

Modernisation vs dependency school



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SGM 100**1. INTRODUCTION**

There are many reasons to examine the current situation of the world, where a lot of countries are underdeveloped or are developing, and a small portion of the world, which are the Western countries, are relatively rich and developed. In this essay I discuss the Modernisation theory and Dependency Theory and how they came into existence. Also, the contributions made by all the countries and trying to develop in their own way by the argument based on the Neo-Marxist theorists explains the reasons why this division is still present, especially, the third World countries being dependent on Western countries. Later, I have taken CUBA as an example to show how it ended its dependency on the western countries, and it may give hope to other underdeveloped countries. Then the comparison between the two theories is done and concluding which one is better.

2. DEPENDENCY THEORY:

After World War II, due to economic expansion and polarisation Cold War emerged, and it was then that American social scientists started studying the Third World nations with the purpose of promoting social and political stability and bringing development in the economic structure. (So, 1990, pp. 17). However, scholars from made their own theories. It was partly based on the modernisation theory which resulted in the sub-optimal results, as well as ending by saying that imperialism “ *has actively underdeveloped the peripheral societies they are living in* ” (Martinussen, 1997, pp. 86). Peripheral countries are assumed to be dependent on mass media.

Modernisation School was first criticised in Latin America, when the United Nations-Economic Commission for Latin America went Bankrupt (ECLA).

(So, 1990, pp. 91).

Overall, because of the failure of the ECLA and the Modernisation School theories declined, it gave rise to Neo-Marxist Dependency Theories.

First, attempt to redefine dependency theory from the Third Nations point of view was done by Paul Baran and Andre Frank.

Baran argued that the backward or the third world countries were defined by double economies: a large sector was under agriculture and a very small sector was under industries (Martinussen, 1997, pp. 86). The capability to generate economic surplus and profit margins from agriculture is still minimal (Keet, 2002). Baran articulated the difference between the classes and their relations. Also, their impact upon how the economic surplus is been utilised and the power being distributed which resulted to create barriers, preventing development. Thus the crucial and most important point is the conditions of the Third World country within their country. He explained solution to eradicate dependency on the western countries by using a lot of state interference to promote industrialisation as an arrangement for evolution of other industrial sectors (Martinussen, 1997, pp. 87).

Frank criticised Baran's thesis by identifying the causes of underdevelopment. Merchant capitals target metropolises. The satellites' exists only to feed the metropolises based on their requirements. The crucial method to gain more economic surplus was trade and batter system, including both international and national exchanges. Frank proposed a

solution to eradicate the problem of dependency by de-linking completely from the world market to grow. (Martinussen, 1997, pp. 88-89). It directly blamed the external factors, like colonialism, whereas the Modernisation School assumed the reason behind these countries to be under-developed is overpopulation, culture, and lack of motivation to do anything constructive or little investment. Moreover, Frank argues that the same process of development in the Western countries immortalises the third world countries to develop (So, 1990).

Most of the scholars tried to explain the reason for them to remain backward by focussing on the external factors. They think there was unequal exchange of economies from the western countries, and their theoretical structure is core versus periphery. All the solutions that were proposed included a socialist revolution with a completely or partly staying away from the international system.

Based on the 'classical' dependency theories, more observational information was collected from the circumferences point of perspective, not only from Latin America, but also within African and Asian countries. It was very clear that dependency theory alone cannot explain all the observations. Martinussen (1997, pp. 93) states " *the actual changes in the less developed countries implied greater and greater differentiation between the underdeveloped countries*". Therefore, Neo-Marxist theory required an elaborate and expanded version of explanation.

3. MODERNISATION THEORY

For more than 10 years, till the late 1960s, modernisation theory was very popular among the social science. The concept was used in order to explain

the changes which will last for a long time due to this theory. It also criticised the Marxist theory on dependency and discussed the difference in cold war and explained how the new independent countries should progress.

After this, in the next 20 years, the concept of modernisation theory and its understanding was completely changed and had become the target of criticism. Most of the people did not accept any theory, but there were some of them who preferred Neo-Marxist theory; puts the blame on the United States for most of the countries to remain underdeveloped. Many people started ignoring the modernisation theory without mentioning any efforts that could be made to apply this theory systematically.

As the Cold War ended, modernisation theory was again brought into picture. It was only to reduce the rising disagreement over globalisation. Some argued that the fall of communism was one of the reasons that deviate the requirements which were specified in the theory, while others replied that other abrupt changes in Russia and other countries proved the theory to be wrong. What was the reason that proved modernisation theorists wrong? Was it the failure of the socialist model or the failure of the economic advice? Later, debates about globalisation pointed out many of the same issues as modernisation theory. After almost 50 years, the theory was again brought into the limelight, social scientists are again working on the positives and negatives of the theory and opening it to the outside world, also on political reform in order to improve capacity of the state and its responsiveness, a breakdown of social barriers, and to improve the knowledge of the state that maximises absorption of information.

- Definition

It is used to inspire by its historical and sociological background. It had been developed by doing a lot of historical research and investigating the effects of modernisation that will have on the human communication. According to Giddens (1991), Modernisation means the appearance of ' modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence'. Modernisation theories explain how the communication and media uses have changed in the traditional and modern societies.

After the World War II, there were more or less twenty societies which were regarded as highly efficient and more. Definitions of *modernised varied from places to places. For some of them, structural features, such as levels of education, urbanisation, use of sources of energy, and fertility were the ways to decide whether the particular society is modern or no. For others, attitudes described the modernisation of the society, such as secularization, achievement orientation, functional specificity in formal organizations, and acceptance of equality in relationships.*

- Core assumptions and statements

Modernisation theory has evolved in three parts.

The first part came into existence in the 1950s and 1960s. One tried to contrast the Western styles of living from the other parts of the world, their technological inventions and their highly selective, targeting to only one person at a time, types of communication, their individualist cultures and of individual motivation and achievement (Lerner, 1958 and Schramm, 1964).

According to McQuail, (2000, pp. 84), this produced three variants:

1. Economic development: mass media promote the global diffusion of many technical and social innovations that are essential to modernisation (Rogers, 1962).
2. Literacy and Cultural Development: Mass media teaches literacy and other techniques to develop. It encourages a favourable state of mind. E. g. finding a way to live a life beyond the traditional way.
3. National identity development: Mass media helps support the national identities and democratic elections in the newly created colonies.

Most of these theories have been criticised as they were pro-western bias.

The second step of modernisation theory is a part of the critical theory that was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. This part does not join hands but it criticises the influence of the western countries on the other countries. This is held to be an instance of Western cultural and fiscal imperialism or authority. (Schiller, 1976).

The third step of modernisation theory which rose in the 1990s is the theory of late, or post modernity. It tries to not be in favour or against the modernisation of the westerns. In fact, it attempts to eradicate the differences in the process of modernisation and explains the results of modernity for individuals in contemporary society (Giddens, 1991a, b). Giddens showed that modern society is characterised by time-space distanciation and dis-embedding mechanisms. Traditional society is basically a direct conversation between the people who live close by, whereas,

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modern societies goes way beyond that and reaches out to a number of people and communicate with them through the means of mass media and interactive media.

Benjamin Barber tried to explain the differences between the Western and non-Western cultures of the world in his *Jihad versus McWorld: How the Planet is both Falling Apart and Coming Together* (1996). This matter of grouping on integration and division in civilisation and in media use is also present in the effort of Meyrowitz (1993) and Van Dijk (1993, 1991/1999). Van Dijk tries to explain the rise of the new media such as computer networks and mobile telephony as important tools for modern life. It tries to explain the relationship between all the countries from a historical, sociological, economic and cultural point of view. It gives attention to the role played by the mass media and the new media to help a society develop.

4. CASE STUDY ON CUBA & THE ALTERNATIVE MODEL

Cuba has always been a socialist revolution, which was a necessity by the classical dependency school in order to end the dependency. Unexpectedly, the relations with the international countries changed. Partly, because U. S put restrictions on Cuba. This was the reason for Cuba to move strongly towards the Soviet Bloc. This resulted in the export of sugar cane and import of petroleum, equipments required in industries, daily bread and butter and agrochemicals (Rosset and Benjamin, 1994, and Enriquez, 2000). Moreover, 5. 4 times more for Cuban sugar cane was paid by the soviets than the market price (Rosset, 2002), providing almost 80% of Cuba's foreign exchange (Enriquez, 2000), thereby promoting dependency of Cuban

society. Its positive point was their internal investment to get an excellent education system and a good health care system.

But, Cuba's links with the Soviet Bloc. ended after the end of the Cold War.

“ According to Dr. Funes quoted in Parker, 2002, \$8billion/ per disappeared from the Cuban trade and imports were reduced by 75 percent”(2002). “

Other sources claim it to have been cuts of 82% (Rosset, 2002) of its pesticides or over 90% of Cuba's fertilizer use (Rosset and Benjamin, 1994, pp. 3).” Even more seriously, “ Approximate weight of the population's caloric intake that was derived from imported goods ranged from 44 to 57 percent.”(Enriquez, 2000). This indicated food shortage for the citizens.

Thus Cuba, which was still under the restriction of the U. S, lost all their trading partners overnight. They faced the challenge to find other ways to be highly mechanized and industrialised. They wanted to be self sufficient and rely on themselves in its food production to prevent scarcity.

Here Cuba's social structure proved to be of great advantage. As they were highly educated and along with state regulation, they started planning which resulted in positive result of the socialist revolution, which is known as The Alternative Model.

“ Although Cuban citizens are still on food ransoms, and food availability had dropped at least to only 60% (Kovaleski, 1999) during the 1991-1995 period, Cuban agriculture has recovered in most areas to the levels of the 1980s (Parker, 2002) and is now world leader when it comes to knowledge of organic agriculture” (Rosset, 2002).

- Elimination of dependency

“ We are told that small countries cannot feed themselves, that they need imports to cover the deficiency of their local agriculture and synthetic farm chemicals, yet Cuba is virtually doing so. We are told that we need the efficiency of large-scale corporate or state farms in order to produce enough food, yet we find small farmers and gardeners in the vanguard of Cuba. We hear time and again that international food aid is the answer to food shortages-yet Cuba has found an alternative in local production.”(Rosset, 2000)

“ Acknowledged, Cuba has faced real hardship in the 1990s, but it is also an example that the so-called ‘ de-linking’ as outlined by the Dependency School is possible. Proof of the viability of organic agriculture is the other great windfall” (Parker, 2002).

Also can this Alternative Model be an example for other dependent countries? According to the World System dependency theorists Cuba was already in the semi periphery, because they have educated population who were crucial in its policies for survival. Enriquez (2000) points out the parallel, but slower process in China and Vietnam, and says that countries of other Soviet Bloc are not experiencing a this difference because they don’t have the socialist planning structure. She also explains by going little ahead, claiming that due to the restrictions put by the U. S change have been positive.

On the other hand, Latin America lost a lot of liberty of their power to administer their spending (Anon, 2002), Cuba has proved that even after going through a lot of difficulties, it was capable enough to gain back all the things that it had lost. However, the majority of the dependent nations do not have a socialist structure in place, also U. S continuous to put restrictions to prevent neo-liberal influences. So Cuba cannot be an appropriate example for these nations but it can encourage them to find their way out of this dependency trap.

5. GLOBALISATION: MODERNISATION vs. DEPENDENCY

Over the last ten decades many events and situations have occurred throughout the world. This has affected not only the places where these

events or situations took place but also the media relations, politics and economic factors were affected the world as a whole, due to industrialisation. Some of these situations that have occurred have been positive and some were negative. Events that take place in developed and those countries which has the power to influence the other countries, such as the United States or United Kingdom have a tendency to make a larger impact on other developing or underdeveloped countries because more relationships are tied through them. This makes countries like the United States and the United Kingdom able to purposely make decisions and direct it in a direction which is beneficial for them, which is why the way the United States and the United Kingdom conducts its business is criticised so thoroughly. There are some people who believe that this has led to globalisation and this effect is a very good thing and there will be a difference in the social and cultural background in all societies because of industrial capitalism. These kinds of people believe in the modernisation theory which was developed because of globalisation. There are also some people that believe that this is not a good thing and it can lead to inequality all over the world as the result of historical exploitation of the poor, underdeveloped societies by rich, and the developed countries. This led to the development of dependency theory. The people who follow this are considered as dependency theorist

According to my opinion, by in large, I believe that the dependency theory is the way we think and react in terms of globalisation. The modernisation theory states that one thing needed to modernise is infusion or the merger of capitals. I believe that this is all too true, and the more advanced the

society becomes, the more they must stay away from others in order to make themselves greater and develop more. At this point the people in the United States use the third world countries or the underdeveloped and developing countries as the way to gain resources that we are exhausting. They get their raw materials, their industry, and even their people from these countries. The other countries and their cultures that decide not to modernise and wants their traditional ways of thinking to be alive are not given any choice by the other countries and cultures. They remain backward as they do not get any choice because the other cultures are going ahead as they are modernising their cultures. The Kung tribes in the Kalahari Desert in Namibia, Botswana and Angola, talks about the way they had lost their traditional values in less than one generation because they had lost their land which they needed to exist in this world as hunter gatherers. This is something that will continue happening and I do not believe that there is anything we can do about it except compensate heavily.

On the contrary, Dependency theory has an almost exact opposite outlook on globalisation than modernisation has. It basically attacks the structure modernisation theory, and with some very good reason. The modernisation theory says that globalisation has a positive impact through infusion of capital from the sources received from the other countries. Dependency theory accepts this but censures the words under which it is done. First world countries like America indirectly set standards of developing and underdeveloped countries by making unfair, but unavoidable, deals. These deals are shaped in a particular fashion that seems to be something helpful and which cannot be avoided.

One of the very good examples is that can explain dependency theory is about the states of Global South. They are in desperate need to develop. “ *Development seeks to improve the welfare of people living in conditions of economic and social poverty*” (Weaver n. d, pp. 112). Why is the Global South prone to remain in this condition? This is a question which has been asked a million times and the answers are given in many different ways. Two interesting theories are used to understand the conditions of Global South and their development, which are: the Classical Economic Theory, which is also known as *the Modernisation Theory and the Dependency Theory* . One of these theories explains the need to development and living conditions in the southern countries.

According to modernisation theory, there are a few steps which can lead to success for each and every country. In Walt Rostow (1962) work on *The Stages of Economic Growth : A Non-totalitarianism proclamation*, a particular pattern for developing has to be undertaken for a country to become successful, profitable, sophisticated, and have a modern economy, which in turn, will enrich the lives of the citizens in that particular country. This is a very systematic theory. It says that if you do this then only you will become successful and modern. It is demonstrated by *Mahler 45* that there needs to be preconditions for development, and thus leading to mass-consumption. The part that is not included in this theory assumes that all countries will follow the exactly same predetermined way to development. Too many variables intercede between that will affect the ability of a state to develop.

For example, Mexico faces a lot of difficulty to develop as it is geographically destined due to the deserts, forests, and mountains. Approximately thirteen

percent of Mexico's land is arable, as well as, there are no big rivers in Mexico, it becomes all the more difficult to have a good economy. These factors increase the difficulty level for Mexico to develop because it constrains transportation, which directly affects the ability to export and import goods efficiently and profitably.

If the states in the Global South follow the steps of modernisation, there is no guarantee that they will develop. It can be argued that having a rigid set of rules and regulations to follow will not make you reach to the decided destination. One important and sometimes neglected barrier to development could be the geographical condition. However, there are other variables that can restrict a country from developing. As stated in *A Global Agenda: Issues Before the 54th General Assembly*, "Underlying all these initiatives [for development] is the assumption that poverty eradication and good governance are inseparable, because good governance brings about a proper balance among state action, the private sector, civil society, and the communities themselves" (Tessitore n. d, pp. 105). The reason is that if a country's leadership is very poor, it will directly affect its ability to develop. Take for instance; Saddam Hussein's country could not develop because all the wealth that was collected by the people was kept by him. Maybe if Hussein would have used the wealth in a good way in his country, by encouraging invention and improving education, then probably his country could have developed long back. Also in India, the political parties and the government are very corrupt. They can be easily bribed. Most of the taxes that people pay go in the pockets of the politicians and the government. If

this was not the case in India, and if they had strict rules on bribing, then India would have been one of the developed countries.

In relation to modernisation theory, the states in the Global South should create situations which can improve production and free trade, as well as enhance the internal characteristics, for example, removing illiteracy, improving the communication and infrastructure problem, as well as what the Asians did, popularly known as 'Asian Tigers', by improving their transportation which improved their ability to import and export goods efficiently, proved that export-oriented growth was possible.

"Dependency theory became popular in the 1970's" (Kegley n. d, pp. 226) .

According to the dependency theory, the states in the North exploit the states in the South. One main reason for this can be that the southern states are highly dependent on the wealth earned by the northern states; therefore this unable them to advance, because of the vicious circle that then ensues. An example of this bad circle can start with a country being economically unstable. They allow a multinational corporation to set up a branch in one of their cities. This increases job opportunities for the people of that city. But the people are hired for very low salary. Then the products that are produced are bought by the northern states, which in turn stop the southern states 'mass-consumption' abilities. This is one of the generalized ways that the south gets exploited and remains underdeveloped by the north and the multinational corporation that had set up their branches in the cities of the southern states and come out making huge amount of profit at the expense of desperate people who are just trying to survive and are willing to work for pennies.

For example, all the multinational companies have their customer service centres in India, as it is a developing country. There are huge amount of people who are unemployed and are willing to work even during the nights for pennies for the multinational companies. All the services provided to people in the north with any difficulty is provided by these people working in the particular customer service centres.

According to dependency theory, underdevelopment is the reason of the development of capitalism. A significant example could be Latin America and the United States. *The following quote from the preface to the English edition (1979) the persistence of Dependency and Development in Latin America by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Prentice Hall and Enzo Faletto(2003), somewhat details this dependency issue, " In order to go ahead with economic expansion, a dependent country has to play the ' interdependency' game, but in a position similar to the client who approaches a banker ... even if the dependent country becomes less poor after the first loan, a second one follows. In most cases, when such an economy expands, its roots have been planted by those who hold the lending notes".* Thus, leading to the conclusion, that in order for global south to develop, the capitalist system will have to break down completely in relation to the dependency theory. Of course, dependency theory did not take backward societies who are not dependent into consideration.

Therefore, after considering all factors of dependency theory, it can be concluded that theory by itself cannot explain or improve the economical conditions and life of the citizens in the global south. It is very clear that some states in the south are completely dependent on the states in the

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north and they end up being exploited by the north and are caught in the cycle of debt which is never-ending and continues to grow with no way to escape, making them more and more dependent on the northern countries. It is also very clear that modernisation theory neglected the fact that not every state will develop in the same way or in the same period of time. It doesn't give justice to explain the lack of assumed decreasing profit of the people that is described in the theory.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of educating citizens and improve the other internal characteristics, it would seem to lead to an improved life for the citizens. Also by becoming less dependent on wealthier and developed nations would help to improve the lives of the citizens in the Global South. “*Indeed, there are differences in the theoretical approach to the problem of development. General consensus on the practical problem are, those on the Left and Right agree that the growth rate achieved by under- developed countries after forty years of international assistance is less than satisfactory, if not disappointing*” (Mahler n. d , pp. 59). Modernisation theory, however, hypothesises and predicts better than dependency theory. It is a model for some sort of success, based on the definition of success by the western capitalistic countries.

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