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 Spring 2007

J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Politics," *Comparative Politics* 10, 4 (1978): 535-52

**Thesis:** "Much work needs to be done within a dependency perspective to clarify its concepts and causal interrelationships, as well as to assess its capacity to explain social processes in various parts of peripheral societies. And yet the dependency approach appears to have a fundamental advantage over the modernization perspective: It is open to historically grounded conceptualization in underdeveloped contexts, while modernization is locked into an illustrative methodological style by virtue of its very assumptions." (552)

**Contribution:** Valenzuela and Valenzuela provide a comprehensive comparison of dependency and modernization theories, noting both similarities and differences between the two by analyzing the assumptions made by the two theories, the different levels of analysis, the methodological factors, and the prescriptions for change. In addition to the comparison, the authors use dependency theory to illustrate the causes of asymmetrical development around the globe, specifically in Latin America.

**Arguments:**

- 1) Difference between the two in regard to levels of analysis:
  - a. Modernization theory uses the microsociological level (individuals and aggregates of individuals, their values, attitudes, and beliefs).
  - b. Dependency theory uses the macrosociological level (mode of production, international trade, political and economic linkages, and group and class conflicts or alliances).
  - c. Modernization theory looks at the nation's society, while dependency theory looks at the global system.
  - d. Dependency theory provides temporal analysis while modernization strives for universal validity.
  - e. Dependency theory regards human behavior as a constant and modernization theory regards human behavior as being relative based on culture.
- 2) Differences between the two where methodological factors are concerned:
  - a. Modernization theory's ultimate goal is a parsimonious theory, while dependency theory is more of an approach in which many aspects need to be studied more thoroughly (particularly the linkages between international phenomena and national class and power dynamics).
  - b. However, too many problems exist with modernization theory, making it inferior to the dependency approach.
    - i. Modernization theory is not useful for studying complex phenomena.

- ii. It is not falsifiable.
  - iii. The empirical evidence that has been used is only illustrative and is not used to test the theory.
- 3) The object of inquiry is the only thing that these competing approaches have in common.

### **Model (of sorts) for Dependency Theory:**

“Mercantilistic” Colonial Period → “Outward Growth” (dependence on exports) → “Crisis” of the Liberal Model (collapse of external demand and ability to import) → Import Substitution of Industrialization → Current state of “Transnational Capitalism”

### **Questions:**

- 1) Which level of analysis seems more useful for studying this topic: macro- or microsociological?
- 2) Is dependency theory’s tendency to use temporal analysis at odds with the possibility of creating a parsimonious and generalizable theory?
- 3) Can human behavior be regarded more accurately as constant or relative to culture?

Guillermo O’Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, 1979), pp. 1-111

**Thesis:** O’Donnell asserts that an increase in a country’s level of modernization leads to an increase in political pluralization rather than an increased likelihood of political democracy and that longitudinal analysis is key. Furthermore, he builds a hypothesis that higher levels of modernization in a state results in an increased likelihood that technocratic incumbents will take power, resulting in a bureaucratic-authoritarian system.

**Contribution:** O’Donnell explains that there is no one-to-one correspondence between socioeconomic structure and the type of political system in a state, but information about the socioeconomic status can provide one with information about the type of political system. However, because of a lack of methodological rigor, flawed conclusions and data have led researchers to reach incorrect conclusions. Reliance upon correlations which are a “snapshot” rather than historical analysis which is a film and upon national averages has led to these false conclusions, in O’Donnell’s view. Thus, by using a different methodological approach, O’Donnell is able to give a more nuanced theory that better explains the progression (or lack thereof) of South American modernization and its effects.

### **Arguments/Propositions:**

- 1) The degree of heterogeneity is low in Argentina and Uruguay, increased in Chile, and relatively high in Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. Bolivia and Paraguay are homogenous.
- 2) Because of these differences, national means may be less useful than “cross-center” strategy when studying socioeconomic characteristics.

- 3) In contemporary South American countries, the larger size of the domestic market and the larger concentrations found in urban areas, the more advanced their industrial strategies.
- 4) In South America, as the level of advancement in industry increases, so does the unionization and industrialization of the workers there.
- 5) As industry becomes more advanced, specialized skills for production are required and secondary socialization processes provide them.
- 6) More advanced industry leads to more scientific-technological innovations.
- 7) Data on innovation can be used to test the adequacy of orderings of socio-economic differences.
- 8) More advanced industrial establishments result in higher numbers of people connected through modern communication and transportation methods.
- 9) In South America, the higher and lower levels of modernization result in less democratic systems, while political democracy is found in states with mid-level modernization.
- 10) New salient social problems and developmental bottlenecks are generated by higher levels of industrialization, further social differentiation, greater penetration of technocratic roles, new sets of political actors and political coalitions, increasing rates of political activation, new policy issues and new patterns of dependence.
- 11) High modernization → demands-performance and differentiation-integration gaps → social problems and political demands → mass praetorianism ↔ diminished problem-solving capabilities of current political system
- 12) Given these conditions, the “contraction of the political system by the exclusion of the popular sector is likely to become a point of agreement amongst most of the other social sectors.” (76)
- 13) High modernization leads to an increase in the density and scope of technocratic roles.
- 14) Increased differentiation and pluralization → increase in political activation + modernization → mass praetorianism → political deactivation of the popular sector through the use of coercion

**Assumptions:** Technocrats will perceive themselves as more capable of handling governmental problems than the current government when society becomes more demonstrative of its will. Thus, they will initiate a governmental coup and suppress the will of the people, resulting in bureaucratic-authoritarianism in these modernized societies.

**Hypotheses:**

- 1) The more unionized and industrialized workers there are, given the concentration in urban areas, the greater the likelihood of their political activation.
- 2) The transmission of technical expertise from an advanced to a modernized society is only part of a larger phenomenon which includes the transmission of role models (career and social expectations).

- 3) Role performance must change in this transition and is likely to frustrate technocratic incumbents, which leads to political action.
- 4) The greater scope and density of the penetration of technocratic roles multiplicatively communications and inter-institutional linkages of those who fill these roles.
- 5) Increased penetration of technocrats → their increased perception of problem-solving capabilities → increased control over social sectors and activities
- 6) Given these conditions, there is an increased likelihood of a coup attempt by these technocrats in order to reestablish order.

**Questions:**

- 1) By explaining only one end of the modernization “continuum”, does O’Donnell do any better than those who have come before him?
- 2) O’Donnell makes several assumptions about the interests of technocrats based on the cases of Argentina and Brazil. Do these assumptions seem to be generalizable across more than just these two countries? Are they reasonable assumptions?
- 3) Does O’Donnell do a better job of operationalizing the necessary concepts than he claims that previous researchers of the topic did?