Integral Research (Peer-reviewed, Open Access & Indexed Multidisciplinary Journal) ISSN: 3048-5991
Journal home page: https://integralresearch.in/, Vol. 01, No. 10, December. 2024

Classical and Post-Colonial Approaches to Development: A Critico-Expository Assessment

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Abstract

Over the past fifty years and beyond, the concept of development has shaped many public policies in both the industrialised "core" countries and the former colonial "periphery" countries, now known as the "less developed countries" (LDCs) of the "Third World." This notion encompasses "change" and "progress," rooted in the Enlightenment philosophers of Europe, who identified a rational foundation for ethical reasoning. Actions deemed "right" can be interpreted as promoting the "progress" of individuals and societies. Thus, "development" suggests a transformative journey towards a more "advanced" state of being for societies. Consequently, development theories aim to comprehend the mechanics of this transformative process. This paper examines various aspects of both classical and post-colonial development theories. A thorough grasp of classical theories remains beneficial for

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Received 09 Dec. 2024; Accepted 20 Dec. 2024. Available online: 30 Dec. 2024.
Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

today's international development researchers, not only for understanding the historical context of their field but also because the modernisation and dependency theories have significantly shaped contemporary discussions. Furthermore, aspects of classical theories are still relevant in today's examinations of issues like global production, identity, and democratisation. With an emphasis on important ideas, frameworks, and scholarly fields within international development, postcolonial perspectives on development relate to a continuous conversation with the developmental imagination regarding globalisation. The main features of the two traditional models of development modernisation and dependency theories—are discussed in detail in this paper. An example will illustrate how these classical models appear in today's development discourse. Following a brief introduction to postcolonial theory, the paper will explore several development practices, constructs, and academic domains with which postcolonial theory has interacted. It concludes with some succinct remarks.

Keywords: Development, Underdevelopment, Dependency, Modernization, Democratization.

Introduction

The term "development" in English suggests concepts such as "unfolding," "growth," "a more thorough exploration of the details of anything," and the emergence of latent potential within something (like an image concealed within the chemicals on traditional film that necessitates “development” to be uncovered). The understanding of development that has influenced much public policy for more than 50 years is related to all of these ideas, both in the industrialised "core" countries and in the "periphery" of former colonies that are now known as the "less developed countries" (LDCs) of the "Third World." This idea also includes notions of “change” but equally of “progress”—a concept rooted in European philosophical thought since the Enlightenment, where it provided a rational base for ethical evaluation. "Right action" can thus be perceived as fostering the “progress” of individuals and society. Therefore, the notion of “development” about societies signifies a shift towards what is conceptually a more “advanced” condition. Development theories, consequently, aim to illuminate how this transformation occurs.

However, conceptualising a change towards a more advanced (or “progressed”) condition prompts an examination of what we mean by “advance” or “progress.” The most straightforward interpretation of these concepts, which have dominated international development initiatives since 1945, is "increasing wealth", or economic growth, usually measured by GDP variations. Over the last fifty years, nation-states have increasingly prioritised GDP growth. A distinct branch of economic development economics—emerged to explain how economic growth is achieved, supported by substantial theoretical modelling and empirical investigation (Kenny & Williams, 2021). Nevertheless, some economists contend

that a separate theory for "developing economies" is unnecessary, as the fundamental principles of economics are universally applicable—and one prominent economist, Deepak Lal, published a notable pamphlet titled The Poverty of Development Economics (1983).

The idea that "development" equals "economic growth" has faced considerable critique. The most significant challenge comes from Amartya Sen, who posits that while "commodities"—central to economic growth—are valuable, their worth lies in what they enable individuals to accomplish. Sen argues that we should approach development in terms of individuals' capacities to obtain outcomes they find valuable: "The focus here is on the freedom that a person has to do this or be that—things that he or she may value doing or being" (Sen, 2019, p. 231). At the heart of this perspective is the emphasis on freedoms, including both "negative" freedoms—freedom from unwarranted coercion and the freedoms of expression, speech, association, and movement, as well as "positive" freedoms that enable individuals to truly enjoy their liberties, including the material (commodity) resources necessary for this enjoyment. Consequently, development "can be seen as expanding the real freedoms people enjoy" (Sen, 2009, p. 3).

Revisiting development as "the realisation of the potential that exists within something," we can interpret international development as establishing circumstances that enable individuals to fulfil their potential as human beings or lead meaningful lives they cherish. This concept closely aligns with what Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, articulated shortly after 1947. He emphasised the necessity "to provide every Indian with the greatest opportunity to develop himself according to his ability" (Ayodele, 2022, p.112). It seems reasonable to say that most people value life, good health, and at least a basic level of education, even though people may have different opinions about what capabilities they value. These are necessary for each person to be given the best chance to develop her abilities. Despite their apparent association with wealth and economic growth, these values cannot be reduced to purely financial measures. From the perspective of "human development," they are desired. The idea of development in human societies, whether or not it is seen through the prism of economic growth or capabilities, entails a transition from premodern structures (such as patrimonialism, feudalism, and patriarchy), which restrict certain freedoms, to "modern" systems that seek to grant them. This transition occurs in "traditional," primarily agrarian societies. There is still significant debate regarding the ideal set of institutions, and this issue lies at the core of development theory. Development theories, which concern a complex journey of human progress, are inherently normative and inevitably oriented towards specific outcomes.

In the early 1980s, Richard Higgott (2003, p. vii) characterised modernisation and dependency approaches as 'the two prevailing viewpoints on political and social transformation in the Third World.' In a book of around 120 pages, Higgott could distil the discussion's main points. The substantial research and theorising on development issues, both inside and outside the Global South, would probably push Higgott's work well beyond the classical development theories and call for a much longer manuscript if he were writing his book in the present day.

Today's international development scholars still benefit from a deep understanding of classical theories. This is crucial because, in addition to the fact that scholars must comprehend the history of their field, modernisation and dependency theories have significantly influenced modern theorising. Classical theories are still relevant in contemporary global production, democratisation, and identity studies.

Among the various frameworks about international development, modernisation and dependency theories represent two opposing viewpoints. Politically speaking, these two theoretical positions support inevitably dissimilar approaches to improving conditions in developing countries. Nonetheless, there are important similarities between modernisation and dependency approaches. First, both theories agree that development is fundamentally a process that can promote advancement, especially given recent criticisms of the linearity assumption in development theory. Secondly, the two frameworks primarily concentrate on 'macro-structures' (Niederveen-Pieterse, 2020, p. 12) as they elucidate both the development process and its obstacles.

Postcolonial perspectives on development can be seen as an ongoing diplomatic endeavour with the developmental imagination about the global context, including engaging with international development's main fields, concepts, and academic centres. This relationship is reciprocal because postcolonial approaches have been greatly influenced by and shaped by responses to development. Conversely, the interaction has been marked by mutual influence and critique. In the end, both development and postcolonial theory are responsible for addressing the needs of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people and a shared demand that the wealthiest and most influential organisations take up these concerns to change global inequality.

Nonetheless, there are notable conflicts between development theory and postcolonial theory. Their divergent views on how and to what degree to address global poverty and inequality are the source of these conflicts. One could argue that postcolonial theory is more fundamentally oriented toward addressing global inequality, driven by a politically charged frustration with the various forms of poverty and discrimination that global inequality fosters, affecting both

intimate and global levels. In contrast, development theory focuses on eradicating global poverty, although it remains critically aware of how poverty intersects with national, regional, and global inequalities. Christine Sylvester's observation succinctly captures these tensions regarding their differing views on the poorest and most vulnerable populations: 'Development studies do not tend to listen to subalterns, and postcolonial studies do not tend to concern itself with whether the subaltern is eating' (Sylvester, 2009, p. 703).

An interdisciplinary framework that challenges inequality in the global system is postcolonial theory. Although its basic methods vary by discipline, it is distinguished by a political agenda that is anti-colonial and anti-hegemonic. Emerging in the latter half of the twentieth century, postcolonial theory addressed Eurocentrism as a remnant of European colonialism. It has advocated for a stronger voice for those marginalised beyond the West or, as Stuart Hall (2012) expressed, for 'the rest'. However, recent geopolitical shifts, particularly the conclusion of the Cold War and the emergence of Asian and other powers, have exposed the more profound concern with inequality itself as a byproduct of various colonial conditions: the geographic positions of centres and margins have become more precise and less static than the persistent existence of such centres and margins within the global framework (Raghu et al., 2018). The concept of the subaltern represents, by definition, the unnoticed other (Said, 2015), regardless of their origin, and postcolonial theory has focused on how the subaltern can be acknowledged, let alone respected, in a global framework built on imperialistic foundations (Spivak, 2019). The genocides, misrepresentations, and silences found in colonial archives, practices, and processes were inherently distorting (Power et al., 2016; Slater, 2018): no authentic voice of the untouched indigenous remains available (Spivak, 2019). In the post-imperial age, this 'white noise' (Cox, 2016) is further aggravated by the 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 2019, p. 281) and obscuring biases present in developmental frameworks and agendas (Kapoor, 2018). Thus, postcolonial theory is not merely focused on enhancing the subaltern's involvement in global wealth—using Sylvester's (2009) terms; one might view the desire for the subaltern to partake in wealth as an aspect of development theory that emphasises the need for the subaltern to 'eat'. Postcolonial theory is more invested in examining the conditions for such participation: What transformations must the subaltern undergo to engage in global wealth? What opportunities do the systems that sustain global wealth provide for radically diverse cultures and viewpoints to coexist and be equally valued? In Sylvester's (2009) terminology (derived from Spivak, 2019), how can the global framework genuinely listen to the subaltern? In the end, postcolonial theory highlights that we can only hope to attain any long-lasting global equality by carefully analysing the terms and conditions surrounding global wealth and wealth

creation—its beginnings and participation in colonial oppression, as well as its continuous perpetuation through exploitation, inequality, and the repression of cultural differences.

Several facets of the conventional theories of development are examined in this paper. It lists the salient features of modernisation and dependency theories, the two primary classical viewpoints on development. The paper provides examples of how these classical theories are reflected in current development discourse. Following a brief overview of postcolonial theory, the paper will examine various development practices, concepts, and academic disciplines with which postcolonial theory has interacted. It concludes with some succinct final thoughts.

The Modernisation Approach

The modernisation framework significantly drew from the traditional concerns of Western philosophy regarding social, economic, and political change. In his classical examination of sociological traditions, Nisbet (2006, p. viii) traced the foundational ideas of prominent social theorists from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to 'the tensions between traditionalism and modernism within European culture'.

American sociologist Talcott Parsons' contributions are a significant inspiration for modernisation theory. Parsons, frequently referred to as a structural-functionalist, focused on how societies evolved from "traditional" to "modern" forms. Using biological metaphors, Parsons' evolutionary approach to social change emphasises adaptation—the capacity of a social system to adapt to changes in its surroundings (Parsons, 2004, p. 340). He maintained that societies that can effectively adjust to environmental changes—considerable, long-term changes like those brought about by the Industrial and French Revolutions—display certain "evolutionary universals." In his own words, 'An evolutionary universal, then, is a complex of structures and associated processes the development of which so increases the long-run adaptive capacity of living systems in a given class that only systems that develop the complex can attain certain higher levels of general adaptive capacity' (Parsons, 2004, pp. 340–341).

Parsons (2004, pp. 342–350) identified several evolutionary universals, including social stratification, cultural legitimation, bureaucratic organisation, and monetary and market systems. He concluded that societies that have developed more complex social hierarchies (beyond the straightforward "two-class system" of rulers versus ruled), sophisticated mechanisms for legitimising authority, effective bureaucracies, and enhanced market and financial systems are better able to adjust to change.

One characteristic that separates modernisation theory is its differentiation between "traditional" and "modern." Various academic disciplines influenced this theoretical

framework, including anthropology, political science, economics, and sociology. The analytical distinctions of 'traditional' (or 'simple') and 'modern' (or 'complex') closely mirrored the divide between 'Western' and 'non-Western' structures of social, political, and economic organisation. Consequently, modernisation theory frequently faced criticism for its normative stance, essentially viewed as an ethnocentric portrayal of Western principles (Niederveen-Pieterse, 2021, p. 23; Frank, 2019, pp. 21–95). Numerous critics associated the theories generated with their implications during the Cold War period (Niederveen-Pieterse, 2021, p. 23; Ross, 2019).

Among the many writers who have contributed to modernisation theory, Walt W. Rostow is a pivotal figure. In his influential work The Stages of Economic Growth, Rostow identified five stages of societies, which transition from traditional to modern ('mass-consumption) ones, based on an 'analytic bone structure' defined by production relations, specifically focusing on 'the distribution of income among consumption, saving, and investment … the composition of investment and … developments within specific economic sectors' (Rostow, 1960, p. 13). A predominance of agricultural production and low productivity levels mark traditional societies. The second stage, known as the preconditions for take-off, results from scientific advancements that generate surpluses available for investment. The take-off stage signifies a period of self-sustaining growth, where manufacturing, sparked by an entrepreneurial elite, becomes the central force of development. The drive to maturity involves transitioning from initial growth sectors to new ones, like heavy industry, particularly during Europe's Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lastly, in the age of high mass consumption, the final stage, the focus is shifted toward consumption rather than production (Rostow, 1960, pp. 17–92).

In his sociological investigation of economic development, Bert F. Hoselitz introduced the concept of "pattern variables," which he derived from Parsons' work (1951). Along with Rostow, Hoselitz was a primary target of Andre Gunder Frank's critique of modernisation theory (Frank, 2019, pp. 24–47), and he highlighted that the developing complexity of the division of labour is the foremost indicator of economic development. About the pattern variables, Hoselitz (1960, p. 47) stated that "The very needs of economic advancement must bring about a gradual replacement of' ascription as a standard by achievement and associated with this a replacement of functional diffuseness by functional specificity and particularism by universalism."

In addition to the contributions of economists and sociologists, political scientists played a vital role in advancing modernisation theory. A significant early work in the modernisation

discourse was an edited collection by Almond and Coleman (1960), which focused on the political dynamics of developing regions. This volume began by analysing the functions fulfilled by structures within political systems 'in all societies irrespective of their scale, level of differentiation, and cultural context' (Almond, 1960, p. 5). The functional categories identified by Almond (1960, p. 17) included four input functions (political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication) along with three output functions (rule-making, rule application, and rule adjudication). A single political structure, like a ruler, a legislature, or a bureaucracy, can carry out several tasks, according to the viewpoint on political modernisation. However, the viewpoint also asserts that structural differentiation or specialisation characterises "modern" political systems, suggesting that political structures are increasingly thought to serve a single purpose. When we say that modern systems are specialised, we mean that specific structures emerge that have a distinct function and typically take on what we might call a regulatory role regarding that function within the political system as a whole. The emergence of legislatures, political executives, bureaucracies, courts, electoral systems, parties, interest groups, and media of communication is what sets apart modern political systems; each structure tends to serve a regulatory role for that function within the political systems as a whole" (Almond, 1960, p. 18).

The contributors to a renewed wave of modernisation theory, which is generally considered to have started in the latter part of the 1960s, were, according to Higgott (1983, p. 18), less hopeful about the future of progress and democracy compared to the modernisation theorists from the first half of the decade. Samuel Huntington's work on political order best illustrates the growing concern about political stability. Similar to the more obvious differences in economic development, Huntington examined the "political gap" between more and less developed countries regarding the level of political institutionalisation. He argued that political violence and instability were primarily the result of rapid social change and the swift mobilisation of new groups into politics, combined with the slow evolution of political institutions (Huntington, 1968, p. 4).

According to Huntington, the conflicting trends of social mobilisation and economic advancement present many developing countries with an increasingly difficult time institutionalising politics. Social mobilisation, which he defined as a change in the attitudes, values, and expectations of people from those associated with the traditional world to those typical of the modern world' (Huntington, 1968, p. 38), fosters desires and expectations among citizens of developing countries that their current level of economic development cannot meet. The demands on the political system to allow for greater political participation are heightened

by the growing dissatisfaction brought on by the growing disparity between economic opportunities and social mobilisation. In order to handle this pressure, political systems that are more successful in building strong institutions will be better equipped to handle the growing demand from political participation, which will ultimately lead to increased stability, according to Huntington. Political instability will likely arise when political institutions struggle to handle increased participation (Huntington, 1968, pp. 78–92).

Modernisation theory was more heavily criticised in the second half of the 1960s. In addition to criticising the ethnocentricity of the approach, detractors have increasingly called attention to the approach's disregard for the influences resulting from developing nations' roles and circumstances in the global arena. In their analysis of the economic underdevelopment of Latin American countries, scholars specifically identified colonialism's effects and economic reliance on the United States as key causes of skewed development. The understanding of development that resulted from this examination of dependence and underdevelopment was captured in dependency theory.

The Dependency Approach

Like the modernisation approach of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social theorists who studied the underpinnings of European social and economic modernity, many dependency theorists continued the radical tradition of Marxist and neo-Marxist criticisms of capitalism and imperialism of the same era. The necessity of capital accumulation as an essential component of the capitalist political-economic structure and the inherently exploitative nature of production relations are two key ideas drawn from the (neo-) Marxist background within dependency (and later world-system) theory.

Dependency theory emerged in 1960s Latin America and was based on prior structuralist theories on development initiated by Raúl Prebisch and others in the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) during the late 1940s and early 1950s (Kay, 2017, p. 117). According to Kay (2017, pp. 117–118), in his influential study of Latin American development and underdevelopment theories, dependency theory comprised two distinct positions: reformist and Marxist.

Scholars like Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Faletto, Celso Furtado, and Osvaldo Sunkel represent the reformist viewpoint, whereas Marxist ideas influence Andre Gunder Frank, Theotonio dos Santos, and Ruy Mauro Marini. Even though the reformist position was important from an analytical standpoint, the Marxist viewpoint became more widely accepted worldwide. It was developed into a more comprehensive theory of development by combining

ideas from Asia and Africa through the work of academics like Walden Bello and Samir Amin. The reformist view was encapsulated in Cardoso's (1972) examination of dependent capitalist development and the influential work by Cardoso and Faletto (1979) on dependency and development in Latin America. The dependency perspective was changed by the analysis offered in these reformist writings from a straightforward trade of raw materials for manufactured goods to one in which industrial production for the market became increasingly important in Latin America.

Dependency would persist, as Cardoso stated, 'despite internal economic development, countries linked to international capitalism via this connection remain economically dependent, as the means of production (technology) continue to be concentrated in advanced capitalist nations (primarily the US). … As long as locally produced consumption goods produced by foreign investments can produce specific dynamic effects within dependent economies, there may be some degree of local prosperity. Nevertheless, the global capitalist development process also creates a relationship between the sectors that produce and consume capital goods, strengthening the bonds of dependency (Cardoso, 1972, pp. 90–91).

A crucial aspect of this analysis is the idea that dependency cannot be interpreted solely as an external condition of developing nations; instead, the internal dynamics must also be given equal consideration to grasp the historical dynamics of relationships between central and peripheral countries. Cardoso and Faletto (1979, p. xvi) underscore the significance of understanding 'the social practices of local groups and classes that seek to enforce foreign interests, not merely because they are foreign, but because they align with the values and interests that these groups aim to promote as their own.'

The Marxist-influenced interpretation has undoubtedly been the most prevalent within the dependency approach, emphasising the consequences of developing countries' externally focused traits. Andre Gunder Frank became a prominent figure in the Marxist dependency framework, emphasising the "development of underdevelopment." Frank's famous quote, "The now developed countries were never underdeveloped, though they may have been undeveloped," demonstrates how his theories are predicated on the difference between the experiences of Western and developing nations (Frank, 1969, p. 4).

Andre Gunder Frank (1969, p. 9) viewed development and underdevelopment as 'two sides of the same coin,' stemming from the historical context of the capitalist global system. He maintained that the exploitation of the working class by capitalists and peripheral countries by those at the centre has always been at the heart of global capitalism. The bourgeoisie in developing countries benefits from exploiting their populace through connections to the centre

but is fundamentally a ‘lumpen bourgeoisie’ reliant on central forces within the global system (Frank, 1972, pp. 13–14).

Frank argued that capital accumulation is the foundation of the global capitalist system, which was established in the fifteenth century. The centre has extracted economic surpluses from the periphery through unequal labour relations, trade, and investment. Throughout capitalism, the main techniques for extracting surplus have changed. The classical colonial relationship between the core and the periphery involved the exchange of raw materials produced in colonies for manufactured goods made by colonial powers in Europe (Frank, 1979, pp. 103–110). Moreover, investments represent another method of surplus extraction: capital owners ensure that the returns from such investments revert to the centres of capitalism, resulting in minimal gains for the periphery (Frank, 1979, pp. 189–199). Labour has historically been integrated into the production process under unfavourable conditions. Throughout capitalist history, various forms of forced labour, including slavery in its early stages, have been replaced by proletarianisation and the formalisation of work in various regions (Frank, 1979, pp. 160–171).

Similar to Frank but with a different focus, Samir Amin (1974), an Egyptian, looked at (under)development and dependence from the perspective of "accumulation on a world scale." He maintained that falling profit rates in the capitalist centres had been the primary factor behind capitalism's growth over the past 500 years. The capitalist system's centre and periphery are interconnected through ‘unequal exchange’ involving different types of commodities, predicated on the unequal remuneration of labour across different system areas (Amin, 1974, pp. 62–63). Amin believed that unequal exchange results in a transfer of value from the periphery to the centre via undervalued commodities and manufactured goods that are ‘traded’ between the two poles of the system. The underdevelopment of the periphery manifests through three primary structural characteristics (Amin, 1974, pp. 262–299): significant productivity disparities across various sectors in the periphery, a lack of linkages (‘disarticulation’) among productive sectors in the periphery and an external orientation to cater to demands from the centre, and a heavily skewed international division of labour, evident in ‘unequal specialisation’ and the periphery’s reliance on foreign capital.

Frank and Amin reached similar conclusions about developing countries' political strategies. Frank (1984, pp. 215–229) proposed the idea of "dissociation" from the global system, which was very similar to Amin's (1987, 1990) concept of "delinking." Amin's strategy for severing developing nations' ties to the global system was based on his conviction that these countries could only benefit from development policies that were indeed "auto-centric." It would be

necessary to shift the export orientation of developing countries, moving away from primarily generating primary products for international markets towards focusing on producing goods for domestic consumption and capital goods (Amin, 1990, pp. 18–19). The delinking proposal entailed a political agenda, as 'delinking, whether desired or not, is linked with a 'transition' – eventually moving away from capitalism and over an extended period towards socialism' (Amin, 1990, p. 55).

Immanuel Wallerstein and other dependency theorists have been attempting to develop a social scientific explanation of the history of the capitalist world system since the emergence of world-system theory in the early 1970s. The world-system perspective gradually replaced dependency theory. The idea of a singular division of labour forms the basis of Wallerstein's historical and sociological analysis of the emergence and growth of the capitalist global economy during the "long sixteenth century" (1450–1600).

Wallerstein contends that "social systems," not particular societies or political entities, should be the focus of long-term development theories. As he articulated, 'My unit of analysis focuses on the quantifiable social reality of interdependent productive activities, which can be referred to as an "effective social division of labour" or, using coded language, an "economy"' (Wallerstein, 1984, p. 2).

Wallerstein believes that the history of the capitalist world economy is essentially the history of the worldwide division of labour's expansion, which has correlated all regions and peaked during the era of neo-liberal globalisation (Wallerstein, 2000). The primary force driving capitalists globally has always been capital accumulation, and to perpetuate this process, the primary political strategy has been 'the relocation of specific sectors of production to other parts of the world economy that generally have lower wages' (Wallerstein, 2000, p. 261).

Mechanisms of accumulation outside of production for (world) markets have declined in the story of the contemporary world system, which is defined as a capitalist world economy. Because the global division of labour was never governed by a single political entity that would have, in Wallerstein's (1974, pp. 347–348) words, turned the world economy into a world empire, the world economy has managed to survive politically despite inherent contradictions and tensions among social factions. The semiperiphery, or intermediate tier of regions between the core and periphery, has been an important part of the political structure of the modern world system. The semiperiphery, which functions as both an exploiter and exploited (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 23), is conceptualised concerning its intermediate position regarding variables such as capital intensity of production, labour control mechanisms, and state strength. The political role of the semi-periphery is primarily viewed in terms of the way it consists of 'middle areas [that]

partially deflect the political pressures which groups primarily situated in peripheral areas might otherwise direct against core-states and the groups which operate within and through their state machinery' (Wallerstein, 1974, p. 350).

The material and economic components of dependency and world-system theories' explanatory models and their seemingly deterministic interpretations of development processes have drawn criticism over time. Other methods, such as postcolonial theory and post-structuralism, have been developed by academics who share the radical criticisms of dependency but emphasise other facets of development, such as issues about culture and identity.

Contemporary Manifestations of the Modernisation Approach

This development approach has become less appealing due to criticism of modernisation theory since the late 1960s, but it has not entirely disappeared. Even though modernisation theory has long since peaked, many academics still find inspiration in the ideas presented during the investigation of modernity and tradition. Generally speaking, modernisation theory's concepts were not taken at face value, so some of the criticisms levelled at the framework have been incorporated into modern interpretations of modernity and tradition. Shmuel Eisenstadt's thoughts on multiple modernities, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit's analysis of occidentalism, Ronald Inglehart's research on democracy and democratisation, and North et al.'s work on social order and economic development are the four examples examined in this section that demonstrate the influence of modernisation theory.

American political scientist Ronald Inglehart has substantially contributed to our knowledge of how industrialisation changes political and social values. Since the early 1970s, Inglehart has promoted the idea that younger generations differ from older generations in their value preferences due to industrialisation and growing wealth. Through an analysis of data from advanced industrialised nations, Inglehart demonstrated that older generations generally prioritise what is referred to as acquisitive concerns related to law and order, stability, and material wealth. In contrast, younger generations have embraced 'post-bourgeois' or 'post-materialist' values associated with freedom of expression and political engagement (Inglehart, 1971, pp. 994–996). Inglehart concluded that the adoption of post-materialist issues by newer political parties would probably trigger a 'silent revolution' within advanced democracies, as the transformed preferences of younger voters would bolster post-materialist parties while undermining the support for traditional parties (Inglehart, 1971, pp. 1009–1013). In his later work, based on data from the World Values Surveys, Inglehart (2019, p. 4) proposed that the shift from materialist to post-materialist values was only one aspect of a broader cultural shift that included everything from sexual norms to religious beliefs. The influence of modernisation

theory on his views is evident in his assertion that '[e]economic development, cultural change, and political change go together in coherent and roughly predictable patterns' (Inglehart, 2019, p. 324).

To expand the exploration of modernisation and cultural transformation into a concept termed 'new modernisation', Inglehart and Welzel (2019, p. 36) proposed that democracy emerges as a natural result of social and economic modernisation processes. By defining modernisation as a syndrome of social changes linked to industrialisation' (Inglehart & Welzel, 2019, p. 34), they argued that 'economic development catalyses social and political changes only when it alters individual behaviour. Therefore, economic development promotes democracy to the degree that it, first, engenders a large, educated, and articulate middle class of individuals who are accustomed to independent thought and, secondly, reshapes people's values and motivations (Inglehart & Welzel, 2019, pp. 42–43).

Sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt has investigated globalisation to comprehend what modernity means in today's world. Eisenstadt argued that "Western patterns of modernity are not the only 'authentic' modernities, even though they have historical precedence and still serve as a fundamental reference for others," challenging the idea that modernisation is the same as Westernization (2020, pp. 2–3). According to Eisenstadt, the "programme of modernity" includes cultural, political, and identity elements. The cultural component of modernity is the idea that people can shape their futures through "autonomous human agency" (Eisenstadt, 2020, p. 3), unencumbered by the limitations of conventional political and cultural authority. The political aspect pertains to the waning of conventional means of defending the political system. The move toward embracing more universal definitions of identity and community is associated with the identity dimension of modernity.

Eisenstadt maintained that modernity manifests in various forms across different world regions, influenced by social movements (Eisenstadt, 2020, pp. 9–12). Consequently, different versions of modernity coexist and often clash with each other. Specifically, the interaction of modernity with non-Western societies led to significant changes in modernity's premises, symbols, and institutions (Eisenstadt, 2020, p. 14). Eisenstadt claims that this development has led to several modernities, each prioritising different political, cultural, and social organising principles while sharing aspects of the previously mentioned program. When Eisenstadt talked about fundamentalist movements, he said they are frequently not just traditionalist ones. Instead, "fundamentalist movements have sought to reinterpret modernity based on their context; their distinct perspectives have been articulated in terms familiar to the discourse of modernity" (Eisenstadt, 2020, p. 18).

Buruma and Margalit (2020) have distinctly approached modernisation theory compared to Eisenstadt. Through the prism of modernity and modernisation as instruments of political struggle, these authors have attempted to analyse various forms of "anti-Westernism." According to Buruma and Margalit (2020, pp. 3–10), the phenomenon of occidentalism is fueled by the oversimplification of 'the West' through specific attributes of modernity, such as industrialisation, urbanisation, democratisation, and individualism, which are perceived as opposing the fundamental values held by their critics. Buruma and Margalit's (2020, pp. 6–8) discussion of anti-Western sentiment is not limited to non-Western sources; their allusion to German Nazism demonstrates that criticism of Western ideals and concepts can also come from within the West. Moreover, Buruma and Margalit assert that because both leftist and rightist groups can embrace it, occidentalism is not linked to any specific ideological position. Diverse Western groups have one thing in common: they despise the modernity that Western social, cultural, political, and economic practices represent. The prevalent strategy among occidentalists is to 'reduce an entire society or civilisation to a collective of soulless, decadent, money-hungry, rootless, faithless, unfeeling parasites' (Buruma & Margalit, 2020, pp. 10–11). Grounded in the principles of new institutional economics regarding development, North et al. (2019) have formulated a 'conceptual framework' to comprehend long-term socio-economic transformations that build on North's previous research while drawing from the modernisation theory tradition. Although the authors are cautious about the overly simplistic developmentalism typical of earlier modernisation theories—'The dynamism of social order is a dynamic of change, not a dynamic of progress' (North et al., 2019, p. 12)—their principal concepts revolve around the 'natural state' or 'limited access order' and the 'open access order'. The natural state is 'the default social outcome … Until two hundred years ago, there were no open access orders; even today, 85 per cent of the world's population live in limited access orders' (North et al., 2019, p. 13). Modernisation is incorporated as a theoretical category when North et al. (2019, p. 2) mention that '[t]he transition from the natural state to an open access order [is] the second social revolution, the rise of modernity'.

North et al. (2019, pp. 18–21, 30–41) claim that the existence of exclusive privileges, especially access to economic rents, enjoyed by a dominant coalition of elites characterises the natural state. Because they understand that the institutions they use to collect rents from land, labour, and capital depend on the backing of the state, conflicts between the elites are kept to a minimum. Because external shocks or unanticipated consequences of collective policies may upset the balance of interests and spark disputes among elites, the equilibrium between them is inherently unstable. Open access orders are conceptualised as those where, in a Weberian

framework, the state possesses the sole authority over the legitimate use of violence, and economic and social interactions shift from personalistic to 'impersonal' (North et al., 2019, pp. 21–25, 112–117). The transition to open access orders can occur when elites 'discover a mutual interest in converting certain elite privileges into impersonal elite rights shared by all elite members' (North et al., 2019, p. 190). North et al. identify three so-called doorstep conditions that emerge in the natural state and pave the way for the transition to an open access order: the establishment of a rule of law for elites, the capability to create stable impersonal organisations, and control over the military (North et al., 2019, pp. 26, 154–181).

Contemporary Manifestations of the Dependency and World-System Approach

Related to the earlier modernisation perspective, the critique of dependency and world-system theorists' writings did not result in the approach's demise. The dependency and world-system perspective are still widely used in current research. The critical analysis of global capitalism that has traditionally defined this approach seems to have gained new momentum after the global financial crisis. Here are three examples of recent studies that have been impacted by the dependency and world-system framework: Castells and Laserna's investigation of the new dependency linked to global technology, recent world-system studies of commodity chains, and Christopher Chase-Dunn and associates' analysis of the global crisis after 2008.

In order to claim that specific dynamics in the contemporary global capitalist framework represent types of "new" or "neo" dependency, scholars have repeatedly returned to the idea of dependency. The exploration of new dependencies brought about by using contemporary technologies by Castells and Laserna is a prime example of how traditional dependency theory ideas can be applied to new situations. They contend that economic globalisation, socioeconomic shifts in core and peripheral regions, and integration of information technologies into production have all created these new dependency dynamics. In rapid technological advancement, countries must rely on imports for most new production machinery due to insufficient endogenous productive capacity in high-tech capital goods (Castells & Laserna, 2019, p. 536). This reliance on importing advanced technologies necessitates an increase in the exportation of manufactured products, especially those with lower technological complexity, leading to a 'new unequal exchange in the international economy … between goods and services with different technological components' (Castells & Laserna, 2019, p. 540).

The idea of global commodity chains, which scholars in the world-system tradition created, has also been connected to the conventional worries about unequal specialisation. As initially

defined by Hopkins and Wallerstein (1986, p. 159), '[t]he concept "commodity chain" refers to a network of labour and production processes whose result is a finished commodity. In building this chain, we start with the final production operation and move sequentially backwards… until one reaches primarily raw material inputs.' A special issue published in the Journal of World-Systems Research in 2018 assessed the political economy surrounding commodity chains, specifically focusing on 'how commodity chain analysis can be mobilised to illuminate the contours, composition, and character of the modern world-system' (Blair, 2018, p. 2). The impact of the US-China interstate rivalry on managing the transnational cotton commodity chain, the gender-based division of labour in the commodity chain, and the value generated by Apple's production and marketing of iPads were among the many current issues the authors addressed regarding the functioning of commodity chains.

According to Amy Quark (2021), the difference between state and private sector governance is not as important as frequently asserted, especially considering the global cotton supply chain. The cotton industry, dominated by the US, along with US government agencies, sought to maintain its supremacy in establishing standards for cotton production in the face of challenges to US hegemony: this analysis suggests that the US government, in collaboration with transnational corporations, aimed to rally support from other participants in the global cotton trade before China's state and textile manufacturers could develop their capacities to pursue a hegemonic agenda, which would be supported by their considerable power as the world's largest cotton market (Quark, 2021, pp. 50–51). Despite China's rise and its challenge to US dominance, the US government and domestic cotton producers, with the backing of European and American transnational merchants, succeeded in limiting Chinese influence over standard setting and made only minimal concessions to China (Quark, 2021, pp. 52–53).

Current research on commodity chains also explores how transnational mechanisms that promote surplus creation have disparate impacts on the global system and sustain inequality, consistent with dependency and world-system theories. This strategy is demonstrated by Dunaway's (2021) study, which looks at women's role in global supply chains. She asserts that mainstream studies on production perpetuate a misleading analytical separation between household and market (Dunaway, 2021, p. 71). Women disproportionately perform non-waged and unfree labour, yet their contributions to household maintenance and childcare remain largely invisible, as they are often excluded from official economic assessments (Dunaway, 2021, pp. 73–75). Similarly, Clelland's investigation into iPad production highlights the various forms of value involved in the commodity chain established for Apple's tablets. Clelland posits that two value types should be recognised: visible, monetised or 'bright' value, and hidden or

'dark' value. The 'dark' value arises from 'hidden inputs in the form of externalised costs that often contribute to creating more value than the visible elements' (Clelland, 2021, p. 86). Through a commodity-chain analysis of iPad production, Clelland argues that Apple's value extraction is driven not only by its dominance throughout the chain from production to marketing and sales (the company's monopolistic position) but also significantly by its 'monopsonistic externalisation of costs' (Clelland, 2021, p. 94). Apple generates substantial 'dark' value from various sources, including the exploitation of Chinese migrant workers, underpaid labour, unpaid domestic work, informal labour, and ecological externalities (Clelland, 2021, pp. 95–103). Emphasising class-oriented elements in dependency and world-system frameworks, Clelland (2021, p. 105) concludes that 'most of the relevant dark value is realised not as corporate profit, but as consumer surplus in the form of lower prices for goods. … In this way, core citizens become part of a global consumerist aristocracy.'

By interpreting global issues as a component of the historical evolution of the global capitalist economy, the symposium discussions on the global system crisis since 2008, published in the Journal of World-Systems Research, exemplify the core ideas of world-system theory. In her analysis of the current global system, Chase-Dunn (2020, pp. 176–179) identifies five interrelated crises (relating to governance, inequality and democracy, the environment, the capitalist system, and the global left) and attributes them to the dialectical relationships resulting from changes in the system's hegemonic powers. According to him, U.S. hegemony—a significant power's preeminent political and economic sway—has been waning for several decades. He believes a "new stage of capitalism" could result from these interrelated crises (Chase-Dunn, 2020, p. 179). Sassen (2021) claims that the crisis of capitalism has led to the 'expulsion' of a significant number of people from the economy across various regions of the world. She argues that the intensification of global capitalism—which has superseded previous waves of expansion into new territories—now necessitates the natural resources of many developing nations rather than their inhabitants. These displaced populations are increasingly forced into urban centres or, as migrants, to different nations, ultimately forming an underclass (Sassen, 2021, p. 199).

Continuing themes in the world-system perspective—resistance and repression—are examined by Reifer (2020) and Robinson (2020) in their studies of anti-systemic movements and the emergence of a global police state. According to Reifer, resistance manifested through anti-systemic (or anti-capitalist) movements has gained traction following the Great Recession but should not be seen as a novel phenomenon; instead, it is a continuation of previous anti-systemic activity. He maintains that the same persistent 'structural world-systemic factors'

have contributed to the various manifestations of anti-systemic forces represented in the World Social Forum, the Arab Spring, and Occupy Wall Street (Reifer, 2020, p. 187). Robinson (2020, p. 193) asserts that repression is an unavoidable consequence of the current crisis of capitalism, given the 'shifts from social welfare to social control states globally.' Over-accumulation and increasing inequalities within and among societies have led to heightened polarisation, which may surpass what can be managed through consensual policymaking and, therefore, might necessitate the 'policing' of global capitalism (Robinson, 2020, p. 196).

Postcolonial Approaches to Development Foci

Postcolonial theory has continuously moved the emphasis from different agents of change and expressions of agency to various subalterns and subalternity types. Let us examine what is frequently referred to as the development era, specifically the years right after the Second World War. It becomes evident that while the immediate post-independence emphasis on the developmental state marked the beginning of a postcolonial era of self-rule, it was primarily characterised by aspirations to transform traditional societies into (post)modern entities (Cardoso, 2002). When these aspirations began to falter, particularly as the geopolitical power structures failed to change, the narrative was altered so that newly independent nations had to confront their ongoing reliance on foreign state actors (Manzo, 2006).

Within this framework, postcolonial perspectives analysed the individuals who constituted the state, viewing them not just as decision-makers but as exemplifying a uniquely hybrid form of subalternity: these were European-educated postcolonial elites who, needing to forge connections with 'the people', actively sought to engage with and represent them (Fanon, 1967). Numerous influential writers foundational to postcolonial theory critiqued the paradoxes faced by these elites, making this a key representation of the complexity of what could be seen as the postcolonial condition (James, 2002). V.S. Naipaul (2018 (1967)), for instance, criticised these post-independence elites as 'mimic men', tragically educated and influenced by a futile desire for Western knowledge and culture, yet never fully assimilating into either Western culture or the cultures of the regions they governed and represented. This fractured version of subalternity—where elites hold relative power yet struggle to voice their perspectives—can be interpreted as the cultural backdrop for the development of what Achille Mbembe (2021, p. 42) refers to as 'postcolonial potentates', ruling through familial ties and offering patronage within ineffective bureaucracies. These disproportionately structured systems arguably resulted in a governance shortfall as the state was downsized due to structural adjustments in the 1980s (Said, 1995; Hewitt, 2017).

Building upon their arguments, postcolonial theorists have often confronted a similar fractured subalternity, and postcolonial theory itself has faced criticism as merely indicative of the fact that 'Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe' (Dirlik, 2015, p. 329). In essence, postcolonial theory has been seen as the intellectual pursuits of the elite cosmopolitan or, borrowing from a parallel critique of cosmopolitanism, as 'the class consciousness of frequent travellers' (Ley, 2016, p. 160). Well-known theorists such as Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Trinh Minh-Ha are portrayed as academics whose connections to the Global South or Diasporas conflict with the education and stances of the Global North, leaving them uneasy because they do not have a genuine constituency in that world (see, e.g., Hall, 2016).

An interesting source of tension within postcolonial theory is the merging of theory and the theorist's identity, intimately related to the divisions visible in this subalternity. Many postcolonial theorists share a national or ethnic identity with people in the Global South. However, they are also markedly different from the poorest and most vulnerable because of their elite status (wealth, often location, and, most obviously, education). Despite being a scholarly and frequently intricate collection of theories and methods, especially about language and concepts, postcolonial theory promotes a voice for the most marginalised subalterns, many of whom are illiterate, let alone have no access to academic theories. For various development theorists, postcolonial theory can appear almost frustratingly 'obfuscating' (McEwa, 2018, p. 346) and difficult to grasp due to its linguistic complexity, rendering it, at best, a distraction and, at worst, irrelevant in the face of ongoing challenges related to food security, housing, and essential needs. Nonetheless, postcolonial theorists believe that the problematic terminology and ideas of postcolonial theory result from both cosmopolitan theorists' struggles with their subalternity and an effort to acknowledge the subaltern condition in global dynamics. The challenge of articulation arises from the necessity of conveying difference or at least creating space for something profoundly distinct to express itself while currently limited to mainstream language and concepts (Nox & Prez, 2021). Postcolonial development approaches are often more introspective, emphasising identifying what is excluded, lost, unspoken, or unspeakable (due to the constraints of existing frameworks and languages) in development processes and relationships. By contrast, traditional development frameworks tend to focus on action-oriented strategies to initiate and advance change (often with a critical awareness of the destructive potential of such change). In other words, postcolonial methodologies are dedicated to recognising the presence of subalternity within development (Raghu et al., 2018). In postcolonial perspectives regarding another development emphasis that arose in the late

twentieth century—the developmental roles of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the continuous self-reflection intended to recognise subalternity is especially apparent. Postcolonial approaches have shifted the emphasis from the agency of NGOs as developers to the way their actions perpetuate subalternity. This reorientation has been carried out in two main ways. First, postcolonial perspectives have examined the colonial origins and continuities present within large development organisations (Bell, 2022), including intergovernmental agencies (Power, 2022), as well as among NGO workers and development civil servants (Kothari, 2015). These viewpoints examine the historical legacies that contribute to the ongoing disregard for subaltern voices in development. Inequality has been successfully institutionalised in development organisations and practices developed from colonial structures and methodologies.

Secondly, postcolonial perspectives have examined the dynamics of power between NGOs and local communities, highlighting the subtle coercion and power dynamics present in participatory practices (Cooke & Kothari, 2021), the managerial nature of NGOs (Dar & Cooke, 2018), and even the role of development volunteering (Smi & Laurie, 2021; Nox, 2020b). In essence, these perspectives investigate how inequality is frequently perpetuated in modern development practices: even the methods developers use to engage with subaltern voices can reinforce their silence.

Postcolonial Approaches to Development Constructs

Apart from its focal points, postcolonial theory has continuously discussed development theory's ideas. A significant critique has surfaced regarding the temporal and spatial dimensions of development. Regarding temporality, teleology has been the subject of the most criticism. Like other post-theories (like postmodernism and post-development), postcolonialism is sceptical of historical narratives that only suggest one possible future and follow a single trajectory. Development has been fundamental to this theory, with its teleological implications evident in the term ‘development.’ This term has biological origins and conjures the image of nations evolving in specific directions, akin to the growth of plants and animals (from smaller forms to larger ones or from less mature states to more developed ones) (Esteva, 2012). Even though the development of biological entities is cyclical rather than linear, encompassing decay and death alongside maturation (Cowen & Shenton, 2015), many have contended that developmentalism, especially modernisation, implied a singular path for the progression of post-independent nations (Escobar, 2015). Along this path, one moves from a variety of non-Western cultural expressions (which are perceived as superstitious and

stagnant social structures) to a more homogenised Westernized global framework (which is marked by scientific rationalism and a dedication to human progress), thereby moving from an unproductive traditionalism to a productive modernity. The injustices and imbalances of colonialism have been seen as a necessary step towards an inevitable future in this view of development as evolution.

This temporal critique has led postcolonial theorists to examine the unexplored past and the imagined global future. Numerous development researchers have illustrated that globalisation is highly uneven and does not necessarily translate to improvement for everyone (Sparke, 2023; Sousa-Santos, 2023). Furthermore, postcolonial theorists have advocated for acknowledging significant diversity within the global context, highlighting various modernities that coexist amid globalisation (Bhabha, 2019). Indeed, the unequal interactions among these varied modernities define the global landscape, informing many of the development challenges faced by those in the Global South (Mbembe, 2021). For instance, some prolonged conflicts and civil wars in central Africa can be interpreted as a consequence of the flows of resources and ideologies over the fractured terrain of the world, where the minerals and resources consumed in wealthier countries are extracted at high cost to those ensnared in regions that are unruly due to the conflicting pressures from both internal and external forces (Mbembe, 2023; Sidaway, 2023).

However, there is no sanctuary in a perfect past where all answers might be found if progress is not assured and the future no longer offers a comforting vision. Post-development theorists have frequently faced accusations of romanticising a pre-colonial Indigenous heritage, and various movements like negritude or antillanité have sought to reaffirm the value of the pre-colonial era in response to its marginalisation under colonial and modernisation theories (Mudimbe, 2019). Nonetheless, a fundamental aspect of postcolonial theory is the recognition that precolonial societies were also highly intricate: not only is a return to the precolonial past unfeasible, but we should also not expect to discover utopia in such a quest. Postcolonial theorists argue that the unique blending of precolonial and colonial influences—the unresolved interplay or syncretism defining each nation's legacy—is essential to understanding the distinctiveness of their respective modernities (Mbembe, 2023). Therefore, postcolonial theories emphasise an entangled, irreducibly diverse present rather than a developed future (Raghu et al., 2018).

Postcolonial Approaches to Development's Disciplinary Centres

In the end, postcolonial conceptions of development have moved mainly the discipline's emphasis from political economy to cultural contexts or, more geographically, have moved development geography's focus from political and economic considerations to cultural ones. This shift (essentially moving from the social scientific aspects of human geography to its more humanistic elements) is not unexpected, considering that postcolonial theory has developed mainly through comparative literature and the ethnographically driven histories associated with the Subaltern Studies group (Guha, 2016). This pathway has resulted in a methodological transformation regarding development approaches.

In terms of methodology, there is a shift away from broad, universal theories (such as dependency or modernisation theories) and toward an emphasis on a range of localised perspectives and values as well as diverse points of view. Although this is true in the development field, postcolonial frameworks emphasise the finer points of relationships, which reflect the unique localised insights into the values and meanings of everyday interactions and practices that postcolonial theory prioritises in its focus on diversity and equity. Consequently, theories concerning global culture and its diversity emerge from many local contexts rather than being universally applied to various locations (Raghu & Mad, 2022). Nonetheless, unlike other methodological approaches, such as grounded theory, there is a notably politicised focus on diminishing the prominence of European and Westernized bases of theory creation that have shaped development, ensuring that regions in the Global South are viewed not merely as subjects for applying western theory, but as places in which theories are generated from their unique postcolonial contexts (Chakrabarty, 2023).

Decentering Western theories aims to promote theoretical frameworks rooted in postcolonial everyday life, which raises awareness of the difficulties in stepping outside of one's perspective to understand the complexities of others. This awareness is also fueled by the reality that while postcolonial theorists may seek to achieve a decentering effect, most are typically situated in Western institutions or significantly influenced by Western-centered theories, whether through their academic preparation or the postcolonial environments of the institutions they attended (Dirlik, 2015; Mad et al., 2018). At the very least, this challenges recognising what one has been conditioned to overlook. Historically, the contribution of women to the economy was one such neglected aspect of development (Boserup, 2020). However, current oversights can encompass a variety of non-economic or non-commercially valued resources. For instance, sacred knowledge or significant spaces often become apparent only when they hinder development objectives (for example, when they impact health-related behaviours, like

condom usage) or when they can be appropriated for development (such as the growing involvement of faith organisations in social services and in creating narratives that rationalise wealth accumulation) (Comaroff, 2019; Olson, 2018).

A more thorough ethnographic analysis of development practices and subaltern experiences has been spurred by this worry about the incapacity to notice what one has been trained not to notice. Personally, this has caused postcolonial researchers to engage in more in-depth introspection, resulting in a state of "hyper-reflexivity" as they attempt to "unlearn" the prejudices present in Western-centered education (Kapoor, 2018). The goals and circumstances surrounding development research have been thoroughly questioned due to this hyper-reflexivity: What are our research goals, who will benefit from our work, why concentrate on these issues, what frameworks are we using, and why now? In the end, postcolonial theory's pursuit of de-centring poses a fundamental question: What gives the development researcher the right to carry out this investigation? Given the many careers based on development research and the sincere goals and results linked to it, the answer to this question may not mean the end of the field, but the need to defend rather than assume the authority to carry out this research is an important first step in addressing the power disparities that often serve as its foundation (Ayodele, 2022).

This hyper-reflexivity has sparked several ethnographic studies that concentrate on the development itself rather than its typical research subjects at the level of development as a collection of practices and institutions. This encompasses observing not only development practitioners in the 'field' (Crewe & Harrison, 2019) but also those engaged in development discussions (Mawdsley et al., 2023; Trotz & Mullings, 2013), as well as examining the careers of development practitioners over time (Harriss, 2022), and tracking the often fluctuating evolution of development ideas from one forum to the next (Scoones, 2019).

Interestingly, the postcolonial approach’s keen awareness of the challenges in transcending one’s perspective has also led to methodologies focused on textual and discursive analysis, examining literature, films, and social media (Lewis et al., 2018), and developing archives and reports (Slater & Bell, 2022; Nox, 2020a). This tendency to root postcolonial theory in historical and literary contexts reflects the traditional role of novels and archives in shaping such theory, underscoring the significance of theoretical development's geographical and cultural backdrop (Spivak, 2019). The specific origins of a theory impact its construction, which holds for the methodological strategies of postcolonial theory, just as it pertains to its overarching political mission of de-centring established theory.

However, textual approaches are cited in conjunction with a postcolonial understanding of the difficulty of transcending one's perspectives. This is because postcolonial strategies frequently use close reading to alter viewers' perceptions of the world and successfully retrain them to see others from a wider angle (Spivak, 2019). It is essential to find elements marginalised in Western-dominated reports or colonial archival materials but have an impact. This concept can be understood as 'reading along the grain' (Stoler, 2019), which involves paying attention to the underlying logics and epistemologies that shape the text's writing, such that some topics are discussed while others can only be mentioned peripherally. On a micro level, this can be viewed in terms of the mechanics of writing itself, where the postcolonial scholar reads a development document as a writer would, understanding that writing entails several decisions and conventions that, even if they are not the author's intention, result in exclusions or absences. As Toni Morrison (2021, p. 17) remarked regarding the marginalisation or absence of black characters in mainstream North American literature:

I started to depend on my understanding of the writing process, how language is constructed, and my awareness of why authors highlight or overlook some aspects of their work. I relied on my knowledge of what the demands of language necessitate from writers and how they respond to the surprises inherent in the creative process.

As an alternative, this type of reading can be viewed on a larger scale, which includes analysing the local, national, and international contexts that make a given text possible. This method connects to Said's contrapuntal reading (Said, 2015), which notably analysed Jane Austen's Mansfield Park by revealing that its unvoiced foundational condition is the reliance of the English country estate on Caribbean slave plantations, not only for financial support but also regarding hierarchical assumptions tied to differently gendered and racialised bodies in both contexts. Such contrapuntal reading facilitates development analyses that transcend international borders to critique and examine core development dynamics that emerge from the interplay between the Global South and the Global North (Nox & Feather, 2023). Many have noted that these dynamics encompass conflicts and insecurities that symbolise global interconnections (Sidaway, 2023; Duffield, 2017), the traces of which can be tracked through development texts and postcolonial literature (Nox, 2019).

Concluding Remarks

The modernisation and dependency theories, the two main classical frameworks for comprehending development, have been thoroughly discussed in this paper. These frameworks have evolved into important points of reference in the discussion of international development

processes since the 1950s and 1960s. Modernisation theorists' distinction between "traditional" and "modern" economies, politics, and societies prompted research into the circumstances and laws required for nations to progress toward higher levels of development. The effects of colonialism and the ongoing neo-imperialist exploitation that suffuses today's global political economy are highlighted by dependency theory, which, on the other hand, focuses on the historical processes that sustain stagnation in countries in the Global South.

Regarding their core ideas, modernisation and dependency theories have both come under heavy fire. The tendency of the modernisation approach to view the Western experience as a benchmark for development in other areas has drawn criticism. Development scholars are becoming less interested in modernisation theory due to its ethnocentric assessments and recommendations. Likewise, dependency theory has been criticised for being deterministic, which many believe overstates the challenges developing countries face in making significant progress.

The recognised flaws in modernisation and dependency theories have not led to their complete obsolescence; the research frameworks they established five to six decades ago still resonate within scholarly discourse. Although the scope of literature has inevitably been restricted, this paper contends that numerous scholars continue to draw inspiration from the intellectual direction of modernisation and dependency theories. In many respects, current development analysts have distanced themselves from the foundational ideas of these two frameworks, viewing them as overly rigid or simplistic. While generally critical of linear thought, contemporary research on various topics such as democratisation (Inglehart, 2019; Inglehart & Welzel, 2019), globalisation and modernity (Eisenstadt, 2020), anti-Western sentiments (Buruma & Margalit, 2020), and long-term socio-economic change (North et al., 2019) reflects the influence of a broad modernisation paradigm. Similarly, contemporary world-system analysts agree with the criticism of dependency theory's deterministic character. However, a materialist perspective that focuses on the persistence and reproduction of inequalities continues to influence those who advocate world-system analysis and study topics such as technological advancement (Castells & Laserna, 2019), the structure of global commodity or value chains (Clelland, 2021; Dunaway, 2021; Quark, 2021), or the crisis-ridden nature of modern society (Chase-Dunn, 2020; Reifer, 2020; Robinson, 2020; Sassen, 2021).

The notion that postcolonial and development theories are entwined in a reciprocal negotiation has also been examined in this paper. In response to developments in development theory, postcolonial theory has consistently pushed for modifications to the field's disciplinary underpinnings, constructs, and focus. Thus, we can still find some truth in Christine Sylvester's

succinct assertion that "development studies do not tend to listen to subalterns and postcolonial studies do not tend to concern itself with whether the subaltern is eating" (2009, p. 703). Development focuses on the pressing material issues that the most disadvantaged people face, such as whether they can afford enough food each day. Postcolonial viewpoints persistently raise concerns of representation and equity while resolutely criticising the circumstances of subalternity.

However, it is also true that development theories are characterised by important critical disputes and discussions, many of which stem directly from the difficulties of postcolonial theory. At the same time, postcolonial approaches are becoming more sensitive to the material realities of everyday life in precarious situations by considering methodological issues to improve the quality of engagement in development research (Raghu & Mad, 2022). Therefore, poverty and inequality are central to both postcolonial and development theories; they negotiate to address the latter at its core while simultaneously recognising the immediate realities of the former.

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