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**MODERNISATION TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE STATE AND**  
**SOCIETY**

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**Abstract**

The concept of modernization theories does not imply a holistic scientific trend. It is a peculiar combination of methodologically heterogeneous concepts, models and logical methods of analysis. They aim to explain the nature of socio-political development, avoiding simplistic ideas of no-alternative and linear industrial-capitalist progress and identifying the causes of deviation of transitional societies from the supposedly model path developed in the Enlightenment era and traversed by industrial revolutions. The article discusses the comprehensive process of modernization is aimed at changing all institutional spheres of society, resulting in the expansion of human knowledge and control over the environment. Modernization is a set of fundamental processes of qualitative transformation of the social and political system, as a result of which this system increases its adaptive capacity and moves to a new stage of development. The theoretical basis of modernisation is represented by theories of modernisation, which were greatly influenced by evolutionism, functionalism, diffusionism. Modernisation theory was intended to compete with macroxism and its influence on the development of the social sciences.

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## **1. Introduction**

The topic of modernisation in contemporary political discourse does not lose its relevance. Researchers focus on various aspects of transformations of states and society, assessing the purpose, cost, resources, potential of modernisation, taking into account the role of external and internal environment of modernisation, subjective factors that cause changes. The dualistic nature of modernisation is pointed out: on the one hand, it is a world-historical process, but at the same time it is a specific national one (Gavrov, 2002).

Does this mean that each state should have a certain model of modernisation or are there tested "recipes" or methods of transformation? Of course, it is fashionable to talk about general patterns of modernisation, but they should be considered taking into account the political, socio-economic and spiritual-cultural specifics of a particular society (Joas & Knebl, 2011).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The comprehensive process of modernisation is aimed at changing all institutional spheres of society, resulting in the expansion of human knowledge and control over the environment. Modernisation is a set of fundamental processes of qualitative transformation of the social and political system, as a result of which this system increases its adaptive capacity and moves to a new stage of development. According to P Stompka, the concept of modernisation is used as a multivariate category; hence there is multiplicity of approaches to the analysis of this process (Kornienko, 2014).

## **3. Research Questions**

Firstly, modernisation is synonymous with all progressive changes, when society moves forward on some set scale of improvements, meaning progress in all spheres of social life.

Secondly, the concept of modernisation is authentic to "modernity" meaning the complex of spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and political transformations that have been taking place in the West since the New Age (Melville, 2005). Their result was the transformation of traditional or pre-technological society into a society characterised by rational, secular relations, with highly differentiated social structures based on machine technology (Poberezhnikov, 2005).

Thirdly, modernisation is a process of development of backward or underdeveloped liberal societies towards the most developed countries existing in a single time continuum.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Within the framework of the modernization concept, a proliferation of theoretical, methodological and disciplinary approaches has emerged that seek to clarify the multifaceted aspects of development processes. These approaches draw inspiration from a wide range of disciplines, including economics, sociology, anthropology and political science. The convergence of these approaches has led to the creation of a comprehensive framework for understanding development, encompassing its economic, social, cultural and political dimensions. Theoretical models such as dependency theories, world-system

theory, and modernization theories provide analytical frameworks for studying development dynamics (Lipich & Balahura, 2024; Regnerová et al., 2024; Shumilina & Antsiferova, 2024).

Methodological approaches, including quantitative methods, qualitative research, and comparative analysis, allow researchers to empirically test theoretical hypotheses and advance our understanding of various aspects of development. Disciplinary approaches such as development economics, development sociology and development anthropology provide specialized knowledge about specific areas of development such as economic growth, social equity and cultural change. Together, these approaches contribute to an in-depth understanding of complex developmental processes. They enable researchers to identify drivers and barriers to development, evaluate the effectiveness of various development strategies, and formulate policies that promote inclusive and sustainable development (Ahmad et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2024; Waite, 2024).

## 5. Research Methods

The theoretical foundations of modernization originate in various sociological paradigms of the 19th and 20th centuries. These paradigms, which greatly influenced modernization theories, included:

Evolutionism: Theories that viewed the development of society as a linear and progressive process, similar to evolution in nature.

Functionalism: Theories that viewed society as an integrated system in which each component performed a specific function to maintain overall equilibrium.

Diffusionism: Theories that considered the spread of cultural innovations and technologies from one society to another.

Pioneers in the field of modernization studies such as Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Ferdinand Tönnies, Charles Horton Cooley, and Henry Maine developed their theories from these paradigms.

## 6. Findings

The methodological basis is the unilinear theory of T. Parsons, which reduces the evolution of human society to a progressive movement from a primitive and archaic state to the modern one. The common views that united the supporters of this trend on the essence of modernisation were evolutionism, which considers modernisation as a necessary, irreversible, endogenous and progressive process for all states:

- i. recognising the universal nature of change, which is peaceful, incremental;
- ii. viewing modernisation as a spontaneous tendency of self-development "from below" as needed;
- iii. recognising the importance of endogenous, immanent causes of modernisation;
- iv. considering modernisation as a kind of final development, which results in progress as a universal improvement of social life.

In fact, all representatives of the early modernisation perspective (1950s – 1960s), despite their different disciplinary affiliation, shared a number of theoretical and methodological proposals of the

evolutionist and structural-functionalist persuasion. This led to the creation of the linear model (W. Rostow, A. Organski, M. Levy, D. Lerner, N. Smelser, S. Black, etc.) of modernisation studies as the primary theoretical and methodological construct.

The aim of modernisation theory was to explain historically the emergence of capitalist policy and the democratisation of the political system in Western Europe and North America, while at the same time identifying the conditions for democratic growth and democratisation in other parts of the world.

Modernisation theory was intended to compete with macroxism and its influence on the development of the social sciences.

The Enlightenment embodied a critique of the 'old order' when European societies were on the cusp of industrialisation and were open to social dislocations to intensify. Convinced of the inevitable death of the old feudal order and absolutism, Enlightenment intellectuals put forward the 'idea of progress' or the dogma of the immanence and desirability of change. Being in opposition to the defenders of the old order, who defended the existence of social mechanisms governed by the political power of legitimised religions and traditions, the ideologues of the Enlightenment argued that rational knowledge of society, based on scientific enquiry freed from religious dogmas and prejudices, was possible and constituted a superior form of knowledge (Dokuchayeva et al., 2024; Tang & Yang, 2024).

The founders of modern sociology, such as Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, considered progress to be a universal historical dynamic that inexorably guides humanity towards modernity. These theorists believed that societies follow clear and predictable trajectories of development. For example, Marx argued that economic systems determine social structures and political orders. He identified successive stages of historical development: primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and, ultimately, communism. According to Marx, each stage represented a more progressive and complex form of social organization.

Like Marx, Durkheim believed that societies evolve towards greater complexity and rationality. He distinguished between mechanical solidarity, based on the similarity of members of society, and organic solidarity, arising from the interdependence of specialized social roles. They viewed social reconstruction as a continuous process of structural change that would eventually lead to the predominance of features of modernity. From this point of view, the emerging Western industrial societies and modern nation-states represented the highest stage in the evolution of social systems.

Modernization theories that described social development served as a prognostic tool for determining the future of underdeveloped states, most of which faced the colonial rule of highly developed European powers in the late 19th century. These theories assumed that these societies would go through a similar path of transformation leading to the achievement of modernization.

Modernization theory sought to avoid the racial biases of previous evolutionary theories, which often divided societies into "civilized" and "barbarian", implying that the latter were incapable of progress. Instead, modernization theory focused on the nation-state as the basic unit of analysis, viewing development as an internal process available to all societies. Although she maintained the dichotomy of earlier theories, viewing modernization as a transition from traditional to modern societies, she avoided deterministic statements about the failure of some societies to develop.

Modernization theory recognized that traditional and modern sectors could coexist in the same society during transition. This allowed her to avoid presenting development as a single, linear process and to recognize the complexity and multifaceted nature of the modernization process. Moreover, modernization theory rejected the idea that failure was inevitable. She argued that through focused efforts and suitable political strategies, all societies could achieve modern status. This optimistic view inspired policymakers and researchers in the postwar period, as many developing countries sought to modernize.

The traditional sector was rural and agrarian; its socio-political organisation was determined by religion, superstition, native loyalties, and similar forces. In contrast, the modern sector was urban, its economy was dominated by industry; its social status was determined by its economic position (social class), and consequently the result of personal achievement and secularism determined the organisation of social relations and public life. In essence, this equated development with the increasing westernisation of underdeveloped societies through the development of market economies of liberal, pluralist political systems.

## 7. Conclusion

In the mid- to late-20th century, American sociologists undertook a pioneering interdisciplinary synthesis that gave rise to the concept of modernization. It has been defined as the comprehensive process of historical transformation through which traditional societies inevitably move into the modern state. According to this epochal paradigm, modernization represented a roadmap for evolutionary progress at the global level. It assumed the consistent advancement of cultural values, economic systems and political institutions along a linear path of ascent to a rational economy, liberal society and democratic governance.

The United States was considered to embody the ideal of modernization, which became a point of reference for comparison of other countries. This theory established a dichotomy between traditionalism and modernity as ends of the spectrum of historical development. Thus, the modernization paradigm positioned traditional societies as the starting point and modern ones as the final goal. She assumed that all societies would inevitably follow this linear path towards an inevitable progressive transformation.

The theorists of traditional modernisation believed that the natural process of social development could be decisively accelerated. Through careful study of the traditional world, proponents of modernisation hoped to identify the main levers of social change. They also sought to promote the spread of advanced forms of knowledge, technology and the financial assistance necessary to facilitate the destabilising still necessary transition to what they saw as a democratic, capitalist end point of development. At the peak of the Cold War, modernisation embodied the highest aspirations of American liberalism. In addition to setting the historical course for global change, modernisation also promised the tools necessary to steer society along the 'right path of development'.

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