

DEPENDENCY, IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL CONFLICT THEORIES: IDENTIFICATION AND COMPARISON

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ABSTRACT

Fundamentally, this article has explored three prominent social theories' identification, implications and their comparisons. It has also focused on their characteristics and influence that take place on contemporary social science and knowledge. Basically, theory is a thoughtful and rational type of intellectual thinking or the results of such thinking. It has nicely figured out the generalized explanations of how social or political nature works or even how divine or metaphysical matters are thought to work. It has also been critically discussed and made a comparison and set up a relation among the three theories. Methodologically, this scholarship is produced using qualitative and binary comparison approach. This scholarship has put forward some new understandings. The usual economic theory of imperialism needs to be supplemented by the concepts which take into account social imperialism and imperialism by delegation. These concepts have helped us to understand social conflicts which are emerging within the Soviet bloc and between the imperialist structures including the capitalist as well as socialist powers as a whole and the dominated periphery countries.

INTRODUCTION

Theory is a contemplative and rational type of abstract or generalizing thinking, or the results of such thinking. Depending on the context, the results might for example include generalized explanations of how nature works, or even how divine or metaphysical matters are thought to work. The word has its roots in ancient Greek, but in modern use it has taken on several different related meanings. One modern group of meanings emphasizes the speculative and generalizing nature of theory. For example in the arts and philosophy, the term theoretical may be used to describe ideas and empirical phenomena which are not easily measurable. And by extension of the philosophical meaning, is also a word still used in theological contexts. As already in Aristotle's definitions, theory is very often contrasted to practice a Greek term for "doing", which is opposed to theory because pure theory involves no doing apart from itself. In modern science, the term theory refers to scientific theories, a well-confirmed type of explanation of nature, made in a way consistent with scientific method, and fulfilling the criteria required by modern science.

Such theories are described in such a way that any scientist in the field is in a position to understand and either provide empirical support (verify) or empirically contradict (falsify) it. Scientific theories are the most reliable, rigorous and comprehensive form of scientific knowledge, in contrast to more common uses of the word theory that imply that something is unproven or speculative (which is better defined by the word hypothesis). Scientific theories are also distinguished from hypotheses, which are individual empirically testable conjectures, and scientific laws, which are descriptive accounts of how nature will behave under certain conditions. Theories are analytical tools for understanding, explaining, and making predictions about a given subject matter. There are theories in many and varied fields of study, including the arts and sciences. A formal theory is syntactic in nature and is only meaningful when given a semantic component by applying it to some content (i.e. facts and relationships of the actual historical world as it is unfolding). Theories in various fields of study are expressed in natural language, but are always constructed in such a way that their general form is identical to a theory as it is expressed in the formal language of mathematical logic. Theories may be expressed mathematically, symbolically, or in common language, but are generally expected to follow principles of rational thought or logic.

DEPENDENCY THEORY

Dependency theory was established in 1950s by Raul Prebisch. Prebisch and his friends developed it in an attempt to understand why some countries in the world remained underdeveloped. There was a concern that the richer nations were prospering while poverty heightened in the underdeveloped nations (Kendall, 2010). During that time, research showed that the economic practices in the wealthy nations were instrumental in the poor countries' deterioration. These results contrasted with the neoclassical theory that had stated that economic growth benefited all the countries. According to Prebisch, the exports made by the poor countries directly benefited the rich countries since they use them as the raw materials for their industries.

Surprisingly, these rich countries export the end products to the poor countries. Consequently, the rich countries earn foreign exchange at the expense of the poor countries (Kegley, 2009). Some of them include the small internal markets in the underdeveloped countries, failure of the poor countries to make a change, and restriction of the poor countries to export their products. It is for this reason that the scholars developed the theory of dependency. Consequently, scholars developed the dependency theory in an attempt to justify the intensity of poverty in the underdeveloped countries (Pfeffer, 2003). Earlier on, the neoclassical theory condemned the poor countries, attributing their economic status to their delay in handling making important economic decisions. However, the dependency theory opposed their views with claims that poverty in these countries resulted from exploitations by the capitalists (Ghosh, 2000).

The dependency theorists argued believe that the international imperialists are instrumental in the perpetuation of dependency in the poor countries. One of these theorists is Andre Gunder Frank who asserts that further underdevelopment of the poor countries is caused by the capitalists economic practices (Daft, 2010). Dependency theory is based on the Marxist theories that explain the reasons for the international inequality. They assert that economic elites use idealism and realism ideologies in order to justify disparities among the wealthy and poor countries worldwide (Brewer, 2010). Therefore, dependency theory bases its arguments on the Marxist theories. Dependency theory argues that the developed countries use the concept of class to establish certain strategies that guard and support their needs. There are certain principles of the dependency theory that are based on the Marxist theory. First, it states that the world is segmented into certain classes based on economy rather than politics. It asserts that the economy is superior to politics. Therefore, the

theory holds that the imperialists created global state system so as to address the interests of the rich countries and organizations (Johnson, 2009). This explains the ongoing poverty in the poor countries, and prosperity in the wealthy nations. The rich and the poor countries form vital parts of the world system. That is the rich countries are that the central rich nations that possess and prosper from the natural resources (John, 2007). On the other hand, the poor countries give the majority of the human and natural resources that the rich nations exploit. Therefore, the rich nations take advantage of the poor countries' resources in furthering their economic activities. As a result, the economic gap between these countries widens. Additionally, the theory argues the global economic laws perpetuate the international inequality. For instance, one of these influential laws is the World Trade Organization (Ritzer, 2003).

DEPENDENCY THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The dependency theory and the other Marxist theories try to explore ways of addressing the issue of international economic difference. One of these ways is involves the efforts to bring change among themselves. They should make viable economic decisions and policies that are capable of changing their status in a way. This means that their strategies should aim at freeing them from the economic bondage by the strong international forces. They should also champion for the reduction of the wealthy countries' control on their economic activities. For example, they should seek ways of breaking the import barriers in the case of the import substitution. Although Frank is not the initiator of the underdevelopment theory, he made it very popular (Bardach, 1998). He borrowed a lot of Paul Baran's work. He believes that capitalism is caused by underdevelopment in the developing countries in the world.

There are certain reasons that led to the uneven development in these countries. Furthermore, Frank maintained that the increase in the imperialism in Europe is influential in transforming the world into one global system. He further explains the extent to which these capitalists had gained access to the Latin America. Subsequently, this has a negative impact on the country's economy. This, in turn, results in uneven development across the nations. For instance, there are some places that we realize positive development while others record underdevelopment. This happens because the world system consists of the metro-polis satellite relations. These relations are used by the satellite but not committed to the satellite. Using the examples of Chile and Brazil, Frank explains that Chile had an experience of monopoly of imperialists' structure (Martin, 2002). As a result, these metropolis relations facilitate a stronger bond between the capitalists and the metropolises to their respective centers. It also

extends the capitalists rule to the businessmen, stockholders and the tenants. In Brazil, Frank had the same ideas on the effect of capitalism in the country. He explains the transmission of these capitalistic effects from the merchants to the tenants.

Additionally, Frank elaborates on the involvement of the monopolistic system in the countries. According to him, this system involves the poor usage and wastage of a country's resources in the system (Chilcote, 2003). The unequal expropriation and appropriations lead to the development and the underdevelopment of the countries; hence the difference in the economic status. Imperatively, Frank elaborated on the operations of the satellites and their effects on the world system. First, he explains that the political, social, and cultural aspects are linked to the metropolis. Secondly, establishes that a metropolis is having dependent progress. Thirdly, there are weak bonds between the satellites and the metropolis. The fourth idea is that strengthening of these links might result in further underdevelopment of the metropolises. Nevertheless, Frank opposed the notion that underdeveloped world had more than one economies; the current and the ancient economies. He explains that capitalism had deepened its roots in Latin America. Though these countries seemed to be doing well economically, there was a decrease in the performance of the export industries. For example, there was a decline in the productivity of the sugar company in Brazilian North-East (Petrella, 2003). This collapse was as a result of weak ties between the metropolises. Therefore, anything that looked like feudal characteristics results from underdeveloped imperialism.

There are certain criticisms of the dependency theory by certain scholars. Just like any other theory, dependency theory has its share of strengths and weaknesses. To start with, dependency theory has the following strengths. Firstly, the theory analyses the inequality existing between the poor and the rich countries. Moreover, the theory breaks some political bonds and explains reasons why the wealthy nations are taking advantage of the poor countries (Doukhan, 2003). Also, dependency theory dismisses the neoclassical theory's claim that the existing global inequality is caused by the poor countries' laziness. Instead, it argues in favor of these underdeveloped countries and blames the imperialists.

On the contrary, certain scholars argue that the theory has some limitations. One of the weaknesses concerns the theorist, over-generalization and over simplification. Explicitly, Frank should have investigated other parts of the world other than Latin American situation. In such a situation, it is essential different parts of the world, for example, the African countries and Asia (Martin, 2002). Therefore, his ideas are not realistic in that he used a few examples in his arguments. Another weakness of the dependency theory is that does not explain other factors that lead to underdevelopment other than the role played by the wealthy

nations. The terms “core” and “periphery” are different from the terms “traditional” and “modern”.

Additionally, dependency theory is weak in that Frank failed in his attempt to provide solutions to the situation. His suggestions were very unrealistic and over-ambitious. Moreover, these solutions created certain dependencies among themselves. For example, it was impossible for Cuba to disentangle itself from the economic dominion with the USA (Willer, 1999). Furthermore, Frank attempted to prove that the imperialism is the major cause of the economic difference. Instead, he bases arguments on unrealistic perceptions. In addition; the theory is weak in that Frank failed to consider all class relations in his ideas. He also misinterpreted the Marxist's concepts. Frank only addresses market relations.

Some critics also challenge the theory by maintaining that it will cause corruption; with the higher markets and the other markets. Corruption is quite intense in the government industries than in than in others. It also causes lack of competition in the industries of both wealthy and poor countries. The completion is as a result of the restriction of imports to the poor countries, and subsidization of inducements. Finally, dependence theory encompasses certain scholars such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Fernand Braudel, Giovanni Arrigi, Samir Amin, Hans Singer, Frank Gunder and Raul Prebisch. So, dependency theory is influential in explaining the international inequality in terms of economy. Dependence theory asserts that the disparity is a resultant of the imperialism by the powerful and wealthy nations in the world. Therefore, they take advantage of the poor countries, hence widening the gap between them.

However, there are a lot of criticisms on the theory that display more weaknesses than the strengths. Therefore, this theory may not be suitable in the explaining global inequality.

THEORY OF IMPERIALISM

The concept of the imperialist world system in today's predominant sense of the extreme economic exploitation of periphery by center, creating a widening gap between rich and poor countries had its genesis in the 1950s, especially with the publication fifty years ago of Paul Baran's "*Political Economy of Growth*". While acknowledging that traces of such a concept could be found in Marx and Lenin, he feels that "The classical Marxist approach to the worldwide spread of capitalist relations has often been characterized as a crude theory of linear stages of development" whereby the less developed countries would necessarily traverse the same path as

the more developed ones. Among the adherents to this view Foster includes Marxists in the Second and Third Internationals.

The Bolsheviks' Conception of Imperialism is that Marxist anti-imperialism, worldwide, virtually was born with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Russian proletariat seized power in an imperialist country, and was immediately confronted by the armies of the imperialist powers. Thus the Bolsheviks viewed their revolution as forcing the *first breach* in the fortress of imperialism. But further, they proclaimed their "firm determination to wrest mankind from the clutches of finance capital" and insisted on "a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilization, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries" ("Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People," January 16, 1918). This stance gave enormous impetus to anti-imperialist movements worldwide and thus dealt a great blow to imperialism. Moreover, the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War demonstrated that imperialist armies could be defeated by an oppressed people. The reverberations of the Bolshevik Revolution were felt in the May Fourth Movement in China (1919), the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation in India (1919), and the revolt in Iraq (1920), to take just three examples.

In Lenin's keen dialectical view, imperialism did play a dual role in the colonies and dependent countries, but that role was not as the linear-stage theorists would have it one of dissolving the earlier social basis there and initiating capitalist development as such. Rather, it was, on the one hand, of despoiling and plundering these countries, and, on the other, of drawing them into international politics, and thus hastening the independent activity of their peoples in the fight to overthrow international imperialism. By 1919, he characterized the approach of the world revolution as one in which "the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. Few crops and new systems of irrigation are introduced in place of those destroyed by colonial policy, in order to widen the raw material base for imperialism. While agricultural production is geared toward export, Mineral wealth is exploited for the needs of the metropolis. Colonial production does not carry out all the stages of manufacture, but is limited to individual branches of industry. Real industrialization, in particular the building of a flourishing engineering industry which might make possible independent development, is hindered by the metropolis.

THEORY OF IMPERIALISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In terms of the total system, these the dominant classes in the most advanced capitalist countries are the classes which have the power of initiative. The behavior of other classes including the subordinate classes in the dominant countries as well as both the dominant and the subordinate classes in the subordinate countries is primarily reactive. One of the most important tasks of a theory of imperialism is therefore to analyze the composition and interests of the dominant classes in the dominant countries. one can no longer today speak of either industrialists or bankers as the leading echelon of the dominant capitalist classes. The big monopolistic corporations, which were formed and in their early years controlled by bankers, proved to be enormously profitable and in due course, through paying off their debts and plowing back their earnings, achieved financial independence and indeed in many cases acquired substantial control over banks and other financial institutions. These giant corporations are the basic units of monopoly capitalism in its present stage; their (big) owners and functionaries constitute the leading echelon of the ruling class.

It is through analyzing these corporate giants and their interests that we can best comprehend the functioning of imperialism today. Foreign imperialism, imposed on the eastern peoples, prevented them from developing socially and economically side by side with their fellows in Europe and America. Owing to the imperialist policy of preventing industrial development in the colonies, a proletarian class, in the strict sense of the word, could not come into existence here until recently. The indigenous craft industries were destroyed to make room for the products of the centralized industries in the imperialistic countries consequently a majority of the population was driven to the land to produce food grains and raw materials for export to foreign lands. Foreign domination has obstructed the free development of the social forces; therefore its overthrow is the first step towards a revolution in the colonies.

The Comintern's views were most elaborately expressed in 1928 in its Sixth Congress "Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies. While the colonies suffer pains similar to those of early capitalist development, they experience none of the progressive results. Whereas capitalist development develops productive forces, colonial forms of capitalist exploitation transfer surplus value to the metropolis and hinder the development of productive forces. There is a limited development of production (not productive forces) in the colonies, to the extent required by the metropolis. Infrastructure is created for the same purpose. The colonial country is compelled to sacrifice the interests of its independent development to become an appendage of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Imperialism is parasitic. The poverty of the peasantry denotes a crisis in the internal market for industry, which in turn represents a

powerful obstacle to capitalist development. Instead of the development of a national internal market, the scattered internal colonial trade is adapted to the needs of export. Baran showed how mere formal independence, in the absence of an alternative path of development, actually perpetuated the subordination of these countries to imperialism. Crucially, the adoption of such an alternative path depended on the correlation of class forces in the country.

SOCIAL CONFLICT THEORY

Social conflict theory is a Marxist-based social theory which argues that individuals and groups (social classes) within society have differing amounts of material and non-material resources (the wealthy vs. the poor) and that the more powerful groups use their power in order to exploit groups with less power. The two methods by which this exploitation is done are through brute force usually done by police and the army and economics. Earlier social conflict theorists argue that money is the mechanism which creates social disorder. The theory further states that society is created from ongoing social conflict between various groups. There are other theories of deviance, the functionalist theory, the control theory and the strain theory. It also refers to various types of positive social interaction that may occur within social relationships. A homeless consider paying rent towards housing. The conflict theorist argues that this relationship is unequal and favors the owners. Renters may pay rent for 50 years and still gain absolutely no right or economic interest with the property. It is this type of relationship which the conflict theorist will use to show that social relationships are about power and exploitation.

Padgitt continues, Marx argued that through a dialectic process, social evolution was directed by the result of class conflict. Marxism argues that human history is all about this conflict, a result of the strong rich exploiting the poor weak. From such a perspective, money is made through the exploitation of the worker. It is argued thus, that in order for a factory owner to make money, he must pay his workers less than they deserve. Thus, the social conflict theory states that groups within a capitalist society tend to interact in a destructive way that allows no mutual benefit and little cooperation. The solution Marxism proposes to this problem is that of a workers' revolution to break the political and economic domination of the capitalist class with the aim of reorganizing society along lines of collective ownership and mass democratic control. According to Karl Marx in all stratified societies, there are two major social groups, a ruling class and a subject class. The ruling class derives its power from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there is a

basic conflict of interest between the two classes. The various institutions of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. Marx believed that western society developed through four main epochs-primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and capitalist society.

Primitive communism is represented by the societies of pre-history and provides the only example of the classless society. From then all societies are divided into two major classes master and slaves in ancient society, lords and serfs in feudal society and capitalist and wage labourers in capitalist society. Weber sees class in economic terms. He argues that classes develop in market economies in which individuals compete for economic gain. He defines a class as a group of individuals who share a similar position in market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus a person's class situation is basically his market situation. Those who share a similar class situation also share similar life chances. Their economic position will directly affect their chances of obtaining those things defined as desirable in their society. Weber argues that the major class division is between those who own the forces of production and those who do not. He distinguished the following class grouping in capitalist society: the propertied upper class, the property less white collar workers, the petit bourgeois and the manual working class.

SOCIAL CONFLICT THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Conflict theory suggests that human behavior in social contexts results from conflicts between competing groups. Conflict theory originated with the work of Karl Marx in the mid-1800s. Marx understood human society in terms of conflict between social classes, notably the conflict in capitalist societies between those who owned the means of economic production (factory or farm owners, for example) and those who did not (the workers). Subsequent thinkers have described different versions of conflict theory; a common theme is that different social groups have unequal power, though all groups struggle for the same limited resources. Conflict theory has been used to explain diverse human behavior, such as educational practices that either sustain or challenge the status quo, cultural customs regarding the elderly, and criminal behavior.

Conflict theory emphasizes the role of coercion and power in producing social order. This perspective is derived from the works of Karl Marx, who saw society as fragmented into groups that compete for social and economic resources. Social order is maintained by domination, with power in the hands of those with the greatest political, economic, and

social resources. When consensus exists, it is attributable to people being united around common interests, often in opposition to other groups. According to conflict theory, inequality exists because those in control of a disproportionate share of society's resources actively defend their advantages. The masses are not bound to society by their shared values, but by coercion at the hands of those in power. This perspective emphasizes social control, not consensus and conformity. Groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. Those with the most resources exercise power over others with inequality and power struggles resulting. There is great attention paid to class, race, and gender in this perspective because they are seen as the grounds of the most pertinent and enduring struggles in society. Whereas most other sociological theories focus on the positive aspects of society, conflict perspective focuses on the negative, conflicted, and ever-changing nature of society. Unlike functionalists who defend the status quo, avoid social change, and believe people cooperate to effect social order, conflict theorists challenge the status quo, encourage social change (even when this means social revolution), and believe rich and powerful people force social order on the poor and the weak. Conflict theorists, for example, may interpret an "elite" board of regents raising tuition to pay for esoteric new programs that raise the prestige of a local college as self-serving rather than as beneficial for students.

Whereas American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s generally ignored the conflict perspective in favor of the functionalist, the tumultuous 1960s saw American sociologists gain considerable interest in conflict theory. They also expanded Marx's idea that the key conflict in society was strictly economic. Today, conflict theorists find social conflict between any groups in which the potential for inequality exists: racial, gender, religious, political, economic, and so on. Conflict theorists note that unequal groups usually have conflicting values and agendas, causing them to compete against one another. This constant competition between groups forms the basis for the ever-changing nature of society. Critics of the conflict perspective point to its overly negative view of society. The theory ultimately attributes humanitarian efforts, altruism, democracy, civil rights, and other positive aspects of society to capitalistic designs to control the masses, not to inherent interests in preserving society and social order.

CONCLUSION

It has been critically discussed and made a comparison and set up a relation among the three theories. The usual economic theory of imperialism needs to be supplemented by concepts which take into account 'social' imperialism and imperialism by 'delegation'. These

concepts are useful in understanding conflicts which are emerging within the Soviet bloc and between the imperialist structures (including the capitalist as well as socialist powers) as a whole and the dominated periphery countries. The Soviet Union is seen as exercising a particular form of imperialism over its subordinate countries, and as fulfilling the role of a sub-imperialist center in the increased coordination between the capitalist imperial forces. Not all dependency theorists, however, are Marxist and one should clearly distinguish between dependency and a theory of imperialism. The Marxist theory of imperialism explains dominant state expansion while the dependency theory explains underdevelopment. Stated another way, Marxist theories explain the reasons why imperialism occurs, while dependency theories explain the consequences of imperialism. The difference is significant. In many respects, imperialism is, for a Marxist, part of the process by which the world is transformed and is therefore a process which accelerates the communist revolution. Marx spoke approvingly of British colonialism in India.

Additionally, the Marxist theory of imperialism is self-liquidating, while the dependent relationship is self-perpetuating. The end of imperialism in the Leninist framework comes about as the dominant powers go to war over a rapidly shrinking number of exploitable opportunities. World War I was, for Lenin, the classic proof of this proposition. After the war was over, Britain and France took over the former German colonies. A dependency theorist rejects this proposition. A dependent relationship exists irrespective of the specific identity of the dominant state. That the dominant states may fight over the disposition of dependent territories is not in and of itself a pertinent bit of information, except that periods of fighting among dominant states afford opportunities for the dependent states to break their dependent relationships.

To a dependency theorist, the central characteristic of the global economy is the persistence of poverty throughout the entire modern period in virtually the same areas of the world, regardless of what state was in control. Finally, there are some dependency theorists who do not identify capitalism as the motor force behind a dependent relationship. The relationship is maintained by a system of power first and it does not seem as if power is only supported by capitalism. For example, the relationship between the former dependent states in the socialist bloc (the Eastern European states and Cuba, for example) closely paralleled the relationships between poor states and the advanced capitalist states. The possibility that dependency is more closely linked to disparities of power rather than to the particular characteristics of a given economic system is intriguing and consistent with the more traditional analyses of international relations, such as realism.

Of course, such conservative conflict theory is rejected by the radicals. They feel that the emphasis placed on interest groups diverts attention from how the study of social conflict is rooted more fundamentally in the economic structure of society. For example, they argue that material resources, human population and technical know-how are socially and unequally organized according to the mode of production. Capitalist forms of economic production contain the elements of a conflict between a capitalist class (which controls the mode of production), and a laboring class (which must sell its labour in order to survive). All other social relations are dependent on this - including law and social control. Hence, Marxian criminologists (including the later work of Quinney himself) have attempted to understand the relationship between crimes, social control, and the structured inequalities of capitalist societies. As a result, pluralistic conflict theories are said to fail to adequately examine the historically based structural context in which power struggles occur. They imply that the human struggle for power inevitably results in the universal triumph of the mighty and the perpetual divinization of the powerless. This involves little more than a description of the way in which contemporary social life is hierarchically structured - equating the way things are with the way things naturally have to be. Yet, structures are themselves historical creations. They do not exist naturally but are produced and reproduced by the concrete struggles of people in history. This awareness is what separates the critical (Marxist) perspective from the more limited confines of pluralistic conflict theory. Critical theorists recognize that under certain, historically structured conditions, power relations can be those of reciprocity rather than domination.

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