

DISCUSSION 4: SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Social Change and Development Theories - is the frameworks that explain the factors and processes that lead to transformations in the structure, culture, and behavior of a society. These are important in social work because they help practitioners comprehend social structures, address systemic difficulties, and help people overcome problems. Equally important for people and communities, they provide possible solutions to problems like lack of access to resources and poverty, and issues in social welfare. These theories guide social workers in creating solutions that not only help individuals but also to improve whole communities

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

What is Structural Functionalism?

- Is a **sociological theory** first developed in the **1930s**, primarily by **Talcott Parsons**, building on the ideas of **Max Weber and Emile Durkheim**. It sees society as a system made up of different parts — such as families, government, and other institutions — where every part has a specific job or purpose. Each part works together to keep the whole system stable, balanced, and continuing to exist over time. People in society fill roles that help maintain this balance, and they adjust to changes so the system can survive
- Views society as a complex system composed of various parts, each with a specific function that contributes to the overall stability and functioning of the whole; each of the institutions, relationships, roles, and norms that together constitute a society serves a purpose, and each is indispensable for the continued existence of the others and of society as a whole
- **Structural** refers to the different parts of society. For example, social institution (family, education, government, religion, economy) these parts form the structure of society, meaning they are the

framework or system that holds society together.

- **Functionalism** is the idea of each part of society has a specific function that helps society operate smoothly and maintain stability.
- **Albert Spencer (1820–1903)** argued that just as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, the various parts of society work together (**Spencer 1898**). He is an English philosopher, and society is similarly structured between society and human body.

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)

- Was **French sociologist** - applied Spencer's theory to explain how societies change and survive over time. Durkheim believed that society is a complex system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability, and that society is held together by shared values, languages, and symbols
- Durkheim identified several social institutions that play vital roles in society. Examples of this are (family, education, religion, government, economy). These social institutions are interdependent and interact with one another, sharing ethics and norms. Durkheim's analysis of social institutions emphasizes their role in shaping individual behavior and maintaining social stability.
- **Social facts:** These are the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and all the cultural rules that govern social life (Durkheim 1895). Each of these social facts serves one or more functions within society. Durkheim believed that individuals may make up society, but in order to study society, sociologists have to look beyond individuals to social facts.
- **Functioning:** Elements or aspects of society that disrupt or hinder the overall

stability and functioning of the social system.

- **Social stability:** The degree to which a society and its institutions remain predictable and reliable. This is important because it allows participants in society such as individuals and groups to plan and conduct their affairs without disruption.
- **Consensus:** The general agreement or shared beliefs within a society regarding its norms, values, and fundamental practices.
- Durkheim 's work emphasized the importance of social solidarity in maintaining social order. He explored how societies create and maintain cohesion through shared norms, values, and institutions.
- **Types of Social Cohesion:** Mechanical Solidarity and Organic Solidarity

SYSTEMS ANALOGY	DEFINITIONS	EXAMPLES
MECHANICAL	All parts of the system work closely together—well coordinated and integrated	An efficient, well-run city or town
ORGANISMIC	Each part of the system has a special function; if each performs as it should, the parts work together for common good.	A rural farming community where specialized roles are assigned

MORPHOGENIC	Change is ongoing and the structure of the system is continually emerging	A fast-growing school district with a multi-ethnic population
FACTIONAL	Conflict is basic. Change and instability are ongoing	A small town in conflict over growth versus no-growth; one group of residents favor no-growth
CATASTROPHIC	Conflict taken to extremes. The system is chaotic	An environmental group adopts a civil disobedience tactic to stop the community that desperately needs jobs; job seekers retaliate with violence

Social structure is a functionally integrated system regulated by normative consensus.

- **Normative Consensus:** an agreement based on normative reasons that a

moral or legal norm is valid, or a value or an idea of the good defensible.

Structural Functionalist Perspective on Deviance and Change

- **Anomie:** social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting, or absent

Functions of Deviance

1. Affirmation of cultural norms and values
2. Clarification of right and wrong
3. Unification of others in society
4. Promoting social change

Talcott Parsons

- American sociologist. He expanded on Durkheim's ideas and developed the AGIL paradigm, which outlines the functional prerequisites of any social system: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. He applied this framework to analyze the functions of different social institutions.

PARSON'S FUNCTIONAL IMPERATIVES

ADAPTATION

- The social system must be able to adapt to changes in its external environment in order to survive.

GOAL ATTAINMENT

- The social system must establish and achieve its goals in order to fulfill its collective needs and aspirations.

INTEGRATION

- The social system must maintain internal coherence and solidarity among its members.

LATENCY

- Social system must provide for the maintenance of motivation and morale among its members.

Robert K.Merton

- **(1910–2003) was a American sociologist.** States that Social structures can only be analyzed in terms

of both **statics (stability)** and **dynamics (change)**.

- He explained that social processes often have many functions. He introduced manifest and latent functions and social dysfunction.

Manifest Functions

- Are intended and recognized consequences of social actions or structures. These are the functions an institution is designed to serve.

Latent Functions

- Are unintended and often unrecognized consequences. These are good and useful, however not the reason the institution exist. Latent functions can be beneficial, neutral, or harmful.

Social Dysfunctions

- Refers to the negative consequences of social phenomena or structures that undermine the stability or functioning of society.

Adaptations to Strain according to Merton:

1. **Conformists:** accept the goals that society sets for them, as well as the institutionalized means of achieving them.
2. **Innovators:** accept society's goals but reject the usual ways of achieving them.
3. **Ritualists:** reject cultural goals but still accepts the institutionalized means of achieving them.
4. **Retreatists:** reject cultural goals as well as the institutionalized means of achieving them.
5. **Rebels:** not only rejects culturally approved goals and the means of achieving them, but they replace them with their own goals.

APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING DEVIANCE		
Anomie-Strain Theory		
	CULTURAL GOALS	INSTITUTIONAL MEANS
CONFORMITY	+	+
INNOVATION	+	-
RITUALISM	-	+
RETREATISM	-	-
REBELLION	-	→

Where can we use Structural Functionalism in Social Work?

- **Social workers** apply structural functionalism to examine how institutions like families, schools, and healthcare systems either support or undermine a person's well-being. Seeing society as a connected network helps professionals spot problems, understand the individual's place within it, and create plans to bring balance back.
- **Community work:** Review local services, centers, and groups to see if they properly serve residents' needs.
- **Family assessments:** Check if members are carrying out their roles (such as providing income or care) and handling conflicts to keep the household stable.
- **Policy review:** Analyze whether laws and government programs help unite society and keep it stable, or if they get in the way

How does it work?

Mapping systems

- Outline the person's surroundings to see which areas (work, school, or housing) are functioning well and which are causing issues.

Rebalancing support

- Step in to fix imbalances; for example, helping someone without a job get

training so they can meet their own needs and contribute to the community

Recognizing different effects

- Based on Robert Merton's ideas, this means telling apart the planned results of social systems from the unplanned or hidden ones, to better understand both people's actions and where institutions fall short.

Critisms

- **Cannot Explain Conflict or Change:** The biggest flaw is that it focuses too much on balance and order. It struggles to explain why societies change, why groups fight, or how power and inequality work. It is often seen as politically conservative because it assumes the way things are is the way they should be.
- **Ignores Psychology:** Parsons looked only at social roles and systems, not at individual minds, emotions, or scientific psychological research. He focused on motives and goals but did not use controlled experiments or lab-based evidence
- **Methodology Debate:** Earlier theories used quantitative methods like collecting statistics and measurable data. Parsons preferred qualitative methods which is observing behavior, talking to people, and comparing situations. Critics said this was less scientific, though today both methods are recognized as useful for different purposes

Relevance to Social Change & Development View of Society as an Integrated System

- It explains that society operates like a human body, where institutions such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy each have a specific function and work together to meet people's biological and social needs. This is relevant because it shows how different parts of society are connected and depend on each other to

maintain stability and order, which is the foundation for understanding how society functions and develops.

Social Change as Adaptive Mechanism

- It defines social change as an adaptive mechanism that addresses strain within the social system. When one part changes, it creates tension, and other parts make corresponding adjustments to restore equilibrium. This is relevant because it explains how and why change happens. That change is not random, but a necessary process that allows society to fix problems, adapt to new conditions, and keep functioning smoothly.

Development as Increasing Complexity & Differentiation

- Scholars like Talcott Parsons posit that societal development arises from increasing complexity and functional differentiation, meaning societies grow by creating more specialized institutions to handle different needs. This is relevant because it directly explains what development is, it is the process of societies becoming more advanced, organized, and capable through dividing tasks and creating more distinct structures to serve the population.

Organic Analogy as Framework for Analysis

- Originating from Herbert Spencer, the comparison of society to a living body illustrates that all parts must work together and adapt together for the whole to survive and progress. This is relevant because it provides a clear framework to analyze how changes in one area (like technology or economy) affect all other areas, and how coordinated adaptation leads to long-term growth and stability

ROSTOW'S MODERNIZATION THEORY

Rostow's Modernization Theory

- Is a five step Model developed by Walt W. Rostow during the 1960's
- **Full Name:** Walt Whitman Rostow

- **Born:** October 7, 1916
- **Died:** February 13, 2003
- **Nationality:** American
- **Profession:** Economist, historian, political adviser

Rostow's 5 Stages of Economic Growth

1. Traditional Society

- This is the first and primary stage of economic growth where it's economy is based on agriculture and subsistence farming. People produce just enough to survive, with little surplus for trade or investment.
- Technology was limited due to the lack of innovation and education, and the society has a rigid structure often relying on customs and traditions to guide daily

2. Preconditions for Take-off.

- In this stage, a society begins to change and prepare for growth. Over time, small but important developments occur like investments in education, improved transportation, and new leadership and foreign influence inspire change. Modern economic practices like trade and entrepreneurship increase in value. These conditions "**set the stage**" for rapid growth.

3. Take-off.

- This stage is the turning point where the economy starts to grow rapidly. Investments are made in industries such as manufacturing, transportation, and energy. More factories are built, and cities expand. Productivity increases sharply, and exports begin to rise. This growth is usually supported by both government and private investment. It often involves a cultural shift as people begin to accept industrial jobs and new ways of living.

4. Drive to Maturity.

- At this stage, the country has already industrialized, and growth spreads to many parts of the economy. Technology becomes more advanced and is applied in areas like farming, medicine, and transportation. Standards of living rise, education becomes more widespread,

and institutions grow stronger. Innovation and specialization develop, making the country more self-sufficient and competitive globally.

5. Age of High Mass Consumption

- In the final stage, the economy shifts from producing just basic needs to offering a wide range of goods and services. People have disposable income and can afford luxuries like cars, houses, smartphones, and foreign travel. Most jobs are now in the service sector, rather than factories and farms. The country is now fully modern with strong institutions and high standards of living.

Strengths	Criticism
Easy to understand	Assumes all countries follow a linear path of development
Emphasize investments, industrialization, and infrastructure	It is too simple, ignoring real-life circumstances
Serves as a blueprint for developing countries	The model is based heavily on the Western experience

Relevance to Social Change and Development Perspective

- Explains how societies develop from traditional to modern.
- Shows that economic growth can bring social change.
- Helps us understand how countries improve through education, technology, and industrialization.
- Encourages governments to invest in development for a better quality of life.
- Reminds us that not all countries develop in the same way because each has different cultures, histories, and resources.

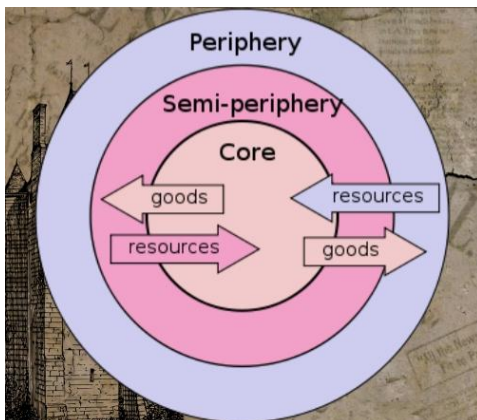
DEPENDENCY THEORY

What is Dependency Theory?

- It explains global inequality **between rich and poor nations**. Wealthy countries exploit poorer ones through trade, aid, and debt. Poor nations remain dependent and underdeveloped. Resources flow from poor countries to rich ones, while manufactured goods flow from rich countries to poor ones. This system keeps poorer countries dependent on richer ones.

Global Structure

- **CORE COUNTRIES**
 - Center
 - Most powerful
- **SEMI-PERIPHERY COUNTRIES**
 - The bridge of Core Countries & Periphery Countries
 - Is both independent & dependent
- **PERIPHERY COUNTRIES**
 - Outer
 - Is less developed



Application in Social Work

Dependency Theory helps social workers recognize when programs may unintentionally create reliance rather than empowerment. It guides them to promote skills development,

community participation, and sustainable solutions. Additionally, it provides insight into how global and economic systems influence local poverty, helping practitioners design more effective and equitable interventions.

Relevance to Social Change and Development

Dependency Theory is highly relevant in understanding social change and development because it explains how global economic relationships shape the progress of nations. It emphasizes that development is not solely determined by a country's internal efforts, but is greatly influenced by its relationship with more powerful countries.

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

KARL MARX (May 5, 1818 – March 14, 1883)

- German philosopher, social and political theorist, economist, journalist, and revolutionary socialist.
- Developed the theory of historical materialism.
- **Co-authored *The Communist Manifesto (1848)*** with his lifelong friend Friedrich Engels.

DIALECTICS

- A method of **examining and discussing opposing ideas** in order to find the truth. *dialektos* "discourse, way of speaking."

DIALECTICAL

- ***Dialecte*** "denoting the art of investigating the truth of opinions."
- Process

MATERIALISM

A theory that physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all being, processes, and occurrences may be described as manifestations or effects of matter

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

- Philosophy of science and nature

- Developed in the late 19th century by **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels**.
- Proposes that the world is material, that all phenomena are the result of matter in motion, and that the world's evolution is the product of a dialectical process driven by internal contradiction

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

- Explain the dynamics of economic and social change.
- It posits that human beings derive meaning from their material conditions and the products they create.
- These relationships are never static.
- Internal conflicts arise from the evolving means and relations of production, leading to broader political and social transformations

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

- **Materialism** holds that matter is the essential substance and that the mind comes from and is a reflection of matter

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM (STAGES OF HISTORY)

1. Primitive Society

- People produce their own survival.
- A primitive society refers to a small, technically and socially **“simple”** community that is held together by the relations of reproduction.

2. Slave Society

- Haves and Have-nots.
- A society where the fundamental class conflict is based on the division of people into masters and slaves, with slaves being the dominant producing class, and ownership over this complete commodification of the human being is controlled by masters.

3. Feudal Society

- Elites expanded their territories through war.
- In the feudal system, a peasant or worker known as a vassal received a

piece of land in return for serving a lord or king, especially during times of war

4. Capitalist Society

- Bourgeoisie (Capitalist) and the Proletariat (Working Class). A society where people seek to obtain ownership of means of production to use to increase their wealth. Some people have little or no chance of owning sufficient means of production to live, and instead sell their labor to those who own productive property.

5. Socialist Society

- The end or bringing down of the capitalist through war.
- A system of production where goods and services are produced directly for use, in contrast to a capitalist economic system, where goods and services are produced to generate profit and therefore indirectly for use. "Production under socialism would be directly and solely for use.

6. Communist Society

- A world without money, where everyone gives according to their needs.
- In a Communist system, individual people do not own land, factories, or machinery.
- Instead, the government or the whole community owns these things. Everyone is supposed to share the wealth that they create

Why did Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels develop the Dialectical and Historical Materialism?

- **TO CORRECT OLD IDEAS** → Replaced “spirit or ideas shape the world” with the truth that “material life shapes reality”
- **TO EXPLAIN CHANGE** → Nothing stays the same; change comes from internal conflicts
- **TO UNDERSTAND HISTORY** → Proved history is not random, but driven by production and class relations

- **TO GUIDE PROGRESS** → Showed that unfair systems are not permanent and can be changed.

APPLICATION IN SOCIAL WORK

Dialectical and Historical materialism helps **Social Workers** look beyond individual struggles to find root causes. It teaches us that poverty and inequality often come from unfair systems, not personal failure. It guides us to understand people based on their real-life situations, empowers communities to fight for better conditions, and pushes us to work toward fair access to resources and dignity for all.

RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

This theory shows that societies grow and change by resolving conflicts between unequal groups. Real development means progress that benefits everyone, not just the rich. It reminds us that unfair systems are not permanent, and meaningful change happens when people work together. We can also learn from history to build more just and sustainable communities

NEOLIBERALISM

What is Neoliberalism?

- **Neoliberalism** is a complex and often debated term in economics and political science. It generally refers to a set of market-based reform policies that emphasize free markets, deregulation, privatization, and reduced government intervention in the economy.
- The term **neo** means "**new**," while **liberalism** refers to the idea of "**freedom**." Combined, these concepts form the basis of "**neoliberalism**," which centers on new interpretations of freedom, often related to economic policies and market-oriented approaches.

Market-based Reforms

1. **Economic Liberalization** - Process of reducing government intervention in the economy, including privatizing state-owned

enterprises, deregulating industries, and promoting free markets. The goal is to increase competition, enhance efficiency, and encourage economic growth by allowing market forces to operate with minimal restrictions

2. **Privatization** - Neoliberalism encourages the transfer of public services and assets to private ownership, believing the private sector can manage them more effectively.
3. **Deregulation** - It promotes reducing government regulations on businesses, aiming to boost economic efficiency and growth
4. **Free Trade** - Refers to the removal of barriers to international commerce, such as tariffs, quotas, and regulations, to encourage the unrestricted flow of goods and services between countries.
5. **Free Market** - Neoliberalism advocates for minimal government interference in the market, allowing for greater competition and individual choice.

INSTITUTION ESTABLISHED UNDER NEOLIBERALISM

1. **The World Bank (WB)** - Concentrates on long-term investment projects, institution-building, and on social, environmental, and poverty issues.
2. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** - IMF focuses on the functioning of the international monetary system, and on promoting sound macroeconomic policies as a precondition for sustained economic growth.
3. **World Trade Organization** - An international organization that regulates and facilitates trade between nations. It was established on **January 1, 1995**, and is headquartered in Geneva Switzerland. The WTO provides a forum for negotiating trade agreements, resolving disputes between member countries, and overseeing the implementation of trade rules.
4. **General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT 1947)** - A treaty minimizing barriers to international trade by eliminating or

reducing quotas, tariffs, and subsidies. It was intended to boost economic recovery after World War II. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a legal agreement between many countries, whose overall **purpose was to promote international trade by reducing or eliminating trade barriers** such as tariffs or quotas.

Pros: Potential for economic growth, increased efficiency, and individual liberty.

Cons: Increased inequality, market failures, harm to social safety nets, environmental damage, and social fragmentation

Relevance to Social Change and Development

Neoliberalism is relevant to social change and development because it encourages free markets and private businesses, which can help improve the economy and create more opportunities. However, it may also lead to inequality and fewer government services for some people.

GLOBALIZATION

- Derived from the word "**globalize**" which refers to the emergence of an international network of economic systems
- A process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investments and aided by information technology. (Levin Institute, 2016)

TYPES OF GLOBALIZATION

1. **Economic Globalization** - refers to the increasing interdependence of world economies as a result of the growing scale of cross-border trade of commodities and services, the flow of international capital, and the wide and rapid spread of technologies. (Shangquan, 2000) 2

2. **Military Globalization** - According to David Held, military globalization is the process that embodies the growing extensity and intensity of military relations among the political units of the world system.
3. **Cultural Globalization** - refers to the interpenetration of cultures which, as a consequence, means nations adopt principles, beliefs, and costumes of other nations, losing their unique culture to a unique globalized supra-culture
4. **Globalization and Politics** - refers to the absence of the absolute sovereignty of a state ' s political borders over a certain area as well as increased interaction between the systems of government and increased external intervention and interaction on the basis of democracy, non-governmental organizations, human rights, and freedom.
5. **Technological Globalization** - the advancement of technology we can now already communicate with others despite the distance separates us. Through our technology today, the process of globalization is now taking place much easier and faster.
6. **Geographical Globalization** - the set of processes that contribute to the relationship between societies and individuals around the world. It is a progressive process by which exchanges and flows between different parts of the world are intensified.
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Effects of Globalization on Social Change and Development

1. **Cultural Exchange & Hybridization** - cultures mix, leading to both cultural enrichment and potential loss of traditional identities.
2. **Economic Disparities** - wealth and concentration in developed nations, while

developing countries may face exploitation despite economic growth.

3. **Migration & Urbanization** - increased movement of people for better opportunities, impacting demographics and social structures.
4. **Social Inequalities** - widening gaps between rich and poor, along with labor exploitation and job displacement. 5
5. **Technological Connectivity** - faster communication and information sharing. but also digital divides and misinformation risk.
6. **Environmental Impact** - Industrialization and mass production contribute to climate change and resource depletion.
7. **Change in Social Norms** - greater awareness of human rights, gender equality, and social justice movements due to global influences.

Relevance of Globalization on Social Change and Development

Globalization is a powerful driver of social change and development because it expands opportunities for economic growth, innovation, cultural exchange, and international cooperation. At the same time, it presents challenges that require effective policies and collective action to ensure that development is equitable, sustainable, and beneficial to all members of society.