’. It is worth making the distinction between modernisation theories in general and neo-evolutionist theories, which can be seen as closely related to, but not identical to, modernisation theories. Neo-evolutionism was developed by the US sociologist, Talcott Parsons, and by others associated with the school of thought that he created, specifically Smelser and Eisenstadt.

Neo-evolutionism

The basic argument of neo-evolutionists was that social change, that is, the Third World becoming more like the First World, can best be understood and explained as a quasi-biological process. They saw certain components of developing countries, such as parts of economic, political and other social structures, evolving from having simple, multifunctional characteristics to having complex, specialised functions, like the organisations and social structures of First World countries. The way in which this evolutionary process occurred was called differentiation.2 If Third World countries modelled themselves on First World countries, then they would ‘progress’ economically, politically, and socially and eventually achieve First World status. Since the neo-evolutionist writers in the 1950s and 1960s modified nineteenth century classical evolutionism in fundamental ways in order to apply it to poorer countries, they were called neo-evolutionist rather than just evolutionist.

In the work of many modernisation theorists, evolutionism was usually more implicit than explicit. This shifted in 1964 with the publication of an edition of the American Sociological Review, which was devoted to a review of evolutionary theory. Generally, the contributors to the volume agreed on the following:

1. Societies are systems that adapt in order to survive.
2. They are primarily systems based upon social norms.3
3. Innovation4 and diffusion5 are critical in modernisation.
4. Modern societies are unique, especially in the extent to which internal differentiation occurs.

One contributor, Moore, characterised evolution as unpredictable and inconsistent, using terms like ‘cycles and swings’ and ‘fluctuation’. Parsons

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1 The theories reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 deal with social change. Read Section B of Gosling (1997) if you need to refresh your memory on the main theories in this area.
2 Differentiation occurs when different parts of a society become specialised, allowing for greater development. In traditional societies, the institution of the family has responsibilities for reproduction, economic life and education. In modern societies, people have jobs and go to school outside the home.
3 Social norms are rules governing behaviour. Normative behaviour is that which is seen as ‘correct’ and ‘proper’ in society. The idea is central to neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories, as they are rooted in the notion that societies are based upon consensus rather than conflict.
4 Innovation can be defined as change involving new, and implicitly better, ideas or ways of doing things.
5 Diffusion is an idea that emerged from chemistry, and was later used by anthropologists to refer to the spread of cultural attributes from one region or people to another.
went further. Drawing parallels from organic evolution and the work of Charles Darwin, he suggested that in order for societies to move from the primitive to the modern, several ‘evolutionary universals’ have to be present. By this he means any organisational development which is so important to any further evolution that it is likely to be hit upon by various systems operating under different conditions. Elsewhere, he defines an evolutionary universal as ‘any complex of structures and processes which so increases the capacity of living systems to adapt’. What this means in ‘plain English’ is that in order to survive and develop, societies need the ability to develop the sorts of cultural attributes and structures of modern western societies including: a wide outlook on the world, rewards based on achievement, cities, a class system, bureaucracy and eventually democracy. Similarly to the way humans ‘evolved’ from apes, developing societies ‘evolve’ into developed ones, if they have the right qualities that allow them to adapt and change into more advanced societies.

Modernisation

Modernisation theories were less holistic, and tended to emphasise the importance of the transmission of modern attitudes and values for the success of development. Daniel Lerner was one example of a modernisation theorist who argued that it was modern techniques of communicating ideas, which made the difference in making the transition from a traditional to a modern society, in key institutions such as education and the mass media. Tradition and modernity were seen as completely different and even antagonistic forms of social organisation. In crude terms then tradition was ‘bad’ and modernity was ‘good’.

Inkeles and Smith

Modernisation theorists, Inkeles and Smith, expressed the goal of development as ‘making men modern’ (sic). This male-oriented idea will be important to remember when we consider the criticism that women have been left out of the development process in Chapter 9. ‘Making men modern’ is, in many ways, the essence of modernisation theory. ‘Modern Man’ has become modern when ‘he’ has changed as an individual. Modernity is indicated in the presence of a distinct set of attitudes, which include:

- a readiness for new experience and an openness to innovation
- an interest in things other and those of immediate relevance
- a more ‘democratic’ attitude towards the opinions of others
- an orientation to the future rather than the past
- a readiness to plan one's own life
- a belief that we can dominate our environment and achieve our goals
- an acceptance that the world is ‘calculable’ and therefore controllable
- an awareness of the dignity of others, for example, women and children
- a faith in the achievement of science and technology, albeit a somewhat simple faith
- a belief in ‘distributive’ justice.

While most modernisation theorists tended to underestimate the disruption caused by processes of development, one writer, Eisenstadt, who edited a book called Readings in Social Evolution and Development (1966), drew attention to these conflicts from within the general modernisation paradigm.
Activity

What is the main difference between neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories of development?

Rostow’s stages of economic growth

An American economist, Walt Rostow, wrote a well-known book that combined a variety of strands within modernisation and neo-evolutionary theory called the Stages of Economic Growth with the sub-title a Non-Communist Manifesto. He argued that economic development takes place in well-defined stages, and mapped the process out more clearly than the earlier work of Talcott Parsons. Rostow argued that development is only possible where the socio-economic conditions that promote money saving among the population exist. This is based on his study of Western economic development. In Rostow’s first stage, traditional society, economic output is limited because of a lack of scientific and technological expertise. People’s values are fatalistic, that is, they believe that the future is predetermined and they cannot control it. Political power has not been centralised, as in a modern state. A new outlook and institutions mark the second stage, what Rostow called ‘the preconditions for take off’. People begin to support economic advancement. Connected to this, education, free enterprise and economic institutions are developed further. The society invests in transportation, communication and raw materials and this stimulates business. At the same time as modern institutions and production techniques begin to emerge, aspects of traditional society remain. Rostow classified this as a ‘dual society’, the example of this situation is a colonial state. The third stage of economic growth is labelled take off. This stage is manifested in the defeat of traditional barriers to growth. This could occur through the appearance of new politically active groups, that prioritise economic growth and expansion, or through the development of new technologies such as new ways to produce goods that represented the beginning of the industrial revolution in Britain. There is rapid economic expansion at this point and the middle class begins to emerge. Agriculture is commercialised, and output that meets the needs of growing cities increases swiftly. Stage four is referred to as the ‘drive to maturity’ when 10 to 20 per cent of national income is invested and the economy is nearly ‘developed’. The economy begins to advance beyond heavy industry, and technology gets more sophisticated. National production and consumption moves from meeting basic needs, to the ability to choose goods and services. The last stage is called ‘high consumption’ and is based on increasing ability to produce high value consumer items like cars, refrigerators, televisions and computers, the economy also becomes more service oriented. At this point, people’s basic needs are satisfied, and the state focuses on social welfare and security. For Rostow, reaching this stage in the USA coincided with the mass production of automobiles.

Activity

Give an example of the way Rostow integrated neo-evolutionary and modernisation thinking.
Responses to neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories

From the late 1960s to the late 1980s, neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories were intensely criticised from various perspectives within sociology, such as Marxist sociology. At the same time, if you were to look at the activities and programmes of major development organisations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and United States Agency for International Development, you would find that their policies have always been based on the principles of modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories. Criticisms of neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories have come from within academic sociology and activist groups rather than from mainstream development organisations.

Gusfield’s critique

The clearest and most persuasive conceptual critique of neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories of the 1950s and 1960s, though some of its substantive examples are dated, is the article by Gusfield. His analysis focuses on the ways in which the concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, which are central to many of the theories, misrepresent the sociological realities that exist in First and Third World countries. He points out that ‘tradition’ and ‘innovation’ are not necessarily in conflict or opposed. Furthermore, neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories make Western political forms either inevitable or superior outcomes of political processes in developing countries, as seen in Parsons’ evolutionary universals. In this, he is questioning the linearity of many of these arguments, as in the Darwinian argument that a society ‘evolves’ in a straight line from a pre-modern or ‘traditional’ society to a ‘modern’ or essentially (North American or European) society. In particular, he focuses on a number of assumptions that these theories make, which he labels false.

First, he contends that it is wrong to suggest that traditional society is untouched by modernity. Neo-evolutionary and modernisation theories tended to ignore the fact that developing societies had been strongly influenced by their histories of foreign domination and colonialism. In the case of India, these influenced and changed important parts of society, including family life, religious belief and practice, and social structure. The concept of India as a non-industrialised and agricultural society only ready for modernisation in the mid-twentieth century is problematic. The decline of industries in India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Gusfield argues, was a result of the British protection of their own textile manufacturers that were important in the Industrial Revolution happening there at that time.

Second, he argues that traditional culture is not homogeneous. Hindu philosophical and religious teaching, for example, is consistent with a number of diverse orientations to life. The importance of this is that so-called ‘traditional culture’ is not resistant to change; it can actually allow for a wide variety of behaviours. In addition, in contrast to modernisation and neo-evolutionary theorists, Hinduism is compatible with capitalism and economic development, for example, there is labour mobility within the caste system. He suggests that many neo-evolutionary and modernisation theorists were overly influenced by Weber’s thesis in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Third, he suggests that modern ideas or practices do not always replace traditional ones. They may increase the range of options people have in developing countries. Tradition and modernity are not always in

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15 See Chapter 3 for a discussion of Marxist theories of development.

16 A summary of criticisms of the theories can be found in Preston (1996) Chapter pp.172–75.

17 Weber believed that many non-Western societies lacked the cultural attributes which allowed capitalist development to take place. For a review of his ideas on social change see Gosling (1997) pp.32–34.
conflict. For example, in Japan ‘feudalism’ and industrial growth have ‘fused’ to promote economic development. Tradition and modernity are not mutually exclusive systems. Instead, Gusfield argues, they are often mutually reinforcing. Some theorists argued that development of industrialisation was only compatible with the reduction over time, from large extended families to small nuclear families based only on two parents and their children. Industrial growth was also compatible with large family size among certain groups in India.

The last criticism is that modernising processes do not weaken traditions. He suggests that increased transportation, technologies, and the spread of ideas benefits tradition as well as modernity. For example, the traditional Muslim pilgrimage to the holy site of Mecca in Saudi Arabia is greatly facilitated by the access that many people now have to aeroplane travel. As a result, there are far more pilgrimages to Mecca than there ever were before the aeroplane. Thus, Gusfield concludes that the common practice of neo-evolutionary and modernisation theorists to pit tradition and modernity against each other as paired opposites tends to overlook the real world’s complexities. Some, but not all, of the points raised by Gusfield remain valid about modernisation theory today. An example of this follows.

Crenshaw

The analysis proposed by Crenshaw et al. (2000) attempts to surpass criticisms regarding the problematic ways in which tradition and modernity are used or reified\textsuperscript{18} in modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories of the 1950s and 1960s. Crenshaw et al., similar to Parsons, define social change in any society as adaptation that follows conflict. However, unlike Parsons, they do not refer to value-laden terms such as ‘evolution’, ‘stages of growth’, ‘progress’, ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’. They emphasise ‘transitions’ that occur resulting from changes in social and organisational circumstances when looking at issues such as human reproduction and its link to modernisation. Their model therefore focuses on mechanisms that produce social change, such as instituting family planning programmes, rather than prescribing solutions that treat the social and economic values and structures of Western countries as the evolutionary ideal for which Third World countries must strive.

Neo-modernisation theory

The revival of neo-evolutionist and modernisation theories in the late 1980s had to do with the changes in Eastern Europe and the demise of the Soviet Union as well as the apparent end of socialism and the introduction of the market into many parts of the new Second World, the former socialist countries. Some of the neo-evolutionist and modernisation theorists have argued that changes in these countries support their general theory. This has led to renewed interest in the area of modernisation in particular, and a new approach to development called ‘neo-modernisation’. The theorists have also tried to transform the ideas to explain the substantial increase in industrialisation seen in some Third World countries, particularly in East Asia\textsuperscript{19} since the 1960s.

Two schools of neo-modernisation theory have emerged in recent years. One emphasises the convergence of values resulting from ‘modernisation’. Similar to the idea of ‘making men modern’ (sic) above, it emphasises the decline of traditional values and the replacement of ‘modern’ values. The other school emphasises the persistence of traditional values despite economic and political change. This school assumes that values

\textsuperscript{18} Reify literally means ‘to make thing-like’. It is the process by which aspects of the social world, such as ideas, become fixed and binding as if they were objects, part of the natural world. The criticism of reification is often used when theorists treat their conceptual categories as real solid things rather than fluid ideas open to revision and interpretation.

\textsuperscript{19} These include the ‘four dragons’: Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea.
are independent of economic conditions.\textsuperscript{20} It therefore argues that convergence around a set of ‘modern’ values is unlikely, and traditional values will continue to exert an independent influence on the cultural change that results from economic development.

\textbf{Ingelhart and Baker}

In contrast to theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, most contemporary modernisation theorists support the view that traditional values persist despite economic and political change. Ingelhart and Baker suggest, as does Gusfield, that modernisation does not follow a linear path, in contrast to, for example, Walt Rostow. Economic collapse can also reverse the effects of modernisation as in the case of the return to traditional values in the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, although economic development transforms people's attitudes in societies in predictable ways, such as secularisation in the early stages of capitalist industrialisation for example, the process and path of change varies. Therefore, predictions about changes in societies need to be based on the historical and cultural context of the country in question. Samuel Huntington, likewise moved from a model that emphasised the linear and universal expansion of Western values through convergence, later stressed the fragmentation which occurs in an era of globalisation where there is conflict between different civilisations and cultures.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Kim}

Kim tries to bring together the ideas of conflict and convergence in order to understand the ways developing societies deal with modernisation. For him, the economic, technological and military power of more developed societies forced less developed societies to ‘receive’ their values, institutions, and other cultural attributes. The response from the ‘receiving’ societies that encountered the ‘intruding’ societies has been varied. The extent to which the receiving society is familiar with the values of the ‘intruding’ societies is what can be called ‘cultural preparedness’. The level of cultural preparedness determines how people in the receiving societies will react to values of the intruders. Usually, traditional societies have been resistant to foreign invaders or their ideas. This could have been due to inadequate understanding of them, because of differing cultural outlooks or internal struggles within the traditional society. Therefore, the nature of the response is connected with the cultural flexibility of the ‘receiving’ society. If the receiving culture and institutions are flexible, then it is more likely that adaptive change will take place with a small degree of social conflict. Once contact between the two societies is made, and the initial response from the receiving society is made, the relative strengths of both societies in terms of economic resources, technology, and military ability determines the relationship between the two cultures. This can decide whether the outcome of the encounter results in complete control, colonisation, brief occupation, creation of diplomatic relations, or whether other types of relationship are established. There is an element of choice, or ‘cultural selectivity’ in the process of taking on cultural aspects of the intruding society. If the receiving society is especially flexible, it may be able to absorb new elements easily, but with selectivity, may adopt some aspects rather than others. Selection also occurs in the political arena since there must be a decision about what type of adaptation will take place and how it will occur; this is called political selectivity. Therefore, the interaction of political and cultural selectivity leads to an understanding of the process of how developing societies adapt to modern values.

\textsuperscript{20} DiMaggio (1994).

\textsuperscript{21} Kreutzmann (1998).
Activity

Identify one similarity and one difference between modernisation and neo-modernisation theories.

Chapter summary

This chapter examines modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories in the sociology of development. The theories were especially prominent in the 1950s and early 1960s, after which they were subject to intense criticism from theorists influenced by Marx. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in revised versions of modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories following the developmental successes of some countries in the Third World. Modernisation theories suggest that the process of development entails the acquisition of modern ideas and values. Neo-evolutionary theories are slightly different from modernisation theories in that they stress a type of biological process where Third World societies become like First World societies in both culture and structure. This process involves the whole society: social structures, the economy, as well as ideas and culture. There are a number of criticisms of modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories, mainly concerning the fact that they suggest Third World societies become like the First; rather than following their own path to a better life. Revisions of modernisation and neo-evolutionary theory attempt to surpass some of the earlier problems by focusing on different ways of understanding adaptation outside of an ethnocentric model.

In the next chapter, we will examine the Marxist and neo-Marxist critique of, and response to, modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories. All of these critiques raise the question of whether industrialisation and development can be spread from one country to another (defined as exogenous change) or whether it can only come from within the internal economic and social structures of a given country (known as endogenous change). Few theorists would argue that development is ever brought about entirely by exogenous or endogenous factors, but there is considerable controversy over the relative weights given to each set of factors. Most neo-evolutionary and modernisation theorists tend to emphasise endogenous factors, whereas their critics stress exogenous ones. The critics raise the question of the limitations of endogenous theories of Third World development, that is the extent to which countries fail to develop properly due to their own actions as opposed to the effects of the actions of outsiders.

Activity

Critics argue that institutions like the World Bank are implicitly, if not explicitly, guided by the tenets of modernisation and neo-evolutionary theories. Find a copy of one of the World Bank’s recent World Development Reports, or access the Bank’s website on www.worldbank.org/ and see what evidence you can find, if any, of ideas or assumptions characteristic of neo-evolutionary, modernisation, or neo-modernisation theory.

A reminder of your learning outcomes

Having completed this chapter, and the Essential readings and activities, you should be able to:

• describe modernisation, neo-evolutionary and neo-modernisation theories of development

• discuss the strengths and limitations of these theories.
Sample examination questions

1. To what extent are all theories of development about modernisation?
2. Critically assess the extent to which modernisation and/or neo-evolutionary theories explain the status of the ‘Third World’.
3. What is the relationship between modernisation and globalisation?
Chapter 3: Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of development

Essential reading


Further reading

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter, and having completed the Essential readings and activities, you should be able to:

- discuss the main Marxist approaches to development
- review critiques of the main Marxist approaches to development
- discuss empirical studies that use these approaches.

Introduction

Karl Marx (1818–1883) is considered one of the founding fathers of sociology, along with Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. He was born and educated in Germany, but spent most of the later part of his life in London, living in poverty. He is best known for his academic work on the connection between economic and social life. In particular, he was interested in the analysis of societies organised into social classes, especially capitalist society. He also studied the ways in which societies moved from one form of social organisation to another, and argued that this was caused by class struggle between dominant and subordinate classes. Therefore, he had much to say that was of interest to sociologists of development. He was especially fascinated by the development of capitalism in the West. He was not as interested in the developing areas of the world however, since capitalism was not as advanced there. Later Marxists thought that his model of the development of capitalism could be applied to developing countries, because they believed that the notion of struggle between dominant and subordinate groups explained the condition of the Third World.

In this chapter, we examine Marxist approaches to development. Just as there is no one modernisation theory of development, there are several Marxist approaches to development. The roots of Marxist development theories lie in classical Marxism, in the writings of Marx, Luxemburg and Lenin. Neo-Marxist theories drew heavily on Lenin’s theory of imperialism to create analyses of underdevelopment, dependency and the capitalist world system. Orthodox Marxists responses to neo-Marxist theories, returned to classical Marxist views of imperialism and the capitalist mode of production. The orthodox Marxist response is often called ‘mode of production analysis’ because it focuses on the ways in which the capitalist mode of production unfolds in individual Third World countries. It aims to generate this analysis through the examination of empirical cases of developing countries in order to understand this process.1

Classical Marxism

Neither Marx nor Engels wrote very much about development in what came to be called the ‘Third World’. Their main interests were in understanding how capitalism developed in the First World and they looked at other countries only as comparative examples. Marx did not pursue a detailed analysis of developing societies. While Marx was interested in feudalism, this was primarily because it preceded capitalism in Western Europe. He saw societies going through the same stages on their way to capitalist development, therefore, he favoured evolutionary explanations to social change. Marx believed that capitalism would eventually spread throughout the world. He once said that ‘the country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future’.2

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1 In revising the material from this chapter you should focus primarily on the chapters in Corbridge, Preston and Brewer which provide an overview of Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of development, and secondly on the original writings of Marxists, empirical studies and relevant critiques.

Chapter 3: Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of development

Marx

So, what was the mechanism by which capitalism would spread worldwide? One answer was imperialism, which is the process whereby one country or region extends its influence over another country or region through methods such as trade, diplomacy, or military subjugation. Imperialism was not an idea that Marx himself developed extensively. Marx saw foreign trade as the basis for preventing a fall in the rate of profit. This occurred not only through the exploitation of non-industrialised countries for their raw materials, but also through the more advanced production techniques of Western countries, which allowed capitalists in the First World to sell their goods with a higher profit margin than their competitors in other parts of the world. As Marx said: ‘...the more advanced country sells its goods above their value even though cheaper than the competing countries’.3 This process is known as capitalist imperialism. Marx’s view of capitalist imperialism, then, was that it would generate ‘a proliferation of autonomous capitalism, such as he expected in India and did witness in North Africa’.4 Marx saw outlying areas of the world as undeveloped until they were developed by capitalism, and this is a point on which Marx would agree with neo-evolutionary and modernisation theorists.

Luxemburg

Among the early Marxists, Rosa Luxemburg was the first to emphasise the Third World in her analysis.5 In The Accumulation of Capital (1913), she considered the problem that productive capacity in the West was increasing faster than consumers could buy goods. She argued that the developing world allowed the expansion of capitalism in the First World. Pre-capitalist countries provided raw materials, and new markets for capital. Luxemburg believed that eventually these countries would be absorbed into a world capitalist system, increasing capitalists’ competition for markets. She anticipated neo-Marxist theory by seeing capitalist imperialism and its associated militarism in the Third World as linked to the survival of Western capitalism, but for her, imperialism in developing countries was not centrally important. Lenin took the theory of imperialism and elaborated upon it, informed by Luxemburg, as well as by the work of Bukharin and Hilferding.

Lenin

Lenin expanded the idea of imperialism by defining it as the ‘monopoly stage of capitalism’. He saw it as a recent phenomenon, emerging in the 1860s and being established in the early years of the twentieth century. A key idea in Lenin’s conceptualisation was ‘finance capital’, which for him was ‘capital controlled by banks and employed by industrialists’.6 Banks use of finance capital provided the basis for the centralisation of the local, national, and world economies. This was a process ‘transforming thousands and thousands of scattered economic enterprises into a single national capitalist, and then into a world capitalist economy’.7 Importantly, capitalist imperialism brought about uneven development and underdevelopment: ‘Both uneven development and a semi-starvation level of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions of [the capitalist] mode of production’.8 Furthermore, also laying the groundwork for a theory of underdevelopment, Lenin saw imperialism as the logical extension of capitalism, not just one possible option taken by capitalists, as argued by other classical Marxists.
Neo-Marxist theories of underdevelopment

As discussed earlier, the difference between Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of development hinges on their relationship to the question of imperialism. The main neo-Marxist approaches that we will examine in this chapter are underdevelopment, dependency and world-system theories. They all draw from Lenin. Their distinguishing feature is that they see imperialism as responsible for the fact that most of the Third World today is underdeveloped. One of the main neo-Marxist theorists is Andre Gunder Frank. Frank has written a series of books on what he labels the ‘development of underdevelopment’ that drew their inspiration from the work of the theorist Paul Baran who wrote in the 1950s.

Baran

Baran had developed Lenin’s ideas of imperialism further by arguing that it was actually in the interests of capitalism to keep the Third World as an ‘indispensable hinterland’, since it provided the West with raw materials and the chance to extract an economic surplus, or a higher profit rate. For Baran, the underdevelopment of the Third World was a direct result of the development of the First World. Development of the First World therefore took place at the expense of the underdevelopment of the Third World. The only way out of this problematic relationship was for Third World countries to de-link from the world economy altogether and introduce socialist economic planning. This was a direct challenge to the way in which economic development was seen at the time Baran was writing.

Frank

Frank was able to successfully popularise Baran’s ideas in the 1960s. He took Baran’s notions, and conceptualised them in terms of a capitalist world system of metropolitan areas and satellite areas. The dominant world metropolitan areas subordinate the satellite regions through military, political and trade agreements, and extract an economic surplus. Within countries, the capital city underdevelops outlying satellite regions; and the capital city is in turn underdeveloped by the world metropolitan centre. The basis for Frank’s analysis was the growth records of many Latin American countries, especially Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Chile. For example, he reported Latin American estimates for 1965 that indicated 20 per cent of the rural population had received only 3 per cent of the national income. At the same time, the wealthiest 20 per cent of the population received 63 per cent of the national income, the richest 5 per cent received 33 per cent and the richest 1 per cent 17 per cent of the national income. This indicated that industrialisation brought with it uneven development. He found that during times when the ‘Great Powers’ of the First World were otherwise engaged or weakened, such as the two World Wars, depressions and the like, that Latin American countries were able to record ‘marked autonomous industrialisation and growth’. When links between metropolitan and satellite regions were re-established, growth in the satellite areas was once again stifled. This contrasts with cases such as Japan, which was able to industrialise even though it did not have any natural resources, because it was not the satellite to any metropolis.

Dependency theory

A key part of underdevelopment theory is dependency theory. It arose in Latin America in the 1960s with the failure of economic development plans favoured by Western institutions such as the World Bank, and

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11 It may seem odd to use a word that is normally an adjective (‘underdeveloped’), or a noun (‘underdevelopment’), as a verb (‘to underdevelop’). I do this because underdevelopment theorists saw underdevelopment as an active process occurring in poorer parts of the world and directly related to the development of richer areas, for example Frank’s book was entitled The Development of Underdevelopment. As richer areas ‘developed’, they ‘underdeveloped’ poorer areas.
International Monetary Fund, and transnational corporations.\textsuperscript{14} Cardoso, along with other Latin American theorists, tried to modify the dependency approach in the late 1960s and 1970s, in line with the work of Frank.\textsuperscript{15} These theorists were known as the dependentistas (dependency thinkers), and they called for more national control of the development process and foreign capital investment. They argued that the way out of dependency was through governmental reforms, and possibly revolution. The dependency theorists maintained that ‘development’ which takes place in most Third World countries is only in the interests of foreign capitalism and not in the interests of the mass of the population. This led to the concept dependent development to describe the type of development which occurs in Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) in Latin America and East Asia. For example, Evans’ data suggested that in the mid-1970s Brazil and Mexico received 50 per cent of United States direct investment in Third World manufacturing. Therefore, their industrialisation was highly dependent upon international financing.\textsuperscript{16}

**World-system theory**

Immanuel Wallerstein further advanced the concepts of underdevelopment theory in *The Modern World System*.\textsuperscript{17} He did this principally by reconceptualising Frank’s model and adding another category. Wallerstein’s theory was based on a capitalist world-system. The world system had a core consisting of the highly developed countries of the world, a periphery consisting of countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, which are commonly referred to as the ‘Third World’, and a semi-periphery that was made up of countries that were neither core nor periphery, such as the NICs. For Wallerstein, core countries underdeveloped peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, and semi-peripheral countries were both underdeveloped by the core, and underdeveloped the periphery. This model helped to place the NICs within a neo-Marxist theory of development. Wallerstein argues that we cannot understand any nation-state in isolation, because its development status will be shaped by its placement within the overall world-system.

Another key aspect of Wallerstein’s theory is that it is based on an amended definition of capitalism as ‘production for sale in a market... to realise the maximum profit’.\textsuperscript{18} This departs from the more usual definition of capitalism as the existence of a specific mode of production based on private property; capitalists who own the means of production and workers who are free wage labourers. The new definition allows Wallerstein to argue that capitalism existed from the fifteenth century. It also provides the basis for a world analysis, which suggests that as the world economy develops, so does the division of labour, with different regions specialising in different aspects of production and consumption.

The core consists of strong states that enforce both unequal trade and political relationships in such a way as to benefit the core at the expense of the periphery. Core states appropriate surplus value from the periphery, which consists of areas that engage in mono-agriculture and export commodities that are produced using labour that is paid a low wage. The semi-periphery produces both high and low wage products. Wallerstein’s model of a capitalist world-system, based on three interconnected regions, therefore synthesised various theoretical and empirical strands within neo-Marxist theory. Orthodox Marxists returning to Marx’s original writings argued for a shift away from the whole world as an object of analysis, and back to the region and the nation-state.
Activity
Do you see any inconsistencies between classical Marxism and neo-Marxism?

Orthodox Marxist responses to neo-Marxism

Orthodox Marxist responses start with a critique of neo-Marxism, suggesting that neo-Marxist theories of development misunderstand Marx’s basic categories of analysis. Wallerstein and other world systems theorists argued that peripheral areas of the world began to be incorporated into the capitalist world system starting in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This implies that the capitalist world system existed before the industrial revolution took place in Western Europe, which was the period when capitalism developed, according to Marx.

Laclau

A Latin American thinker based in London, Ernesto Laclau, spearheaded the theoretical critique against neo-Marxism. Laclau stated that Frank and Wallerstein’s definition of capitalism, as profit-motivated production for the market, is inadequate. By doing this, the neo-Marxists ignore the Marxist concept of the relations of production, between capitalists and workers. According to Laclau, neo-Marxists confuse capitalism with the existence of an exploitative economic system. For Laclau, as well as for Marx, capitalism should be seen as a specific mode of production based on free labourers’ sale of their own labour power. This takes into account the fact that under capitalism, workers are separated from their means of production, which was not the case under feudalism. Laclau also criticises Wallerstein’s use of the periphery and semi-periphery. Wallerstein saw the core as being based on a free skilled labour force, and the periphery based on a coerced, less skilled labour force. The idea of a coerced labour force is not in line with the ways Marx was defining capitalism.

Brenner

In 1977, Brenner followed on from Laclau’s critique and suggested that the world-system’s focus on the capitalist market originating in core nations, and causing underdevelopment in poorer countries neglects the Marxist notion that the progression from one mode of production is primarily based on the class struggle inside countries. That is, in critiques of world-system models based on the mode of production, you have writers who focus on the internal dynamics of poorer countries, rather than the way they are exploited by richer countries outside them. In Brenner’s return to class relations inside countries, he is returning to core themes in Marxist theory; some argue that world-system theorists helped to distort these ideas. Remember that Marx was trying to understand how individual countries went through various stages of development, and he did not conceptualise a capitalist world system. Class struggle is generally neglected by neo-Marxists, who see Third World classes as merely comprador, or the local agents of the core countries. To orthodox Marxists, class struggle is a central concept. One thinker who had initially found underdevelopment theory to be a great improvement over modernisation theory in understanding development in Kenya later criticised it as ‘theoretically repetitive, stagnant, and unable to solve or formulate problems of development strategy, lacking any practical impact upon the struggle of the people in Kenya’, and so on. Phillips, an Orthodox Marxist critic, furthermore suggested that neo-Marxist theorists should stop asking whether capitalism can or cannot promote development, and
instead concentrate on the nature of class conflict in developing countries. Orthodox Marxist theorists tend to base their analyses on what is actually occurring in Third World countries, and see neo-Marxist analyses as overly vague, and even wrong.

**Warren**

One of the liveliest orthodox Marxist writers to pursue the mode of production analysis was Bill Warren who argued, contrary to neo-Marxist writers, that development was occurring in Third World countries. Thus, Capitalism is fulfilling its historical mission of being ‘progressive’ and of expanding worldwide, as Marx argued. What the Third World needed was not less capitalism, but more. The more people are incorporated into the capitalist mode of production worldwide, the more likely there will be a global proletarian revolution, leading to socialism and communism. For Warren, the development of capitalism in the Third World leads to the breakdown of dependent relationships with core countries. He therefore opposes the world-system view that capitalism brings about Third World underdevelopment, arguing that ‘the empirical data belie this picture and... substantial improvements in the material welfare of the mass of the population have occurred in the Third World following World War II. Moreover, the developing capitalist societies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America have proved themselves increasingly capable of generating powerful internal sources of economic expansion and of achieving an ever more independent economic and political status.” In both Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism and ‘Imperialism and Capitalist Industrialisation’, which is a shorter version of the same argument, there are many empirical examples that Warren uses to support his thesis. For example, he uses increases in gross national product per capita, an indicator used by the World Bank at the time Warren was writing. This is problematic because it does not show the distribution of the income, only the average. This means that a small group may become very rich while most people are poor; therefore, on its own it is not a very good indicator of ‘development’. This led many neo-Marxists to be dissatisfied with Warren’s critique, mainly because much of his data were gathered from non-Marxist sources, such as World Bank data.

Warren’s theory is based on six main points. They can be outlined as follows:

1. Growth rates in many parts of the Third World have been higher than in the First World since World War II, and there is little to suggest that the gap between rich and poor has widened.
2. He argues that in a number of countries in the Third World, an indigenous capitalist class is actively engaged in innovation, accumulation of capital and involved in manufacturing, the hallmark of a ‘real’ capitalist class, not a weak group serving foreign interests as in the neo-Marxist analysis.
3. Warren views the process of urbanisation positively, in contrast to neo-Marxists who see it as underdeveloping the Third World by providing the organisational link to core countries. For him, the growth of cities helps to break down pre-capitalist rural structures in developing countries, and provides an engine for local capitalist development. Increases in urbanisation are also connected to a rise in gross national product and improvements in living conditions.

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25 Warren (1973) 14. The gross national product (GNP) is the total value of goods produced and services provided by an economy in one year, plus the value of investments abroad. GNP per capita is this figure divided by the number of people in the country.
4. Other advancements in living conditions are evidenced by the progress in education, nutrition, health, mortality rates, and housing rates in the Third World.

5. Capitalist agriculture has also spread to outlying areas in Third World countries, undermining pre-capitalist modes of production; and linked to this has been the growth of wage labour and agricultural output.

6. Manufacturing is becoming a larger percentage of the gross domestic product of many developing countries.

Warren is optimistic about capitalist development in the Third World, but he realises that much of his analysis does not apply to the poorest parts of the developing world. He argues that the reason these areas are in an undeveloped state is because they have been starved of capital.26

Sender and Smith

Sender and Smith applied Warren’s analysis to Africa where they concluded that ‘the emergence of capitalist social relations of production constitutes the central dynamic process in a wide range of African societies’.27 For Sender and Smith, the failure of some African societies to develop is not a result of a hostile world system, but the neglect of the export sector. The failure was brought about by the adoption of a policy to generate development through the importation of parts used to manufacture goods for the local market. This policy is called ‘import substitution industrialisation’ (ISI).28 It was associated with the recommendations of underdevelopment and dependency theory. The policies were seen as being based on neo-Marxist theories because their aim was to de-link from the global economy in order to manufacture products for domestic, rather than foreign, consumption.29 They argue that working conditions, the development of trade unions, and other issues connected to class conflict are ignored when neo-Marxists blame external factors for internal problems. For the orthodox Marxists, development has always been uneven, in all countries and regions, so it is nothing new to suggest that the Third World is underdeveloped by the First; furthermore, it is problematic to treat the Third World as a whole. The Third World consists of many countries at different stages of development. Orthodox Marxists also argue that the neo-Marxist focus on external exploitation deflects attention from internal dynamics that allows local elites to use concepts like ‘underdevelopment’ and ‘dependency’ to their advantage by acting as if they support the masses when they are only trying to serve their own interests. This is how orthodox Marxists might critique the proposals of the dependentistas in Latin America.

Chapter summary

To summarise the material from this chapter, we can say that neo-Marxism emerged from classical Marxism, and drew heavily on Lenin’s theory of imperialism to try to explain the current underdeveloped status of most of the Third World today. Baran, Frank, Wallerstein and the Latin American dependency theorists developed the neo-Marxist perspective using a historical macro level approach that considered the whole world as a unit of analysis. Orthodox Marxists critiqued neo-Marxists chiefly by arguing that they had strayed too far from classical Marxism, specifically the capitalist mode of production. Writers such as Warren, and Sender and Smith also argued for a return to the nation-state as the basic unit of analysis and supported their studies with a wealth of empirical detail, later critiqued by neo-Marxists as being problematic because it was

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26Warren’s critique of world-system theories can also be seen as differing approaches to the ‘real’ and the ‘ideal’. Warren and his followers are focusing on the ‘real’ Third World as it can be empirically observed, while world systems theorists have in mind an ‘ideal’ of socialist development which has not yet come to fruition. See Gosling (1997) p.32 on ‘structuralist’ and ‘idealist’ Marxism. An overview of this distinction can be found in Swingewood, A. A Short History of Sociological Thought. (London: Macmillan, 1991) ISBN 0333558618 pp.72–94.
27Sender and Smith (1986) p.128.
28See Chapter 7 for a discussion of import substitution industrialisation.
29We will consider these issues in more detail in the Chapter 7, which discusses Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs).
derived from non-Marxist sources. Because of these debates, Marxists have attempted to incorporate both macro and micro level analyses of development in their explanation of social change, looking at the relationships between the global and the local in the Third World.30

Activity

Draw a spider diagram of Marxist theories of development. Your diagram can look like an organisational chart. It should show how the main theories, such as world system theory, or concepts, such as imperialism, emerged from the writings of Marx. You should also show the ways in which the theories or their key concepts connect or diverge from each other. Key empirical examples, such as those from Sender and Smith’s study of African development, may also be linked in your diagram to relevant theories or concepts.

A reminder of your learning outcomes

Having completed this chapter, and the Essential readings and activities, you should be able to:

• discuss the main Marxist approaches to development
• review critiques of the main Marxist approaches to development
• discuss empirical studies that use these approaches.

Sample examination questions

1. Does capitalism create underdevelopment?
2. ‘What the Third World needs is more capitalism, not less.’ Discuss.
3. How would you go about completing a mode of production analysis on any one country?
Notes