

MODERNIZATION THEORY

By

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Introduction

- Modernization basically refers to, modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from the seventeenth century onwards.
- and which subsequently became more worldwide in their influence, (Giddens, 1991).
- It presents a functionalist approach, i.e. every activity contributes to development of society.
- The ability to be modern as something desirable.
- It is a process of change in areas of human development,
- i.e. Transformation of whole society but not sections of it in a positive direction. Touches all institutions in a community.

CONT'D

- Defined by some people as industrialisation or economic development.
- It involves people's increasing capacity to control social and natural environment.
- Involves total transformation of all aspects of human lives, i.e. from changes in personality to how you relate to external or international interaction.
- Others see it as extent to which larger proportion of population have or are able to acquire characteristics associated with success in modern industries,
- seen as series of transitions or changes from primitive economic to technological intensive industrial society.

PARTS

- The theory of modernization normally consists of three parts:
- **(1)** identification of types of societies, and explanation of how those designated as modernized;
- **(2)** specification of how societies become modernized, comparing factors that are more or less conducive to transformation;
- and **(3)** generalizations about how the parts of a modernized society fit together, involving comparisons of stages of modernisation
- and types of modernised societies with clarity about prospects for further modernization.

THE PROCESS

- Developing countries with traditional societies could evolve by starting in a stage which is undeveloped and traditional
- and through an evolutionary linear process change its society by rationalizing it, becoming a country in a stage with a modern and developed society.
- The theory identified different stages, variables and process through which a society develops.
- According to Huntington (1967) the process of modernisation is characterised as:

CONT'D

- REVOLUTIONARY (dramatic shift from tradition to modern)
- COMPLEX (MULTIPLE CAUSES)
- SYSTEMATIC
- GLOBAL(affecting all societies)
- PHASED (advanced through stages)
- HOMOGENIZING(convergence)
- IRREVERSIBLE AND PROGRESSIVE

STAGES

- Positivist evolution implied that all societies would pass through the same set of stages that the western society had passed: from a traditional to modern society.
- The modernization stages were :
 - 1) the traditional society
 - 2) precondition for take-off,
 - 3) take-off,
 - 4) the drive to maturity,
 - and 5) the age of high mass consumption.
- These five stages of modernization were known as Rostow's stage theory (Rostow 1960).

MODERNISATION AND EDUCATION

- Education was viewed as a catalyst to creating modern individuals.
- Further, argue – creation of modern values is as a result of human planning
- And that particular institutions are of great importance for their emergence.
- E.g. the socialization which takes place in families, school and factories
- Hence, studies have shown that education and factory employment are directly related to the acquisition of modern values.
- modernisation theory is based on the notion that there is a direct causal link between 5 sets of variables known as **MAOZEDONG**:

CONT'D

- **Modernising institutions- Modern values-Modern behaviour-Modern society-Economic development.**
- 1st two sets of variables-well established in research.
- links between the others are more problematic
- e.g. recent research has shown that developing countries with the higher exposures to western media do not manifest higher levels of modern values or indeed economic development.
- clearly, modernisation has resulted in the world's educational systems.
- e.g. schooling as a public responsibility, as compulsory, as structured, both in terms of students progression and teacher certification.

MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Inkeles and his followers argue that:
- To modernise is to develop
- Technology played a key role in this development theory because it was believed that if technology was developed and introduced to less developed countries, it would spur growth.
- Modernisation theory, problems that held back the industrialisation of poor countries were related to the ‘irrational’ way in which resources were allocated in a traditional society.
- Traditional societies became modern rationalisation resource allocation, and by the elimination of cultural, institutional and organizational roadblocks that did not allow countries to develop.

CONT'D

- One key factor in modernization theory is belief that development requires assistance of developed countries aid; developing countries to learn from their development.
- In addition, it was believed that the less developed countries would develop and grow faster than developed countries to be reached between the developed and lesser developed countries.
- And that the society cannot hope to develop until the majority of its population holds modern values.

CRITICISMS/WEAKNESSES/LIMITATIONS.

- 1ST concerns the causal linkage between variables
- 2nd the underlying assumption of modernisation-that
- That modern attitudes and values are incomplete with traditional ones
- E.g. case of Japan- traditional forms of labour-contributed to economic growth
- While the same commitments-seen to be impediment in the west
- 3^{rdly} –assumes modern values and behaviour by individuals necessarily lead to socioeconomic development at societal level.
- However, Portes (1973) and others argue that this causal linkage does not necessarily hold.
- Because a society is not simply the sum of the individuals within it. E.g. the emigration of professionals from less-developed countries is a form behaviour

CONT'D

- But could not be said with any certainty to contribute to structural and economic development in those countries (Portes, 1973)
- 4th – its assumptions about the end-point of the modernising process is ideologically biased and ethnocentric.(Eurocentric)
- E.g. in terms of the criteria used to measure modernisation
- For a society to become modern, it must also become western (Hoogvelt, 1976)

Conclusion:

- From the industrial revolution, there were recurrent arguments that a different types of society had been created,
- that other societies were either to be left permanently behind or to find a way to achieve a similar transformation,
- and that not all modernising societies had equal success in sustaining the process due to differences in economic, political, and other institutions.
- In the middle of the 1950s, these themes acquired new social science and political casting with the claim of increased rigor in analysis.