

Development as an Ideology: An Evaluation of the Modernization Theories from the Context of Samuel Huntington and Claude Ake

Uchem Raphael Onyebuchi
Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi
E-Mail: erunke@yahoo.com

Abstract

The investigations undertaken by scholars in behavioral sciences to understand the socio-economic and political quagmires of Third world countries lies at the heart of this study. Of particular importance to this discourse is the challenge of building adequate empirical evidence on the way forward for Third world growth, development and sustainability. Thus this paper examines development as an ideology while evaluating the modernization theories from the context of Samuel Huntington and Claude Ake, bringing out their peculiarities. The study argues that all supposedly meaningful theoretical expositions put forward by scholars on both ends have further plunged Third world economies into the umbrella of global capital characterized by domination, alienation and inequality in both character and contents. The paper uses secondary data as its methodology; hence the work is basically explorative and entails survey of broader and empirical studies of major schools of thought in social science literatures.

Keywords: Development, Ideology, Modernization, Capitalism, Inequality.

INTRODUCTION

The opinion of development and modernization theories as an ideology held by scholars in the social science discipline is varied in dimension and magnitude depending on the orientation of each of these scholars. The perspective and scope of arguments present itself generally depending on the platform from which each operates and from what kind of wave lens that is used to examine the practice of theorizing. Development and modernization therefore in the context of Huntington and Ake's explanations are seen as two opposing forces in contest campaigning and probably competing for space and relevance in the scholarly world. The sharp divide in both arguments in relation to the dynamics of development which is literally conceptualized as change, social evolution, differentiation, secularization and perhaps, modernization and development brings to the fore the contradictions of development paradigms and logic of empirical investigations which have practically remained an illusion in finding solutions to myriads of Third world dilemma in recent times. This paper examines development ideologies of Huntington and Ake bringing out the dichotomy between the two. This attempt will no doubt allow room for further investigations.

The struggle for the development of Third world countries have always been honored in the breach than in observance. The attempt to try to re-write Third world history over the centuries has resulted to heated debates and counter debates. The result is that in spite of numerous theoretical and empirical postulations by scholars around the world on the way forward for Third world, the continent has remained largely defiant of all acceptable solutions. These predicaments have literally generated the furtherance of theories, comments and analysis to see to the growth, development, and sustainability of Third world countries of Africa, Asia Latin America. The question therefore is: Are there theories aimed at propelling actual development in the Third world? Do Third worlds have shared peculiarities with the west? Can western theories apply to Third world countries? What are the relevance and/or the applicability of these western oriented theories to Third world countries? Can these theories lead to development eventually in Third world states? These questions are timely and deserve urgent answers, and this is what this study seeks to address.

This paper sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To examine the theories of Huntington and Ake bringing out their relevance in an attempt to solving Third world problems
- (2) To examine the dissimilarities between the west and Third world countries
- (3) To identify the gaps between theory and practice as it relates to Third world dilemma
- (4) To examine the authenticity of these theories and show how they apply to Third world circumstances
- (5) To examine whether these theories actually could lead to African development.

The approach adopted in this study is explorative and utilizes existing secondary data obtained from a survey of broader theoretical and empirical studies on major schools of thought on Third world development concerns.

CONTEXTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION AS AN IDEOLOGY

Development and modernization are two sides of the same coin, with one reinforcing the other in the scheme of things. Several scholarly arguments have cropped up to the effect that modernization does not translate to

development (Ake, 1979; Rodney, 1972). The contention here is that nations have development at their various levels and that the so-called underdevelopment maxim only clearly describes the pace of development of nation states in comparative terms. Development therefore could be seen against the backdrop of the individual, groups and society at large depending on the circumstances surrounding each of these sects (Bauer, 1971).

For a better understanding of the nature of this discourse, it must be borne in mind that modernization theory has its origins from a classical evolutionary explanations of social change with its intellectual roots in the European revolutionists of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Brown (2000) argue that the French philosophers and founders of Modern Sociology, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim; the British philosopher Herbert Spencer and of course Karl Marx, were in their different ways trying to explain the transformation from pre-industrial to industrial society. Drawing from the above, two elements in particular from that early theorizing were carried over into debates about modernization in the Third world. One is the notion that social change involves continuity and the other is the belief in progress. However, each of these arguments are fluid and controversial by their nature within the context of ensuing peculiarities between the first world and the rest of the other worlds. The complexities of modernization theories have made scholars to draw conclusions in terms of its greater differentiation and thinking towards evolution.

Similarly, modernization theory, like other evolutionary explanations has its own view at the end of evolutionary process. Modernization in this context is used to mean advancement towards a condition corresponding to the industrial capitalist societies of the west including Europe and North America. This is to say that a society that is becoming modern is one that acquires characteristics common to more developed societies, achieving things that modern societies have in common. This is also a fallacy. On the whole, this school holds the view that for traditional societies to develop, it must eliminate its economic, political and particularly cultural institutions and values, replacing them with modern ones (Bowornwathara, 2000; Almond, 1963).

Building upon these theoretical foundations, it can be said that modernization theorists have simply emphasized features of the process by which it was thought the underdeveloped societies of the world would become modern. First, they contrasted the characteristics of an ideal type which was designated 'modern' with one that was designated 'traditional'. Development is then viewed as transformation of the former into the latter (Ake, 1974; Smith, 1996).

From above, development is here seen as evolutionary, implying the bridging of gap formed by observable differences between rich and poor countries by means of an imitative process, in which the less developed countries gradually assumed the qualities of the industrial nations. This is also controversial because the present predicaments of Third world have a root in manipulations of the periphery by the metropole. The ensuing unequal relationship between the duos is catastrophic on the part of the former. By extension, Levy (1952) and Smelser (1963) described the relationships that are required in industrial societies, arguing that the patterns dominant there inevitably spill over into the other areas of life, especially the political system, where values must be compatible with those of the economy. Thus, the importance of structural differentiation in the social changes accompanying economic development was emphasized. And that differentiation occurs with the transition from domestic to factory production, the replacement of family and church by the school, for example, and the substitution of the complex political party structures for tribal of factions. This in itself is also unrealistic, mechanical and may not reflect the actual modernization guidelines as pelt out here.

MODERNIZATION THEORY: TOWARDS A NEXUS BETWEEN AKE AND HUNTINGTON'S DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGIES

Huntington (1987) argue that the parameters for assessing Third world is through a comprehensive view of its economic growth. The emphasis on economic growth is defined primarily in terms of increase in per capital income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP) remained the central focus of economists and social scientists alike.

History has shown that many Third world countries did grow significantly and that Third world nations achieved the set target set for it by development agencies of a 5% annual increase in GNP during the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era and at times when new emerging economies were springing up. It has also been proved beyond reasonable doubt that economic growth alone cannot necessarily improve the living conditions of millions of people in Third world countries. Within this context, questions of distribution or equity come to the fore. The desire for equity here focuses on two sub-goals, but nut necessarily related to each other: (1) reduction in absolute poverty, that is, in the proportion of the population living below a specified minimum level of material well-being (defined in terms of either income or consumption), and (2) reduction in equality, that is, in the differences in income and/or wealth among population groups.

However, in political science, unlike economics where the shift was from aggregation (that is creation of wealth) to distribution in the 1960s and 1970s, the reverse shift occurred from the problem of distribution of power to achieving democracy to the problem of aggregating power to achieve political order, democratic or

otherwise. Thus with the problems of what Huntington aptly describes as “negative compatibilities” by Third world countries, that is, the failure of these undeveloped countries to make progress towards the goals of development, it is clear that Africa, like its counterpart in Asia, Middle East and Latin America was heading for a disaster.

In a more general sense, the conflict between growth and democracy is seen in terms of what is described as liberty ‘trade off’. The underlying argument is that if a less developed country is going to achieve high rates of economic growth, it will have to have a development-oriented authoritarian government and that democratic governments are simply too “soft”, and hence, unable to mobilize resources, curtail consumption and promote investment so as to achieve a higher growth rate. It is clear from above that there already exist conflict between growth on the one hand, and equity, stability and democracy, on the other. This assumption has practically undermined the principles of harmony in liberal democracies. The harmony of goals posited by Huntington is also an act of misnomer. The analysis is also tainted with some level of challenge. One such challenge involves the high correlation existing between political stability and absence of autonomy. This of course, resulting from the fact that foreign investment and manifestation of dependency blossom under conditions of political stability. Equally challenging is the fact that even though instability that is, revolution may be necessary in achieving minimum degree of equity, a major revolutionary upheaval will normally produce greater equality in income and wealth, at least among those whom the revolution neither exiles nor executes.

RELEVANCE OF HUNTINGTON’S IDEOLOGY ON DEVELOPMENT

The principles of Huntington on Third world development revolve around conflict of interest amongst the rulers and the ruled in the socio-political sense of it. This theory posits general relationship between goals: the opposition between goals and equity. Inevitably, however, the elaboration of these ‘cruel’ alternatives generates a third body of development literature devoted to exploring the ways in which development goals could be reconciled with one another. Assumed compatibility is hereby undermined by the perceived pervasiveness of conflict which in turn gives rise to psychological and political desire to resolve conflicts. It is also important to stress that developing nations can grow its economy through various choices of development goals and a focus on policies concerning sequence, structures and strategies of goals.

CLAUDE AKE AND MODERNIZATION THEORY

Ake (1989) argue that modernization school of thought is better appreciated when adjudged from the political economy point of view. To begin with, it is interesting to ask whether there is a future for political economy of development? Or that is there any cogent explanation to the cruel realities of Third world existence? These are opening questions that Ake will want his apostles of development theories to ponder over. By extension, Ake (1989) opine that the fuse about modernization and what it stands for has not done enough to salvage the critical conditions of backward nations. To him:

In its characteristics form modernization theory posits an original state of underdevelopment which can be changed by capitalism. They assume that the spatial distribution of progress is never static but dynamic, by proximity and interaction progress is diffused through space and in turn, transforms it (1989:100).

Drawing from the foregoing, it can be inferred that the theory of modernization itself lacks the necessary impetus to bail the socio-economic circumstances of underdevelopment since its assumptions are relatively futile and the end product of its postulations amounts to capitalist exploitation, subjugation and domination.

To Ake (1989):

It could not establish its relevance to the developing countries because it was really a celebration of the achievements of the west. It regards western societies as ideal and the development process as a matter of becoming more like the west. When it comes into conflict with the divergent social structures of Third world, modernization theory talks simply of making them isomorphic with western ones; when it encounters cultural resistance, it proclaims the need for the modernization of attitudes. That effectively blocked any chance of making it come to terms with the historical specificities of the Third world (1989:100).

In the light of the above, it can be ascertained that as a body literature, the neoclassical writings have contributed more confusion than scientific understanding of the development process in the Third world. In any case, Ake has given greater credence to economic theorists including Keynes, Harrod Domar, Kaldor-Mirrelees, Ricardo, etc, whom he believes have contributed positively in the development processes of Third world. Again, it can be argued that in its strict sense, it is not these theories as much which are at issue; but that the major encumbrances are the deliberate attempts by some of the neo-classical scholars to press them into service in the Third world.

Ake noted that none of these themes was written specifically for Third world countries. Ake also glosses over the post-war period and argued that western development thinking learned mores towards theorizing, industrialization and growth without the corresponding human relations and welfare. To him:

The neo-classical approach in its varieties was inadequate to begin with. Also it proved incapable of self correction or development in the face of overwhelming evidence showing that it could not work (1989:104).

Claude Ake's worry about classical theorists has not left out the Neo-Marxist approach to development including the works of Samir Amin and Gunder Frank who holds that by virtue of its internal logic, capitalism is incapable of ensuring meaningful development. Ake (1989) argue and very fervently that:

The Neo-Marxist approach also suffers from the problem of relevance and ultimately fails because of it. The problem goes back to Marx and the nature of Marxism. Marxism is a theory of capitalist development thrown up by the contradictions of capitalism. While it is constituted as a negation of capitalism, it is also in dialectical unity with it. Essentially, the negation of the negativity of capitalism, the Marxist view of the alternative path of development and alternative society is largely implicit and fuzzy (1989:107).

RELEVANCE OF AKE'S THEORY OF MODERNIZATION AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Ake's theory seeks to maximize the effective use of desirable political system. It serves as a guide to the understanding of the role of structural differentiation and the phenomena of development in either Third world or developing nations of the world. It is also significant because it presents capability of political systems and show how such systems work in the interest of the greater number. Smith (2003) argues that the most durable aspect of Ake's theory of modernization is its interdisciplinarity. Thus economic and political changes are related in various ways to fundamental changes in social values and social structures.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing study shows the contrast between theory and practice, traditionalism and modernization and wider differences of opinion in the context of modernization in relation to Africa's developmental concerns. The paper espouses on the views of Samuel Huntington and Claude Ake. The duo appears to hold divergent views on the state of affairs of less developed economics. Thus Huntington's analysis appears to present opposing views of those of Ake. The latter prides his position on the antics of capitalism as major impediments of development. The former holds brief for economic growth through economic index. It is however, obvious that the views as mentioned are at best contradictory, and hence, difficult to carve out a niche for Africans and indeed Third world's survival, development and overall sustainability in the 21st century.

REFERENCES

- Ake, C. 1974. "Modernization and Political Instability: A Theoretical Exploration", World Politics 2(2).
..... 1974. *Modernization and Political Instability: A Theoretical Explanation*. World Politics vol. 26(4).
..... 1979. *Social Science as Imperialism: The Theory of Political Development*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan press.
..... 1980. *Social Science and Development: Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa*, Occasional Paper, No. 2.
Almond, G.A. 1963. 'Political Systems and Political Change', American Behavioural Scientist, 6(10).
Almond, G.A. and G.B. Powells 1966. *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*. Boston: Little Brown.
Bauer, P. 1971. *Dissent on Development*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
Bowornwathana, B. 2000. *Governance Reform in Thailand: Questionable Assumptions, Uncertain outcomes*: An International Journal of Policy and Administration vol 1 (3).
Brown, D. 2000. *Contemporary Nationalism: Civic, Ethnocultural and Multicultural politics*. London: Routledge.
Huntington, S.P. et al. 1987. *Understanding Political Development*. Illinois: Waveland press.
Kay, G. 1975. *Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis*. London: Palmgrave Macmillan.
Smith, B.C. 1996. *Understanding Third world politics: Theories of Political change and Development*. New York: Palmgrave Macmillan.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

