



Classical Schools of Development

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ABSTRACT

The post-independence period marked a critical turning point in the development trajectory of many countries, raising fundamental questions about how to achieve sustainable development and overcome structural challenges. In this context, several schools of thought and theories emerged, seeking to explain the underlying causes of these countries' continued underdevelopment and offering solutions for achieving progress. These schools range from those that view development as possible by emulating the path of advanced Western countries to those that focus on global and historical structural factors as the primary causes of continued dependency and underdevelopment. This research aims to review and analyze the classical schools of development, which include the dominant school (modernization theory), the neocolonial school, the dependency school, and finally the world system school. The research will address the main trends within each school, their basic concepts, their interrelationships, and the criticisms directed at them. It will also shed light on the concepts used to explain the situation of post-independence countries and suggest how these countries can deal with the legacy they inherited from the pre-independence period. Through this analysis, we seek to gain a deeper understanding of the development challenges facing emerging countries and ways to address them from a comprehensive perspective

INTRODUCTION

After many countries gained political independence, several schools of thought emerged that attempted to explain the persistence of development challenges in these countries and how to achieve progress. These schools offered varying analyses of the causes and solutions, and can be broadly classified into the following trends: The Mainstream School, also known as modernization theory (Smith, 2020), emerged significantly after World War II and the period of political independence for many countries. This school believes that developing countries can achieve development by following the path taken by advanced Western countries. It calls for adopting Western models in economics and society.

The Neocolonial School is part of a critical movement that rejects mainstream interpretations (Johnson, 2018). It arose in the context of analyzing the persistence of foreign domination after countries gained formal independence. It believes that political independence did not end dependence on former colonial states and major powers, but rather transformed into a new form of domination known as neocolonialism. Another school, the Dependency School, emerged in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s and is considered a development and deepening of neocolonialism concepts (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). This theory asserts that the growth of developed countries (the core) occurred at the expense of the underdevelopment of developing countries (the periphery).

Also, there is the World-System School, which is considered an extension and deepening of dependency theory, developed primarily by Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1974). This school analyzes development and underdevelopment not at the level of individual countries, but within the context of a single, integrated global system (the world capitalist system) that emerged in the sixteenth century. These four schools offer different interpretations of the situation of countries after political independence. The dominant school believes that economic and social development will inevitably lead to political change.

This change is usually viewed as progressive, toward more modern, stable, and possibly democratic forms. The neocolonial school views that political independence did not end dependency on former colonial states and major powers, but rather transformed into a new form of domination known as neocolonialism. This domination relies not on direct military control, but rather on indirect economic, political, and cultural tools. The Dependency School does not view underdevelopment as a temporary condition or a result of internal factors, but rather as a historical product of unequal relations within the global capitalist system. This theory asserts that the growth of developed countries (the core) occurred at the expense of the underdevelopment of developing countries (the periphery).

The World-System School analyzes development and underdevelopment not at the level of individual countries, but within the context of a single, integrated global system (the global capitalist system) that emerged in the sixteenth century. This system is divided into three main regions: (the core, the periphery, and the semi-periphery). In this system, the advanced capitalist

countries control high-value-added production (advanced industries, technology, and financial services) (Wallerstein, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of development and underdevelopment in post-independence countries is a field rich in theoretical debates and empirical analyses. This field has witnessed the emergence of major schools of thought that offer different frameworks to explain these complex phenomena.

1. *The Dominant School*: Also known as (Modernization Theory), the dominant school, also known as modernization theory, is the starting point of development literature after World War II and the period of political independence. This school assumes that developing countries can achieve development by emulating the path taken by advanced Western countries. Pioneers of this school, such as Walt Rostow (1960) in "The Stages of Economic Growth," emphasize that underdevelopment is the result of internal factors such as traditional values, lack of capital, and weak institutions. It advocates the adoption of Western models of economic and social development, including privatization, market liberalization, attracting foreign investment, and industrialization (Rostow, 1960). This school also links economic and social development to political transformation toward liberal democracy and stable institutions, as evidenced by the work of Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell (1966) on political development and Samuel Huntington (1968), who emphasized the importance of order and institutional strength. Despite its significant influence, this school has been criticized for being Western-centric and ignoring external factors and diversity among developing countries (Huntington, 1968).
2. *The Neo-Colonialism School*: The neo-colonialism school is considered part of the critical movement that rejected mainstream interpretations. This school emerged in the context of analyzing the persistence of foreign domination after countries achieved formal independence. The theorists of this school, led by Kwame Nkrumah (Nkrumah, 1965) in his book "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism," argue that political independence did not end dependence on former colonial states and major powers, but rather transformed into a new form of domination based on indirect economic, political, and cultural instruments (Nkrumah, 1965). This school emphasizes that domination does not rely on direct military control, but rather on invisible mechanisms that drain the resources of developing countries.
3. *The Dependency School*: The dependency school emerged in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s and represents a development and deepening of neo-colonial concepts. Dependency theorists, such as André Gunder Frank (Frank, 1967) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Cardoso, 1979), argue that the growth of developed countries (the core) has occurred at the expense of the underdevelopment of developing countries (the periphery) (Frank, 1967; Cardoso, 1979). This theory does not view underdevelopment as a temporary condition or the result of internal factors, but rather as a historical product of unequal relations within the global capitalist system. Dependency offers a

radical critique of the mainstream school, asserting that the integration of developing countries into the global economy in a manner encouraged by the mainstream is the cause of their continued dependency and underdevelopment.

4. *World-System School*: The world-system school is an extension and deepening of dependency theory, primarily developed by Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1974) in his monumental work *The Modern World-System*. This school analyzes development and underdevelopment not at the level of individual countries, but within the context of a single, integrated global system (world capitalism) that emerged in the sixteenth century (Wallerstein, 1974). This system is divided into three main regions: the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. The advanced capitalist countries (the core) control high-value-added production, while the periphery is exploited as a source of raw materials and cheap labor. This theory views the modernization promoted by the mainstream as a mechanism for integrating developing countries more deeply into this system as "peripheries" or "semi-peripheries," serving the interests of the core (Wallerstein, 1974).

These four schools form the theoretical framework upon which this research will analyze the situation of post-independence countries, providing multidimensional insights into development challenges and opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a descriptive-analytical approach to study the classical schools of development and their relationship to the post-independence situation of countries. Data will be collected through a review of the theoretical and academic literature related to these schools, focusing on the works of the pioneers of each school and the most important publications that addressed their ideas.

The methodological steps of this research include the following:

- Introduction to the classical schools: A detailed description will be provided of each of the dominant schools (modernization theory), the neocolonial school, the dependency school, and the world order school. This will include identifying the basic ideas of each school, their assumptions about development and underdevelopment, and their most important pioneers.
- Analysis of the main trends and concepts: The intellectual trends within each school will be analyzed, focusing on how they interpret development, underdevelopment, and political change. The basic concepts associated with each school will also be explored, such as "modernization," "political development," "political change," "neocolonialism," "dependency," and "center and periphery."
- Study of interrelationships and critiques: The relationship between the various schools will be analyzed, particularly how some schools emerged as critiques or extensions of others. The main criticisms leveled at each school will also be highlighted, revealing their strengths and weaknesses.

- Applying concepts to post-independence states: General and overlapping concepts used to explain the situation in post-independence states will be reviewed, such as "economic growth," "sovereignty," "state-building," and "structural reform." These concepts will be linked to the theoretical frameworks of classical schools.
- Providing guidelines for dealing with the colonial legacy: Based on the theoretical analysis, general principles and strategies will be presented for post-independence states to deal with the complex legacy they inherited from the colonial period, including building national institutions, breaking structural dependencies, and addressing social divisions.

Through this methodology, the research aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of classical schools of development and how their perspectives can contribute to a better understanding of development challenges in post-independence states and ways to address them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Mainstream School:

This school views underdevelopment as a result of factors internal to these countries, such as traditional values, an inflexible social structure, a lack of capital, weak institutions, and a lack of technology. It has proposed several solutions, such as adopting Western models of economics and society, including:

- *Privatization and market liberalization:* encouraging the role of the private sector.
- *Attracting foreign investment:* to attract capital and technology.
- *Industrialization:* Transitioning from an agricultural to an industrial economy.
- *Social and cultural modernization:* Changing values and traditions that hinder development.
- *Foreign aid:* Playing a role in bridging financing and technological gaps.

The Main Argument for Choosing the Dominant School:

It believes that development is possible by imitating the West. This assumption means that development is a process of global plans and can be replicated, as developed countries have provided a successful model and a clear path that developing countries can emulate.

The Dominant School's Relationship to Concepts (Modernization, Political Development, Political Change, Neocolonialism, Dependency, World-System Theory):

The "dominant school" of development, commonly known as modernization theory, constitutes a starting point for understanding other schools of thought that emerged later in reaction to it or as an extension of it. Let us review its relationship to the concepts I mentioned:

The dominant school and its relationship to modernization: The dominant school is itself modernization theory. This is the most direct and clear relationship. Modernization theory assumes that all societies go through linear and specific developmental stages (similar to the stages experienced by industrialized Western countries) to become "modern" (Rostow, 1960). Modernization here means the transition from a traditional society (agrarian,

traditional values, rigid social structures) to a modern society (industrial, urban, rational values, flexible and democratic social structures).

The dominant school and its relationship to political development: Political development is an integral part of modernization theory. The dominant school believes that economic and social development must be accompanied by (or lead to) certain political transformations. Like liberal democracy, Western democratic systems are often viewed as the ultimate and ideal model of political development. Economic growth is assumed to create a middle class that drives democracy. Stable institutions, where the focus is on building effective, bureaucratic political institutions (such as political parties, government bureaucracies, and justice systems) to ensure the political stability that supports growth. Political participation, where citizens are increasingly involved in the political process and develop mechanisms for expressing demands, is also important (Almond & Verba, 1963).

The dominant school and its relationship to political change: The dominant school believes that economic and social development will inevitably lead to political change. This change is usually viewed as progressive, toward more modern, stable, and possibly democratic forms. There are several mechanisms for this change, including: (Urbanization and education: These create more informed and demanding societies, the emergence of new classes: such as the industrial middle class, which may seek political participation and the disintegration of traditional structures: The weakening of the power of the tribe or extended family in favor of loyalty to the modern state).

The Mainstream School and its Relationship to Neocolonialism: In principle, the Mainstream School does not recognize the concept of neocolonialism in the sense proposed by Kwame Nkrumah or the dependency schools. The Mainstream School's perspective focuses on the internal factors of developing countries as the cause of underdevelopment.

The Mainstream School and its Relationship to Dependency: Dependency is a radical critique and direct challenge to the Mainstream School/modernization theory (Frank, 1966).

The mainstream school and its relationship to world-system theory: World-system theory is a broader and more complex development of dependency theory, and therefore also fundamentally contradicts the mainstream school.

The Perspective of World-System Theory:

It goes beyond dependency theory's focus on the binary relationship between the "center" and the "periphery" to include the "semi-periphery," examining the global capitalist system as a single unit of analysis since the sixteenth century. It views development and underdevelopment as two sides of the same coin within this global system, with the center growing at the expense of the periphery. It views the "modernization" encouraged by the mainstream as a mechanism for integrating developing countries more deeply into this system as "peripheries" or "semi-peripheries," serving the interests of the center. The dominant school views the world as individual countries developing independently, while the global system views each country as developing within

a specific global system that decisively influences its trajectory (Wallerstein, 2004).

The Mainstream School and its Relationship to Political Stability:

The mainstream school emphasizes the importance of political stability as a prerequisite for economic development. A stable political environment, characterized by strong institutions, the rule of law, and the absence of violent conflict, is considered essential for attracting investment, promoting economic growth, and facilitating the implementation of development policies. This view suggests that political stability provides the necessary conditions for long-term economic planning and the creation of a favorable climate for both domestic and foreign capital.

Criticisms of the Dominant School:

However, this school has faced numerous criticisms for being: First, Western-centric, as it assumes that the Western model is the only viable one. Second, it ignores external factors, as it does not take into account the impact of historical colonialism and the dynamics of the global system on development. It also fails to account for the great diversity among developing countries.

Concepts Used to Explain the Situation in Post-Independence States:

To understand the situation in countries that have recently gained political independence (or post-independence states), a wide range of concepts are used that reflect different perspectives on development and the challenges they face. These concepts are often linked to the schools of thought we discussed earlier (mainstream/modernization, neo-colonialism, dependency, world order). There are general and overlapping concepts such as:

- *Development*: A broad term encompassing economic growth, social change, human development (health, education), and institutional transformation.
- *Economic growth*: An increase in a country's gross domestic product (GDP), often a primary measure of development.
- *Sovereignty*: The concept of a state's complete independence from external interference, which is a persistent challenge for post-independence states in the face of neo-colonialism.
- *State-building*: The process of establishing and consolidating effective state institutions, including the military, police, judiciary, and civil administration.
- *Nation-building*: The process of creating a shared sense of identity and belonging among citizens of a country, especially in countries with diverse ethnic or religious groups.
- *Structural adjustment*: Economic programs imposed by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on developing countries in exchange for loans. These programs often involve privatization, market liberalization, and government spending cuts. They are strongly criticized by dependency theorists (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). An understanding of these concepts allows for a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities countries face in their pursuit of development after gaining political independence.

How Should Post-Independence Countries Deal with the Situation They Inherited from Their Pre-Independence Status?

Freedom from this dependency is achieved through independent national policies, self-development, and resistance to external interference.

Dealing with the post-independence legacy is one of the greatest challenges facing countries that have achieved political freedom. This legacy is often complex and includes distorted economic structures, social divisions, weak institutions, and persistent dependency. However, some general principles and strategies can be drawn:

- *Carefully assess and understand the colonial legacy:* Leaders and thinkers in post-independence states must openly and deeply acknowledge the impact of colonialism on their economic, political, social, and even psychological structures. The problem cannot be solved without understanding its roots.
- *Set priorities:* Which sectors were most affected? Was it the rentier economy, infrastructure geared toward serving the colonizer, or the ethnic/tribal divisions reinforced by colonialism?
- *Build strong and legitimate national institutions:* By redefining the state, the transition from a repressive and exploitative colonial state to a nation state that serves the interests of its citizens requires building trust between the state and its citizens.
- *Develop an efficient bureaucracy:* Free from favoritism and corruption, it is necessary to build an administrative apparatus capable of planning, implementing, and delivering public services.
- *An independent and fair judicial system:* To ensure the rule of law and the protection of rights, which is vital to attracting investment and social stability.
- *A national army and security services:* Loyalty to the state and nation, not to a class or individual, while avoiding excessive political roles.
- *Breaking structural dependency:* Moving away from a single-product economy (e.g., reliance on the export of a single raw material) and investing in manufacturing and value-added services.
- Addressing social divisions and strengthening national unity.
- *Social justice and equality:* Ensuring a fair distribution of resources and opportunities, working to narrow class and regional gaps, and pursuing comprehensive national reconciliation.
- Developing an independent and conscious foreign policy and reviewing unequal agreements and Cultural awareness and the promotion of self-identity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These four schools offer different explanations for the post-independence situation of countries. While the mainstream view is that development is possible by emulating the West, the neocolonialism, dependency, and world order schools suggest that underdevelopment is not necessarily the result of internal factors, but rather a product of global historical and economic structures that continue to drain resources from less developed countries. Understanding these

explanations helps analyze the development challenges facing post-independence countries.

The mainstream school (modernization theory) is the foundation upon which many early post-independence development policies were built, and focuses on internal growth and social and political change. The neocolonialism, dependency, and world order schools emerged as a powerful critique and rejection of the mainstream assumptions, emphasizing the role of external factors, historical and structural exploitation, and unequal relations within the global system in explaining the persistence of underdevelopment in post-independence countries (Amin, 1974).

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research needs to be carried out on the topic of Classical Schools of Development in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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