

# Comparison of dependency theory with modernization theory politics essay



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Modernization is a theory that looks at the domestic factors of a country with the assumption that, with help underdeveloped countries can be brought to development in using the same methods that more developed countries used. Modernization theory focuses on the social elements which facilitate social progress and development of societies, and further aims to explain the process of social evolution. This theory not only stresses the process of change but also the results of that change. Furthermore, it looks at internal functions of a society while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new ways of living. This is because internal situations in societies greatly affect the processes of modernization. A country in which favorites are rewarded and governmental corruption is rampant hampers the state's ability to effectively progress in terms of modernization. This negatively affects the state's economic development and productivity and eventually results in the country's money and resources to flow out to other countries with more favorable investment environments. Such mechanisms slow the process of modernization and as a result the country falls into internal conflicts so as to aid the process of modernization due to scarcity of resources. On the other hand Modernization has over the years been hastened by globalization- as the world has become integrated on many levels (political, economic, and social); modernization has been able to spread across borders through the fact that it has encouraged the development of a global economy that focuses greatly on better utilization of resources and means of production, technology- which is a major contributor to social change through the fact that the introduction of new technologies forces people to adopt to them thus promoting social change, secularization of societies- this contributes to modernization by the fact that people

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become less superstitious and are therefore more welcoming to change and usage of more modern resources available to them. Despite all the positive results of modernization, it also has a negative side as it leads to higher pollution levels and over population especially in urban areas, increased crime, gaps in the social structures for example the rich and the poor (rich become rich, the emergence of a middle class and the poor seem to struggle even more due to higher cost of living), local cultures suffer and the economic markets are more favorable to the already developed countries as their products tend to be more competitive as they have been through the modernization process for a longer period than the developing

Modernization is therefore measured by the following factors:

Economic growth

Increased urbanization

Technological progress

Secularization

On the other hand, the dependency theory focuses on the fact that resources flow from the poor and underdeveloped states to the already developed states while enriching the latter while the poorer states continue suffering. Poor states are impoverished and rich ones enriched due to the power distribution in the international system. The key tenets of dependency theory are that: Poor nations provide natural resources, cheap labor, a place for obsolete technology, and markets for developed nations, without which the wealthier nations could not have the standard of living they enjoy.

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Furthermore, wealthy nations actively fuel a state of dependence by various means which varies from economics, media control, politics, banking and finance, education, culture, sport, and all aspects of human resource development . Finally that wealthy nations normally hamper attempts by dependent nations to fight their influences through economic sanctions and/or the use of military force. Dependency theory states that the poverty of the countries in the periphery is not because they are not part into the developed world system but because of the place they hold in the system.

The theory arose around 1970 as a reaction to some earlier theories of development like the modernization theory which said that all societies progress through similar stages of development, and that underdeveloped areas are thus in a similar situation to that of today's developed areas at some time in the past, and that therefore the task in helping the underdeveloped areas out of poverty is to accelerate them along this supposed common path of development, by various means such as investment, technology transfers, and closer integration into the world market.

First of all, it should be said that Dependency theory was developed in response to Modernization theory out of sheer criticism of the latter theory by the supporters of Dependency theory. Naturally, this fact determined the principal difference between these theories, but, nevertheless, there are still certain similarities between Modernization and Dependency theories.

Speaking about the similarities, it is primarily necessary to point out that both theories pay a lot of attention to the gap existing between developed

countries and undeveloped ones belonging to the third world. To put it more precisely, Modernization and Dependency theory stand on the ground that Western countries are the world leaders due to their higher level of development, which affects practically all spheres of life, including economic, political, social, and even cultural life (Leys, 210). As a result, there exist a strong link between developed and developing countries.

Furthermore both theories state that the experience of developed countries is followed by developing and undeveloped countries, which basically develop in the same direction as developed countries but still they cannot catch the latter up and remain in the rearguard of the world development. In stark contrast, developed countries play the key role in the development of the entire world and the integration of all countries of the world in the global economy is one of the major ways of interaction between developed and developing countries and both theories agrees that this interaction constantly increases.

At the same time, both Modernization and Dependency theories underline that the relationships between developed and developing countries is unequal and there exist a kind of dependence of developing countries on developed ones, though the views on this dependence vary considerably. Nevertheless, both theories underline the dominant position of Western countries in the modern world and leave little room for the alternative ways of the development but the western one, which is viewed as the only way of the development of the future world in the context of the global economy.

It is worthy of mention that both theories are ethnocentric in a way because they practically ignore the possibility of the alternative development of developing countries but, instead they insist that the development of western countries will be the example developing countries, willingly or not, will follow, while, at the same time, they do not really admit the alternative ways of development of countries of the Third world (Preston, 137).

However, it is worthy of mention the example of China which economy is progressing rapidly but its way of development differs considerably from the dominant western way, but this country does not meet to the basic assumptions of either of the theories.

In spite of existing similarities between Modernization theory and Dependency theory, differences between them are much more substantial and it is even possible to estimate that these theories are antagonistic in their views on the development of the world and international relationships, especially on the relationship between developed and developing countries. In fact, differences between Modernization theory and Dependency theory result from the origin of Dependency theory which, as it has been already mentioned above, was developed in response to Modernization theory. On analyzing existing differences between the two theories, first of all, it is necessary to underline that Modernization theory views the development of the world and relationships between developed and developing countries as the relationships of potentially equal countries which are just at a different stage of development at the moment. To put it more precisely, Modernization theory stands on the ground that western countries are well-developed and western way of development is viewed as the most

successful and perspective while there is practically no other alternatives to this way of the development. This is why the supporters of this theory insist on the necessity to develop the cooperation between developed and developing countries in order to make the latter closer to the former. What is meant here is the fact that Modernization theory underlines the necessity of borrowing the experience of western countries by developing countries of the Third world (Scott 196). Basically, developing countries should follow blindly the example of more developed western countries and this will bring them economic, social, and cultural prosperity.

Naturally, to achieve this goal, developing countries should develop their cooperation in all spheres of life, including economy, politics, culture, education, and social relations, with western countries, while the latter, being more advanced compared to developing countries should help them achieve the highest level of development through education, technological assistance and consulting of countries of the Third world. In such a way, this theory views modernization of socio-economic and political life of developing countries on the basis of the example of western countries as the only possible solution of the problem of backwardness of poor countries since western way of development is, according to Modernization theory, is the only correct way to prosperity.

In stark contrast to Modernization theory, Dependency theory underlines that relationships between developing and developed countries are based not on the growing cooperation between them but rather on the dependence of developing countries on developed ones. To put it more precisely, supporters of Dependency theory stand on the ground that western countries are really <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-dependency-theory-with-modernization-theory-politics-essay/>

more advanced than developing countries but the latter follow their example not just because they are willing to do so nor because they really believe that western way of development is really better but, in contrast, they are forced to choose the same way of development as western countries have already made in order to become a part of the world community and avoid the isolation of the country or, what is more, even the intervention of western countries in their policy. In this respect, it is necessary to underline that supporters of Dependency theory argue that western countries impose their politics and their rules to developing countries forcing them to accept western standards and norms, while any disobedience from the part of developing countries threatens by economic sanctions or even military intervention from the part of developed countries (Schelkle, 231).

In such a way, unlike Modernization theory, Dependency theory does not view the choice in favor of western way of development as the panacea from all problems or as a conscious choice that is really supported by the population and elite of developing countries but such westernization of developing countries is viewed as a violent interference of developed countries in the life of the Third world. Naturally, such a policy leads to the growing dependence of developing countries on developed ones and, therefore, makes the socio-economic breakthrough impossible. In contrast, Modernization theory believes in its possibility due to the modernization of socio-economic and political life of developing countries and their closer cooperation with developed countries, which is supposed to be a conscious and willing act of developing countries looking for ways to prosperity.

#### Conclusion

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Thus, taking into account all above mentioned, it is possible to conclude that Modernization theory and Dependency theory are similar in their views on the modern world. To put it more precisely, both theories admit the leadership of western countries and their currently dominant position in the modern world, while undeveloped countries are characterized by socio-economic and political backwardness. At the same time, the two theories agree that the cooperation between western countries and developing countries is constantly growing and leads to their integration.

However, it is necessary to underline that Modernization theory views such cooperation and integration as a conscious and voluntary act from the part of developing countries, for which modernization in the western style is the only way to overcome the existing backwardness, while supporters of Dependency theory argue that such cooperation and integration is imposed to developing countries by more advanced western countries, which simply attempt to benefit from their cooperation with developing countries and their westernization becomes a way of the establishment of control over and growing dependence of developing countries on developed ones.

Regardless, the existing differences, both theories still raise a very important problem of relationships between developed and developing countries and the dominance of western countries and western civilization in the modern world.