

Today's World: Can Modernisation Theory Still Explain It Convincingly?

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ABSTRACT Too often Modernisation theory is skewed in analyses that juxtaposes it with Dependency theory in explaining dilemmas of the Third World. This paper analyses the contesting views and harmonious views on Modernisation theory only. The literature accessed demonstrates that the theory fails to convincingly explain today's world. The theory now needs to be more placed in multi-disciplinary studies to play a more balancing role in explaining the state of the world today. The criticism studied expose the flaws of this popular theory rendering it inadequate as a convincing explanation of today's world. The theory continues to remain popular in historical terms as it simply sounds a building block for globalisations.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the researcher provides the main features of the modernisation theory, provides a summarized version of today's world and critically looks at how the theory attempts and fails to explain today's world. In the last part the researcher clearly adopts a stance in which he defends his conviction that modernisation theory has its strengths and limitations, in providing a convincing explanation of today's world.

1. MODERNISATION THEORY

Modernisation theory evolved in the 1950s largely as an intellectual response to events of the World War II. Moore (1963) states that by then the theory was more interested in the changes taking place in Third World societies and tried to understand these changes as a process of modernisation. Green (2008) points out that modernisation is a change process in which societies evolve from being traditional to modern ones. Kruger (2008: 5) notes that modernisation theory focuses on single developing societies or nations stressing the prevalence of central concepts such as tradition, modernity and backwardness. Kruger (2008: 5) argues that modernisation theory explains lack of development on the part of developing nations on the basis of internal factors particularly low productivity. She further summarizes that modernisation recommends collaboration with the West, belonging to the

global capitalist economy, coopting "modern" institutional structures and western values on the part of developing nations. Kreutzmann (1998) and Green (2008) state that modernisation theory suggests a global development model courtesy of the USA and partner nations which the rest of the world should implement, to be able to attain similar high levels of modernisation. Kreutzmann (1998: 256) says this led to a decade characterised by "the unequivocal belief in solving problems of underdevelopment by applying growth-oriented strategies".

Green (2008) concludes that at the heart of Modernisation theory lies the controversial notion that economic development is only achievable by mimicking the western inspired models. He further argues that for Rostow (1960) modernisation theory was not just interested in the economic and politics, but also socially embedded considerations that would support economic boom such as welfare, and education. Thus he put it as "most profound economic changes are viewed as the consequence of non-economic human motives and aspirations" (Rostow 1960: 2). Central to understanding modernisation is acknowledging that a complete change is expected of traditional or pre-modern society into embracing the attitudes, characteristics and practices the West has cherished for centuries (Moore 1963: 89; Learner 1968 cited in Kruger 2008:3). One may interpret this as amounting to the illusion that although societies of the Western World are more advanced than those of the

Third World and that these will eventually develop so as to appear like those of the West. Rostow (1970) and Parsons (1973) and McClelland (1962) attempted to explain the differential levels of social and technological attainment between societies. McClelland (1973) (cited in Etzioni-Halevy 1981) attributes this difference to the level of what he called need for achievement (n ach) personality traits namely, willingness to take risks and start new forms of enterprise, trade or industry and being open to change, assume responsibility and have the determination to achieve change. Thus McClelland's emphasis is on the individual characteristics rather than societal ones (Blackmore and Coakely 1981). Sanderson (1988: 168) remarks that such research reflects that modernisation theory views lack of development in societies as generally lack of the kind of consciousness or mentality that promotes development.

Inkles's studies the same phenomenon from a sociological perspective, focusing on attitudes, values and beliefs rather than psychological traits. He developed the modernity scale (cm scale) seeking to measure the extent to which individual members of a given society hold what are considered modern values. Inkles and his fellows contend that to modernize is to develop. Thus socio-economic development can only occur when the majority of population is socialized into modern attitudes, values and beliefs through social institutions such as the family, school and factory (Inkles and Smith 1974). Modernisation theory in this context was thus argued along modernizing institutions, modern values, modern behaviour, modern society, and economic development as connected in one way or the other. For a society to be modernized, it should move from being a traditional one to a modern society (Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 38; Webster 1990: 49-50).

It may be argued that as a paradigm modernisation believes in the universality and linearity of the change from traditional modes of existence to modern ones, along the same route the West have followed in the past. The abandoning of traditional values and institutions and harmony with the West is a pre-requisite for development (Kruger 2008: 3). Dobb (1963) concurs that the theory proposes that all in pre-modern societies need to grasp the values. Attitudes and characteristics typical of the West to attain desired levels of development.

An analysis of the traditional and modern societies shows clear features idiosyncratic of each. An understanding of these features helps us in some way as stated earlier on that modernisation entails shifting from a traditional society to a modern society. In this case one may note that this implies that traditional societies (not modernized) have features such as a dominant value of traditionalism, implying that its members of the society are among other conditions unable to adapt to new conditions (Webster 1990: 38). The stress in this type of society is on immediate gratification (affectively) and does not lead to disciplined exertion or to affective planning for the future; instead, it encourages current consumption (Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 38). Another feature is that legal, social, economic and political relationships are heavily influenced by a kinship system with individual positions (strata) are ascribed not achieved (Webster 1990: 50). Etzioni-Halevy (1981: 38) contends that the family that dominates the social scene and local communities are small and intimate with stress on all encompassing (diffuse) relationships, the common goals of the family or the community (collectivism), and personal relations as criteria for the allocation of benefits (particularism). A third main feature of the traditional society is that members of the society still believe in superstition, fatalism and that things are as they were created and they do not exercise any control over the world (Webster 1990: 50).

Kruger (2008: 3) says that in this paradigm, Africa, Asia, and Latin America lack development as they are characterised by the prevalence of outdated institutions, immature partitions of labour, and the non-existence of consumption of their own resources, overpopulation, non-democratic structures, and the predominance of rite, rituals, and primitive customs. The researcher argues here that this theory is now in danger as more and more poor nations realize that modernisation seemed a movement that opened their nations to further exploitation, by accepting the grip of capitalism. As the traditional fabric of their social, economic and political spheres continued to be too accommodative, they allowed for ruthless exploitation of their natural resources by the rich nations. Authorities believe such a situation does not lead to modernisation. It is according to this theory that a society can only be considered as modern, when the following features have emerged

or when the society is characterized by the following features: Affective neutrality, the willingness to renounce immediate gratification especially in the middle class where it promotes individual success as well as saving, re-investment, and economic growth, kinship is less dominant, fewer small communities with larger and more complex social structures (Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 38).

In a modern society, emphasis is on specific segment relationships on the advancement of individual goals (individualism) and allocation of benefits by objective (universalistic) criteria. Society is more open giving greater scope of achievement which ascription serves mainly as a springboard for such achievement (Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 38). It may be concluded then that from the views expressed so far that the Anglo-Saxon (US and UK) act as the centres of global development and exemplary to all nations yet to develop (Kruger 2008: 3).

2. ROSTOW'S THEORY

Modernisation has generally been viewed a five-stage continuum through which nations should pass through in their economic development (Rostow (1960: 6). This theory has an economic bias as the theorist assumes the development of the economy has implications for socio-political development.

Rostow (1960) identified three stages through which economic development or modernisation may be achieved. These may be presented as the traditional; the take-off; preconditions for take-off stage ; take-off stage; drive to maturity and the stage of high mass consumption stage (Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 36-37).

The Traditional Stage - This stage is the initial, stable and mainly agricultural society (Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 36). This stage characterizes several societies from Stone Age to just before the French Revolution, the Newtonian science and technology, and a rigidly ascriptive social structure based on kinship. He characterizes the initial stage consisting of absence of modern technology and modern attitudes towards the real world and argues that a series of stages has to be passed through to attain the stage of development (high mass consumption). While it persists, substantial economic development is unlikely (Etzioni-Halevy 1982: 36). The level of technological knowledge was so low that it lim-

ited per capita growth (Bloomstrom and Hettne 1984: 13). Huntington (1976: 31) like Parsons argues that as a transformative process, modernisation merely centralizes "tradition" and "modernity" as loss of traditional values is apparent for modernity to be attained. This leaves one to conclude that modernisation is development and requires a total break from the traditional, thus requiring that anything "traditional" be discarded in the process.

The Preconditions for Take-off Stage - This is often triggered by outside forces although Rostow (1960) did not really say so. This stage is characterized by a change of ideas and attitudes towards economic progress on the part of society, the emergency of an enterprising elite willing to take risks in pursuit of profits and reinvest a high proportion of that profit in production, a rapid increase in agricultural production, a more effective infrastructure, the emergency of a new mentality and a new class-the entrepreneurs (Preston 2002: 175; Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 36; Bloomstrom and Hettne 1984: 13). Other features worth stating are that in economic matters, increase in trade, services and the beginning of industry (for example, mining) augment agriculture. The economy becomes less self-sufficient and localized as trade and improved communications facilitate the growth of national and international economies.

The Economic Take-off Stage - This stage takes two to three decades to bring about a dramatic increase in the state of involvement so that per capita rises, there is drastic change in methods of production, investment and re-investment ensure further productive investment (Preston 2002: 175; Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 37). Bloomstrom and Hettne (1984:13) estimate that the national income may rise from 5 percent to 10 percent or more and the process of industrialization with other sectors assuming a leading role and modern technology spread to other sectors. One may comfortably say that for this stage to bloom, political and social institutions are pushed to allow the pursuit of growth to take root. In an effort to authenticate this stage quantitatively and qualitatively, Rostow (1960) gave the take-off some of today's leading developed (modernized) countries such as Britain 1783-1803; Russia 1890-1914; Japan 1873-1900; USA 1783-1803, India and China 1950 onwards (Rostow 1973: 289).

Drive to Maturity Stage - This stage on the modernisation process is the period of consolidation-with modern science and technology being extended to most branches of the economy, thus increasing the range of leading sectors. Political and social reform continue and the economy finds "its feet" internationally and the rate of investment remains high (about 10 percent - 20 percent of national income) (Rostow 1973: 290).

The Stage of High Mass Consumption - Rostow (1970:290) says that this stage involves further consolidation and advance. Wealth is concentrated in individual consumption as in the USA and Britain, wealth is channeled into welfare states as in Western Europe and wealth can be to build up to a global power and influence as typical of the former USSR and even present USA. This leaves other writers such as Tipps (1976: 81) view modernisation as an Americanization or an Europeanization process because the developed nations are capable of dictating the criteria for development by use and abuse of economic and ideological muscles.

Although Rostow explains modernisation in terms of these five stages, the underlying fact is that he sees modernisation as evolutionists in the socio-economic change unfolds through a fixed set of stages ranging from traditional to modern. It is unilinear implying that all countries must pass through the same route in the same order. It is internalist and recapitulations in that society transforms only from within and that underdeveloped countries today have to follow precisely the same basic path as did the now developed countries. Neo-evolutionism enables us to understand the modernisation theory.

According to Parsons, social evolution proceeds through the successive differentiation of social sub-system. First the political, culture and judicial sub-system gradually become distinct and autonomous. Modernisation occurs when the economy, and the technology on which it is based, become fully differentiated and autonomous from other parts of society (Preston 2002: 175; Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 39). For both Parsons and Smelser, modernisation entails an evolutionary transition from pre-modern state to modern. Thus transition for both Parsons and Smelser is beset with disturbances which are counteracted to bring stability to society. Both Parsons and Smelser view the pre-modern society as having economic activities embedded in the social ma-

trix of kinship and status systems and impeded by other commitments. The family is concerned with production and consumption, socialization education, religious and political activities (Preston 2002: 175; Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 39; Hoogvelt 1978: 58). For both Parsons and Smelser, this situation does not lead to modernisation. Only when a society has evolved into one (modern one) with the following feature do we talk of modernisation. The role of the economy, technology is autonomous, the family is no longer burdened with most of the functions of the pre-modern ones which have been over taken by formal organizations, such as schools, universities, youth movements; national, state, and local authorities assume political functions, whilst the church controls religious matters. Thus the family remains responsible for consumption and primary socialization (Preston 2002: 175; Etzioni-Halevy 1981: 39). Hoogvelt (1978: 56) puts it clearly that in pre-modern societies, and traditionally peasant communities' roles are likely to be functionally diffused, ascriptive, particularistic and effectively rewarding.

The modern economic/technological complex with its high degree of occupational specialization and the application of the principle of economic and instrumental rationality favours roles that are functionally specific, achievement oriented, universalistic and effectively neutral. Levy (1967: 207) describes modernisation as a homogenizing process along Parson's view that by course of time the developed and underdeveloped nations will increasingly resemble one another. This as patterns of modernisation are such that the more highly modernized societies become, the more they resemble one another. The emphasis of modernisation as Burger (1996: 46) views it in the internal achievement of a society; the particular processes of modernisation support each other in combination; the leading nations do not impede the followers; the processes of modernisation are converging in a common goal" (modern society, modernity).

Levy (1967: 207) maintains that modernisation has the propensity to transform primitive societies by mere interaction and other forms of intercourse that may see undeveloped societies adopting the values and practices of the North. This therefore, one may argue that most nations in the South may be under pressure and accept modernisation as irreversible and unstoppable as a process. Kruger (2008: 3) notes that for the-

orists on modernisation such as Weber, Parsons and Eisendstadt aspects such as secularization, rationalization and differentiation are glaring indicators of modernisation within the cultural domain of a developing society, whilst at the individual domain empathy, performance-orientation are supreme as viewed by theorists such as Hagen and Lerner. Theorists such as Weber, Lerner and Deutsch stress that modernisation is characterised by urbanization, social mobilization, bureaucratization, and alphabetization and population growth within the social domain of development. She lastly notes that in the domain of politics indicators put forward by theorists such as Lipset, Almond, Rokkan and Deutsch are state building, nation building, democratization and redistribution.

It would be interesting to observe as to what extent all these variables indicate how the modernisation theory remains a valid explanation of today's world. Johannessen (2009 : 6) points out that Huntington understands modernisation as a complex, systemic, global, lengthy, phased, homogenizing, irreversible, and progressive process that transforms a society from traditional to modern, through social mobilization changes in the aspirations of individuals, groups and societies; economic development involves changes in their capabilities. Modernisation requires both.

3. TODAY'S WORLD

Today's world is a product of processes recorded in the history of intercontinental and international affairs. It is common knowledge that the world is divided into the First World (Western nations), Second World nations and the Third World nations. Other divisions worth mentioning are East and West; the South and North; developed and developing nations, rich and poor countries. Toye (1983) debates the appropriateness of these terms, however for the purposes of this work, the researcher does not opt to analyse or pursue the arguments therein. May it suffice for the purpose of this work to say that today's world stands as/comprises the rich/western/developed nations and the poor/Third World/developed nations.

Although Bayer in Toye (1993: 37) express reservation on the classifications of the "Asian tigers" and other countries in that region, the writer feels the classification of the world into

these two camps: developed and developing; should give impetus to the debate in this work. Zapf (2004: 1) notes that Western nations are the modern societies that were seen as already having mechanisms of inclusion, value pluralism, differentiation and status upgrading (that is, welfare development). Also in the sense of Talcott Parsons, to the basic institutions which means basis societal inventions, namely, competitive democracy, the market economy, mass consumption, and the welfare state.

Hoogvelt (1973: 61) and Etzioni-Halevy (1981: 4) describe Western countries as characterized by the following, suggesting a high level of development today: An individualized, free market, economy with continuous economic growth as an inbuilt characteristic, large-scale bureaucratic organizations spread through almost every sphere of life, high rates of literacy, the spread of formal education and vocational training, nuclear family patterns, value system emphasizing universal values and achievement, low birth rate balanced by a low rate death rate, a reduction in inequality and increase in social mobility urbanization and secularization (that is, rationality is a prevalent behavioural norm and the influence of religion has waned). Independent judiciaries are in place and an impressive proliferation of voluntary associations, such as trade unions, charity organizations and non-governmental organizations. Political democracy in the sense of a multi-party system and the regular transfer of executive powers by means of secret ballot as opposed to coups, national unity as opposed to ethnic or denominational functionalism and the structural ability to absorb continuous change. The researchers do not hesitate to mention countries such as Britain, France, the USA; Japan, Australia, Germany, Canada and the Scandinavian nations as examples of such nations. The categorization negotiated earlier on implies that Third world countries are not characterized by features of Western countries that are summarized by Hoogvelt (1978) and Etzioni-Halevy (1981). African continent and the Pacific islands fall in the category of Third World. Mazrui (1980: 12) writing on Africa (a good example of a Third world continent) identifies three main paradoxes which characterize today's African state: the paradoxes of fragmentation, lack of development and cultural imitation.

The Paradox of Fragmentation- Africa is not the smallest of the continents but it is prob-

ably the most fragmented. It is fragment along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. In addition a continent of less than 400 million people is split up into more than 50 nations, many of them tiny (Mazrui 1980: 17). This paradox is quite appropriate as basis of analysis. This fragmentation is a clear feature of the formation of those approximately twenty three small nations making up South America and the pacific and Caribbean islands.

The Paradox of Lack of Development - Mazrui (1980) states that Africa is not the poorest of the regions of the world in resources, but it the least developed of the nations of the inhabited continents. Immense mineral wealth and agricultural potential co-exist with some of the lowest standards of living in the world. One may also note the poverty or lack of development that continues to haunt the Latin American states today despite their vast plantations. Further lack of development in Third World Countries is evidenced by the bulk of the poor people found in the neglected rural areas, where hundreds of millions of people scrape a meagre living through agriculture.

The Paradox of Cultural Imitation- Mazrui (1980) observes that African (Third World) countries are not closest to the West culturally, but have been experiencing the most rape of westernization during the century. He argues that the African state and its support institutions remains more in the service of the West, than championing the interest of the people that put it in office and unashamedly continues to emulate the later in ideology and practice. Mazrui (1980) cites the institution of the African University as basically a foreign institution, transmitting foreign culture and techniques consolidating foreign academic tradition.

4. MODERNISATION THEORY AND TODAY'S WORLD

It may be argued that modernisation theory has an impact on today's world. One may note that modernisation theory played a critical role and was very relevant in Africa's early and mid-1960s industrialisation efforts supported by American and European industries and economies (Nkrumah (1966: 85). Modernisation was quite visible through the use of western imported technology that characterize urban areas (Pearson 1992: 22). It may therefore be apparent that Modernisation with its stress on economic

development and industrialisation influenced Third World nations to embrace Modernisation (1966: 54).

However some argue that modernisation became the root cause of the industrialized North, exploiting Africa's primary products in the late 1950 and early 1960s to nourish their rapid industrialized economies (Nkrumah 1966: 84). Modernisation theory explains the prevalence of massive investment in agriculture and mining in Africa heavily funded by the Bretton Wood institutions to exploit the resources (Rodney 1972: 182-183). The sad part of this it may be pointed out was that the state in the host countries were in complicity for "tax remissions for the investments and duty exemption for imported machinery purposes" (Nkrumah 1966: 85). It may be gainsaid that the intricate relationship between modernisation and exploitation of African resources is reflected in the rise in Western nations and or firms control ownership of economies in the 1960s [over 50 percent of the national income of Congo, percent of Gabon and 40 percent of Liberia](The UN Report E/CN. 14/ 246 of 7th January 1964). Another sad effect of modernisation theory in African is that it led to the Africa State creating a suitable environment for the Western imperialism and colonialism (Nkrumah 1966: 86). Contrary reception to this was criminalised, as it threatened the gradual flow of modernisation and interference on foreign rights and interests (Rimmer 1992: 120).

Modernisation theory has problems in giving a convincing plantation of today's world. There is the contention that the variables and values of modernisation seem to be incompatible with other variables such as the constant flux of the political and the socio-economic contexts that the 'traditional' and the 'modern' fail to relate with one another in a given era (Webster 1984: 62-63). It may be argued then that the modernisation theory seems to exhibit shortcomings in threading modern values, attitudes and behaviour and the resultant development (Webster's 1984). Delacroix and Ragin (1978) and Sutchcliff (1978) contend that the link between the modernisation institutions and the modern values variables are well researched so far, but the links between the others are more problematic such as developing countries with high exposure to modern media do not necessarily manifest higher levels of modern values or indeed economic development. One may consider how

today the media has made the exchange of information easier. Western countries market their values through the media to Third World Countries. These values are either rejected or accepted but no real modernisation is noted. At the value level, modernisation theory fails to prove that in today's world socio-economic development is attained if those in developing countries adopt modern values. There is much of Western cultural imitation in Third World countries, particularly in Africa in the nature of education and education practice, socialization, language and speech habits, attire and also low as eating and habits. This has not led to development, let alone makes the African citizen look ridiculous he/she fails to exemplify a specific culture and shamefully apologizes behind the adage of cultural dynamism.

Porte (1973) points that society is not simply the sum total of individuals within it, therefore this causal link does not necessarily hold. If we revisit Mazrui's (1980) paradox of cultural imitation, we still notice that a change of values does not lead to modernisation. For several decades Third World countries have been running Universities, colleges and schools changing values in the indigenous people, but this has not led to modernisation. Third World countries are still far from being as developed as Western nations. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) maintain that Inkles and team members seem to have missed the point in saying that there is a correlation between modern values and modern behaviour. They argue that research indicates that modern institutions can lead to modern values but fail to prove that modern values can lead to modern behaviour. It would appear the change or no change of values is not as issue. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) and in Porterfield's (1967) criticism traditional values concur that the notion of modern attitudes and values are incompatible to traditional ones, is grossly erroneous. They note that traditional organizational behaviour had a hand in the economic growth of Japan whilst the same forms of behaviour proved to be a hindrance in the West.

In Africa and elsewhere the prevalence of modern values has not brought modernisation at all. Modernisation may be criticised for its insistence on the need to eliminate traditional values on the road to development on the assumption that modernity and tradition exists mutually and nurture each other in any society

(Gyekye 1997: 254). It may also be argued that that traditional values do not necessarily hinder modernisation. Japan's Samurai's value of loyalty to the emperor is famous for influencing high production and high manpower retention in Japanese firms (Bella 1957: 187).

Inglehart (1997) observes that modernisation theory has become less deterministic as it absorbs post-modern ideas, cultural diversity and aspects of tradition are seen as beneficial, rather than obstacles to development. Blackmore and Cooksey's (1989) criticism enables us to understand why modernisation theory fails to explain today's world. They point out that this theory neglects the impact of colonialism for example in Africa whilst stressing "Africa" failure to produce modern individuals with a "high need for achievement" and remaining in the bondage of its traditional values.

There is also evidence today that modernisation does not necessarily lead to the weakening of traditional values at all. Studies by Gusfield (1973) and Mair (1984) are a good testimony of how modern technology, particularly transport has made the visit to Mecca (shrine) easier for the Muslims and this has boosted Islam. Islam a traditional religion is being complimentary in economic growth and capitalist investment in the Arab world. Modernisation theory fails to make the development gap in today's world comprehensibly. The researcher finds it silent about the slave trade and colonialism, the very practice that laid the foundation stones of economic bloom for Western/First World countries. The researcher tempted to think that this theory emerged to divert people's attention from the exploitation of Third World nations, by the developed countries. Modernisation theory's neo-evolutionary basis has not been demonstrated by even one developing country.

Just how does modernisation as a process take place? One may wonder why Third World Countries have not followed Rostow's steps of modernisation with leaps of cause as the room to experiment is no longer necessary. The researcher finds the modernisation theory ridiculous in its failure to suggest alternatives and measures to be effected in the event of nations that fail to develop, even after half a century or beyond of exposure to modernisation influences and agents. The researchers do not have any data on the implications of what could happen in the event of development getting stagnant or

regressing in Western nations, within the works of the architects of modernisation and subsequent scholars and writers. One may criticize the theory for its failure to indicate its limits. There is a limit to every prescription, and modernisation as one for both that should develop and the developed seems to have no limits and run the risk of living as parallels.

Another criticism one may present here is the theory's failure to take cognizance of relations (power, economic, technological and military), the natural and capitalistic scramble for resources, conflict of interests and inequalities that may emerge between the developed and developing nations. Tiryakian (1998) points out that the modernisation theory is silent of the inherent cycles and regressive crises and sets the world into cut-throat competition between modernizers, conservatives and bystanders. Currently the African nations are suffering from the severe effects (child delinquency, street children, early parenthood, child labour neglected senior citizens) of the collapse of the nuclear and extended families which modernisation theory sought to be replaced with formal institutions such as schools, old people's homes, and money based commerce (Smelser (1964) and Rostow (1971). Haynes (2008) argues that modernisation theory fails to stress that developing nations are politically and economically diverse, implying that there are higher chances that the implementation of it could be beset with challenges.

Whilst arguments that modernisation theory is accurate in accounting for political and socio-economic development of the West, it fails to account for the same phenomenon globally (Dunn 2012: 2). It can be argued that modernisation theory holds no water in situation where other countries are developing through other routes and means. This leaves modernisation theory standing as an imposition by the West (Dunn 2012: 3; Matunhu 2011: 65).

Modernisation theory may be criticized for being a mere epistemological and cultural illusion that the West is a model, the rest of the world should emulate (Irele 1993: 3). Closely examined, modernisation is a vehicle for liberalism and European and American political and cultural imperialism tailor made for exporting western institutions to the non-western world (Zapf 2004: 2 -5). It can be argued that this is articulated through models of political development emphasizing state-and nation-building, participa-

tion, redistribution, economic growth, and social mobilization, international transformation and of late Human Rights (Berger 1996: 53).

Another scathing attack on modernisation is that it is blinded against the unending effect of colonialism. This, along with the impact of power dynamics between the North and the South that defend the colonial status quo and ensure it prevails in modified modes in the political, and socio-economic arena (Webster 1984: 62). This may be illustrated by the abundance of evidence of clashes between Southern African states and beneficiaries of colonialism and Apartheid over resources particularly land. Clashes are blamed on alleged bad governance by western media moguls such CNN and BBC and Aljazeera.

Some may argue that modernisation theory has remained the same "imperialist" ideology that ended the slave trade and forcefully overran sub-Saharan space in the enterprise of colonialism and incarcerated non-western nation into the economic bondage of the capitalist world (Irele 1993: 3). It may be argued that modernisation has had a hand in the underdevelopment of former western colonies, by deprivation of structural capacity for autonomous sustainable economic development (Irele 1993: 3). The case of India demonstrates limitations of modernisation in those countries where it has been implemented as a route to meaningful development and has not seen such nations matching the level of development of western nations.

It may be noted that although India has been a constitutional democracy since its independence has failed to attain high levels democracy associated with the West (Dunn 2013: 5). Observably India's democracy has been on a low recede since its inception (Zakaria 2003: 30). The limitations of modernisation are also well articulated within Europe rendering it incapable of explaining today's world. It may be argued that the spread of democracy as a political ideology enshrined in the modernisation theory has failed, as some countries have not been exemplary as far as democracy and good governance is concerned (Johannessen 2013). Closer links with the West is no guarantee for development, as earlier on believed that modernisation influences modernity in nations that have intercourse with the development. This may be illustrated by India's economic cooperation with the West which has seen its GDP sky-rocketing from \$37.6785 billion

in 1960 to \$1.848 trillion in 2011, yet matching the West in terms of development remains a mirage (Dunn 2013).

The rise of the Asian tigers, particularly China is challenges modernisation theory and all its tenets. Observably the state in China is repressive, democratic elections are suspect, and yet open to capitalist investment and business. It can be argued that China is currently on the world's economic powerhouses, but have not followed the stage processes of both economic and political development modernisation theory purports to prescribe. As a case China contrasts the West's modernisation process of development in the as it gets richer and more successful in terms of capitalist industrialization, the less 'modern' it gets in the structural functionalist, 'Western' sense of the term (Karbon 2008). Notably China is not in favour of liberal democracy, will not implement it and still attains high levels of development by none compliance to modernisation theoretical traits. It may be inferred that the emerging limitations of modernisation theory stem from the wane of Americanism as "the inescapable ideology and technological advancement setting pace for this planet (Gilman 2008).

It may therefore be concluded that by establishing the US model of democracy and liberal-capitalism as the end product of modernisation, modernisation theorists completely disregard alternative paths to development (Dunn 2013). Further it may be argued that the master minds of Modernisation theory were short-sighted in that they never anticipated that there could have any obstacles such as; ethnic and religious conflicts, the rise of terrorism, military regimes and economic stagnation on the road to mass consumption stage (Linklater 2010: 548). One may note that these are common features of today's world which modernisation theory may not explain at all. The presence of hybrid regimes as in Latin America, coalition/Governments of National Unity as in some parts of Africa totally negate Samuel Huntington's (1960) stages of political development (Diamond 2002: 23). The case of Islamic states (totally opposed to Western liberal thought) attaining high levels of development along with a combination of their unique models of development and reason deep-rooted in their religion may not be matching the West, but are known to be far from being less modern (Sonn 2005: 80). It may be expressed that these have

attained quick economic growth due to oil wealth, but have not yielded social mobilization claimed by modernisation theory (Johannessen 2009: 7). The basic limitations in modernisation theory's failure to explain today world lies in its total failure to acknowledge nations and may not develop to the same economic, social and political levels. It fails to concede to the possibility of industrialisation and economic development, not being the only routes to mass consumption stage (Dunn 2013: 2). Other writers have criticized modernisation theory as ideological prejudiced and tainted (liberal democratic) and ethnocentric (economic development is supreme of all) and that development is synonymous with being western (Higgot 1983: 21; Fagerlind and Saha 1989; Harrison 1988; Webster 1984).

The current wave of democracy in the world may attest to modernisation theory being still relevant today as a culmination of modernisation, rationalization/secularization of authority, bureaucracy, and political participation of citizens (Johannessen 2009: 6). Giving credibility to this perception is that democratization continues to emerge from social mobilization and economic development, the driving forces modernisation theory has upheld since the 1950s (Johannessen 2009: 6).

Although there is still the influence of modernisation in politics one should not know that modernisation falls short in this area. Whilst the economic development dimension remains central. It did not learn from other eras such as the Reformation that saw the changing landscape of the church. The argument that it supports democracy requires a deeper analysis, otherwise it still runs the risk of being parochial in assuming that democracy is a fit all jacket. Africa not wholly embraces Western democracy. Learned, radical and experienced Statesmen such as President Robert Gabriel Mugabe of Zimbabwe has mastered the hidden agenda in Western ideologies, the double bladed-ness of World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the biases in the international operations of the United Nations and the European Union and the World Health Organisation.

In some cases such leaders are totally rejecting the generalized benefits of democracy and that which is called modernisation and are looking inwards for solutions to their national challenges. The fact that currently Mugabe argues that more than 60 percent of the economic base

(mines, factories, industries, immovable assets and so forth) should be in the hands of Zimbabweans is a true reflection of an African Western educated revolutionary head of state who is conscious of the biases prevailing in the jargon and spirit of modernisation, liberal democracy, economic liberalism, Human rights. To such visionaries, there is no universality in application and interpretation in all these. The capitalist wave that modernisation theory blew into the Third World was and is still silent of who must own how much and where and in which sector. Even Rostow's (1980: 360) view that the modernisation may lead to economic equality has remained a shocking mirage as poverty disparities continue to be cause for concern. Modernisation/industrialization with a profit motive seemed to have been allowed to prevail in favour of the economies of the rich Western nations. The developing world is caught up in a web or dilemma. To refuse/refute Western influences in their economies is not possible or even worth attempting as the penalties/consequences are severe for their people, regions and politics.

One may note that today Third World nations grieve under the pressure and unchallenged power of the US\$, British pound and the comfortable Euro currency all ruthlessly defended by the IMF. When Third World policies are crafted, they are subjected to what are called international standards in which the Western nations and their allies have strong influence. Breaking from this grip will take centuries as those nations do not seem to be willing to relinquish international/global superiority in any sphere. Modernisation never intended to bring about equality of nations, but merely images and copies of the West across the world

CONCLUSION

This paper has addressed the major tenets of modernisation theory. An attempt has been made to present the state of today's world. A summary of today's world has been presented with a view to demonstrate in which ways modernisation theory explains it.

The paper concludes that modernisation theory is still relevant today in matters of democracy, democratization and good governance. Also that it has permeated into the social, economic and political spheres of developing nations, without seeking to bring equality between them and

the West but some similarities that do not challenge the economic and global superiority of the developed nations. It would be interesting to study how Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe's refute/challenge of Western control of natural resources and economic infrastructure in that country is an open challenge to modernisation, democracy and international investment policies and to what extent this has impacted on the political purpose of other Third World leaders.

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