

Sociology Daily Answer Writing

Week 6 - Day 5

Model Structures

1. What are dependency theories? Critically examine the “World Systems Theory”. 20

(2 page - dependency theory; 1 page world systems theory; 1 page - its criticism and conclusion.)

Model Structure

Introduction

- Define dependency

Main Body

- Dependency theory:
 - A G Frank pointed out that the contemporary underdevelopment position of a country is the result of its economic, cultural, political and social characteristic features
 - He pointed out that the capitalist system has developed rapidly during the last centuries and its effect has reached the most isolated parts of the underdeveloped world
 - Frank has come to a very interesting conclusion that underdevelopment is generated by the historical process which has generated economic development and the development of capitalism.
 - Therefore, the two types of countries are connected with each other through exploitation and colonization.
 - Frank has found the connection between the development of the centre and the periphery countries.
 - The now underdeveloped countries have not had the opportunity to continue developing in the conditions of growing capitalism.
 - Consequently, the development of these countries has had to be sacrificed for that of others.
 - Therefore, the contemporary underdevelopment of certain countries is connected with their close ties with now economically developed countries, which have

become economically developed owing to these underdeveloped countries in the past, and which have abandoned them when the wealth of their mines, raw materials and natural resources disappeared.

- In his view, Asia and Latin America have actually developed under development; whereas Europe, North America, and Australia have accumulated capital at the expense of the periphery
- Relevance: A.G. Frank's theory was developed in a bipolar post-WWII world. It needs to be rethought in a contemporary multipolar world
- World Systems Theory:
 - Immanuel Wallerstein further advanced the concepts of underdevelopment theory
 - He did this principally by reconceptualising Frank's model and adding another category.
 - Wallerstein's theory was based on a capitalist world-system.
 - The new capitalist world system was based on an international division of labour that determined relationships between different regions as well as the types of labour conditions within each region.
 - In this model, the type of political system was also directly related to each region's placement within the world economy.
 - As a basis for comparison, Wallerstein proposes different categories, core, semi-periphery and periphery into which all regions of the world can be placed.
 - The categories describe each region's relative position within the world economy as well as certain internal political and economic characteristics.
 - The world system had a core consisting of the highly developed countries of the world, a periphery consisting of countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, which are commonly referred to as the 'Third World', and a semi-periphery that was made up of countries that were neither core nor periphery, such as the Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC).
 - Critique:
 - This, of course, did not mean either that everybody in the periphery became poorer or that all citizens of the core regions became wealthier as a result. In the periphery, landlords for example often gained great wealth

at the expense of their underpaid coerced laborers, since landowners were able to expropriate most of the surplus of their workers for themselves.

- Although the functioning of the world economy appears to create increasingly larger disparities between the various types of economies, the relationship between the core and its periphery and semi-periphery remains relative, not constant. Technological advantages, for example, could result in an expansion of the world economy overall, and precipitate changes in some peripheral or semi-peripheral areas

2. Is the theory of cultural lag valid in present times? Discuss.

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Model Structure

Introduction

- The term ‘cultural lag’ is often used to describe the state of disequilibrium between material and non-material aspects of a culture.

Main Body

- Ogburn, who coined this word, explained that ‘cultural lag’ occurs when parts of a culture that were once in adjustment with each other change at different rates, and become incompatible with each other.
- Ogburn pointed out how the non-material culture (values, beliefs, norms, family, religion) often lags behind material culture (technology, means of production output of the economic system).
 - For example, family planning technologies (i.e. material culture) have advanced, but people take their time to accept them. Some sections of the population may reject the very idea of ‘family planning’ and believe in having a large family. Again, when an event such as an increase in population or a depletion in natural resources causes a strain in society, it takes some time for the society to understand and absorb the strain and alter its values and institutions to adapt to the

change. But in order to function smoothly, societies adjust to maintain and restore themselves.

- Critics have pointed out that such a view neglects revolutionary changes which are profound and sudden. Conflict theorists do not assume that societies smoothly evolve to higher or complex levels. Modern life is full of examples. The feminist movement has stimulated a reaction from men and women. The liberalisation of sexual mores has led to open denunciation.
- Values are strongly bound to other aspects of the social system to which they belong; and change in the value system goes hand in hand with changes in the social system as a whole.
- Whether it is the change in the value system that causes social change, that is, the change of the social system; or it is some other factors which bring about basic social change, including a change in the value systems - is a question on which opinion is sharply divided.

Conclusion

- Thus, the theory of 'cultural lag' is relevant to understanding social change.