

**MAX WEBER, RATIONALITY AND DEVELOPMENT:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEM OF  
"RATIONALITY" IN LIBERAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES**

**Gillian Patricia Watkins**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social  
Science in the Department of Sociology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.**

**Pietermaritzburg  
December 1991**

## ABSTRACT

Weber's writing on rationality and processes of rationalisation, which provided insights into the origins and elements of industrial capitalist society, play a significant role in liberal conceptions of development.

Weber established that the rise of capitalist industrial society in the Occident was accompanied by large-scale increases in the formal-instrumental aspects of rationality within the social structure as a whole. This insight led orthodox conceptions of development to regard the value and substantive aspects of rationality as obstacles to development, as characteristics of "traditional" or "pre-capitalist" social structures. Thus development is understood in terms of the necessity for formal rationality to transcend substantive rationality, and its success is gauged in terms of the extent to which formal-instrumental rationality has overcome the value and substantive aspects of rationality within social structures generally.

This dissertation contends that many of the problems associated with the contemporary development crisis are precisely the consequence of a concept of rationality that stresses formal-instrumental components at the expense of substantive ones, a concept that perceives rationality as the denial of substance.

The development problem is addressed by returning to an analysis of Weber's writings on rationality and rationalisation, focusing particularly on the argument that in modern society, formal and substantive rationality exist in a dialectical relationship; with the spread of formal rationality leading to increasing conflict with substantive rationality, rather than simply transcending it. This relationship becomes increasingly evident when we break with the notion that development occurs at the level of the nation-state, and consider the literature which addresses the world system as a whole.

It is argued that a linear conception of development, whereby substantive rationality is understood to be transcended by formal rationality, is untenable.



Development should be conceptualised in terms of optimising the two forms, rather than maximising one of them.

Such a reconceptualisation would necessitate a greater emphasis on process and on action in the development debate and less emphasis on the structural aspects of "tradition" and "modernity". Stressing the priority of process over structure is also vindicated by theoretical developments in contemporary systems approaches to evolution.

# DECLARATION

Except where otherwise specified in the text, this dissertation is my own work.



GILLIAN WATKINS

DECEMBER 1991

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to Peter Stopforth for his patience, time, and advice in the supervision of this dissertation as a whole.

My thanks go also to Yunus Carrim, for his time and advice in early drafts of specific parts of the dissertation.

Thanks also to the staff of the university library, particularly to Rosemary Metcalf and Ommraj Deoparsad for processing and obtaining all the interlibrary loan requests.

I also wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the following people and institutions for facilitating at crucial stages:

The Human Sciences Research Council for financial assistance.

Chris Albertyn for assisting in the final layout of the dissertation.

Lara Kay and Jon White for providing a room to work in.

My parents for financial assistance and for their support in general.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Title Page . . . . .	i
Abstract . . . . .	ii
Declaration . . . . .	iv
Acknowledgements . . . . .	v

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
------------------------	---

### PART ONE

### RATIONALITY IN THE WORK OF MAX WEBER

#### CHAPTER ONE

RATIONALITY AND PROCESSES OF RATIONALISATION . . . . .	12
1.1 Capitalism and the Rationalisation Process:	
<u>The Protestant Ethic</u> and the specificity of western rationalisation . . . . .	16
1.2 The location of the western rationalisation process within the broader framework of other processes of religious rationalisation - what is rational from one point of view is not from another . . . . .	23
1.3 Rationality from the perspective of the anthropological debates . . . . .	30

#### CHAPTER TWO

RATIONAL ACTION: RATIONALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CLASSIFICATORY IDEAL TYPES . . . . .	36
2.1 A breakdown of Weber's types of social action . . . . .	38
2.1.1 Traditional type of social action . . . . .	38
2.1.2 Affectual type of social action . . . . .	39
2.1.3 The "Rational" types: Value-rational and Instrumentally-Rational Types of Social Action . . . . .	41
2.2 <i>Zweckrational</i> social action and the problem of the value content of ends . . . . .	46
2.3 An alternative perspective on rational action: <i>Zweckrational</i> social action with a consciousness of substance . . . . .	51
2.4 Rational action and the problem of locating the actor at the level of the individual actor . . . . .	54

## CHAPTER THREE

### FORMAL VERSUS SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY:

THE OBJECTIVE COUNTERPARTS OF RATIONAL ACTION . . . . .	58
3.1 The problem of ends as they relate to formal and substantive rationality . . . . .	61
3.2 Weber's ambiguity in discussing substantive rationality in modern society . . . . .	62
3.3 A consideration of the dialectical relationship between formal and substantive rationality in modern society . . . . .	66
3.4 Formal versus Substantive Rationality - some comments about the development literature . . . . .	72

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SCIENCE, DEMOCRACY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT:

CAN A SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT ONLY ASSESS MEANS? . . . . .	78
4.1 Weber's position on the limits of science and the problems which his position raises for a sociology of development . . . . .	78
4.2 Twentieth century shifts in the philosophy of science as they relate to the value-freedom problem . . . . .	82
4.3 Breakdown of the notion that science is objectively detached from society . . . . .	87
4.4 Implications for "ethics of responsibility" . . . . .	94

## PART TWO

### **RATIONALITY AS AN ELEMENT IN LIBERAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE SHIFT TO PERCEIVING THE WORLD SYSTEM AS OBJECT OF ANALYSIS**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES AND THE VALUE-FREEDOM PROBLEM:

SOME CAUTIONARY NOTES . . . . .	100
5.1 the ends of rational development - are they given or open? . . . . .	105

## CHAPTER SIX

POSITION AT THE END OF THREE "DEVELOPMENT DECADES"	112
6.1 Theoretical position after three decades	112
6.2 Empirical position after three decades: top-down approaches have resulted in growth without redistribution	115
6.2.1 Widening gaps and the persistence of poverty	117
6.2.2 Social breakdown without reintegration	123

## CHAPTER SEVEN

DEVELOPMENT AS RATIONAL "DOMINATION OF THE WORLD"	125
7.1 Rationality as "domination of the world" - an integral element in liberal view of development	125
7.2 Evolution as domination, as "survival of fittest" - corollary to the occidental form of rationality	132
7.2.1 Linearity and hierarchy	134
7.2.2 Closed systems approaching equilibrium, organic analogies	136

## CHAPTER EIGHT

MIDCENTURY LIBERAL APPROACHES	139
8.1 Structural-functionalist input to modernisation theory	141
8.2 Neo-evolutionary input to modernisation theory	144
8.3 Critical overview of modernisation approach	147
8.3.1 Built on a mix of incompatible components - evolutionism, diffusionism and structural-functionalism	147
8.3.2 Pattern variables - choices or prescriptions?	150

## CHAPTER NINE

NEO-MARXIST CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND DEPENDENCY	153
9.1 World as one system (with underdeveloped dependent parts)	161
9.2 Static dependency - Frank's original circulationist position	162
9.3 Challenges to Frank	165

9.3.1 Progressive capitalist development is taking place in the periphery: Warren, <i>dependistas</i>	167
9.3.2 Relations of production are not homogeneous throughout the world system: Laclau's critique of Frank's circulationist approach, and the notion of articulating modes of production	172
9.4 Refinements of the circulationist (structuralist) position	177
9.4.1 Wallerstein	181
9.4.2 Amin	184

## CHAPTER TEN

LIBERAL RESPONSE TO NEO-MARXIST CHALLENGE: AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD, GLOBAL INTEGRATION	189
10.1 Ecological concerns and the global growth debate as a challenge to accumulative rationality	194
10.2 Stages in the global growth debate	195
10.2.1 Stage one of the global growth debate: limits to growth	195
10.2.2 Stage two of the global growth debate: redistribution with growth, global integration, and the N.I.E.O.	198
10.2.3 Stage three of the global growth debate: Brundtland and beyond: sustainable growth?	206

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

WORLD SYSTEM APPROACHES - A SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THEIR COMMON NEGLECT OF AGENCY	216
---	-----

## CHAPTER TWELVE

NEW EVOLUTIONARY PARADIGM: SYSTEMS VIEW OF EVOLUTION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AGENCY	221
12.1 Open systems	223
12.2 Coevolution of organism and environment	226
12.3 Living systems characterised by nonequilibrium dissipative structures	227
12.4 Evolution as a creative process - nondetermined futures	229
12.5 Priority of process over structure	232

12.6 Agency in creative evolution: rational action and development . . .	233
12.6.1 Who are the players? . . . . .	239
REFERENCES . . . . .	247

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE ONE: The Methodenstreit: Key Divisions Between the Historical and Theoretical Schools . . . . .	14
FIGURE TWO: Conditions Underlying the Ideal Type "Capitalism": Institutional Characteristics of a Modern Capitalist Economy . . . . .	19
FIGURE THREE: Typology of Salvation Methods . . . . .	28
FIGURE FOUR: Typology of Formal Relations to the World . . . . .	28
FIGURE FIVE: A Comparison of the Types of Rational Action: Wertrational and Zweckrational . . . . .	42
FIGURE SIX: A Distinction of "Value-Rational Orientation" from "Non-Rational Value Orientation" . . . . .	45
FIGURE SEVEN: Types of Rationality of Action, in Relation to Forms of Objectified Rationality . . . . .	59
FIGURE EIGHT: Summary Chart of Weber's Categorisation of Formal and Substantive Rationality as they Relate to [1] Economic Action and [2] a System of Economic Activity. . . . .	64
FIGURE NINE: Table of Conceptualisations of Formal and Substantive Rationality as Interpreted by some writers subsequent to Weber . . . . .	66
FIGURE TEN: A Comparison of the Newtonian/Cartesian World View which dominated classical science generally, and classical physics specifically, with the emergent scientific world view . . . . .	85



## INTRODUCTION

Both the liberal and the marxist traditions share a common post-Enlightenment assumption that, in principle, development means increasing control and manipulation of social and natural environments. When applied in practice, these assumptions have resulted in attempting a top-down rational control and manipulation of people and resources.

While it is traditionally the liberal approaches, often drawing on Weber, which have stressed rationality and rationalisation, Weiss notes that leading Soviet theorists also saw a crucial characteristic of socialist society,

... in its scientific grounding, organisation and direction to an extent that had not previously been experienced nor considered factually as well as ideologically possible in pre-socialist societies (1986:112).

However, in the final analysis, both "modernisation" and "socialism" have failed in their attempts to bring about rational development<sup>1</sup>. The goods have not been delivered to the people (Dube:1988), except for a privileged elite - where this elite has been determined in some cases by class privilege, in others by status privilege.

As far as the east bloc is concerned, "rational socialism" has legitimated centralised state control and status privilege, resulting in inefficient production and distribution mechanisms, rather than in the anticipated egalitarian utopia which it was supposed to deliver.

The contradictions located within marxist thought, as represented in Lenin's ideas about social change, have manifested themselves within experimental socialism. Two central contradictions have been documented by David Lane (1974:25). On the one hand, this perspective has been hostile to capitalism, whilst simultaneously advocating the benefits of advanced industrial organisation. Secondly it has been characterised by an emphasis on obedience to centralised authority, whilst simultaneously advocating that the masses participate in public affairs and decision making. The result has been

---

1. Käsler maintains that for Weber, the more rational capitalism is "the more closely it relates to mass demand and the provision for mass needs" (1988:49). Weber claims that the provision of needs is essential to every rational economy (1947:185). However, at present Soviet citizens are suffering severe food shortages, and masses of people in the capitalist periphery are not having their basic needs met.

industrialisation at exploitative costs to the environment which has paralleled the exploitative environmental costs associated with capitalist industrialisation, together with centralised authority having won out over mass participation in decision-making.

The west bloc has used "rational capitalism" as a legitimisation for colonialism, domination and exploitation of disadvantaged groups. To a large extent development has been an extremely undemocratic phenomenon - characterised by conquest, war, and forced expulsion of the masses of people from control over the means of production (Luxembourg:1913:ch.XXVI-XXIX).

Rational capitalism has been characterised by a "trickle-up" of wealth and a consequent widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, instead of the anticipated "trickle-down" of wealth. Rather than the material benefits of growth being widely diffused, there has been an increasing marginalisation of people (Dube:1988; Durning:1990; Griffin:1987; Hoogvelt:1976;1982; Institute for African Alternatives:1987; Trainer:1989).

As Dube notes, the object of modernisation has not been spelled out in distributive terms, and its objectives have not been related to a consideration of social justice (1988:27). Hence we find ourselves in the position where the world as a whole can increase its economic wealth, even as the proportion of the increase gained by the richest 20 percent over the eight-year period to 1976 was 67 times the proportion gained by the poorest 20 percent (Trainer:1989:13).

Given the structure of the world system, "rational capitalism" has employed double standards while pretending universalism. "Rational capitalism", propped up by liberal modernisation approaches, has espoused the values of the modern side of Parson's pattern variable continuum, whilst in practice has applied different rules in different nation-states and regional contexts.

For example, formal rational legal protection has been built into the substantive concerns of environmental protection, social welfare and wage rates within the first world contexts, while exporting hazardous wastes, and superexploitative capital-labour relations to "Third World" contexts. Multinational corporate interests have been able to locate subsidiaries in various parts of the world depending on relative advantages to be made from low wage rates, the co-existence of semi-subsistence sectors in the "rural" areas, and so on. Furthermore, whilst espousing democratic principles as an indication

of western modernisation, the West has not been shy of aligning itself and all the military backup at its disposal with the interests of the elites of extremely undemocratic states.

The level at which the system is analysed has implications for what is observed. The tendency, in liberal theory particularly, to define "society" at the level of the nation-state, has served to obscure the fact that power relations and inegalitarianism operate across national boundaries. There is an increasing acknowledgement that a conception of "society" at the level of the nation-state is inadequate to explain some of the dominant social forces which are presently at play.

At present it appears that only the elite and powerful strata are socially integrated at a global level, while the less powerful become increasingly marginalised. The system as a whole has only been able to integrate a minority at a social level (Amin:1976:385; Sunkel:1973), whilst encompassing humanity as a whole at an economic level of accumulation.

Part two of this dissertation addresses the way in which the world system has been dealt with in development approaches. In chapters seven and eight the influence of nineteenth century Occidental ideas about progress, rationality and evolution on midcentury liberal approaches (which did not focus on a world system of accumulation but tended to see societies as isolated organisms) is stressed. Following this, the neo-marxist challenge of a world in which parts are connected via relations of dependency is explored. The liberal response to this challenge, in which the problem is redefined to one of an "interdependent world", is critically addressed in the light of the limitations which have been carried through from midcentury neo-evolutionary structural functionalist perspectives. The challenge posed to the liberal conception of rationality by the "limits to growth" input to the notion of an interdependent world is addressed in chapter ten. Finally, the developments in contemporary evolutionary theorising are addressed as they relate to the limitations of the classical paradigm which persistently underlie liberal development approaches. It is concluded that unique events, action, and process are significant factors in the development process, and that evolutionary directions into the future are uncertain and nondetermined.

While classical evolutionary inputs to sociological approaches to development stressed structure over process, closed systems, stable equilibrium structures and determined futures, contemporary evolutionary insights force us to question many of our

assumptions about the evolutionary process and hence the development process. Contemporary systems approaches to evolution stress the openness of systems, the creative aspects of evolution (in which voluntarist agency has a significant role to play), the fact that in unstable systems unique events can take on dramatic proportions, the priority of process over structure, and the nondetermined nature of the evolutionary process.

In recent literature the failure of many development projects in practice has been attributed to top-down approaches where outside "experts" are brought into foreign social contexts in order to advise and rationally implement development schemes (Woods:1990). Failure to comprehend local customs, institutions and social structures will inevitably be met with resistance. In this regard a number of writers are arguing that we need to place "people" more firmly at the centre of development programmes (Coetzee:1987b:5; Dube:1988:62; Pitt:1976:44,49).

An admission is emerging that wide gaps of communication have existed between planners, implementation agencies and the people who are subjected to "development". As Dube argues, top-down messages tend to become distorted, and feedback tends to be poor and usually ignored unless it reaches crisis proportions. It is argued that reorganising the communication network from top-down to bottom-up (Dube:1988:78), or from external-internal to internal-external (Pitt:1976:1) is necessary. Hence there are calls for the need to assess the expectations of the people who are the subject of these development programmes, particularly the marginalised groups (Coetzee (ed.):1987; Harrison:1988).

The idea here is that development should entail consultation with all who are to be affected. Yet what happens when the opinion of the "expert" differs from that of the people who are consulted - when what is rational for planners contradicts what is rational for participants? As Dube notes;

... what is culturally right may not always be scientifically right and what is recommended by science may be culturally unacceptable (1988:58).

In broad terms this simply means that there is very often a conflict between the formal and substantive rationalities of development.

One implication of the shift from a top-down approach to a bottom-up approach to development is that it demands a shift in theoretical emphasis away from formal-



instrumental rational considerations and towards a reassessment of the normative, ethical and distributive components entailed in Weber's conception of substantive rationality.

Weber argued that value-rational ideas of legitimacy find it increasingly difficult to assert themselves in the face of increasing formal and instrumental rationality. Furthermore "there is by no means a historical tendency towards the realisation of democratic ideals" (Weiss:1986:170). If this is so, then democratic ideals will only be attained through voluntarist intervention. Neither rational socialism, nor rational capitalism, nor even rational science, will guarantee that democratically desired goals will be met.

It will be argued that development cannot be seen as a positivist phenomenon, rather it is a normative concept, according to the substance of the goal/s towards which it is directed. Yet who defines these goals? One problem is a fundamental conflict between "scientific rationality" and democratic participation. In this regard it is argued that the "control" aspect of rationality has been closely associated with a legitimization of rational scientific control - over both nature and people - rather than with the possibility for voluntarist control by people themselves over the goals of development and over their own action.

There is a need to return to Max Weber's writings on rationality and processes of rationalisation in order to shed light on the contemporary development debate. Concerning rationality, there are two points which I wish to make at this introductory stage.

Firstly, there has been a fundamental bias in the literature towards an understanding of "rationality" as being equatable with one particular form which Weber identified in his characterisation of types of rationality. This is the instrumental type which is closely associated both with the methods of science and with rational planning oriented to maximum capital accumulation. It is also closely associated with a disposition toward calculable regulation that is a feature of patterns of formal rationality within the social structure, especially the economic institution. I argue that a bias favouring maximisation of instrumental rationality precludes the possibility that development can benefit all strata of society. Rather, it is structured in such a way that to maximise this form can only benefit the privileged strata. The goal of maximising economic advantage, which I argue is built into the ideal type of instrumentally rational action, presupposes

advantage over others, and indications in the literature are that this advantage tends towards increasing inegalitarianism rather than a diffusion of benefits.

It is argued that a central problem in both liberal and marxist approaches is a rationalist bias, where a utilitarian, formal-instrumental conception of the notion of "rationality" has been dominant. In the liberal perspective this is in part a consequence of Weber's attempts to identify the pure type of rational action. However it also characterises the marxist rational choice analysis of the 1980s.

While Weber stressed that formal rationality can explain "anything about the type of real want satisfaction only when it is combined with knowledge of the distribution of income" (1947:212), dominant development paradigms have stressed the "formal" aspects of Weber's conception of rationality at the expense of the "substantive" aspects. There is a need for development approaches to reassess the role which substantive rationality plays in the development process, rather than suppressing its significance. At an economic level, such a theoretical reassessment would correlate with the trend to include factors such as employment levels, income distribution and the notion of self-reliance (Seers:1969;1977), rather than focusing primarily on purely formal indicators such as economic growth rates.

While Weber was quite clear on the significance and role of other forms of rationality, subsequent development writing and practice has tended to stress the formal, instrumental type as "desirable" whilst failing to acknowledge the role of value rationality and substantive rationality in the development process - except for perceiving such types as obstacles to development. This dissertation argues that rather than neglecting substantive and value types of rationality, they have a crucial role to play in the development process - and that the continued neglect of them is to proceed down a development path which tends in the direction of increasing inequality and disempowerment at the social level, and environmental destruction at the ecological level. It also tends in the direction of producing commodities which have no relation to real consumption needs<sup>2</sup>. In the context of socialist rationality directed at rational planning

---

2 As Luxembourg puts it "profit becomes an end in itself, the decisive factor which determines not only production but also reproduction....for the capitalist producer the manufacture of commodities is not an end in itself, it is only a means to the appropriation of surplus value....in a capitalist system of production, it is not consideration of social needs which actuates the  
(continued...)

for the end of accumulating "social" capital (read state capital), it can also be argued that there is a tendency to invest huge amounts of capital in producing goods which have no relation to real consumption needs. This has been evidenced in the prioritisation of the armaments industry which has been legitimated on the basis of a perceived threat of capitalist imperialism and conquest (Baran:1957).

Substantive rationality is of central significance to the current concern over the inability of the current system to meet basic needs, as it is with the concern with the need for wealth redistribution if inegalitarianism is not to increase within the global structures. It is also of central significance to the democratic process.

I argued above that this dissertation was concerned firstly with the bias in the literature towards a utilitarian, formal-instrumental conception of the notion of "rationality".

A second aspect of the rationality problem with which this dissertation is concerned is the nature of the relationship between formal and substantive rationality within the structure of the modern world system of accumulation. It is argued that in modern society there is a dialectical relationship between the two forms - that the increase of formal rationality comes into increasing conflict with substantive rationality, rather than simply transcending it.

The contemporary development crisis raises the question of why - with this huge expansion of formal-instrumental rationality that has characterised the growth of industrial society at the level of a world system of accumulation - it has come to be underpinned by an ever-expanding base of people who are not adequately provided for?

Is it possible that development could be redefined in terms of a notion of "fit" between the forms of formal and substantive rationality (which includes ethical components), rather than in terms of the orthodox perception that it is an extension of formal rationality at all costs?

A central problem is whether or not production can take place in a formally rational manner, whilst maintaining standards of substantive rationality in the long term.

---

2(...continued)

individual private producer....Capitalist production is not production for the purpose of consumption, it is production for the purpose of creating value" (1913:34-42).

To what extent is it feasible for development to encompass both the formal rationality of production and the substantive rationality of distribution for need satisfaction? To what extent can there simultaneously be wealth creation and distribution of wealth to the population as a whole? Can growth take place without necessarily being underpinned by increasing quantities of impoverished and marginalised people? For how long can the non-sustainable exploitation of non-renewable resources - which has provided a significant part of the backbone of capital accumulation - continue? What are the ecological limits to the continued expansion of formal-instrumental economic rationality? Is formal-instrumental economic rationality class-based and directed at an ultimate value which serves an elite group?

This dissertation argues that, rather than anticipating that a maximisation of formal rationality will automatically satisfy human need, the relationship between the two forms is dialectical - such that the expansion of formal rationality in fact leads to increasing conflict with substantive rationality, rather than simply transcending it. Furthermore, it is argued that this conflict is reflected partly in class struggle. It is argued that a maximisation of formal rationality as a development goal can only serve the interests of privileged strata, and will necessarily result in political consequences that will obstruct attempts to expand formal rationality. If this analysis is correct, the implication is that in fact the conditions for a growth of formal rationality in the development process may well depend on increasing the substantive regulation of that formal rationality.

One problem with Weber's writings on rationality has been his inability to move adequately between the level of the subjective actor (which he located at the level of the individual) and that of social structure. Parsons's attempt to bring a Weberian analysis of the unit act in line with a further level of analysis in terms of systems of action is described by Hindess (1988:142-3) as a "tense and perpetually uneasy relationship". Recent contributions to the rationality debate that continue to be optimistic about the potential for voluntarism in the face of post-Weberian structural approaches (Hindess 1987;1988), have raised the question of whether or not the actor should be perceived not at the level of the individual, but rather at the level of a decision-making entity.

Thus, for example, while the idea of "class" as an actor is fallacious, Hindess argues that a trade union can be regarded as an actor. Similarly the capitalist firm can



be an actor, since it contains structures for arriving at goal-directed decisions and acting upon them. In the same way a co-operative with decision-making structures for working rationally towards specific goals could be perceived as an actor. Presumably, a party (as opposed to a state) could be perceived in the same way. Hindess proposes that "actors should be conceived simply as loci of decision and actions" (1987:141).

By incorporating an understanding of rational action into a schema that extends the concept of "actor" beyond the individual, the possibility of rational action by groups can be explored. This would enable a degree of voluntarism which a Wallersteinian type of world system approach to development denies, and open up the exploration of the extent to which collectivities can pursue development goals in a rational manner. The notion of rational action assuming an actor as loci of decision and actions (as opposed to an individual), would entail a consideration of the communicative elements of rationality. Rational action entails maximum knowledge of the facts or conditions of a situation and the meanings of participants when decisions are made and action is taken, so if the actor is not an individual then the facts of the situation can only be established via a maximisation of communication between participants in the decision-making process.

In the light of the discussion in chapter one concerning the value bias built into Weber's conception of instrumental rationality, I argue that development need not be defined primarily in terms of individualistically based rational action oriented to maximum accumulation and self-interested economic advantage<sup>3</sup>; but can also mean collectivities employing the formal methods of rational action to achieve other substantive goals. In this sense development ceases to be defined in terms of, and directed primarily at, the accumulation of capital, but takes on broader dimensions consistent with the emergent concern with quality of life. Pitt argues in a similar manner that development should be seen as "the perceived improvement in the quality of life, even when this means fewer goods and services" (1976:9).

Weber attributes "the spirit of capitalism", which is in essence a fundamentally

---

3 Weber argues, concerning the ethos of modern capitalism, that its "spirit" is the ethos of the modern "bourgeois middle classes" and that "only the methodical way of life of the ascetic sects could legitimate and put a halo around the economic 'individualist' impulses of the modern capitalist ethos" (1946:321-322).

irrational force, to those who accept accumulation as an end in itself as a guide to their conduct (Eldridge:1971:40). Similarly, liberal conceptions of development have perceived people not as an end, but rather as a means to achieving the end of capital accumulation and maximum economic growth. The conception of rationality has been equated with profit maximisation as the guiding economic principle, and as the dominant motive in determining human behaviour (Hoogvelt:1982:113).

This dissertation argues that "development" need not necessarily be about simply treating accumulation as an end in itself. The view that accumulation is an end in itself is exactly what Weber describes as the *summum bonum* (or ultimate determining principle) of the spirit of capitalism.

Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs (Weber:1930:53).

In a view that development need not necessarily be about simply treating accumulation as an end in itself, groups striving in a rational means-ends manner towards communicatively defined goals which may have varying substantive content, would be legitimated as part of the development process. These goals may include substantive content which is contrary to the maximum rationality of capital accumulation. To give concrete examples - trade unions acting in a rational manner to obtain living wages in the face of lowered overall company profits, or environmentalists acting in a rational manner to protect water supplies from contamination in the face of profits to be gained from uranium mining - would be acknowledged and legitimated as part of the process of development. Theoretically the locus of decision-making and action could cross national boundaries (as in employees of multinational corporations cooperating together), but it could also apply to levels much smaller than the nation-state level such as localised communities.

In the case above of trade unions lowering company profits, a communicative component in determining the facts of the situation would also entail the possibility of a locus of action at the level of the firm, encompassing communication between representatives of both capital and union. In this way, the maximum facts of a situation could be made known to all parties - including information on profits and investment (which South African capital still tends to withhold at present). This would prevent the undermining of productive formal rationality through maximisation of trade union

demands in isolation of knowledge of some of the facts of the situation, and prevent undermining substantive rationality in the case of maximising capital demands in isolation from knowledge of other facts of the situation.

In discussing development, I argue that it is the phenomenon of communicative decision-making and goal directed behaviour which is at issue. The action aspects of social behaviour become of more significance than the growth goal. This means that a doubling of conscious goal-directed action and communicative processes are more significant indicators of social development than is a doubling of gross national product. The essential component of such a view of development is the notion of people maximising control of their own destinies, rather than being manipulated by the dominant forces of capital maximising rationality which empowers a few and marginalises many.

In such a view, development is more about democratic decision-making than it is about capital accumulation. It is about empowerment of groups capable of formulating goals and acting upon decisions as to the most rational means to achieve the goals, as opposed to a top-down development approach by which goals are defined from above, from the outside. Attention should be paid particularly to marginalised groups in order to determine what bases exist, and what structures could be developed for goal directed action in order to enable the articulation of their needs and encourage bottom-up communication and development.

Otherwise we are left with a situation where marginalised people's fates continue to be determined by factors beyond their control. Deprivation tends to promote passivity and fatalism rather than development, and at the moment almost half of those living in the so-called "Third World" are existing in a condition of absolute poverty (Dube:1988:112). This after three so-called "development decades".

Of what value can science and rationality be to a person if its only impact on her life is to fatefully manipulate it, in the same way as she once believed the gods did?

## PART ONE

### RATIONALITY IN THE WORK OF MAX WEBER

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### RATIONALITY AND PROCESSES OF RATIONALISATION

In the second edition of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1930), Weber added the following footnote, the implications of which have to a large extent been ignored in the development literature:

A thing is never irrational in itself, but only from a particular rational point of view. ... If this essay makes any contribution at all, may it be to bring out the complexity of the only superficially simple concept of the rational (1930:194:n.9).

It has very often been the case that Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis - which discusses the rise of capitalism in the Occident - has been interpreted as representing the growth of "rationalisation" *per se* and the extension of "rationality" *per se*. Hence the implication for development in practice is that what was rational in the Occident is perceived as rational for all societies and nation-states to follow. "They" must become more like "us" where "we" are "rational" and "they" are not. Furthermore, the perception of what is "rational" *par excellence* has come to be perceived as methodical and calculable self-interested action<sup>4</sup> directed at the end of accumulation, or maximising economic advantage. From this it follows that capitalist social organisation, directed at commodity production without regard for substantive concerns, comes to be seen as the rational type, towards which it is desirable to aim.

More recently, the interpretation that Occidental rationalisation equals the extension of rationality *per se* has been challenged (Kalberg:1980; Lash and Whimster (ed.):1987; Mommsen:1987; Schluchter:1981;1987). It is argued that rationalisation is embedded in religious world views and that when The Protestant Ethic is located within

---

<sup>4</sup> In the Occidental case, characterised by a free market economy "unthinking acceptance of ancient custom" is substituted by "deliberate adaptation to situations in terms of self-interest". There is a similarity of modes of action by which it is oriented "in terms of the pure self-interest of the individual and of the others to whom he is related" (Weber:1947:122-123).

the framework of Weber's other writings on the sociology of religion, it is quite clear that the rationalisation of world views can develop in a variety of directions other than what happened in the Occidental case (Giddens:1978:10; Lash and Whimster:1987:16-17; Schluchter:1981;1987). This view stresses that the Occidental case of rationalisation, like all other cases, is rooted in irrational religious beliefs as opposed to being a necessary evolutionary development.

However, despite Weber's sensitivity to the diverse possibilities of religious rationalisation in his writings on the sociology of religion, he fails to adequately integrate the implications of this "perspectivism" (Kalberg:1980:1157) into his economic theory as regards rational action.

As a result, there is a fundamental discrepancy in Weber's work. While his study of Occidental rationalisation, which documents the rise of instrumentally rational action on a large scale, is essentially an historical ideal type reflecting the interests of the historical school which existed on one side of the *Methodenstreit*, his classification of ideal types of rational action attempts an objective and timeless categorisation - thus reflecting the interests of the theoretical school which existed on the other side of the *Methodenstreit* (Turner and Beeghley:1981:193-246). The essential conflicts in the *Methodenstreit* are summarised in figure 1.

Weber's use of ideal types in an attempt to establish different forms of rational action was an attempt to attain an objective and scientific categorisation. Here the instrumental type, which is located at the top of a hierarchy of rationality in which action becomes more rational the more of its elements are subject to control, closely approximates the view of rationality which the theoretical side of the *Methodenstreit* assumed - that is, rational economic man as being motivated by a narrow self-interest.

While being at pains to stress the contextual relativity of rationality in his writings on religion and processes of religious rationalisation, when it comes to his economic theory as represented in his Theory of Social and Economic Organisation (1947), he falls into a rationalist trap, where what is rational becomes most definitely culturally bound within the constraints of his own culture, and more specifically within the constraints of specifically bourgeois interests. He fails to adequately locate the "pure" type of rationality (from which one is to measure deviations), within the context of a unique belief system and unique economic conditions, thus leaving the path wide open for

westerncentric interpretations as to what constitutes the "rational" and "rational development".

**FIGURE ONE: THE METHODENSTREIT: KEY DIVISIONS BETWEEN THE HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL SCHOOLS.**

HISTORICAL SCHOOL	THEORETICAL SCHOOL
Favoured inductive method	Favoured deductive method
Findings relative	Findings universally applicable
Rationality not universal	Assume universal core of rationality
Economics as an ethical discipline	Economics as a scientific discipline

Source: Turner and Beeghley:1981:197-209.

Weber argued in The Protestant Ethic that the God of Calvinism demanded of his believers a "life of good works combined in a unified system" which led to a systematisation of ethical conduct, and a constant self-control and a planned regulation of life which almost took on "the character of a business enterprise" (1930:117-124).

It was this "systematic method of rational conduct" which Weber summarised under the concept of "this-worldly asceticism" in The Protestant Ethic thesis (Käsler:1988:85).

Suddenly, in his economic theory, this form of conduct - demanded by the God of Calvinism - becomes the rational form against which to measure deviations<sup>5</sup>.

By returning to Weber's writings on the sociology of religion, and then highlighting the contradiction between the relativist views expressed there concerning rationality - as opposed to the culturally bound views expressed in his economic writings - an attempt will be made to clarify my contention that the Calvinist God has been allowed a monopoly on dominant conceptions of rationality and of rational development.

---

<sup>5</sup> "It was after all 'on the basis of' the Puritan idea of the calling that 'rational conduct...was born'" (Eisen:1978:67).

A broader perspective that takes into account Weber's sociology of religion as a whole leads to the conclusion that the rationalisation of world views could develop in a variety of different directions, and can include the extension of either instrumental rationality or value rationality (Lash and Whimster:1987:16-17)<sup>6</sup>, where **either** type is rooted in irrational religious impulses. In this perspective rationalisation is not a phenomenon restricted to the Occidental experience associated primarily with economic rationalisation, rather it includes civilisational developments in the Orient.

In this sense what is "rational" comes to be relative to normative context<sup>7</sup>, and especially in relation to the context of the ethics of the major world religions in which particular communities (including secular ones) are rooted. For example, Weber describes Confucianism as the most rational form of adjustment to the world, the Indian religions as the most rational form of flight from the world, and Protestantism as the most rational form of domination of the world relative to other religious rationalisation processes (Lash and Whimster:1987:16).

Having made these introductory comments, I shall now address the process of Occidental rationalisation - centred largely in the economic sphere - which Weber highlighted in his Protestant Ethic thesis. Secondly, I shall locate that particular work within the context of his broader views on processes of rationalisation generally, arguing that in his mature works there is a broadening of his understanding of "rationality" and rationalisation processes - that his initial concern with capitalism had become transformed into a concern with rationalisation in a broader sense than the Occidental case (Schluchter:1981). Thirdly I shall address the question of rational types of social action, and show how Weber failed to stand outside of bourgeois Occidental values and interests in his attempts to identify the pure type of rational action.

Hopefully, through this exercise, I can demonstrate in part what Sica calls "the ultimate irrationality of those who wish most to appear rational" (1988:38).

---

6 "Rationalisation for Weber is simply the overall effect of the extension of either instrumental or value-rationality" (Lash and Whimster:1987:16-17). In the Occidental case, the process was characterised by an extension of instrumental rationality - most notably in the economic sphere.

7 (The view that "rational" is relative to normative context is also the approach taken by the anthropological relativists).

# 1.1 CAPITALISM AND THE OCCIDENTAL RATIONALISATION PROCESS: THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPECIFICITY OF WESTERN RATIONALISATION

According to Hoogvelt, both Weber and Parsons consider the principle of economic rationality to be the definitive feature of modern capitalism, and this principle encompasses the desire to maximise benefits over costs (1976:45). Rational capitalism is very different from booty capitalism, or political capitalism. Booty capitalism is the type where money is invested in arrangements for appropriating wealth which has already been produced - as opposed to producing it (Andreski:1983:9). On the other hand, rational capitalism as an overarching economic system entails a regular, systematic orientation to the pursuit of profit and a regular, systematic investment and reinvestment in the economic enterprise (Andreski:1983:24; Giddens:1978:3). What factors brought about this systematic attitude and orientation at a large-scale level?

Briefly, Weber associates the process of economic rationalisation in the Occident with the rise of the "Protestant ethic". Besides the general economic conditions of capitalism, Weber argues that necessary complementary factors were "the rational spirit, the rationalisation of the conduct of life in general, and a rationalistic economic ethic" (Weber:1927:354). He argues that vocational asceticism, the idea of a "calling" - which characterised the rationalism of the modern world - has spiritual roots (1930:78). The rise of the Protestant ethic was accompanied by radical changes in the practical action of people, and in people's attitudes towards economic activity. Christian asceticism had developed into work-oriented asceticism during the Middle Ages, but at that stage it had still been an otherworldly type. With the rise of the Protestant ethic, asceticism was brought out of the monasteries and into the everyday world. The unintended consequence of this was an accumulation of capital which was continually reinvested into economic enterprises. For Weber, only ascetic Protestantism "created the religious motivation for seeking salvation primarily through immersion in one's worldly vocation" (Schluchter:1981:173). The unintended result of this change in practical economic action was "the accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save" (Weber:1930:172).

There have been two broad interpretations of the work, the earlier version being more crude, the latter being more complex, and developing as Weber's comparative studies were published.



In the crude interpretation, The Protestant Ethic, in demonstrating the significance of "ideal" variables, was seen as being a reaction to marxist materialist views. The Protestant ethic was understood to be a **sufficient** condition for the rise of capitalism, and Weber was interpreted as arguing the case for a causal relationship between the rise of Protestantism (especially Calvinism) and the development of capitalism (Eisenstadt:1968b:4; 1973:136; Giddens:1978:10).

Furthermore, in the crude interpretation, where The Protestant Ethic has been read in isolation from Weber's other work on religious rationalisation, the economic rationalisation which characterised Occidental development was perceived as being rationalisation *per se* and "rationality" tended to be equated with the action patterns associated with western institutions. As Hindess has commented;

... it is always tempting to read Weber as proposing a conception of history as the progressive realisation of the purposive rationality that he presents as characteristic of the modern west (1987:144).

If one assumes modern western civilisation to be the realisation of an "essential" rationality, it is then easy to proceed to conceive other civilisations in terms of their deviation from this "essential" rationality which becomes imbued with moral values of the "good". One result of this crude interpretation of the west as being a realisation of an "inherent" or "essential" rationality, is that it has helped lead to the creation of bipolar and stage models on a linear evolutionary scale, where the Occident is perceived as a model of development for all to follow (Coetzee:1987c:18-20; Taylor:1979:42), and in liberal approaches, the endpoint beyond which development is not perceived to proceed.

Such an interpretation leads to a sociology of development in which westerncentric perceptions about what is "rational" prevail (Coetzee (ed.):1987; Hoogvelt:1976,1982). This perception results in a top-down, outsider knows better, approach to development. It also places a value on the economic sphere, particularly in its formal rational aspects, above all others. Such an approach has characterised development in practice and has created enormous problems in the process.

The more complex interpretation developed as Weber's Economy and Society (1968) and Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion (1920) were published in English. There are three significant points regarding this interpretation.

Firstly, stress is placed on the argument that there are no "laws of history".

Rather the Protestant Ethic describes the very **uniqueness** of the Occidental rationalisation process. The process of economic rationalisation which characterised Occidental development was simply one unique case, amongst others. In this interpretation, Weber's thesis still challenges marxist orthodoxy, but no longer in the sense of being seen to put forward a simple case for idealist causation as opposed to materialist causation.

Secondly the irrational roots of the unique process of Occidental rationalisation are stressed. Contrary to maintaining that Occidental rationalisation is rationalisation *per se*, it is argued that the particular form which rationalisation takes in western society is the unintended consequence of a long and complicated process of **irrational** religious belief. Thus Weber stresses the **irrationality** of the Protestant ethic, out of which the methodizing of life and conduct, and rationalisation in the sense of a disenchanted life-world unintentionally arose. In fact, his study demonstrates the irony that the anti-religious nature of the modern world in fact has a religious base (Alexander:1987:188; Nelson:1973:85).

Thirdly, the Protestant ethic is now perceived as having been a **necessary**, but not sufficient condition for the rise of capitalism<sup>8</sup>. As opposed to the then marxian interpretation of capitalist development, Weber was illustrating that the rise of capitalism was the result of a unique combination of forces - economic and extraeconomic, rational and irrational (Nelson:1973:80).

These forces will be discussed briefly before considering some the implications of this particular interpretation of Weber's work.

Regarding economic factors, Weber acknowledges that it is crucially important to take account of the economic conditions associated with the rise of the Protestant ethic (1930:183,277). The factors operating in the economy which Weber stresses include rational permanent enterprise, rational accounting, rational technology and rational law. Figure two below is a summary of the characteristics operating in the economy, as well as in the legal and political spheres.

---

<sup>8</sup> The "relationship of a man to his calling as a task" is "**necessary** to capitalism" (Weber:1930:77; emphasis added).

**FIGURE TWO: CONDITIONS UNDERLYING THE IDEAL TYPE "CAPITALISM": INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A MODERN CAPITALIST ECONOMY**

ECONOMY	<p>Rationalised.</p> <p>Presupposes rational commodity calculation and capital accounting - a formally rational monetary system. (Book-keeping, entailing the formal calculation of assets, profits and costs) which in turn presupposes a wide extension of market competition between autonomous economic units. The appropriation of the means of production by private industrial enterprises.</p> <p>Private business, in the form of a "rational capitalistic establishment" is the predominant form which provides for everyday human needs. Land, raw materials, machinery etc. become disposable property.</p> <p>Capitalism as an ideal type also rests upon the freedom of the market (as opposed to monopolisation). There is free labour, a free labour market<sup>9</sup>, freedom in the selection of workers and a free commodity market. The ideal type capitalist economy is characterised by the systematic organisation of work. It also requires the separation of household and enterprise, of private and public wealth - the capital of the enterprise should not be subject to dispersion through inheritance.</p>
POLITICAL ORGANISATION	<p>Modern rational-legal state.</p> <p>The state is characterised by bureaucracy - which Weber identified as being an expression of rational-legal domination.</p>
LEGAL ORDER	<p>Impartial, universalistic.</p> <p>Economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique, rational administration and rational law. This encompasses complete calculability of the functioning of public administration and the legal order, together with a formal guarantee of all contracts by the political authority. Capitalism as an ideal type presupposes calculable law, and administration based upon formal rules and strictly systematic forms of thought which are essential to rational jurisprudence.</p>

Sources: Andreski (1983:25-26); Parsons (1947:32-33); Weber (1930:26; 1947:35,211,275-277).

<sup>9</sup> "Rational capitalistic calculation is possible only on the basis of free labour; only where in consequence of the existence of workers who in the formal sense voluntarily, but actually under the compulsion of the whip of hunger, offer themselves, the costs of products may be unambiguously determined by agreement in advance" (Weber:1927:277).

As regards the extraeconomic and irrational forces, Weber focuses on the way in which religious movements, especially Calvinism, played a part in creating conditions favourable to the development of capitalism.

He identifies the "form of rational thought" that made large numbers of people accept and act upon the idea of a calling and devotion to labour as being "this-worldly ascetic Protestantism" (1930:78-79). The non-ascetic Protestantism exemplified by Lutheranism is distinguished from the ascetic Protestantism epitomised in Calvinism, which entailed a "systematic search for salvation", and "systematic self-control (particularly of the emotions)" (Schluchter:1987:100).

While being rooted in irrational religious impulses, such as individual anxiety about predestination and the idea of devotion to labour in a calling (Weber:1930:76-78); the ethos of ascetic Protestantism enabled Occidental culture to unintentionally overcome the inner resistance of spiritual obstacles to development within the economic sphere (Weber:1930:26-7). Thus the rise of the Protestant ethic was accompanied by a decline of the traditional spirit. The "unthinking acceptance of ancient custom" became substituted by "deliberate adaptation to situations in terms of self-interest" (Weber:1947:123).

The rise of the Protestant ethic was characterised by a radical change in people's orientations, and in their practical action. There were changes in people's orientations to "self, destiny, work, world" (Nelson:1973:79). Its alleged effect upon practical action was to influence actors into action patterns characterised by a combination of hard work, acquisitive activity and frugal consumption. Effectively there occurred a large-scale rise of instrumental action within the social structure as a whole. Aspects of social life became increasingly subjected to precise means-ends control, together with an increase in calculation and administration.

In short, Weber maintains that this large-scale rise of instrumental action was partly an unintended consequence of individual anxiety about predestination, which manifested in the idea of a calling and a devotion to labour. In the Occident, the direction of religious rationalism was an inner-worldly asceticism, rooted in individual anxiety about predestination. However, the point is that such a direction is objectively no more rational than any other type.

Ascetic Protestantism also served to legitimate inequality within the modern social

structure, something else which I maintain was necessary to the rise of capitalism, besides the idea of a "calling". Both the idea of a calling and the legitimation of inequality were rooted in irrational religious impulses. Thus, Weber argues that as capitalism developed, the legitimation of inequality was rooted in religious beliefs about salvation and predestination.

The analogy between the unjust (according to human standards) predestination of only a few and the equally unjust, but equally divinely ordained, distribution of wealth, was too obvious to be escaped (Weber:1930:281:n.102).

Having discussed the differences between the earliest interpretations of Weber's thesis, and the later ones, as well as discussing the content of the forces which Weber identified as central to the rise of capitalism; a few points will be made regarding the implications of the later interpretations - which stress the irrational roots of the modern economic order, the uniqueness of Occidental rationalisation, and the complex, non-causal interaction between the numerous forces which gave rise to capitalism.

Firstly, in stressing the unique character of the rise of capitalism in the Occident, the implication is that we cannot assume the Occident to represent a natural order<sup>10</sup> towards which other societies are moving. In contrast to those who maintain that development follows general laws, and who then deduce that the Occidental path has laid down what those laws are to be; this interpretation suggests that in fact the Occidental experience is a unique historical accident rooted partly in fundamentally irrational impulses.

Secondly, if as Nelson argues (1973:80) the rise of capitalism was the result of a **unique** combination of economic, extraeconomic, rational and irrational forces; the implication is that the necessary combination of elements which came together in the Occidental case which Weber documented are unlikely to coalesce in other times and spaces. This implies that capitalism can only rise once unless these elements coalesce again, which is improbable.

If capitalism can only rise once, then to anticipate that this event will repeat itself at the nation-state or regional level is to miss the point entirely. Rather, the point is that while capitalism arose in the Occident, it has subsequently spread its influence across the

---

<sup>10</sup> The "institutional system of the modern western world is not a 'natural order'". Rather it represents one possible line of social development (Parsons:1947:31).

globe.

Weber acknowledged this in the opening lines of the Protestant Ethic, claiming that the cultural phenomena which have appeared in the west have a "universal significance and value" (1930:13) and claiming in the concluding pages that - today the modern economic order determines "the lives of all individuals who are born into [its] mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force" and that it will continue to do so "until the last ton of fossilised coal is burnt" (1930:181).

In this sense, the role of the Protestant ethic as an element of compulsion to methodical, calculable economic activity has subsequently been replaced by market forces - while "the Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so" (Weber:1930:182).

More recently, marxist contributions to the development debate have clearly demonstrated that capitalism has subsequently spread its relations all about the globe, albeit in an extremely uneven manner where capitalist relations articulate with other relations of production, and even other modes of production.

What began in the Occident has taken on universal dimensions. Thus we need to analyse the nature of the relationships which this expansion has produced, relationships that are not confined to the boundaries of the area where capitalism as an economic system originated. Any development which takes place today is significantly affected by these global relations.

Thirdly, while the Protestant Ethic is probably Weber's most well-read work, and certainly is the one which has had the largest influence on sociological approaches to development, it describes only one process of rationalisation, but rationalisation has historically followed numerous other paths, some of which also have universal-historical significance. It is precisely the **peculiarity** of Occidental rationalism that it has manifested itself in a capitalist economic structure characterised by action patterns directed at a maximisation of self-interested economic advantage. The point that rationalisation has historically followed numerous paths is often neglected (Alexander:1987; Andreski:1983:7-8,10).

It is to this point that my argument now turns.

## 1.2 THE LOCATION OF THE WESTERN RATIONALISATION PROCESS WITHIN THE BROADER FRAMEWORK OF OTHER PROCESSES OF RELIGIOUS RATIONALISATION - WHAT IS RATIONAL FROM ONE PERSPECTIVE IS NOT FROM ANOTHER

Weber changes the meanings of the terms "rational", "rationalism" and "rationalisation" from context to context (Collins:1980; Eisen:1978; Swidler:1973; Weber:1946:293-4). In his Social Psychology of the World Religions (1946:267-301), for example, he identified three types of "rationalism". Firstly it could imply practical means-end calculation in the sense associated with instrumental action, and with the unique form which rationalisation took in the Occident - namely economic rationalisation. Secondly it could imply "a systematic method". Thirdly it could imply religious rationalism as in "a systematic world view based on precise abstract concepts" (Collins:1980:927) or a "compulsion to consistency in belief" (Lash and Whimster:1987:15).

There appears to be a tension between a "westerncentric" Weber (Lash and Whimster:1987:16), who presents a westerncentric view of rationality and processes of rationalisation, and a "perspectivist" Weber (Kalberg:1980:1157); who in his mature writings has shifted his concern with capitalism to a concern with rationalisation in a more general sense which includes developments in the Orient as well as the Occident.

Possibly this tension in Weber's writings can be located within the broad structures of "rationalism" as a philosophical tradition, which Eisen claims he was struggling to transcend (1978:57-69). Abercrombie et al. argue that this tradition stresses reason as being the only basis for a valid knowledge of reality and that very often it led to an implicit value-judgement asserting the superiority of western civilisation over other societies which were considered "irrational" (1984:281). Abercrombie et al. note that such assumptions have been challenged by anthropological fieldwork, but the debates are not resolved.

Recent interpretations of Weber's work argue that in his mature works he shifts towards the position that all the major world religions undergo processes of rationalisation (Kalberg:1980; Lash and Whimster:1987; Schluchter: 1981;1987; Tenbruck in Mommsen:1987). While The Protestant Ethic describes the Occidental rationalisation process, it is argued that rationalisation is not a process specific to modern western civilisation.

The rationalisation of the Occident, though identified by Weber in The Protestant

Ethic as having universal significance, is by no means the only path of rationalisation which he identified by the time of his mature works, nor is it the only path having universal significance (Schluchter:1987:110).

This is hinted at in The Protestant Ethic itself when he writes that;

In fact, one may - this simple proposition, which is often forgotten, should be placed at the beginning of every study which essays to deal with rationalism - rationalise life from fundamentally different basic points of view and in very different directions. Rationalism is an historical concept which covers a whole world of different things (Weber:1930:77-78).

In the conventional perspective (usually based on a reading of The Protestant Ethic in isolation from Weber's other works on religion) the unique form of rationalisation which characterised the Occident is understood to represent "rationalisation" *per se*, and the action patterns associated with Occidental development history are taken to be "rational" *per se*. The most common interpretations of "rational" and its cognates are derived from Weber's characterisation of rational in the context of modern capitalism and ascetic Protestantism<sup>11</sup>.

The conventional perspective represents the Weber who latently (or blatantly?) assumed the "superiority" of the Occidental form of rationality as manifested in "economic" rationalisation. Lash and Whimster claim that around the time of 1904-5 he clung to a western prejudice that inner-worldly asceticism was a relatively more "rational" form of religious rationalisation than the eastern ones (1987:16). It is argued that in his earlier writings, he shared the general intellectual faith in progress based on the rational transformation of nature and the rational organisation of society, and connected Occidental rationality with freedom, and irrationality with bondage (Alexander:1987:185; Loewith:1970:110; Sica:1988:108).

On the other hand there is the "perspectivist" Weber, who with paragraphs like the following stresses the complexity of the concept "rational";

...the specific and peculiar **rationalism** of western culture. Now by this term very different things may be understood....There is, for example, **rationalisation** of mystical contemplation, that is of an attitude which,

---

11 In this context alone Brubaker has identified sixteen apparent meanings of rational in Weber's work, namely: deliberate, systematic, calculable, impersonal, instrumental, exact, quantitative, rule-governed, predictable, methodical, purposeful, sober, scrupulous, efficacious, intelligible, and consistent (1984:2). Eisen identifies purpose, calculability, control, universality, impersonality, logical coherence, and systematic methodical organisation (1978:58-61).



viewed from other departments of life, is specifically **irrational**, just as much as there are **rationalisations** of economic life, of technique, of scientific research, of military training, of law and administration. Furthermore, each one of these fields may be **rationalised** in terms of very different ultimate values and ends, **and what is rational from one point of view may well be irrational from another**. Hence **rationalisations** of the most varied character have existed in various departments of life and in all areas of culture. (Weber:1930:27; emphasis added).<sup>12</sup>

However, quotes like these are out of step with the broad themes in his Protestant Ethic thesis. In line with these broader themes "rationalisation" is generally understood to be the process of the progressive "disenchantment" of world view, a "reduced religious orientation to the world, and an increase in instrumentally rational forms of conduct guided by modern 'value-free' science" (Mommsen:1987:38). Nevertheless, Mommsen claims that rationalisation should **not** be understood in this sense. Rather, he draws on Tenbruck (1975) to conclude that in fact rationalisation is

a step leading precisely to **the intensification of the effects of religious values on society** (Mommsen:1987:38-9; emphasis added).

Lash and Whimster also oppose the orthodox view of rationalisation. They argue that rationalisation as a concept **cannot** be "confined to concrete examples of rational action within western institutions"(1987:8). For them, the basis of all religious rationalism is a compulsion to consistency, which operates as a dictate upon human thought and action. Rationalisation refers to "a process that is common to all religious belief systems", this process being a drive to "consistency, coherence and greater applicability" (1987:8). In this sense, what the Protestant Ethic thesis demonstrates is how transformed religious beliefs have the potential for far-reaching social changes. However, life could be rationalised from different points of view and in different directions, and all the major world religions undergo an internal process of rationalisation (Lash and

---

12 One can see evidence of Weber's difficulty of presenting a perspectivist view of rationalisation - whilst struggling with the culture of western rationalism - by the fact that "rational" and derived words are mentioned over 50 times in the first 15 pages of The Protestant Ethic, and 14 times in the complete version of this one particular paragraph. Sica writes that this paragraph of Weber's "seems a parody of himself at his worst" (1988:158-9). While these pages were placed by Parsons as an introduction to The Protestant Ethic - in the context of the distinction made between the earlier Weberian work and the mature Weber - it should be noted that they were actually written sixteen years after the body of the work and completed a week before Weber's death (ibid.159).

Whimster:1987:8). There are "universal-historical dimensions" to processes of rationalisation and world views which were originally determined by religion "could develop in a great variety of directions", apart from the Occidental direction (Lash and Whimster: 1987:8-9,16)<sup>13</sup>.

A consequence of this view is that it is impermissible to assume that rationalisation is specific to modern western civilisation, and it

should not be identified with the direction taken by western civilisation...other civilisations are not static and forge their own lines of development (Lash and Whimster:1987:8-9).

The significant thing which follows from this interpretation, they argue, is that it is not only possible, but also necessary, to take a less Eurocentric view of the process of rationalisation.

Kalberg claims that the "perspectivist" aspect of Weber's mature work on processes of rationalisation has been largely neglected (1980:1157). In the "perspectivist" view, he argues that what is rational from one point of view may be irrational from another point of view. This is the "perspectivist" Weber who was able to see the relative nature of the "rational" (Eisen:1978:64), who Levine claims went beyond the earlier works of Kant, Hegel, Tönnies and Simmel in that he "transcended the Europocentric notion that the development of rationalism is a uniquely western phenomenon" (1981:9).

At this point I shall draw on Schluchter's work (1981:156-176;1987:92-115) to demonstrate what I am trying to get at in saying that development sociology has inherited a westerncentric conception of "rational" and "rationalisation", as opposed to the more perspectivist approach which comes when Weber's work is seen in its entirety. Schluchter's work is useful in that it helps to situate the rationalisation process which characterised the Occident in a position relative to other processes of rationalisation.

I do not intend to dwell in depth on the substantive aspects of these arguments - such as the content of "world flight", "world adjustment" and so on. Rather, these arguments are used simply to demonstrate the contention that a conception of "rationalisation" as equatable with the Occidental experience is untenable in the light of

---

<sup>13</sup> On this point, see also Brubaker (1984:8-9), Giddens (1978:10), Parsons (1937:567), Tenbruck (in Kalberg:1980:1150) and Weber (1930:77-78).

recent Weber interpretations (Lash and Whimster:1987:8-9).

Schluchter claims that rather than considering Weber's sociology of religion to be a theory of rationality, we should see it as a "typology of forms of religious rationalism" (1981:9). He analyses Weber's work in relation to rationalisation and religion. He looks at the rationalistic kernel of western religion - epitomised by the Calvinist solution to the need for certainty as to whether one would be saved or not. However, he extends the understanding of Weber's work on religious rationalisation by examining the rationalist core in other salvation religions as well.

There are a number of categories which Weber uses in his ideal types, and which Schluchter clarifies. Firstly, there is the distinction between theocentric and cosmocentric world views. Theocentric world views are associated with the religions of the near east and the west, whilst cosmocentric views are associated with the Orient, with Asian salvation religions.

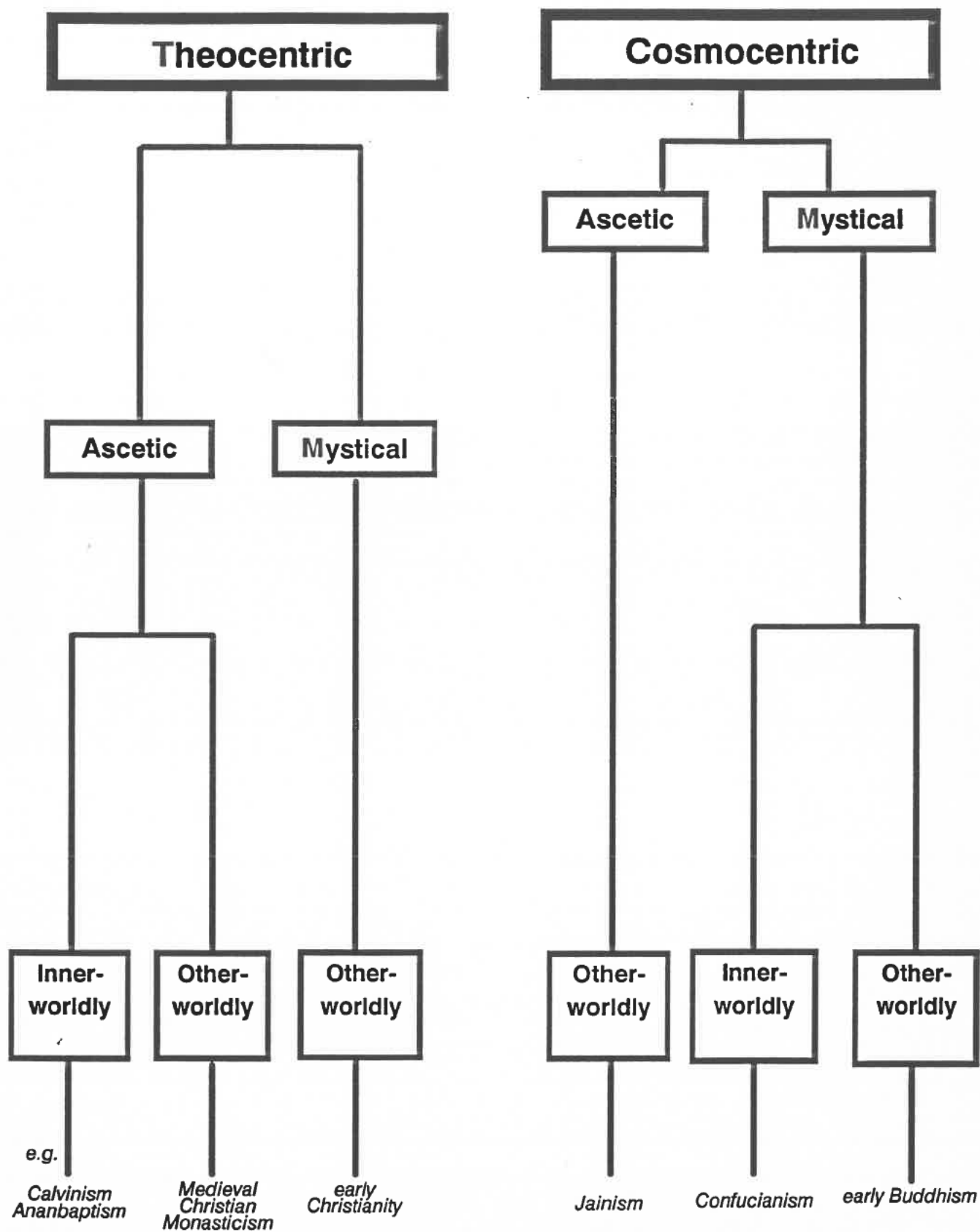
Within the broad framework of theocentricism versus cosmocentricism, there are subcategories of asceticism and mysticism, which in turn may have either inner-worldly or other-worldly action spheres<sup>14</sup>. Theocentric world views tend towards ascetic salvation methods, whilst cosmocentric world views tend towards mystical salvation. These are overall tendencies, but Weber acknowledges that the West has known some mysticism, and the Asian tradition has known some asceticism (Schluchter:1981:161). Figure Three below illustrates these categories.

Drawing On Weber's writings on religion, Schluchter then develops on the concepts of inner-worldly and other-worldly and further subdivides these spheres of action into passive and active attitudes. The final outcome of this typology which compares salvation religions is that there are essentially four ways of relating to the world: world mastery, world adjustment, overcoming the world and flight from the world. These attitudes are exemplified in various religions as outlined in figure four below.

---

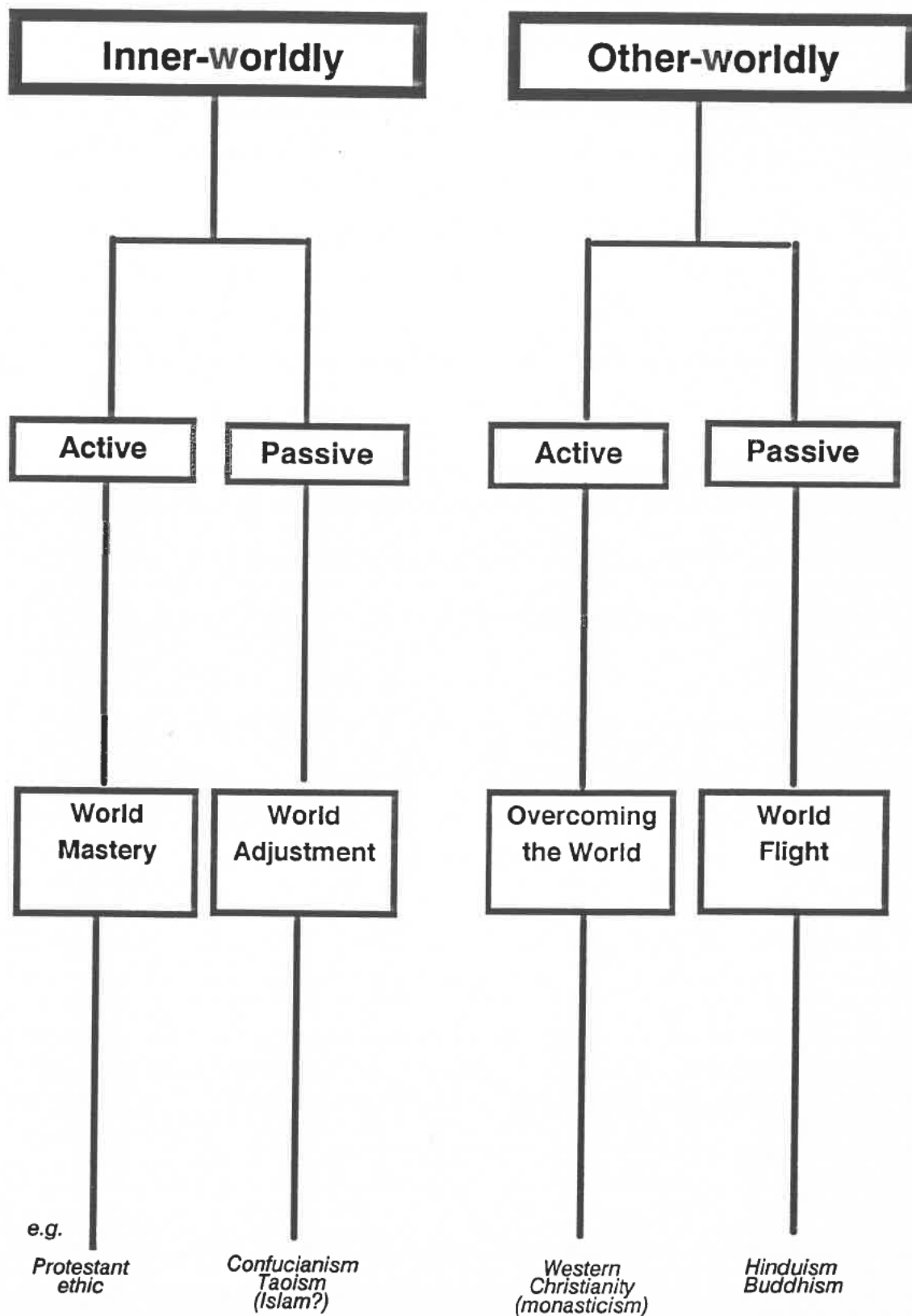
14 In contrast with Indian asceticism, the uniqueness of Occidental asceticism derives from it being an **inner-worldly** asceticism of work (Schluchter:1987:110; emphasis added). Schluchter argues that the Asian cosmocentric tradition does not know the combination of inner-worldliness and asceticism in one of the culturally powerful religions of salvation. Similarly the western theocentric tradition does not know a combination of inner-worldliness and mysticism (1981:162ff.).

FIGURE THREE: TYPOLOGY OF SALVATION METHODS



Source: Schluchter (1981:162).

FIGURE FOUR: TYPOLOGY OF FORMAL RELATIONS TO THE WORLD



(Source: Schluchter:1981:165;1987:112).

It can clearly be seen here that ascetic Protestantism was significant in that it represented a unique combination of theocentricism, asceticism and inner-worldliness. Schluchter maintains that only a unique combination of characteristics could produce the religious motivation for world mastery (1981:170). However, at a broader level, in this interpretation of Weber's work, the emphasis is on the diversity of the rationalisation of world views, where western perceptions of what is rational are no longer a measure against which to measure other cultures and civilisations. This is a far cry from equating rationalisation with the Occidental form, which alone has "universal significance and value" (Weber:1930:13). In this view, the form of religious rationalism (that is, inner-worldly asceticism) which accompanied the rise of capitalism is as irrational as any other form.

On the question of "universal-historical" significance, Schluchter argues that in the case of "inner-worldly asceticism" Weber had tried to assign a "universal-historical" role to this case within his comparative sociology of religion" (Schluchter:1987:110). Yet, he maintains when we look at the complete schema, there are two Indian cultural phenomena that have possibly had a universal significance and validity - these being "striving for salvation through a flight from the world" and an "organic social ethic" (Schluchter:1987:112-114). Schluchter claims that both these phenomena were developed along the most rational lines in India.

If we accept a typology such as this, we accept also that "rational" is not a homogenous concept applying across all contexts. Rather it is embedded in different types of formal relation to the world. In this view, Protestantism is the most rational form of domination of the world, relative to other processes of religious rationalisation (Lash and Whimster:1987:16). However, different religions will be rational in other ways - such as world adjustment (Confucianism), overcoming the world (medieval monastic Christianity), or world flight (Hinduism) (Lash and Whimster:1987:16; Schluchter:1987:112).

Just as Confucianism developed the most rational form of adjustment to the world, and ascetic Protestantism the most rational form of domination of the world, so the Indian salvation religions developed the most rational forms of world flight (Lash and Whimster:1987:16).

In summary, The Protestant Ethic is not the study of the process of rationalisation, it is a case study of one form of religious rationalisation, which happened to manifest in the

economic sphere. The Protestant Ethic studies the Occidental type of religious rationalisation - which took the form of this-worldly ascetic Protestantism which had the unintended consequence of creating a methodical, rational, relation to the world - a relation centred in control and domination as a way of dealing with the world (Lash and Whimster:1987:15-16). The phenomenon of rationalisation in the disenchantment sense of the modern world, is not rationalisation *per se*, but rather an "effect of a prior process of (religious) rationalisation" (Lash and Whimster:1987; emphasis added).

Thus disenchantment, an increase in instrumentally rational forms of conduct, and secularisation - are unintended consequences of (and the intensification of the effects of) the religious rationalisation of one particular salvation religion, which manifested in "world mastery" as a formal relation to the world. Other salvation religions undergo different internal processes of rationalisation - and presumably will have their own unintended consequences.

There is an important point which follows from Schluchter's approach. He notes that a typological representation such as this, presupposes that reality can assume a variety of rational forms. He claims that if we are to accept such a view, it is **not** the task of sociology to assert the value of any one of these forms (1981:165).

World mastery cannot be considered the highest form within the religious-metaphysical world view. Its developmental success does not vitiate the 'rightness' of other alternatives (Schluchter:1981:165).

Schluchter argues that this point is often overlooked in sociology.

### 1.3 RATIONALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL DEBATES

Weber's writings on religious rationalisation demonstrate that rationality is relative as regards differences between relations to the world emanating from the major world religions.

In the context of Weber's writings, a diversion into the anthropological debates may seem to lead far from the tracks of his central contributions. Their subject matter does not address the notion of rationality within a central framework of either the world religions, or Weber's ideal types of rational action. However, it is necessary to address these debates - if only briefly - because they have managed to extend the possibilities of interpretative understanding, or *verstehen*, beyond the parameters of action which is

subject to the mathematical/calculable verification which Weber aspires to (Weber:1947:91-92). Rather they demonstrate the significance of language and communication as means to the interpretative understanding of the actor's motivation and subjective meaning. These writers are concerned with the possibilities for communication and translation of meaning that face the anthropological researcher in attempts to understand unfamiliar cultures.

Like Weber's writing on the sociology of religion, these contributions are concerned with the rationality of beliefs. However, they can provide a complement to Weber's sociology of religion in an attempt to understand the concept of rationality, because they are concerned with the possibilities for rationality in social contexts where the major world religions do not apply. They raise questions about what is the basis of "rational" in any social context which has not experienced the process of religious rationalisation characteristic of the world religions - those who do not have a "unified *Weltanschauung*", who have not undergone "the elimination of magic from the world" - a factor which Weber considers to have been a major historical achievement in the development of the world religions (1930:105).

These contributions are valuable because they attempt the understanding, or *verstehen*, of subjective meanings in contexts which Weber simply wrote off as non-accessible to sociology.

For Weber,

... the more radically ultimate ends or values differ from our own ultimate values, the more difficult it is for us to make them understandable by imaginatively participating in them....Unfortunately **we do not have any reliable means of determining the subjective state of mind of an animal or what we have at best is very unsatisfactory....there is no reason to suppose that our ability to share the feelings of primitive men is very much greater** (1947:91-104; emphasis added)<sup>15</sup>.

---

15 Contrast with Gellner who argues that "in our actual and shared world, diverse cultures, though not sharing their beliefs, nevertheless seem to have little trouble in communicating with each other" (1982:189). Parsons also rejects the view that *verstehen* can only apply to the case of actors sharing similar ultimate values to the researcher. He contends that "language is perhaps the most crucially important source of evidence for subjective phenomena...What has seemed to so many 'civilised' men to be the strangeness and incomprehensibility of the behaviour and thought of primitive peoples, is apparently primarily a matter of the former's failure to admit the latter to an adequately thorough and rigorous investigation" (1947:104n.27).



Contemporary problems of development are in part a result of assumptions such as these. When cultures have come into contact, the rationality of western culture (which is embedded in its own unique ultimate values, and formal relation to the world) has been taken as the only measure of rationality. As a result, development programmes have been characterised by an "external knows better" approach (Pitt:1976:1), where the knowledge of the participants of such programmes has been denied any status, and where little attempt has been made to understand the meanings of people involved.

Weber's classificatory ideal types are built on the foundation of the concept of *verstehen*, and the possibility for the sociologist to interpret action in terms of its subjective meaning - to determine the subjective state of mind and motivations of the actor. The implication of Weber's assertions above is a denial of the possibility of understanding motivations and subjective meanings of cultures with differing ultimate values to his own context. This problem is undergirded by an attempt to link rationality with calculation and control, while downplaying communicative components.

Modern anthropology argues that beliefs which appear absurd to an outsider are reasonable once located in their cultural context. The understanding (*verstehen*) of other cultures thus becomes a matter of correct translation, which implies communication<sup>16</sup>. While nineteenth century anthropologists regarded magic and religion as irrational and a product of a pre-logical mentality, Abercrombie et al. note that studies of language claim that the existence of language implies the presence of logical norms (of negation, identity and non-contradiction) (1984:202).

Within the anthropological debates two broad perspectives can be identified - the universalist, and the relativist positions. The "universalists" assume a universal core of rationality, whilst the "relativists" argue that it is more useful to understand rationality as relative to cultural context.

The tensions between these two perspectives reflect very similar tensions to those between the earlier interpretations of Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis (which saw Occidental rationality as an historical realisation of an essential rationality) and the later interpretations which place his Protestant Ethic thesis within the context of his other writings on the sociology of religion.

---

16 On these debates see Wilson (ed.) (1974) and Hollis and Lukes (ed.)(1982).

Broadly speaking, those who subscribe to the position that rationality is a universal phenomenon, fall into the philosophical camp of rationalism, perceiving reason as an evolutionary phenomenon (epitomised by Hacking)<sup>17</sup>. This camp is aligned with the view associated with earlier readings of Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis, where he was understood to be proposing the view that history is a progressive realisation of the purposive rationality which characterises the modern west (Hindess:1987:144). The universalists claim that there is a "core" of human cognitive rationality which is common to all times, cultures and places - this core has to be assumed if anthropological translation is to take place (Horton:1967). Rationality implies rules of inference, these rules being universal (Beattie:1974), so beliefs that are apparently irrational are "subject to transcultural standards of rational appraisal" (Hollis and Lukes:1982:17).

Those who subscribe to the position that rationality is a relative phenomenon (for example, Barnes and Bloor), are opposed to the rationalist position, and perceive rationality as a **normative** phenomenon<sup>18</sup>.

The relativist position is that "rational" will vary according to variations in beliefs and cognitive apparatus, that there are no context-free norms of rationality. In this view, there is a distinction between the "truth" of beliefs and "rationality" of beliefs. The rationality of beliefs refers to the grounds on which beliefs are held. So if beliefs are compatible with experience, coherent and non contradictory, then they are considered rational, as opposed to beliefs which are incoherent and contradictory (Abercrombie et al. 1984:202).

For the relativist there are no context-free norms of rationality, nor are there super-cultural norms of rationality (Barnes and Bloor:1982:27). Beliefs are acknowledged to vary between cultural contexts and so the anthropologist does not attempt to understand them as a deviation from an ideal type, but rather in the whole context of the culture of which they are a part (Agassi and Jarvie:1974:181).

---

17 Hacking epitomises the arch-rationalist position, claiming that "it has taken millennia to evolve systems of reasoning" and that "by and large our western tradition has contributed more to this progress than any other....Humankind has got better at reasoning...there are good and bad reasons" (1982:52-53).

18 For discussion of the relativist position in anthropology, see Gellner (1982), Hollis and Lukes (1982) and Barnes and Bloor (1982).

In the extreme version, relativism claims that "there are no objective, external epistemic standpoints" (Hollis and Lukes:1982:12-13), that "what we believe to be objective reality is only a product of our own cognitive apparatus", and this will vary from individual to individual, community to community and age to age (Gellner:1982:183).

The implication of relativism is that any world view is as accurate as, or no less accurate than, any other. However, Barnes and Bloor point to the fundamental problem which results from a relativist position - if all beliefs are false, then what is the status of the relativist's own claims (1982:21)?

In considering the relativist position, the implications for a conception of development would entail the principle of endorsing human diversity, as opposed to taking a unitary line on what development ought to be for all people. Of course this principle of tolerance raises its own problems. Gellner, for example, argues that often foreign visions of reality have themselves been internally exclusive, intolerant and ethnocentric. Thus by tolerantly endorsing them we can indirectly endorse intolerance (Gellner:1982:182). However, the alternative is to endorse intolerance in our own culture. All in all it leads to something of a catch-22 situation.

While these debates are more concerned with rational belief than with rational action, they share with Weber's writing on processes of religious rationalisation the feature that they uproot us from the taken-for-granted assumptions of our own dominant conceptions of rationality - highlighting the cultural boundedness of our own assumptions.

*Verstehen* can be of little use to development problems if the parameters of what it is possible to *verstehen* are defined within the context of phenomena most amenable to calculation, and of people with common ultimate values to one's own. Where ultimate values differ from one's own one cannot simply write them off, claiming them to be irrational and then locate the rational within the confines of one's own expectations and values. (This is what Weber does in his attempt to identify the "pure" type of rationality). Rather, the more that ultimate values differ from one's own, the more that communicative elements should enter a conception of *verstehen*, and hence of rationality. Without an adequate understanding of the subjective meaning and motivation of an actor one is in no position to evaluate the rationality of that actor's beliefs or actions. To write off the rationality of those whose ultimate values differ from one's own as irrational is

an easy route to take, but it cannot deal with development problems which arise when different rationalities collide, except by means of domination. This path of domination is the historical path which has characterised the meeting of different rationalities.

Furthermore, in the present historical context of a global development system, the notion of isolated cultures is no longer valid. While it may have been possible a century and a half ago to pretend the objective stance of the anthropologist analysing the isolated community (forgetting that the anthropologist's own presence denied the possibility of isolation in the first place), such an approach is no longer tenable. The tendency in the present and future historical period is for boundaries between cultures which may come from different pasts to collapse and collide, not to remain isolated. Thus communication of social worlds will come to play an increasing role.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RATIONAL ACTION: RATIONALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CLASSIFICATORY IDEAL TYPES

Weber regards social action as central to sociology. Sociology should attempt the interpretative understanding (*verstehen*) of social action in order to "arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects" (1947:88). The actor's subjective meaning and motivation is central to an interpretative understanding of social action.

Central to the positivist method of coming to know the world is the assumption that phenomena are objectively occurring events that can be impartially quantified, and then analysed with a view to generating scientific causal laws that hold for all times and places. In this regard it appears that Weber's attempt to define the "pure" type of rational action - in contrast with his historical ideal types, approaches the worldview of the theoretical school in the *Methodenstreit*.

He uses the methodological tool of the ideal type in his attempt to enable a "scientific" analysis of the rationality of action. He claims that the pure type which can be understood in the sense of a causal explanation is the "rational" type. Hence there can be no ambiguity with the pure type, and this type is used as a base line from which to assess the ways in which actual action is influenced by irrational factors - such as "affects and errors" (1947:92).

Weber considers it easiest to rationally understand a logical train of reasoning, and gives the case of rationally understanding mathematically related propositions. If someone uses the proposition  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , the meaning is immediately and unambiguously intelligible to a second person (1947:91)<sup>19</sup>.

He then says that instrumental action is clearly understandable in the same way as these mathematically related propositions (1947:90-92). In attempting a rational scientific understanding of the meanings of social action (as opposed to mathematical propositions) we use the concepts of ends, means, and facts of the situation. By

---

<sup>19</sup> Bertrand Russell, on the other hand, claimed that "mathematics may be defined as the subject in which we never know what we are talking about, nor whether what we are saying is true" (cited in Zukav:1979:121). In other words it leaves out substantive considerations.

examining these elements of action, we can interpret the meanings attached by the actor.

In an attempt to clarify the concept of "rational" social action, Weber identified four types of social action (1947:88-118).

In analysing these categories, there are three problems which concern me. Firstly, an attempt to present (even for purely methodological purposes)<sup>20</sup> discrete categories of action types - namely affectual, traditional, value-rational and instrumentally-rational - is extremely problematic, with overlapping of cases.

For example, the meaning of both the affectual and the *Wertrational* types of social action lies in the carrying out of the action for its own sake, and not in the achievement of a result ulterior to it (1947:116); both affectual rationality and *Wertrational* social action can be oriented to an absolute value, regardless of the prospects of success (1947:115-116). Furthermore, Weber argues that both the affectual and traditional types lie on the borderline of meaningfully oriented action (1947:116). Thus affectual behaviour may shade into *Wertrational* behaviour in cases where it reaches a level of consciousness, or into non-rational realms when it is a case of uncontrolled reaction to some external stimulus (Eisen:1978:59).

It will be argued below that the boundary between value-rational and instrumentally rational action is also not nearly as clear cut as Weber would have us believe.

Secondly, Weber did not succeed in objectively distancing himself from the values and interests of his own culture in his attempt to separate the instrumentally rational type from the value-rational type of social action. The logic of his argument implies that "pure" type of instrumentally rational action cannot in fact exist, because the ends of such action are inevitably composed of substantive content (Weber:1947:185). When he does attempt to concretise the pure type of rational action - the substance he allocates to the given end happens to be the maximisation of economic advantage (Weber:1947:96). This given end is not devoid of value content, it is simply the dominant value which characterises bourgeois interests within the framework of a capitalist market.

---

<sup>20</sup> Weber does note that these ideal types are not discrete categories in the real world. For example, traditional action may overlap with value-rational action (1947:116) and similarly, the line between meaningful action and reactive behaviour cannot be sharply drawn empirically (1947:90).

Thirdly, Weber's efforts to explain social action causally by using the rational type as the ideal from which to measure deviations, has led sociology to a bias of concern for the "pure" rational type generally, at the expense of seriously addressing the role of the traditional, affectual and value-rational types. Within bipolar development approaches, these ideal types tend to be reified so that traditional action becomes associated with traditional societies, and modern societies are seen to be characterised by formal-instrumental rationality. Weber actually stressed that the ideal type be used as a methodological device, and that it not lead to a "rationalistic bias" in sociology. He writes that the hypothesis that action is purely rational is only a methodological device.

It certainly does not involve a belief in the actual predominance of rational elements in human life, for on the question of how far this predominance does or does not exist, nothing whatever has been said. That there is, however, a danger of rationalist interpretations...naturally cannot be denied. All experience unfortunately confirms the existence of this danger (1947:92-93).

However, despite Weber's warnings against a rationalistic bias in sociology, it can be argued that he did not totally manage to escape the problem of giving primary epistemological status to the rational type himself. His attempt to establish the "pure" type of rationality rests upon a scale or hierarchy, where the more elements of action are subject to calculable control, the more closely they approach rational. He ultimately perceives action as being more rational, the more action aspects it controls (Schluchter:1981:130). Thus, even though he attempts to establish four distinct methodological types, the implicit hierarchy he employs can only result in certain types being imbued with more values of the "good" than others. Furthermore his identification of irrationality and emotion has strongly Calvinist hues to it. Not only the pure type of rational action, but also Calvinist world mastery, requires of the actor systematic conduct and control of emotions.

In the final analysis, I can only agree with Sica's contention that "rationality" has achieved totemic status in Weber's work (1988:4).

## **2.1 A BREAKDOWN OF WEBER'S TYPES OF SOCIAL ACTION**

### **2.1.1 Traditional Type of Social Action**

Essentially the type of action which is traditionally oriented, is determined by ingrained habituation (Weber:1947:115). It is associated with a lack of control over the elements

of action, and diverges substantially from the "pure" rational type which is amenable to causal explanation.

As far as the relevance of this type of action for development theory is concerned, a point that needs to be stressed is that Weber by no means advocated a dichotomous reification of "traditional" and "modern" action as being the predominant type in any specific society<sup>21</sup>. On the contrary, he asserted that

the great bulk of all everyday action to which people have become habitually accustomed approaches this type (1947:116).

Traditionalism - action determined by ingrained habit - is thus possible even within modern society and within formally rational institutions. This is a point that has been consistently ignored in many interpretations of Weber and the neglect of it has influenced development sociology to take a direction based upon bipolar models where the traditionalism of modernity is ignored.

In this regard, Horton for example, argues that within modern society the scientist becomes an "agent of tradition" in the same way as the elders of the village might be in other societies;

...the layman's ground for accepting the models propounded by the scientist is often no different from the young African villager's grounds for accepting the models propounded by one of his elders. In both cases the propounders are deferred to as the accredited agents of tradition. As for the rules which guide scientists themselves in the acceptance or rejection of models, these seldom become part of the intellectual equipment of members of the wider population. For all the apparent up-to-dateness of the content of his world-view, the modern western layman is rarely more 'open' or scientific in his outlook than is the traditional African villager (Horton:1967:171).

### 2.1.2 Affectual Type of Social Action

Affectual rationality of action is in fact regarded as irrational in Weber's schema. Like traditional rationality of action, it too, diverges substantially from the "pure" rational type. For Weber, **irrationality** is the determinant of affectively oriented action.

---

<sup>21</sup> Often traditional action is interpreted as being the type of action characteristic of communities with a shared normative structure, where actors are not exposed to a wide range of choices. "In such societies, people are very resistant to changing their long established ways of living, which are often sanctified in religious terms. As a result individuals often continue in the old ways even when some aspect of the situation has changed" (Turner and Beeghley:1981:218).



For the purposes of a typological scientific analysis it is convenient to treat all irrational, affectually determined elements of behaviour as factors of deviation from a conceptually pure type of rational action ....affectually determined and thus in a certain sense irrational....affectually determined and hence derived from irrational motives (Weber:1947:92-95).

An element which both traditional and affectual action lack is that of "control", which Parsons (1937:592) identifies as central to the scientific world view. That is, while the *Zweckrational* orientation particularly, and the *Wertrational* orientation to a lesser degree, allow the actor a degree of conscious control, or voluntarism in his/her social relations; both traditional and affectual orientations appear to be determined by external factors - irrational/emotional and structural/habituated, respectively.

Peter Baehr has recently addressed the problem of Weber and emotions, arguing that Weber makes a logical error in identifying the irrational with the emotional. He argues that Weber has assumed the Kantian dichotomy of reason and emotion, and never questions "the symmetry of affect and unreason" (1990:242-265). However, Baehr maintains that the identification of irrationality and emotion is false because it supposes a gulf between reason and affect, which is not necessarily valid. In some cases, he argues, emotions and reason may complement one another - "We fear proximity to a shark because of what we have learnt about the creature's human-eating proclivities" (1990:257). Furthermore, modern psychology has shown that feeling is not a reactive state - rather it is "part of a process of evaluation and assessment" (1990:258). Baehr does not deny that emotions can be irrational. Yet it is important to distinguish between intrinsic irrationality and emotions which are "only irrational contingently" (1990:258)<sup>22</sup>. In the case of emotions which are only irrational contingently they may (but need not necessarily) eventually result in conduct that is harmful to reasoned thought and behaviour (1990:259).

Thus emotion cannot be equated with irrationality in a facile manner, as Weber has done. Rather we need to address different forms of emotion and establish precisely under what conditions they contribute to reason, and vice versa. It cannot be assumed that emotion and reason are fundamentally divorced from one another, rather the precise relationship needs to be explored in more depth.

---

<sup>22</sup> As regards "intrinsic irrationality", Baehr draws on Fromm (1973:352-4), where irrationality means "life-thwarting".

### 2.1.3 The Rational Types - Value-Rational and Instrumentally-Rational Types of Social Action

From the above it is clear that in cases where the actor is carried away by habit or feeling, Weber regards those types of actions as non-rational. In considering value-rational action and instrumentally-rational action, we begin to approach the "pure" rational type.

In order to clarify the commonly understood components of the *Wertrational* and *Zweckrational* types, I have drawn up Figure Five below, using Brubaker (1984:49ff.), Parsons (1937:643ff) and Weber (1947:115-118). In the discussion which follows Figure Five it will become apparent that both the accurate identification of the types, and the separation of them as discrete categories, is more problematic than first meets the eye.

The *Wertrational* type is extremely problematic. In all cases, what is common is that in the final analysis it is oriented to an ultimate value. But beyond that Weber's discussion of the type is somewhat unclear.

For example, in some cases he writes of a rational orientation, assuming a choice of means<sup>23</sup>, towards the given (and self-consciously formulated)<sup>24</sup> ultimate value. In other cases, he writes of action being carried out simply for its own sake, for the sake of the intrinsic properties of the act itself. Here, the most important consideration for the actor is the realisation of the value itself, which need not be self-consciously formulated. Hence means and ends here become confused. Such a type, I would maintain, precludes the notion of "rational orientation" to an end.

If we are considering the *ends* of the two types of rational action, the fundamental difference, according to Weber, is that value-rational action is oriented to a given end - an absolute value - while in the case of instrumental rationality the actor has a choice of discrete individual ends (Weber:1947:115-118).

---

23 "In so far as it involves ends, rational considerations, such as those of efficacy, are involved in the choice of means. But there is no question...of rational weighing of this end against others..." (Parsons:1947:115n.38).

24 "The orientation of action in terms of absolute value is distinguished from the affectual type by its clearly self-conscious formulation of the ultimate values governing the action and the consistently planned orientation of its detailed course to these values" (Weber:1947:116).

**FIGURE FIVE: A COMPARISON OF THE TYPES OF RATIONAL ACTION -  
WERTRATIONAL AND ZWECKRATIONAL**

	<b>WERTRATIONAL</b>	<b>ZWECKRATIONAL</b>
<b>MEANING</b>	Lies in the carrying out of the action itself, in the act's intrinsic properties. Meaning of the action does not lie in the achievement of a result ulterior to it.	Lies in achieving a result ulterior to the action itself.
<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No weighing of possible secondary consequences. No considerations of chances of success. The most important consideration for the actor is the realisation of the value itself. Involves commands or demands which the actor feels obliged to fulfil.	Conscious weighing of possible, foreseeable secondary results and consequences.
<b>MEANS</b>	May be weighed. May be choice of means.	Consciously weighed. Appropriate means chosen to achieve desired end, via procedures of conscious calculation.
<b>ENDS</b>	Absolute value. Given, not weighed. May be rational orientation to consciously upheld, self-consciously formulated, ultimate value.	Discrete individual ends. Consciously weighed. Oriented to calculable expectations.

Sources: Brubaker (1984:49ff); Parsons (1937:643ff); Weber (1947:115-118).

In the *Zweckrational* case, furthermore, there is a rational orientation to calculable expectations. In this type, appropriate means are chosen and employed in order to efficiently achieve the desired end.

The *Wertrational* case is not so clear. It appears that there may be, but need not necessarily be, a choice of means in this type. Furthermore, assuming the case where there is a choice among means, there can be a rational orientation to the value-end. So even though there is no choice of end, there is a choice of means to realise this end. Thus in the *Wertrational* type there appear to be degrees of control - depending firstly on the role of means in the action, and secondly on whether or not the value-end is consciously formulated.

The most rational *Wertrational* type (where means may be weighed and where the end is self-consciously formulated) could be represented as follows.

means[1]		
means[2]		
means[3]	oriented to	absolute end
means[n]		[self-consciously formulated]
(choice among means including rational considerations of efficiency) <sup>25</sup>		(end given by absolute value) e.g. aesthetic, religious, ethical.

as opposed to the *Zweckrational* type which could be represented as follows

means[1]		end[1]
means[2]		end[2]
means[3]	oriented to	end[3]
means[n]		end[n]
(choice among means)		(choice among discrete ends).

---

25 (Parsons: 1947: 115n.38).

It is useful to distinguish (i) the case of *Wertrational* action where there is a rational orientation to an absolute and self-consciously formulated end, from the case (ii) where there is a confusion of means and ends, and where the action is carried out for its own sake. The problem seems to centre around the case where value-rational action shades off into affectual action, with the latter case approaching the affectual type (Weber:1947:116).

For the sake of argument, call the first type [Va] and the second type [Vb]. Because there is a greater degree of control in the relationship between means and given end in [Va] than there is in [Vb], one could say that [Va] is **relatively more rational** than [Vb]. [Vb] approaches the affective type, and hence I maintain that it is more correct to refer to it as non-rational value-oriented action, than as value rational action.

By distinguishing these types, Weber's sometimes blanket statements about value rationality can then be treated with some caution. For example, he argues that in *Wertrational* action, orientation is to an absolute value - regardless of the prospects of success (Weber:1947:115). This may be true of [Vb], but it is difficult to see how, when there is an element of choice in means, including considerations of efficiency (as in [Va]); considerations of prospects of success cannot play a role in the choice process. On the contrary, I would argue that where there is a choice of means and considerations of efficiency in orienting action to an ultimate value, there must be a consideration of how effective a particular mean will be to achieving the goal, relative to other means. That is - there must be consideration of prospects of success.

For the purposes of this discussion, I am more concerned with the significance of [Va], that is, with the relatively more rational type where the end is self-consciously formulated, where there is a weighing of means, and where there is thus a relatively greater degree of control over the elements of action - Figure Six below distinguishes the elements common to [Va] from those common to [Vb]. I shall regard [Vb] as residual and concentrate now on [Va] as it relates to *Zweckrational* social action.

While [Va] *Wertrational* social action involves rational consideration of efficiency in so far as there is a weighing of means, *Zweckrational* social action entails a subjection of more of the elements of action to control by the actor.

Weber argues that the case of a *Zweckrational* ideal type of orientation of action entails choosing an end from a system of discrete, relatively individual ends (none of



## 2.2 ZWECKRATIONAL SOCIAL ACTION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE VALUE CONTENT OF ENDS

In contrasting the *Wertrational* [Va] and *Zweckrational* types of social action, it has been established that the choice of means to a particular end is a common element to both types. Furthermore in [Va] it has been established that action is oriented to an absolute value.

As far as *the Zweckrational* type is concerned, Weber attempts to portray the ends as neutral. However, a problem arises in that, while it is structured in such a way that there is a choice among discrete ends, ultimately one of those ends must be chosen, in preference to possible alternatives. In choosing one end as opposed to others, considerations of value must come into play.

A central question is that of values, particularly ultimate values, and the way in which Weber regards them as an "irrational" force, whilst only briefly acknowledging that such irrational forces form the substantive content of the ends to which *Zweckrational* social action is oriented.

How, precisely does Weber see the relationship between values and ends in the *Zweckrational* case? For Weber, absolute values are the substantive aspect of particular ends. Thus, by absolute values, we are referring to the content of particular given ends (1947:185). However, critics have pointed out that Weber actually does not really address the content of the ends of *Zweckrational* social action as they relate to values adequately in his treatment of the types of rationality of social action (Eisen:1978; Lash and Whimster:1987; Worsley:1957). As Lash and Whimster note;

Anglo-Saxon philosophy has interpreted *Zweckrationalität* exclusively in terms of a means-end rationality to the detriment of the evaluation of the ends themselves....when we choose an end we make a moral evaluative choice as well as a means-end assessment of possible outcomes (1987:19-20).

Worsley, in a similar vein, writes that

Weber leaves out of his scheme, as something extra-scientific the analysis of the objectives or goals of action...we can merely take them as given (1957:267).

Parsons also addresses this problem of the ends of action. He argues that the criteria by which Weber assesses rationality are problematic because they do not describe the situation in which an act is carried out. Weber's criteria do not specify the content of the

end or goal (Parsons:1947:14), and they are inadequate to describe a total unit act. They fail to include

the basic value-orientations which individuals have and which are institutionalised in the society of which they are a part (Parsons:1947:17).

Parsons, in attempting to address these value-orientations as they relate to rationality (1937:ch.xvii; 1947:14) has talked of *Zweckrational* social action as being "oriented to a plurality of values". This ties in with Weber's point that values represent the substantive content of the goals of instrumental action. In the *Zweckrational* type there is a limitation on devotion to any one value, since there is a trade-off relationship where such devotion entails the cost of sacrificing devotion to other values (Parsons:1947:14).

For Parsons the essential distinction between *Zweckrational* and *Wertrational* orientations of social action appears to lie in

... the absoluteness with which the values involved in *Wertrationalität* are held (1947:115 n.38).

So in the purely *Wertrational* case, devotion can be unlimited, but in the *Zweckrational* case limitations are placed upon devotion to the value embodied in the substantive content of the end which is chosen from among discrete ends.

However, I argue that what cannot be denied is that in choosing a particular end, ultimate value must play a part in deciding which end to choose. There may well be limits on devotion to that value, but the limits on devotion is a **relative** matter only. That is, *Zweckrational* social action is not devoid of value content.

In acknowledging the value-content of discrete ends in the *Zweckrational* case, the type (called [Za] for the purposes of further argument), can be represented as follows:

[Za]:

<u>Plurality of means</u>	<u>Plurality of ends</u>
means[1]	end[1]
	embodying value[1]
means[2]	end[2]
oriented to	embodying value[2]
means[3]	end[3]
	embodying value[3]
means[n]	end[n]
	embodying value[n]



Furthermore, the argument can be taken further than Parsons does, because once an end is chosen and pursued from amongst alternatives, the limitations on devotion to that value which is chosen from amongst alternates would obviously be reduced.

This becomes even more evident if we are to accept Parson's assertion that as Weber's analysis shifts, *Zweckrationalität* comes to refer to "considerations respecting the choice of means and ends which are in turn means to further ends, such as money" (1947:115:n.38). (I shall call this new case [Zb]). In this concrete case, "money" more closely approximates an ultimate end than do the ends in [Za], since in Weber's shifted schema it is no longer discrete and relatively independent.

[Zb]:

<u>Plurality of means</u>	<u>Plurality of ends</u>	<u>Relatively</u> <u>Ultimate end</u>
means[1]	end[1] embodying value[1]	
means[2]	end[2] embodying value[2]	given
oriented to means[3]	end[3] embodying value[3]	oriented to
means[n]	end[n] embodying value[n]	

That is, in this shifted analysis [Zb], there is choice of means and ends, but these choices are guided by their ability to further some ultimate end.

Following these arguments, one can only conclude that in the final analysis, *Zweckrational* action cannot be easily divorced from the value content of the ultimate end which is chosen amongst alternates in [Za] or given in [Zb].

In fact the "pure" *Zweckrational* case cannot exist. While Weber argued that it

was only a "limiting case"<sup>26</sup>, both Parsons, and more recently Albrow, have argued that it cannot exist at all<sup>27</sup>.

In [Za] there is a post-weighing of ends, value-determined choice of an end, which the actor then uses rationally planned means to successfully achieve. In [Zb] the ends which are weighed are merely means to some relatively ultimate end.

And what is this ultimate end for Weber? For Weber, *Zweckrational* action appears in its purest form in economic exchange (Brubaker:1984:52), and;

The concepts and laws of pure economic theory...state what course a given type of human action would take if it were strictly rational...if it were unequivocally directed to a single end, the maximisation of economic advantage (Weber:1947:96).

What has happened to value-free sociology? Perroux has noted that

... not a single basic economic concept can be really thought through if its cultural grounding is shaken (1983:172).

And yet, in Weber's formulation here, the historically derived ultimate values of the bourgeois capitalist ethos have been built as logic into sociological conceptions of maximally rational action. As Capra et al. have pointed out, when trying to have a value-free science, what often happens is that scientists tacitly accept dominant societal values (1982:5-6).

Weber has pretended value neutrality in the ends of *Zweckrational* action, but here he makes manifest what is latent in the whole schema -the maximisation of economic advantage is the ultimate end (given from the outside) which drives Weber's "pure" type of rational action. The implications of Parsons argument above - that Weber failed to include the basic institutionalised value-orientations which acting individuals have (1947:17) - become clearer here. As Sica has noted, when Weber attempted to deal with types of action, his inspiration for using the rational-irrational continuum stemmed from marginalist economic theory which can only apply to action within the context of

---

26 Weber argues that when ends are alternative and conflicting, "action is rationally oriented to a system of discrete individual ends only in respect to the choice of means...the orientation of action wholly to the rational achievement of ends without relation to fundamental values is, to be sure, essentially only a limiting case" (Weber:1947:117).

27 Parsons argues that "a purely rational act is not objectively possible" (1947:17). Similarly, Albrow argues that "only in the most artificial way...can one talk of the isolated act of purposive rationality" (1987:170).

a capitalist market (1988:208).

Identifying the "pure" type of rationality as being the *Zweckrational* type, which when driven to concretise he assumes to be directed at the given substantive content of maximising economic advantage, does not evade the values or institutions of Weber's own culture. Thus it cannot claim to be an objective assessment of rationality.

Somewhere along the theoretical line there appears to a confusion whereby the most calculable elements of action have come to be perceived as the most rational ones. However, I argue that while some ends may be more calculable than others (for example, the profit of individual firms based on a maximisation of economic advantage, as opposed to social need), the calculability of the end itself can be neither a sufficient, nor even a necessary criterion for what constitutes the rational.

What we have to escape from is the trap whereby calculable=rational, whereby money is formally the most rational means of orientating economic activity (Weber in Käsler:1988:159) and whereby as a consequence the most calculable (and hence "rational") goal built into this orientation is profit maximisation<sup>28</sup>.

To argue that the given end of maximisation of economic advantage, is the most reasonable, or the most rational end, is most definitely to make a value judgement. The given end of maximising economic advantage simply represents the dominant values embodied in the traditionalism of bourgeois modernity, and by definition it presupposes a scenario where only some can gain. The question becomes advantage relative to whom?

This particular substantive end is built into the logic of Weber's whole schema. Firstly, the concept of rational action is based on the assumption that the actor is an individual. Secondly, consider his contention that phenomena most amenable to rational understanding are mathematical propositions such as  $2 \times 2 = 4$ . Thirdly in figure five it was established that one of the criteria for distinguishing *Zweckrational* social action from *Wertrational* social action is that - as far as ends are concerned - the *Zweckrational* type is oriented to calculable expectations, while the *Wertrational* type is oriented to an

---

28 As Hoogvelt argues, in liberal theory the market principle of profit maximisation is economic rationality (1982:113). Eisen argues, that while in Weber's schema "money yields the highest formal calculability" because it "increases the extent and facility of possible calculation".... "only at a general level is monetary calculation optimally rational regardless of our provisioning standard; at a more specific level, the particular calculation or policy used will vary in utility depending on our specific goals" (Eisen:1978:64-65).

ultimate value. This implies that ends most amenable to calculation also become the most rational ends.

The end of maximising economic advantage is extremely amenable to calculation, relative to other substantive ends, it is also perfectly suited to a model of action resting on the individual (as opposed to a collectivity) as actor, and it can be communicated in the language of mathematically related propositions. Surely there is circular reasoning at work here in Weber's attempt to identify the pure type of rationality and the substance of its end? This pure type of rationality has turned out to be simply accountants' rationality.

Ultimately Weber is unable to stand outside of the system he observes in attempting to establish the "pure" type of rationality. He claims a value-neutral stance whilst in the final analysis becoming an apologist for capitalist rationality directed at maximising economic advantage over others.

In identifying the pure type of maximally rational action as action which is unequivocally directed towards the single end of the maximisation of economic advantage (Weber:1947:96), Weber misses the point that this single end is not value-neutral but is embedded in power relations which have everything to do with substantive criteria. As he himself argues elsewhere;

Capital accounting in its formally rational shape...presupposes the battle of man with man (1968:93);

and those who possess control over the the means of production

... and over economic advantages which can be used as capital goods in a profit-making enterprise enjoy by virtue of this control and of the orientation of action to the principles of capitalistic business calculation, a specific position of power in relation to others (1968:95).

### **2.3 AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON RATIONAL ACTION: ZWECKRATIONAL SOCIAL ACTION WITH A CONSCIOUSNESS OF SUBSTANCE**

Can the procedural form of Weber's *Zweckrational* type be retained, whilst acknowledging the inevitably that the type embodies value elements, and broadening the concept to include a concept of the actor that goes beyond the individual?

In recognising that even calculable ends have substantive content, there is a need to readdress Weber's basic assumptions. Can it be assumed that calculable phenomena -

whose meaning is "immediately and unambiguously intelligible to a second person" (Weber:1947:91) are necessarily the most rational phenomena?

I question the assumption that the accountant has the right to lay down the ground rules of reason upon which we are to assess the rationality of action.

The anthropological debates point to the need to broaden our understanding of rational beyond merely the most easily calculable phenomena. They suggest that the notion of *verstehen* (which is the researcher's means to assessing rational action) needs to be broadened to include communicative elements, including language.

Harman (1987) argues that our dominant fetish with economic rationality is approaching an end point and that notions of "social rationality" will increasingly carry more weight than notions of "economic rationality" as changes in our understanding of "development" proceed. He claims that economic development is becoming "demoted to the status of means rather than end" (1987:10).

The accountant's rationality is appropriate for accountants but not for social science. While it is not possible to assess the rightness or wrongness of the given end of maximising economic advantage, is it not possible that the procedural aspects of the pure type of rational action as identified by Weber can be employed to further other substantive ends, without reducing the rationality of action?

The problem then becomes one of how and by whom ends are to be defined - if not by the accountant.

If the procedural aspect of Weber's "pure" type is employed - (without including the notion that elements of action which are most easily subject to quantification also score points for adding rational components to the act) - then the value bias (which ironically has been built into Weber's pure type through an emphasis on calculability) has the potential to be eliminated.

Instead of attempting a dichotomous separation between instrumental and value types of rationality, the elements of choice of means, choice of ends, and consideration of possible consequences which Weber attributes to his *Zweckrational* type are more useful for an analysis of "social rationality" if we do not assume the given end of maximising economic advantage. In addition it would make sense for the notion of self-conscious formulation of the end (as in [Va]) to also become a criterion of rationality, because self-conscious formulation of the end in fact allows the actor more voluntarist

control than does a structural determination of ends. Furthermore, these elements do not need to rest upon the assumption that the actor is an individual (as will be argued in [2d] below). If communication is added as a criterion of rational action (which is a prerequisite if the maximum facts of a situation are to be known, in any case) - then it forces a widening of options for both means and ends.

In the hypothetical event of communicatively agreed upon ends, the rationality of action can be assessed simply in terms of the extent to which an efficient procedure is utilised (once the end is decided upon) in realising that defined objective; rather than confusing the issue in terms of the extent to which the procedure is calculable. (Of course it is easier to scientifically assess efficiency where means and ends are calculable and quantifiable, but this does not mean that action employing the most easily calculable and quantifiable means and ends is necessarily the most rational action, in the Latin sense of the word "ratio" or reason).

The assessment of rational action would then rest upon the extent to which a rational procedure, based on a knowledge of as many of the facts of the situation as possible, is followed, in orientating action towards a self-consciously formulated end in the case of an individual, or towards a communicatively agreed upon end in the case of groups. In this view, the conscious formulation of ends becomes a real potential in goal-directed social action, as opposed to the legitimisation of a structurally given end as rational, based on the fact that it is more amenable to calculation than other possible ends.

In summary, having shown firstly that certain types of value-rational action (namely [Va]) can approach Weber's criterion of "pure" rationality, and having shown secondly that in the final analysis *Zweckrationalität* has substantive content embodied in its ends; I am proposing a view of rational action that encompasses a recognition of substance instead of a denial of it. Since substance inevitably exists in even the most rational act, it appears to make sense to be conscious of it, and of the fact that it will always be relative to other possible substance. The view that consciousness of the substantive component of ends should enter a criterion of rational action actually allows for **more** elements of control than does action oriented to maximising economic advantage, since the given end of maximising economic advantage is objectively no more rational than any other end, and denies the possibility of alternate options.



## 2.4 RATIONAL ACTION AND THE PROBLEM OF LOCATING THE ACTOR AT THE LEVEL OF THE INDIVIDUAL ACTOR

A few critical points must be made regarding the problem of alleged "methodological individualism" in Weber's work and the way in which he theoretically weaves self-interested action into his notion of action that is rational.

For Weber, not only do the "laws" of economic theory state what course a given type of human action would take if it were strictly rational (Weber:1947:96), but these "laws" of economic theory apply in the context of a free market economy where action is oriented "in terms of the pure self-interest of the individual and of the others to whom he is related" and where there is "deliberate adaptation to situations in terms of self-interest" (1947:122-123).

At the time Weber wrote, the concept "action" as unit of analysis was a breakthrough in the context of the social sciences. It was a breakthrough from common conceptions at the time of "individuals" or even "collective personalities" (such as classes in marxism) being regarded as unit of analysis (Marianne Weber:1975:679).

However, the question of "methodological individualism" in Weber's writings continues to be a point of contention amongst his interpreters (Hindess:1988; Lash and Whimster (ed.) 1987; Runciman 1972; Schluchter 1981). It is argued that even though his focus is on action, he has nevertheless theoretically located it at the level of the individual actor. In Weber's understanding of action and of the actor, collectivities are always in principle reducible to the actions of individuals<sup>29</sup>. Critics argue that the location of the actor as an individual is an incomplete representation of action in the real world.

It is not only in Weber's work that rationality has come to centre around the concept of the self-interested individual (arguably a product of Calvinist-inspired anxiety

---

29 On this point see Abercrombie et al. (1984:268); Hindess (1987:139) and Marianne Weber (1975:679). In *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, Weber asserts that "action in the sense of a subjectively understandable orientation of behaviour exists only as the behaviour of one or more individual human beings" (1947:101; emphasis in original). For Weber, the concept "action" entails that the actor attaches subjective meaning to it (1947:88). Meaning itself is generally located at the level of the individual. Where he does allow for "meaning" to be located at the level of a collectivity he writes of "...the average or approximate meaning attributable to a given plurality of actors" (1947:89). This is problematic, since it does not take account of communication or the possibility of collective decision-making. Can meanings be averaged?

itself). The legacy of the "rationalist bias", which Weber warned against is evident even within the marxist camp.

Hindess maintains that rational choice analysis in general has adopted questionable assumptions about actors and their rationality (1988:3-4), and that Weber's model of the rational actor as a narrowly self-interested individual has been echoed in models of the actor in rational choice theories in economics, political science, sociology - and in much of the social science literature on "rationality".

He argues that rational choice analysis rests upon a methodological individualism in which actors are assumed to act in an instrumentally-rational way, and these actors are assumed to be narrowly self-interested (Hindess: 1988:3-4).

First, actors are assumed to act rationally in terms of a relatively stable set of values and desires. Secondly it is often supposed that they are narrowly self-interested....Finally, there is an explicit methodological individualism which presents the structural features of social life as if they were reducible to the action of rational individuals and their (often unintended) consequences....Rational Choice Analysis treats the actor's desires as exhibiting utilitarian structures (Hindess:1988:4-5).

Similarly, Carling (1986:43) claims that rational choice marxism<sup>30</sup> has drawn on an "economic" and "utilitarian" pedigree, as opposed to the alternative marxist tradition (which has been primarily concerned with the concept of power). Societies are seen as composed of human individuals endowed with economic resources who attempt to choose rationally between various courses of action (Carling:1986:26).

Hindess claims that even the "new marxism of collective action", which combines rational choice theory with versions of the traditional marxist notions of exploitation and class struggle, shares a commitment to the analysis of social life in terms of an "uncompromising methodological individualism" (Hindess:1988:22).

Recent contributions to the rationality debate have raised the possibility of collective bases for social action, as opposed to perceiving rational action as being located at the level of the individual (Hindess:1987;1988). Hindess claims that

any approach to the analysis of modern societies that admits only human individuals as effective actors must be regarded as seriously incomplete

---

30 These writers include Elster, Przeworski, Roemer, Geras, von Parijs, and Laver. In reaction to Althusserian marxism, which tended to perceive actors as puppets of their historical destiny, rational choice marxism considers the potential for actors to be "rational political actors" (Elster:1988:207).



(1987:146-7).

If Hindess's argument is accepted, it raises the possibility that rational action can be legitimated as something other than necessarily the maximisation of individual self-interest.

For Hindess the way out of this problem is to perceive the actor as being constituted of a decision-making entity. An actor is a "locus of decision and action" (1987:141,146). Social life is not reducible to the "constitutive actions of individuals" (1987:138). Rather, there are actors other than human individuals and the decisions of these other actors have important consequences. In this framework, individuals may be actors, but they are not the only medium of decision-making, nor are they the only agencies that attempt to act on decisions. Organisations ranging from state agencies, capitalist enterprises, churches, trade unions and political parties are all examples of such agencies. They all have means of reaching decisions, and they all act on some of them. Hindess claims that sociology has to turn to these collective agencies in assessing rational action (Lash and Whimster:1987:18)<sup>31</sup>.

If we can extend our understanding of rational action to include collective decision-makers who communicatively formulate goals and act with efficient means to achieve those goals, then it becomes possible to reconstruct our notions of rational development. Rational development will no longer be perceived as the pursuit of purely self-interested economic action aimed at maximisation of advantage (which advantage by definition only some can feasibly achieve). Rather it will be understood as entailing more elements of solidarity and communication, and thus a wider option of goals and possibly even a wider option of means to achieve those goals.

Where communication is maximised, it is likely that more of the facts of the situation can be known, both to actor and observer, and hence more rational decisions can ultimately be made. For Weber, the more total the knowledge of the facts of the situation, the more likely we are to be able to assess the most rational means for achieving a particular goal (1947:90-92).

---

31 Weber argued that entities such as states, societies or classes cannot be said to be actors (Marianne Weber:1975:679). Hindess agrees, saying that the concept of the actor cannot be extended to entities that don't have identifiable means of formulating decisions. To extend the concept of actor to such entities would be spurious (Hindess:1987:146-7).

### CHAPTER THREE

#### FORMAL VERSUS SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY: THE OBJECTIVE COUNTERPARTS OF RATIONAL ACTION

Figure Seven on the following page clarifies at a general level how the formal and substantive "forms of objectified rationality" relate to their subjective counterparts of rational action. Substantive rationality is the objective counterpart of the subjective type "value-rational" social action, while formal rationality is the objective counterpart of the subjective type "instrumentally-rational" social action. Subjective rationality depends on the inner orientation of the actor (as discussed in chapter two), while objective rationality depends on the extent to which an action measures up to an objective standard (Brubaker:1984:50).

Weber associates formal rationality with efficiency based on the quantitative calculation of means. At the level of economic systems, he writes that "economic formal rationality...represents the 'extent of quantitative calculation or accounting which is technically possible and which is actually applied'" (Eisen:1978:64).<sup>32</sup> Formal rationality as the objective counterpart of instrumentally rational action seems to be associated with, and prerequisite of, productive rationality, especially the expansion of production associated with industrial society<sup>33</sup>.

Substantive rationality, on the other hand, has distributive (as opposed to productive) components embodied in it<sup>34</sup>. It is

... the extent to which it is possible to secure what, according to a given system of values, is an adequate provision of a population with goods and services, and in the process remain in accord with the ethical requirements of the system of norms (Parsons:1947:30).

---

32 By "formal rationality", Weber means "...the extent to which it is possible to carry through accurate rational calculation of the quantities involved in economic orientation...and hence to act upon the results of such calculation" (Parsons:1947:35).

33 "A monetary policy oriented to substantively rational goals is said to decline in formal rationality. Worker participation in management, causing substantive interests to take precedence over formal functioning of the enterprise, reduces its formal rationality" (Eisen:1978:64-5).

34 "Formal rationality...by no means guarantees substantive rationality, at least to the extent that the latter is conceived in terms of adequate provision for needs or wants. For the 'formal rationality of money accounting does not reveal anything about the actual distribution of goods'" (Brubaker:1984:39).

Eisen also stresses the provisioning element which substantive rationality entails;

Substantive rationality represents the degree to which **provisioning** is shaped under some criterion of values, whether this is ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, feudal, egalitarian, or whatever (Eisen:1978:64; my emphasis).

**FIGURE SEVEN: TYPES OF RATIONALITY OF ACTION, IN RELATION TO FORMS OF OBJECTIFIED RATIONALITY**

OBJECTIVE FORMS OF RATIONALITY	SUBJECTIVE RATIONALITY		
	ASSOCIATED WITH RATIONAL CONTROL OF ACTION		
FORMS OF OBJECTIFIED RATIONALITY	SUBJECTIVE COUNTERPARTS OF OBJECTIVE FORMS	CONSCIOUS PATTERNS OF RATIONAL ACTION	TYPES OF SOCIAL ACTION
Substantive	Value-rational orientation	Yes	Value-rational
Practical	Means-ends rational orientation	Yes	Instrumentally rational
Formal	Disposition towards calculable regulation	Yes	
	ASSOCIATED WITH LACK OF CONTROL, NON-RATIONAL:		
	Non-rational	No	Traditional
	Non-rational	No	Affectual

Sources: Kalberg:1980; Levine:1981.

So, in considering substantive rationality, Weber says that it is not enough to consider the fact that calculations are being made - this is merely a formal concern. It is also necessary to take account of the ultimate ends that economic activity is directed at (1947:185). These ends can be diverse - he lists ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, the attainment of social distinction, social equality, or anything else. He argues that in this sense, there is in principle an indefinite number of standards of value which are rational (1947:185).

These values could include not only criteria of economic welfare (for example, maximal production, quality of life, or a socialist economic distribution) but also ethical or religious values (Collins:1980:927). In short, Weber associates substantive rationality with "the adequacy of actions for meeting ultimate values" (Collins:1980:927). As Brubaker puts it, the formal rationality of the modern social order is a matter of fact. However, whether or not one considers this social order to be substantively rational will depend on one's point of view - on the ends, values or beliefs that one takes as a standard of rationality (1984:36-37)

Substantive rationality, then has a distinctly moral or normative dimension. At the economic level, substantive rationality (also called "materiel") is concerned with the satisfaction of material needs, and exists in any surviving economic system. In contrast to formal rationality, this is a rationality of adequate distribution of goods and services, as opposed to simply "production" of them.

Formal rationality as the objective counterpart of instrumentally rational action, is primarily a rationality of production, and appears to favour economic growth. Substantive rationality is primarily a distributive rationality, and appears to favour sustainability as opposed to growth. It is linked to need satisfaction and ethical regulation (Parsons:1947:30). Substantive rationality is bound up with values, with normative structures and with the ethical regulation (where it exists) of formal rationality. Formal rationality is concerned specifically with calculation, while substantive rationality is concerned with the normative constraints within which such formal rational calculation would operate.

Implicit in the distinction between formal and substantive rationality is the following: that at an economic level formal rationality is concerned with growth of the economy, substantive rationality with survival of both the actors in that economy, and

the system itself - that is - with the adequate satisfaction of material needs of that economy.

### 3.1 THE PROBLEM OF ENDS AS THEY RELATE TO FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY

The objective counterparts of rational action echo the contradictions which were highlighted in the discussion concerning *Zweckrational* social action and the problem of the value content of the ends.

Just as in the final analysis of instrumentally rational action it was argued that instrumentality cannot be divorced from the value content of the goal towards which it is directed, a similar problem arises in considering formal rationality as the objective counterpart of instrumental rationality.

Arnold Eisen has addressed this problem as regards the notions of formal and substantive rationality. He argues that the notion of formal and substantive rationality which Weber has superimposed onto the general concept "rationality", only clouds where it is meant to clarify. He claims that Weber's distinction between formal and substantive rationality is

... theoretically confused and substantially biased, disguising the valuations inherent in the criteria by which formal rationality is assessed....this confusion casts considerable doubt on the utility and value-neutrality of Weber's entire effort to clarify the process of rationalisation which he identified (Eisen:1978:58-61).

Drawing on Marcuse (1971), he asks if Weber's distinction between formal and substantive rationality is not deceptive - "a matter of scientific procedure unavoidably prejudicing findings" (Eisen:1978:66)?

The problem with Weber's whole schema is that there is a hierarchy built into the notion of rationality, whereby that which is formal and instrumental becomes valued more than other forms, while presuming that this formality can be set apart from substance. Weber does acknowledge the role of substantive rationality, but ultimately because of the way in which his action types are hierarchically structured with instrumental rationality approaching the purest type of what is rational - and the linking up of instrumental rationality with formal rationality as its objective counterpart - it is inevitable that the formal and instrumental types come to be seen as "superior" or

"purer" forms. In this framework we land up in a situation where maximisation of the formal and instrumental types is perceived as rational and desirable.

Eisen argues that the source of the problem regarding Weber's categories of formal and substantive rationality is based upon the fact that formal rationality is of a processual nature. The question he asks is - how can one judge a thing or a process efficient, purposive, or systematic without it being efficient, purposive or systematic relative to some end (1978:64)?

The point is that while formally rational action is assessed as a matter of process and efficiency, maximally calculable action can be oriented to an infinite variety of possible substantive ends (Brubaker:1984:36).

So, while formally rational (maximally calculable) action is assessed as a matter of process and efficiency, it can be oriented to an infinite variety of possible substantive ends. Only where the ground rules are consensually defined can one begin to assess rationality.

### 3.2 WEBER'S AMBIGUITY IN DISCUSSING SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

The contradictions inherent in Weber's attempts to separate formality from substance are evidenced in his ambiguous ideas regarding the relationship between formal (productive) and substantive (distributive) rationality in a modern economic system. Concerning the end towards which the formality of calculation is systemically directed, Weber is ambiguous. Sometimes he assumes the end to be accumulation of capital through private enterprise, other times the end becomes the satisfaction of human need.

He does not appear to question the assumption that a maximisation of formal rationality will provide for the satisfaction of human need<sup>35</sup>. My contention is that the contemporary development crisis forces the reexamination of this assumption.

Regarding the development problem, the question I begin with regarding Weber's

---

35 Eisen reaches a similar conclusion, drawing on Marcuse's (1971) criticism of Weber. "The concept of ratio...is not sustained throughout [Weber's] analysis and fails at the decisive point. The answer to 'controlling for what?' points up the limits of formal reason, by definition the most efficient means to some end set from the outside. This end, logically prior to capitalist rationality, is the provisioning for human needs on the basis of private enterprise (as opposed to any other basis such as socialism). The failure of capitalism to provide does not appear in the definition" (Eisen:1978:66).

understanding of substantive rationality in modern society is as follows: In his economic writings, did Weber assume that the formal rationality of production would automatically coincide with the substantive rationality of distribution for need satisfaction in capitalist industrial society?

In some of his writing, he assumes that it would. According to Collins, capitalism for Weber

... is the **provision of human needs** by the method of enterprise, which is to say, by private business seeking profit (1980:927; emphasis added).

Weber writes that;

If the standard used is that of a **provision of a certain minimum of subsistence for the maximum size of population**, the experience of the last few decades would seem to show that formal and substantive rationality coincide to a relatively high degree (1947:212)....Capitalism is present wherever the industrial **provision for the needs of a human group** is carried out by the method of enterprise, irrespective of what need is involved (1927:275)....a system of economic activity will be called 'formally' rational according to the degree in which the **provision for needs, which is essential to every rational economy**, is capable of being expressed in numerical, calculable terms, and is so expressed (1947:185; all emphases added).

In these examples, Weber simply assumes that needs will be satisfied through formal instrumentally-rational productive and calculative procedures.

However, elsewhere his argument diverges from this assumption, arguing that the conditions of high formal rationality of a money economy, require a system of production and marketing of goods where it is "effective demand"<sup>36</sup> and **not "desire"** or "need" that is the driving force;

It is not wants as such, but effective demand for utilities, which regulates the production of goods by profit-making enterprises oriented to capital accounting (Weber:1947:211-212).

---

36 What does this mean in practice? Effective demand includes the ability to pay a sum of money for some amount of a particular good or service. Where there is a very inegalitarian income distribution within a particular system this could result, say, in a high demand for swimming pools determining how water is used, leaving out all consideration of meeting the basic need for clean drinking water. This reflects the logic of production oriented to effective demand. The development of dams is another example. In cases where these dams serve corporate or state interests, the consequence of their development may be to deprive people who have less "ability to pay", of the water that was previously the basis of their livelihood. Shiva (1989) gives an account of this process in the case of India.

In this perspective he claims that the satisfaction of need is a substantive, and hence separate concern;

the formal rationality of money accounting has as such no implications for the actual distribution of goods....Under all circumstances, it holds true that formal rationality can explain anything about the type of real want satisfaction only when it is combined with knowledge of the distribution of income (Weber:1947:212).

Further evidence as to Weber's alleged "theoretical confusion" regarding the relationship between formal and substantive rationality can be seen in his distinction between economic action and a system of economic activity, and the way in which he locates substantive rationality in this regard.

**FIGURE EIGHT: SUMMARY CHART OF WEBER'S CATEGORISATION OF FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY AS THEY RELATE TO [1] ECONOMIC ACTION AND [2] A SYSTEM OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

	FORMAL RATIONALITY	SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY
ECONOMIC ACTION	Extent of quantitative calculation; accounting	Degree in which a group is <b>provided with goods</b> via an economically oriented course of social action (in terms of any given set of ultimate values).
SYSTEM OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	Degree in which <b>provision of needs</b> is capable of being expressed in numerical, calculable terms.	Consideration of the ultimate ends towards which economic activity is oriented. (Indefinite number of ends are 'rational' in this sense). Includes ethical dimensions.

Source: Weber (1947:185).

In considering figure eight, it can be seen that at the level of both economic action and a system of economic activity, Weber associates formal rationality primarily with the degree of **calculation**. However, as far as the provision of goods is concerned, this is subsumed under substantive rationality at the level of economic action, but under



formal rationality at the level of systems of economic activity.

So, regarding "distribution", or the provision of goods, Weber considers it a substantive concern as far as economic action is concerned. Yet when it comes to systems of economic activity, he subsumes distribution under the criterion of formal rationality.

In response to the question I posed as to whether or not Weber assumed that the formal rationality of production would automatically coincide with the substantive rationality of distribution for need satisfaction, the answer can be established. At the level of a system of economic activity, Weber assumed that it would. At this level, Weber **assumes** provision of needs - in fact it is **"essential to every rational economy"** (Weber:1947:185; emphasis added).

If the assumption that provision of needs will be met by a maximisation of formal rationality is removed, our conception of rationality and of a rational economy must be reassessed. This is exactly the point which marxist writers have made concerning rationality and the capitalist system. In the marxist perspective capitalism is fundamentally irrational (Baran:1957). The marxist alternative has been rational socialism which in theory means that not only production, but also distribution can be centrally planned in a rational fashion. However, in practise socialist central planning has shared with monopoly capitalism the same top-down flaw in the hierarchy of control. This encourages people not towards development in the sense of empowerment, self-reliance and taking a rational control of their own environments, but rather towards a fatalist submission to the role of becoming means to the ends of powerful interest groups. In the modern world the centres of both socialism and capitalism have used rationality not as means to enable people control over their own lives and development paths, but rather as an instrument for the powerful to control other people's lives.

I have argued that Weber confuses the issue by sometimes claiming that formal rationality does meet the end of human needs, sometimes claiming that it does not. Both empirical and theoretical evidence<sup>37</sup> suggest that formal rationality in fact does not have any inbuilt tendency to satisfy human needs and distributive requirements within economic systems. Is there not something fundamentally irrational about this?

---

<sup>37</sup> See discussion in chapter six. For the theoretical position see Parsons (1947:36-37). Parsons's argument is elaborated later in this chapter.

### 3.3 A CONSIDERATION OF THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

**FIGURE NINE: TABLE OF CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY AS INTERPRETED BY SOME WRITERS SUBSEQUENT TO WEBER**

	FORMAL RATIONALITY	SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY
<b>BRUBAKER</b>	Refers to the calculability of means and procedures.	Refers to the values of ends or results. Substantive rationality is rationality from the point of view of some particular substantive end, belief, or value commitment.
<b>HINDESS</b>	Refers to the calculability of means and procedures, whatever the end pursued.	Refers to the assessment of outcomes in terms of a particular value standpoint.
<b>SCHLUCHTER</b>	Refers to form.	Refers to content.
<b>EISEN</b>	Refers to theoretical.	Refers to actual.
<b>KALBERG</b>	Is associated with a specific structure of domination - one that "acquired specific and delineated boundaries only with <b>industrialisation</b> ; most significantly the economic, legal and the bureaucratic form of domination" (1980:1155-1156; emphasis in original).	Has an epoch-transcending and intercivilisational character. Orders action into patterns in relation to "value postulates" (that is, clusters of values) as opposed to means-ends calculations of solutions to problems.

Sources: Brubaker (1984:36); Eisen (1978:64); Hindess (1987:145), Kalberg (1980:1155-1156); Schluchter (1981:89).

While Habermas argues that substantive rationality is a casualty of advanced industrial societies (Lash and Whimster:1987:25-30), those writers who point to a growth of conflict between the two forms appear to be closer to the mark.

The following writers, amongst others, have stressed the conflict which results from the extension of formal rationality: Albrow (1987:182), Brubaker (1984:43), Eisen (1978:58), Hindess (1987:145-6), Kalberg (1980:1157), Lash and Whimster (1987), Mommsen (1987:43), Parsons (1947:32), Weber (1947:212; and in Bourdieu:1987).

As regards Weber's own work, Mommsen claims that he shifted his position in his mature writings, moving from the assumption that formal rationality would get the better of substantive rationality to the argument that the principles exist in an ongoing state of conflict. Mommsen claims that by the time Weber wrote Economy and Society (1968), he saw the two forms as "dichotomous principles inherent in the historical process at all times" (1987:43). For example, Weber writes "the requirements of formal and substantive rationality are always in principle in conflict" (1947:212).

In a similar vein, Eldridge argues that Weber suggests that there is an "unavoidable element of irrationality in economic systems", which he sees as a product of a conflict between formal and substantive rationality (1971:64-5). According to Mann, Weber came to fear the possibility of western society becoming imprisoned in an "iron cage" of formal rationality but substantive irrationality (1983:322)<sup>38</sup>.

Other writers have also stressed the tension in modern society between formal and substantive rationality. It is argued that the tension results from the fact that the modern period is dominated by the world view of formal rationality (Hindess:1987:145-6); that the extension of formal rationality continuously comes into conflict with whatever substantive norms exist in the societies concerned (Parsons:1947:32)<sup>39</sup>; that as formal

---

38. In the concluding pages of The Protestant Ethic, Weber had this to say - before silencing himself on the grounds that he was entering into judgements of value - "No one knows who will live in this cage in the future...at the last stage of this cultural development it might well be said: 'Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilisation never before achieved'" (Weber:1930:182).

39. "The process of extension of formal rationality, and of the conditions underlying it, creates situations and stimulates types of action which in various ways come into conflict with whatever substantive norms there are in the society and the sentiments and symbols associated with them" (Parsons:1947:32).

rationality grows, substantive irrationalities increase equivalently (Albrow:1987:182).

While it may be correct to argue that formal rationality emerges on a large scale and is dominant specifically in modern industrial society (Kalberg:1980:1155-1156), it is not correct to deduce from this that it will surpass, transcend, or do away with substantive rationality. Thus the rise of formal rationality does not mean the simultaneous negation of substantive rationality. Hence it would be a mistake to,

... imagine that the one is an alternative, much less a conclusive negation, of the other (Albrow 1987:182).

The literature dealing with the conflict between formal and substantive rationality in modern society indicates that the conflict appears to operate at two levels. Firstly, at the institutional level such that the modern individual is confronted with different forms taking priority in different spheres. More significantly for the development debate, however, is the contention that this conflict pervades the modern economy at a class level.

Firstly, the conflict at the institutional level will be briefly considered. Contemporary writers who are concerned with the "postmodern" secular condition claim that processes of rationalisation - in the sense of systematisation of beliefs - also characterise the different institutional spheres, or "life orders", which have their own different "value-spheres". These processes of rationalisation do not follow parallel lines in different life-orders<sup>40</sup>, thus there is a compartmentalisation of rationality (Alexander:1987:192). The modern individual is confronted with a value-pluralism, finding her existence divided up into several realms or "life-orders", each with its own set of values (Weber in Lash and Whimster:1987:7).

As opposed to the unified *Weltanschauung* which characterises the rationalised world-views of the world religions of major civilisations; the disenchanted, intellectualised rationalisation process which characterises modernity, results in a shattering of the unified *Weltanschauung* (Lash and Whimster:1987:7-12); a fragmentation not only of the value-spheres, but also of the modern individual. Weber

---

40. "The history of rationalism shows a development which by no means follows parallel lines in the various departments of life" (Weber:1930:77).

claims that this-worldly asceticism experiences a "dissolution into pure utilitarianism", and that it produces metaphysical disorder, that is, a "fragmented world without any metaphysical integration (Käsler:1988:89).

The modern individual has more than two value spheres (namely the worldly and the religious which characterise the civilisational plateau of the world religions) to cope with (Lash and Whimster:1987:7). There will be no overarching and systematised set of beliefs, as there is in the era of the world religions.

In this view, (based upon the interpretations of Weber's work which view rationalisation in universal-historical terms as discussed in section 1.2 the era of the world religions forms a civilisational plateau between the "primitive" and the "modern" where there is fragmentation on either side of the plateau (Lash and Whimster:1987:7). While the era of religious hegemony was characterised by people having a unified *Weltanschauung*, the modern individual exists in a fragmented condition where a tension and contradiction develops between the different life-spheres, or institutions. Substantive rationality takes priority in some spheres, formal rationality in other spheres. For example, religious ethics are substantively rationalised, whilst economic and political action become formally rationalised (Albrow:1987:82; Brubaker:1984:78).

So, both the "modern" and the "primitive" are characterised by a lack of ordered cosmology and by a plurality of beliefs.

The similarity of the modern to the primitive is the absence of a coherent structuring through a unified and usually systematised set of religious and metaphysical beliefs. In this sense both have to live with the inevitability of a plurality of beliefs. The modern, as Weber says in 'Politics as a Vocation', has like the ancient Greeks to live with a plurality of Gods and demons.<sup>41</sup> (Lash and Whimster:1987:7).

These problems are not a central concern for this dissertation, (except for the fact that this fragmentation provides ideal foundations for charismatic eruptions which could undermine gains in formal rationality made so far)<sup>42</sup>. Of more consequence are the

---

41. Once God directed man, now man chooses his gods - "You serve this god and you offend the other god when you decide to adhere to a position" (Weber:1919a:151).

42. Lash and Whimster raise the question of whether - in consequence of this fragmentation and similarity in this respect between the primitive and modern - the process of rationalisation which has characterised the West could be subject to charismatic eruption - which would mean a new set of values and changes in the direction of industrial civilisation (1987:9-13).

tensions arising from the fact that - regardless of these existential-type tensions, the modern society is nevertheless characterised by an overarching hegemony of the formal type -especially in the powerful realms of scientific activity and the economy (Brubaker:1984:86; Hindess:1987:145-146).

It is in this sense that Brubaker writes of,

...the impotence of demands for substantive rationality in a society dominated by objectified economic and political structures that perpetuate themselves according to an inexorable logic of purely formal rationality, a logic that excludes all considerations of substantive rationality, all questions of ultimate value (Brubaker:1984:86).

In the modern era, Occidental rationality replaces religious legitimation with a scientific legitimation. Lash and Whimster claim that there are two consequences of this. Firstly, the integrative structures of religious legitimation are done away with. Secondly, the ethical dimensions of substantive rationality are done away with (1987:7). Thus, in eras where religion has hegemony, values are regarded as "valid" absolutes. However, with the rise of science values are no longer regarded as "valid" absolutes when they come to be placed in the realm of calculation (Kalberg:1980:1174).

At this point the way in which the tension between formal and substantive rationality operates in the economic sphere, and especially the class dimensions to this conflict, will be addressed, following Brubaker's argument that the tension between formal and substantive rationality is not only a tension between conflicting values, but it is also a tension between social **groups** with divergent interests,

... between groups interested in and benefitting from calculability and efficiency on the one hand and groups interested in and benefitting from the substantive regulation of social and economic life on the other (1984:42).

As regards Weber's writing and the class dimension to this conflict -he pointed out himself that different class interests derive benefits from, or depend for their survival upon, different forms of rationality. He wrote that the rationality associated with methodical, rigorous planning is suited ideally to bourgeois interests, as opposed to peasant interests which have a more seasonal character and are exposed to unusual and unknown forces (1968:1178).

Brubaker begins to explore the implications of such an argument. He concludes that as a result of the class bases of rationality, it follows that economically privileged

groups have a vested interest in maximising formal rationality, whilst economically disprivileged groups have an interest in maximising substantive rationality.

Formal rationality in the economic and legal spheres favours some groups at the expense of others. As a result, economically privileged groups deriving their power from market transactions have a strong interest in maximising formal rationality, while economically threatened or disprivileged groups have an equally strong interest in subjecting economic life to substantive regulation and thus in reducing formal rationality (Brubaker:1984:43).

In addition to the conflict of interest between owners of property and owners of labour power which Marx addressed, it is increasingly apparent from the development literature which examines accumulation as a global phenomenon, that other groups such as peasants, casual labour, and the semi-proletarianised are the groups most severely disadvantaged by the extension of formal rationality.

The question arises whether or not one may speak of this conflict between groups in bourgeois theory, as being analogous to the conflict between classes which characterises Marxist theory. On this point one needs to be cautious. Brubaker points out there are also tensions and conflicts **among** groups interested in the substantive regulation of the social order. These conflicts include conflicts over the particular substantive ends to be furthered and over the appropriate manner of pursuing shared ends (1984:48). However, it could be concluded that at one level those who do not share the goal of directing rational action at maximisation of economic advantage do share a common interest in increasing substantive regulation of the activities of those who wish to pursue the given end of maximising economic advantage. Thus the divisions to which Brubaker refers will exist within certain objectively given parameters.

In considering systems of economic activity and the idea that formal and substantive rationality exist in a state of dialectical tension; even Parsons, who had a profound influence on modernisation perspectives, has pointed out that there is reason to believe that the process of a competitive market economy (that is, where formal rationality is maximised) will have a cumulative tendency of increasing inequality (1947:36-37). (This is a point which liberal development theory has not developed

upon)<sup>43</sup>.

If a maximisation of formal rationality has a cumulative tendency towards increasing inequality, then it follows that it is the substantive needs of the disprivileged which such an economy would fail to meet. And following this, if disprivileged groups do have a strong interest in subjecting economic life to substantive regulation, then a development path that has a cumulative tendency towards increasing inequality must also have a cumulative tendency towards increasing pressures to reduce formal rationality and to subject economic life to substantive regulation.

If Brubaker's and Parson's arguments are combined, the logical implication which follows is that an expectation that formal rationality will spread throughout populations as development occurs, could be fallacious in highly inegalitarian systems - and this might help to explain the failure of development blueprints.

The question which follows from this discussion, is whether it is possible for substantive rationality to be suppressed in a modern economy, or whether the process of the rampant expansion of formal rationality at a global level (with the global system of accumulation being a highly inegalitarian one) gives rise to ever greater numbers of people who by the very nature of the structure of the system will have an interest relationship to substantive rationality, and hence will depend on maximising it.

In fact, given the dialectical relationship which is evidenced here, the conditions of the extension of formal rationality might well depend on a "substantively rational" regulation of it, such that the class bases become more blurred. For example, oppressed groups seeking substantive rationality might have access to the formal abstractions of modern law (Alexander:1987:205).

### 3.4 FORMAL VERSUS SUBSTANTIVE RATIONALITY - SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT LITERATURE

In an age where scientific legitimation has replaced religious legitimation, "formal rationality" is a positively value-laden concept relative to "substantive rationality", as is

---

43. Parsons argues that the tendency to inequality would continue to operate "unless control of it is more stringent than there seems to be any realistic possibility of attainment" (1947:36-37). Such control, one would assume, would be based in protective legislation.



its subjective counterpart of "instrumental rationality" relative to "value-rationality".

In bipolar sociological models, substantive rationality is generally associated with "traditional" societies, whilst formal rationality is associated with "modern" societies. Hence development is understood to be a move from a society characterised predominantly by substantive rationality towards one characterised predominantly by formal rationality<sup>44</sup>.

In the light of the discussion above, the role of substantive rationality needs to be addressed not only in modern society, but also in the development process - rather than simply ignoring it - or worse still, regarding it as a form of rationality which we would rather do away with since it is associated with "traditionalism" as opposed to "modernity".

The stress on development as a process of an increasing extension of formal rationality, has tended to assume that such an extension would be positive, and that formal rationality would transcend substantive rationality. It was assumed that one could anticipate a growth of instrumental action in the structure as a whole, in line with the process that Weber had documented in the Occident in his Protestant Ethic study. Whilst formal rationality was assumed to increase along with development, substantive rationality was assumed to decline in significance.

Substantive rationality, contrary to formal rationality, has been perceived as negative - it characterised "primitive" communities, "peasant" communities, "less developed societies" and so on. As opposed to the assumed evolutionarily superior rationality of the capitalist economy - which was directed at the goal of profit maximisation and effective demand, the pre-capitalist mentality was alleged to be caught up in a rationality of production directed at need, not profit. According to Foster (1962) in such a rationality, the world and the resources it had to offer was perceived to be limited<sup>45</sup>.

---

44. This idea is reflected in the marxist approach as the shift from natural economy C-M-C towards commodity economy M-C-M (Bradby:1975).

45. Foster does, however, point out that such a view would actually be rational in the context of isolated rural communities, which did in fact have finite resources (1962:296).

If capitalist development was to take place this traditional attitude would have to be broken. Thus - the substantive rationality of need satisfaction which characterised pre-capitalist communities was seen as a major stumbling block to the development process. Generally, theorists anticipated that the spread of formal rationality would destroy the rationality of producing simply for need satisfaction.

Liberal theorists assumed that the expansion of formal rationality would satisfy need through a trickle-down effect where wealth would ultimately be spread throughout the population. Implicit in their assumptions was the general belief that the rampant extension of formal rationality would in fact satisfy need. This was to occur through Adam Smith's invisible hand mechanism, by which individuals all striving for their own interests would somehow contribute to the common good of society<sup>46</sup>.

Both liberal and marxist approaches stressed the importance of increasing rationality of production (liberals as an end in itself, marxists as a means to a higher stage from which socialism could develop). As Gorz (1989) has argued, Soviet style socialism pursued accumulation and economic growth as its principal goals. However the spontaneous regulation of the capitalist market was to be replaced with the "Plan" - an attempt to rationalise the economy as a whole based on methodically programmed centralised means.

In the Soviet attempts at rationally planning the economy it was assumed that a "socialist consciousness" would develop (Gorz:1989). Here workers, through party faith, would acquire meaning in the obscure tasks assigned them by the party (as opposed to the market)<sup>47</sup>. Again a top-down rationality is evident, whereby the substantive aspects of democratic control are neglected. In short, communist values (one substantive aspect

---

46. In 1968, Garrett Hardin showed the fallacy of such an assumption in his paper The Tragedy of the Commons. In this hypothetical case, when each individual adds one head of cattle to his herd it makes economic sense at the level of the individual. At a collective level, however, the system ultimately breaks down through the collective irrationality of overgrazing which results from every individual adding a head of cattle to his herd.

47. Gorz (1989) notes that the parallels with the "calling" to a vocation associated with Protestant ascetism are quite evident. The Party replaces God, and the individual remains dictated to by a separated external consciousness, and - contrary to controlling the means of production - acts as a cog in machine over which she has no control.

of communist development) were simply assumed to follow from the party imposed Plan.

If we question the argument that the untrammelled extension of formal rationality will automatically satisfy needs, then much of the failure of development this century seems to make more sense.

The process of accumulation that is occurring at a global level is not leading to a "trickle down" of wealth as was anticipated by earlier development optimists; rather it has been accompanied by an ever widening gap between the richest percentiles of global population, and the poorest percentiles, with the poorest not meeting even their basic needs<sup>48</sup>. This indicates that while the system as a whole has been able to produce ever larger amounts of social capital, there is no inbuilt tendency to provide for social needs.

I argue that such provision can only be met if there is a substantive regulation of the formal rationality which appears to be the *sine qua non* of methodical profit accumulation.

As Loewith puts it;

The economic temper of the bourgeois stratum of society which was 'religiously' motivated originally, i.e., by definite human needs.... becomes 'irrational' by virtue of the fact that the economy becomes independent to such a degree that - in spite of all external rationality - there no longer exists any evident relationship to the needs of man as such (1970:115).

The fundamental irrationality of our modern economy is a natural consequence of a view of rationality which has attempted to have no ends but has really thrived on the given ultimate end of maximising economic advantage. This value, though secular, is nevertheless an ultimate one in the modern economy. The problem is that it is not recognised as such, hence its fundamental irrationality is not recognised.

The development of a world system of capital accumulation has been at once a process of the extension of formal rationality. At a global level the consequences of the untrammelled growth of formal rationality are evident in not only increasing emiseration,

---

48. See Amin (1976:351ff.), Dube (1988), Emmanuel (1972:xx,xxxviii,46-47), Hoogvelt (1976:81), Institute for African Alternatives (1987) and Trainer (1989:13); as well as the discussion in chapter six.

marginalisation of the masses - but also in the global environmental crisis which is evidenced in declining forests, increasing desertification, poisoned air and waters and so on.

The recent concern with "limits to growth", and with the limitations which the finiteness of non-renewable resources place on the long term potential for economic development, is significant to the extent that such views represent a return to the concept of "limited good" (Foster:1962); but at a global system level rather than an isolated small community level. The fact that such a perception is taking hold even in global institutions like the United Nations, World Bank and IMF must have social consequences, if it goes beyond mere rhetoric. The perception of the globe as limited (rather than infinite) is contrary to the rationality which spurred the rise of capitalism, in which both the world and the potential for wealth accumulation were perceived as infinite territories to be conquered.

If formal rationality does not transcend substantive rationality, but exists in a state of conflict with it, then we should shift from a perception of development as entailing an unlimited growth of formal rationality - towards one in which the **balance** between formal and substantive rationality is at issue.

Perroux argues that given the west's reliance on using calculation as a means of expressing economic considerations, one result has been the confounding of the concept "maximum" with that of "optimum" (1983:169). I argue that it is not possible to optimise formal rationality by pushing economic rationality to its limits<sup>49</sup>. Rather than retaining a linear view that assumes a transition from substantive to formal rationality, and assuming the maximisation of formal rationality to be desirable and characteristic of "development", we need to perceive development in terms of a balance between formal and substantive rationality. We need to reconceptualise the whole problem in the sense of optimising the two forms rather than maximising them.

A central advantage to be gained from incorporating a notion of "substantive rationality" into the development debate, is that the ends at which action (including

---

49. Gorz gives a concrete example when he argues that the rebellion of semi-skilled workers against Taylorist scientific work organisation "revealed that optimum economic efficiency could not be attained by pushing economic rationality to its limits" (1989:59).

development action) is concerned come to play a more central role in our conceptions of development.

In recognising that a simple growth/maximum accumulation goal is a value-laden concept in itself, the options for development become wider. While it is probably correct to argue that the formal rationality of capital accumulation is indispensable for raising life-quality, it is equally correct to argue that such a rationality of accumulation requires substantive regulation, and that we cannot afford to regard such substantive regulation as an "irrational" factor<sup>50</sup>. Rather it is rooted in a value rationality of distribution as opposed to production. It is also rooted in a value rationality of sustainability as opposed to growth.

To maximise formal rationality in the pure type is to maximise a rationality of non-sustainability. The demands for "sustainable development" (Redclift 1984; World Commission on Environment and Development 1987; Trainer 1989) is commensurate with the demand that the role of substantive rationality in the development process be addressed. Readdressing substantive rationality and the role it has to play is commensurate with advocates of a "bottom-up" approach to development, rather than a "top-down" one (Coetzee (ed.):1987; Wertheim:1974).

---

50. "Substantive rationality means that decisions are influenced by norms different from those obtained through logical generalisation of abstract interpretations of meaning, whether ethical imperatives, utilitarian and other expediential rules, or political maxims. It differs from substantive irrationality in that in the latter such norms influence only particular cases, but are applied universally in the substantively rational case" (Eisen:1978:65; emphasis in original).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SCIENCE, DEMOCRACY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT: CAN A SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT ONLY ASSESS MEANS?

Closely linked with Weber's position on value-free science is his argument that the limits of science lie in the assessment of means.

In this concluding chapter of part one, the problem of the conflict between formal and substantive rationality as evidenced in the conflicting roles of science and democracy in the development process is addressed. It is argued that, in so far as a sociology of development is concerned, Weber's position that the limits of science lie in the assessment of means is inadequate.

The value-freedom problem is addressed both in the light of philosophical shifts which have taken place in the "natural sciences" this century (shifts which have undermined nineteenth century ideas about objectivity), and in the light of social trends away from "pure" science and towards "applied" science; where the direction of science has come to be determined to a large extent by powerful social interests.

It is argued that a sociology of development has as much to do with addressing the limits beyond which science cannot advise, as it has to do with the boundaries within which science can advise. Development is a normative process, and not a positively given process. A sociology of development need not simply accept the assumption of ends given by dominant power structures; since it is capable of increasing knowledge of alternate ends. While it may not be able to advise on ends, it can help in making conscious the fact that conflicting ends exist.

In short, it is argued that a sociology of development can increase knowledge of the ends, even if it cannot advise on which end is ultimately selected. Not to do so, is to support the goals of *status quo* interests unquestioningly.

#### 4.1 WEBER'S POSITION ON THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE AND THE PROBLEMS WHICH HIS POSITION RAISES FOR A SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

"Value-freedom" is often formulated in the claim that science cannot provide ultimate meanings as to how we should conduct our lives, pursue our politics, or order our societies

(Lash and Whimster:1987:9-10).

Weber connected science with rational procedure, and with the death of absolute values and value judgements (Sica:1988:108). He has often been interpreted as the champion of a value-free sociology, where "what is" is understood to be separable from "ought to be". Furthermore, his work on rationality and on the Occidental form of rationalisation has had a strong influence in defining what liberal approaches regard as the "what is" of development. And yet, as Coetzee argues;

Value-freedom can never be considered in a sociology of development. The concept **development** can never be used in a value-free manner (1987a:92; emphasis in original).

The concept of "development" is a nexus where the contradiction between formal and substantive rationality manifests itself very clearly.

While Weber's position on the relationship between science and democracy was that;

Democracy should be used only where it is in its place....Scientific training...is the affair of an intellectual aristocracy, and we should not hide this from ourselves (1919b:134).

I argue in this chapter that such a position is untenable.

A central contradiction which emerges in the development debate is one between the formal rationality of our dominant scientific and economic structures, and the substantive rationality which demands democratic participation in the decision-making process. It cannot be assumed that as the scientific rationalization of social contexts of action increases, democracy will be expanded with it (Weiss:1986:113). In fact, Weiss argues that the production of specialist knowledge, and its social application require organisational rules (such as specialisms, institutional differentiation and hierarchical structures) that are "diametrically opposed to the principles of radical and comprehensive democratisation" (Weiss:1986:113).

In considerations of development, is there not a line to be drawn beyond which science cannot advise? Is development a purely formal concern, or does it have significant substantive components? Has a sociology of development succeeded in separating "what is" from what "ought to be"? Can it in fact do so at all? Can "development" be separated from ethical questions? Can a sociology of development only assess means, or does the very

notion of "development" imply movement towards ends? If it does entail ends, how can a sociology of development deal with ends? For example, does it have any role to play in advising on ends? In analysing them? Or is the role of a sociology of development to simply ignore ends in the tradition of formal science, thus leaving out substantive considerations altogether? Can a sociology of development not give knowledge of the ends?

For Weber, the limits of science lie in the assessment of means -rational science can only give us knowledge only of the means (Loewith:1970:113).

He maintained that beliefs about how to live exist independently of scientific findings and decisions about how to live can only be made on the basis of values. (Turner and Beeghley:1981:212).

Ends as ultimate values are beyond the limits which science can advise, so in choosing the ends we have reached the limits of science. The answer to Tolstoi's question "What shall we do and how shall we arrange our lives?" lies beyond the boundaries of science (Weber:1919b:152-3).

Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important to us: 'What shall we do and how shall we live?' That science does not give an answer to this is indisputable. The only question that remains is the sense in which science gives 'no' answer, and whether or not science might yet be of some use to the one who puts the questions correctly" (Weber:1919b:143).

Weber's solution to the value-freedom problem in the social sciences was worked out within the framework of the *Methodenstreit* which characterised that period of German academic history. His contribution to the value-freedom debate was worked out within the framework of a debate with the classical paradigm of natural science and the accompanying assumptions about objectivity. His discussion of the value-freedom problem was essentially located within the framework of a debate between the historical school, and the theoretical school (which approximated the classical paradigm of natural science including classical assumptions of objectivity in the natural sciences).

Since then developments within the natural sciences themselves have reframed the parameters of the objectivity and value-freedom debate, as will be argued shortly.

For Weber, the natural and social sciences shared some features, while differing in



others. Essentially, he appears to have understood the difference to have resided in the historical nature of social phenomena. Thus Turner and Beeghley claim that he rejected the idea that sociology can be modelled after the natural sciences, since any search for universal laws excludes important and unique historical events from consideration (1981:245).

So, for example, the value of his Protestant Ethic thesis lay in the demonstration that **unique** events can have significant social consequences.

As far as the similarities between the natural and social sciences are concerned, he argued that there was an "objective and verifiable knowledge that links all sciences, natural and social" (Turner and Beeghley:1981:212), and that a value-free sociology could attain this knowledge, that the methodological problem of objectivity in the social sciences could be resolved.

He claims that all science is united by a **procedural similarity** - all sciences share a single goal - the search for truth through the use of rational methods, clear concepts and rational inferences (Turner and Beeghley:1981:195-212).

Thus his position on value freedom centres around the procedural aspects of the research process, and the possibility that the research process itself can be devoid of values - even if values impact on the topic to be studied. A scientific analysis cannot include ethical values in it and be regarded as objective, thus the research process must be rational, rather than evaluative (Turner and Beeghley:1981:212).

Weber unquestioningly accepts that the topics chosen for research will be determined by forces outside of abstract science<sup>51</sup>, but denies that this affects the research process itself. His argument is that if a rational method is followed - that is, if data is clearly conceptualised and systematically analyzed, if concepts are clearly defined, agreed upon rules of evidence are followed and logical inferences made, then there can be an objective science of sociology (Turner and Beeghley:1981).

---

51. As far as the objects of research topics are concerned, Weber acknowledges that in all science, the researcher's value orientations, as well as material interests will guide the selection of topics for study (Turner and Beeghley:1981:267). "What becomes the object of investigation...is determined by the value-ideas which govern the researcher and his epoch" (Käsler:1988:196).

#### 4.2 TWENTIETH CENTURY SHIFTS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AS THEY RELATE TO THE VALUE-FREEDOM PROBLEM

Today the question of value-freedom and objectivity cannot be discussed in isolation from developments within the "natural sciences" - and hence in the philosophy of science - this century.

Today the objectivity problem has gone beyond the parameters of the debates which characterised the *Methodenstreit*, since the nature of the philosophical assumptions of the natural sciences has undergone a radical transformation.

While classical physics had assumed the object, including atoms, to be a solid entity, this assumption did not correlate with findings in atomic research (Capra:1982:67-78).

Capra argues that the properties which a subatomic phenomenon shows will have no intrinsic properties independent of its environment, rather properties exhibited will depend on the experimental situation, the apparatus with which it interacts (Capra:1982:67-69). Rather than being an object "out there", a subatomic "particle" is essentially a "set of relationships" which **interacts with the observer** (Capra:1982:67-69; Zukav:1979:93,115).

The 'observed' system...cannot be observed until it interacts with the observing system, and even then all we can observe are its effects on a measuring device (Zukav:1979:93).

The result of these discoveries has been a fundamental philosophical shift - away from a focus on "objects" and towards a focus on "relationships", including relationships between the scientist and what is observed. Capra claims that this shift has huge implications for science as a whole, not just for physics. In modern physics, the subject/object divide of the classical framework has broken down, as has the concept of the world-as-a-(dead) machine.

The electron does not have objective properties independent of my mind. In atomic physics the sharp Cartesian division between mind and matter, between the observer and the observed, can no longer be maintained....the properties of particles are determined by principles closely related to the methods of observation....the observed patterns of matter are reflections of patterns of mind (Capra:1982:77-84).

Capra claims that by transcending the Cartesian division between mind and matter, subject and object; modern physics has also invalidated the classical assumption that one could have an objective description of nature and thus has challenged the "myth" of a value-free

science (1982:77). Since the patterns which are observed by scientists are "intimately connected with the patterns of their minds", human consciousness plays an important role in the process of observation, and in atomic physics it "determines to a large extent the properties of the observed phenomena" (Capra:1982:77).

Scientists<sup>52</sup> are thus identifying a broad philosophical shift within science from the classical mechanistic, reductionist "world-as-a-machine", Newtonian/Cartesian paradigm; to a systemic perspective where it is acknowledged that the scientist is unable to observe without both participating in and influencing that which she observes.

Modern physics, in contrast to the clear subject/object divide of Newtonian physics, "presupposes an observer situated within the observed world" (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:218). It assumes **interaction** between the observer and that which is observed, where the scientist is a participator in the system she observes. While Newtonian science contained no reference to the observer, and defined objectivity in terms of a lack of reference to the observer (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:213-218); quantum mechanics teaches us that it is impossible to observe reality without changing it (Zukav:1979:56)<sup>53</sup>.

It must be stressed that this does **not** imply that physics has become "subjective" in the sense of being a result of our convictions. What is different is that the observer is assumed to interact with and to influence that which is observed - something which was denied in classical physics and in the "objectivity" assumptions accompanying them. Modern physics does remain subject to constraints "that identify us as part of the world we are describing" (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:218).

Once we presuppose an observer situated within the observed world, boundaries must be established. What has to be tested is the limits of where in all probability one's assumptions will hold true. A recognition of one's values is essential to clarifying the

---

52. See Capra (1982), Prigogine and Stengers (1984) and Zukav (1979) for these debates.

53. "If we observe a certain particle collision experiment, not only do we have no way of proving that the result would have been the same if we had not been watching it, all that we know indicates that it would not have been the same, because the result that we got was affected by the fact that we were looking at it" (Zukav:1979:56).

boundaries within which one's assumptions will in all probability hold true.

To give a concrete example regarding ideal types of rational action -the notion that the instrumental type of self-interested action directed at the given end of maximising economic represents the "pure" type of rationality may hold true within the context of an ideal type capitalist market; however is a useless criterion of rationality where ultimate values differ.

In summary, developments within physics this century, have undermined classical assumptions within the natural sciences about value-freedom, objectivity and control. The researcher is no longer regarded as separate from what is observed, but rather as a participator in what is observed. In this post Cartesian philosophical framework the act of observation is assumed to influence what is observed of "natural" phenomena, and subject and object cannot be separated in a facile manner. Rather, there is an acknowledgement of the parameters of objective knowledge, and going with this an acknowledgement of an ethical dimension to science which can no longer be evaded. Within the classical framework, time was perceived as linear, progress was perceived as infinite, and it was assumed that in principle it was possible to know all of reality.

Weber also adopts this assumption - he maintained that increasing intellectualisation and rationalisation means that **in principle** we can master all things by calculation (1919a:139).

By contrast, in the emergent systemic view it is assumed that we cannot in principle know more than a fraction of reality (Berman:1981:237; Zukav:1979:2), and thus in principle we cannot control all of it.

These developments within "natural" science demand a reassessment of sociology's own assumptions about objectivity, the ethical responsibility of scientists, and value-freedom. The boundary lines which divided the two sides in the *Methodenstreit* have become more blurred. Today, the idea of scientists enjoying some kind of extracultural, extraterritorial prerogative which places them in an objective position outside of society and culture is no longer acceptable (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:298-299).

**FIGURE TEN: A COMPARISON OF THE NEWTONIAN/CARTESIAN WORLD VIEW WHICH DOMINATED CLASSICAL SCIENCE GENERALLY, AND CLASSICAL PHYSICS SPECIFICALLY, WITH THE EMERGENT SCIENTIFIC WORLD VIEW.**

Newtonian World View

Can picture it.

Based on ordinary sense perceptions.

Describes **things**; individual objects in space and their changes in time.

Predicts events.

Assumes an objective reality "out there".

Nature is known from the outside, and phenomena are examined in abstraction from their context (the experiment); goal is control over nature.

We can observe something without changing it.

Claims to be based on "absolute truth"; the way that nature really is<sup>54</sup>.

No relationship between fact and value.

Mind is separate from body, subject is separate from object.

Systemic World View

Cannot picture it.

Based on behaviour of subatomic particles and systems not directly observable.

Describes statistical behaviour of **systems**.

Predicts probabilities.

Does not assume an objective reality apart from our experience.

Nature is revealed in our relations with it, and phenomena can be known only in context (participant observation).

We cannot observe something without changing it.

Claims only to correlate experience correctly.

Fact and value inseparable.

Mind/body/subject/object are each two aspects of the same process.

... continued

---

54. In this respect, Weber is located in the classical camp. Turner and Beeghley argue that Weber saw science as "the search for truth" (1981:195).

Newtonian World View

Linear time, infinite progress;  
we can in principle know all of  
reality.

Descriptions are abstract,  
mathematical; only that which  
can be measured is real.

Only matter and motion are real.

The whole is nothing more than  
the sum of its parts.

Living systems are in principle  
reducible to inorganic matter;  
nature is ultimately dead.

Systemic World View

Circuitry (single variables  
in the system cannot be  
maximised); we cannot in  
principle know more than  
a fraction of reality.

Descriptions are a mixture  
of the abstract and the  
concrete; quality takes  
precedence over quantity.

Process, form, relationship  
are primary.

Wholes have properties  
that parts do not have.

Living systems are not  
reducible to their components;  
nature is alive.

Sources: Berman (1981:237); Zukav (1979:66).

Classical science is the science which reflects the formal relation to the world - rooted in irrational religious impulses - of Calvinist "domination of the world". This is the science of the theoretical side of the *Methodenstreit* with which Weber had dialogue.

What then are the sociological implications of the findings which this science has generated from **within itself** this century - that point to the futility of aspiring towards total control - and furthermore which have an affinity not with ascetic Calvinist ascetic ideals, but rather with its antithesis - (cosmocentric, other-worldly and passive) eastern mysticism?<sup>55</sup>

---

55. See Berman (1981), Capra (1982;1988), Prigogine and Stengers (1984:47) and Zukav (1979).

#### 4.3 BREAKDOWN OF THE NOTION THAT SCIENCE IS OBJECTIVELY DETACHED FROM SOCIETY

I have addressed some of the philosophical shifts within science which raise serious questions about the possibility of a value-free science. In addition it is also necessary to address the position of science as a whole, as it relates to, and fits into contemporary society. Such considerations raise further challenges to the notion of the possibility of a value-free science. The ends towards which science is presently directed are clarified, rather than ignored, evaded, or taken as given. Only by making the substantive ends towards which contemporary science is oriented conscious, does the possibility of employing science for the pursuit of alternate ends open up.

According to Richards, the notion of detached science is an idealisation that is not appropriate to contemporary social conditions. Typical science is now "applied" science, and this applies to both the natural and social sciences. The gap between "pure" science and applied science, between "pure" science and technology, has narrowed to the extent that Richards estimates that less than ten per cent of contemporary scientific activity can be regarded in the old idealisation of "pure" science any longer (Richards:1983:109).

The idealised model of science as a "pure" and "self-regulating system" has broken down, with science being subject to political, economic and other forces (Richards:1983:171). Science and rationality "do not float free of the educational and institutional patterns of the day" (Hollis and Lukes 1982:5). Science and technology have become increasingly interlinked since the end of the nineteenth century (Richards:1983:111; Prigogine and Stengers:1984:1), thus we must forget the nineteenth century idealisations of value-free science and acknowledge that modern science is "a highly organised new profession closely linked with industry and government" (Richards:1983:128).

In contemporary society, much of the research which is conducted is closely integrated into, and funded by, the military industrial complex, with the majority of contemporary scientific work being carried out for the ends of gaining economic or military advantage (Richards:1983:115). In fact, the armaments industry employs almost half of the world's scientific and technological manpower (Capra:1982; Hoogvelt:1982:141). Within capitalist countries, the state and huge business corporations are the major actors who are

in the financial position to support research and development programmes (Richards:1983:129-31).

If Richards' analysis is correct, then science as it stands today as an institution is quite clearly organised to preserve the basic societal value of maximising economic advantage. As Richards argues, today "society gets the science it is willing and able to pay for" (1983:1).

There appears to be an affinity between the elites within capitalism and the aristocrats of the scientific institution, in that both operate on a level which disregards substantive considerations in favour of maximising formal ones. If we consider their relationships to the broader social structure in which they are located, they are in an extremely powerful position. To claim an ethic of responsibility for these interest groups serves to legitimate the total disregard for the substantive content of ends which these two groups share.

As I understand it, a central problem of modernity is the fact that in an age where scientific legitimation replaces religious legitimation, the scientists assume the structural role of priests. While Weber may have warned the scientist against preaching, the scientist is nevertheless the modern agent of legitimacy, and the layperson vests trust, faith and power in these priests, forgetting that most knowledge given to them by the priests is based on information chosen specifically for the purposes of assessing the most adequate means to a single given end - namely the maximisation of economic advantage.

So modernity's priests are in the powerful position of being the agents of legitimation whilst being concerned neither with considerations of the content of the ends of action, nor with questions of possible alternates. Their task is simply to establish the most efficient means for achieving given ends, which to a large extent are determined by financially powerful elite interests.

Bearing in mind the fusion between science and technology which has characterised the twentieth century experience, Weber's position on technology will be briefly addressed. As far as technical rationality is concerned, he argued that it does not matter whether a product is useful or not - that theoretically it is possible to have a rational technique for achieving ends that nobody desires (Weber:1947:162). In Weber's scheme, while economic action involves choice between alternative ends; technology entails the choice of appropriate



means to given ends (1947:162).

And towards what end has technology been historically directed? He writes that the - "technological development of modern times has been largely oriented to profit making" (1947:163). Thus it shares an affinity with his conception of what a given type of human action would take if it were strictly rational - "if it were unequivocally directed to a single end, the maximisation of economic advantage" (Weber:1947:96).

And yet, For Weber, assessment of ends and advice as to ends is beyond the bounds of science (Loewith:1970:113). To assess ends, to advise on ends would be breaking his maxim that it is not the role of science to tell us how to order our lives!

In Weber's ideal of a value-free science, the limits of science were defined in terms of the assessment of means. However, avoiding substance simply allows for a vacuum that will be filled by substance over which science can have no control at all and this substance will define the given end, in an unconscious manner.

It is not only as an 'atrophied spirit' that 'the machine is not neutral': it is never neutral. Formality can never escape substance; its formality is relative; it is always most efficient **for some end**....Formal rationality is not merely formal, but substantive: it has 'real' implications.... perhaps it really serves no one, being independent of all control, a manually created automaton now careering madly on its own power, like the demon unleashed by the sorcerer's apprentice (Eisen:1978:66-67).

To avoid this vacuum being filled by given ends, science will have to address substance, rather than ignore it - even if it does not go so far as to advise on substance. There can be no awareness of alternative ends if we simply ignore the substance of the ends given to us - in the name of value freedom.

The role which Weber advocated science in relation to the layman - was to play a role in providing people with accurate information on which to base their decisions about how they ought to live (Turner and Beeghley:1981). How is it to do this when it is structurally located in such a way as to assess only the means to given ends - given not by democratic control, but by elite control?

While Weber argued that the role of science was **not** to order our lives, I argue that the fact is that, as an institution, which shares close relationships with dominant economic interests, it **does** order our lives. Science, in collaboration with business and state monopoly

interests, is integrally involved in the process of arranging our lives, of determining what we shall do and how we shall live. So, While I agree with Weber that science does not provide an answer to the question "what shall we do and how shall we live?", that it does not provide **ultimate meanings** (since it doesn't ask these questions in the first place); its effects nevertheless impinge powerfully on these domains of our existence.

In the light of all this discussion so far, I reject Weber's claim that the limits of science lie in the assessment of means. As regards a sociology of development, to ignore ends simply amounts to advocating a form of development which cannot escape the pincers of the machine.

However, in line with the position consequent upon developments within the philosophical assumptions of the natural sciences which were discussed earlier, this does not mean that a sociology of development becomes "subjective" in the sense of convictions as to desirable ends. Rather, it amounts to a recognition of substance rather than an evasion of it, and a recognition that the ends which the scientist serves are not substance-free. There is no reason why social science cannot determine ends which actors have and give a knowledge of alternative ends.

In this sense, the essence of Weber's value-freedom position - that there is a huge distinction between taking a political stand and analysing political structures - remains valid (Weber:1919b:145). It simply means that the data given and the data left out in analysis - that which is chosen to be observed from numerous elements - will be recognised (by scientists and laity) as being determined partly by the political stand which the scientist takes when not playing the role of scientist, as well as by any financial interests which have sponsored that research. This helps to set the parameters within which the results can be contextualised.

The way science is structured today there is not a consideration of ultimate values (Brubaker:1984:86). Weber himself advocated the notion that the choice of ends was beyond the bounds of science (1919b:151).

Weber stressed that sociology cannot take a moral position, that it cannot be a moral science, that it cannot be committed to ethical or political interpretations of historical events. The scientist must separate his personal standpoint, "for which he may not claim any

**scientific** legitimation, from the description of facts" (Käsler:1988:193; emphasis in original). For Weber, sociology cannot identify "proper" norms, values, or modes of action; it cannot take a moral or political position. The sociologist must distinguish between "what is" and "what ought to be" (Turner and Beeghley:1981:212,247). Ethical positions are not scientifically demonstrable it is "impossible to justify (or to dismiss) a political standpoint with "scientific" arguments" (Käsler:1988:18,193), except "in discussing the means for a firmly given and presupposed end" (Weber:1919b:147; emphasis added).

Yet given recent developments in science generally and communications research specifically, is it not possible that science can play a role in assessing the most adequate means for attaining collectively communicated ends, rather than simply adopting those ends determined by a science that does not consider ultimate ends, yet whose direction is often determined by powerful financial interests?

Our understanding of rationality (partly as a consequence of Weber's writings) has been closely linked to a notion that pure rationality really means controlling numbers without substance.

In practice, calculation occurs within institutionalised structures, and is always directed at substantive ends. Where ends are not consciously formulated, they will be determined within broader institutional structures. To pretend value neutrality is to tacitly accept the dominant cultural values embodied in institutionalised ends. Thus, by trying to have a value-free science, what generally happens is that scientists tacitly accept the dominant societal values (Capra et al.:1982:5-6).

Even if one accepts Weber's position that science does not **advise** on ends surely it is not beyond the bounds of science to **analyze** ends, as opposed to taking a stand on them. Only once ends, including those of science, are analyzed (as opposed to ignored) does the potential for a broader social control of which ends are pursued, become possible.

Weiss argues that Weber is concerned with the **possibility** of human action to develop a conscious, self-assertive and critical relation to the relations that determine it;

... the concept of meaningful social action is conceived in terms of the possibility (rather than the necessity) of consciousness and a conscious approach to the historically determinative bases of social conduct (Weiss:1986:133-4)<sup>56</sup>.

In this regard, Gorz argues that while economic rationalisation begins with calculation and counting, calculation does away with the subject giving meaning to decisions and accepting responsibility for them (1989:109-127).

If the possibility of a meaningful approach to development is to be realised, then the substantive content of the ends of rational social action cannot be left out of consciousness. If development is perceived merely in terms of formal considerations, the possibility of control over what all this formal calculation, regulation and methodical action is ultimately leading towards is denied.

I argue that the development process should be one of developing the potential for such conscious social action. In such a view, consciousness of the ends becomes crucial. Following Hindess, I argue that the definition of ends need not occur at the level of the individual actor, but can be manifested in collective decision-making structures as well. In this way, questions of how to live and how to order our societies have the potential to be legitimately and rationally decided by more of the people who live in them than is presently the case.

Hindess argues that Weber considered the means-end relationship in isolation from social relationship, and from the discursive conditions in which actors reach and formulate decisions, and that Habermas's concept of "communicative action" brings out those aspects of the rationality of action which were neglected in Weber's action theory. (Hindess:1987:138-143)

For Habermas, all discourse that falls short of the ideal speech situation in which

---

56. "In the great majority of cases actual action goes on in a state of inarticulate half-consciousness or actual unconsciousness of its subjective meaning. The actor is more likely to 'be aware' of it in a vague sense than he is to 'know' what he is doing or be explicitly self-conscious about it. In most cases his action is governed by impulse or habit....The ideal type of meaningful action where the meaning is fully conscious and explicit is only a marginal case" (Weber:1947:111-112).

consensus is arrived at (Draper:1986) is subject to "systematically distorted communication", which arises from power inequalities between participants (Mellor:1983:72). In his Theory of Communicative Action (1981), Habermas attempts to develop a theory of action that doesn't stress means and ends so much as the need to co-ordinate action socially via communication.

If the barriers to upward information transfer (which result from systematically distorted communication arising out of power inequalities between participants) are to be adequately addressed, it is essential that the substantive rationality of the ends of action will have to be addressed, not evaded, by social science.

In the ideal speech situation, these ends would be decided upon through communication. What needs to be established is the conditions under which communication might approximate the ideal speech situation, and under which ends may come to be agreed upon through maximum democratic participation.

Only once goals are consensually defined and the value content of them acknowledged, can the sociologist begin to assess the most adequate actions for attaining those goals, and thus the rationality of the ensuing social action. This is an alternate direction for sociology (and especially a sociology of development) to take as opposed to assuming value-neutral goals (whilst legitimating powerful ones) in its conception of rational action and of rational development.

In such an approach it follows that actors themselves are in a position to define the goals of development. Historically it has been the powerful who have done so, but the development crisis demands that such goals be determined in the future through maximum participation in the decision-making process. Only once the process of goal-definition has occurred, and the goal is defined consciously, can the most adequate means begin to be determined for attaining development goals. Then formally rational measures of methodical calculation could be employed as part of this process, with an acknowledgement that the end will necessarily embody a substantive value content, which has been communicatively decided upon as more desirable relative to other possible ends. That is, formally rational processes could still be used but they would be directed at goals which are meaningful to participants. (Such ultimate goals might include the maximisation of economic advantage,

but would be consciously defined and thus not considered value-neutral).

I acknowledge that such a view obviously has Utopian components. However it needs to be acknowledged that the alternative as presently constituted also has Utopian components in its presumption that economic logic will ultimately displace philosophical discourse and that economic rationality will "naturally" dominate (Harman:1987).

Leaving the Utopian element aside, and considering shifts in contemporary social reality, the argument which I am making here is congruent with the present shift from a production-focused society to an "information society"; where information itself comes to be a resource - one which is not as accessible to the same quantitative analysis as commodity production is.

The consideration only of means, and the refusal to analyze ends - including and especially those of science - is denying the possibility of democratic control of the ends which science can serve, and allowing instead for a monopolisation of science and its ends by powerful interest groups, including the scientific aristocracy itself.

As Gorz argues - modernity has come to be manifested in forms of "megatechnology and scientism" which,

... lead to the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of a technocracy whose expertise generally serves to legitimate the economic and political powers that be (Gorz:1989:232).

While, as Weber asserted, science might not be able to advise on ends, it is quite capable of analysing them, thus developing data which would enable the possibility of more self conscious action, and more self-conscious control over the ends of science.

Setting development goals without a comprehensive understanding of the values which guide them can only amount to meaningless development.

#### **4.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR "ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY"**

Not least of the dilemmas raised by the developments in the natural sciences as discussed in section 4.2 is the conclusion that ethics can not be regarded as an entirely separate concern to science. Scientists now are no longer only intellectually responsible for their research, but also morally responsible (Capra:1982:77; Prigogine and Stengers:1984:312).

This follows directly from a number of factors. Firstly, a human element enters the act of research - we "cannot eliminate ourselves from the picture" (Zukav:1979:56). Secondly, it is the result of the shift of concern from "object" to "relationship" where it is acknowledged that the observer becomes part of the observed world, the observer cannot observe without altering what he sees (Zukav:1979:115). Finally, there has been a consequent shift from assuming "mastery of nature"<sup>57</sup> towards participating in "dialogue with nature" (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:218).

To ignore the substantive and ethical dimensions of modern science, choosing rather to be concerned with purely formal, procedural concerns such as  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , can no longer be presumed as taking the position of an ethic of responsibility. This is because it has been demonstrated within physics that today we have to acknowledge that scientists are a part of the systems they observe and that they influence them by the mere act of observation. In this sense, Weber's position on value-freedom, which assumes the possibility of objective knowledge (Turner and Beeghley:1981:212) and the belief that "truth" can be discovered through formally rational methods (Turner and Beeghley:1981:195), has been transcended within physics; and there is no reason why it should not be transcended within sociology.

There are a few points to be made regarding the value-freedom question, relating to the notion of an "ethic of responsibility" which appears in Weber's later work.

In addressing Weber's types of social action, I pointed out the problems inherent in his attempt to identify the "pure" rational type. It was concluded that not even *Zweckrational* action is devoid of substantive value content, that pure *Zweckrationalität* is not objectively possible (Albrow:1987:170; Parsons:1947:17).

The problem is exacerbated when *Zweckrational* comes to be equated with an "ethic of responsibility" (in contrast to an "ethic of ultimate value") as Parsons has done (1937:643-5).

---

57. Weber understood the element of control to be central to the natural sciences (Parsons:1937:592). His position was that natural science only gives us an answer to the question of what we must do "if we wish to master life technically" (Weber:1919b:144). Parsons claims that "Apart from this interest in control, natural phenomena are, as an object of science, indifferent to human values" (1937:592).

If I am correct to argue that ultimately *Zweckrational* action cannot be clearly divorced from the substantive contents of its ends, then quite clearly neither can ethics of responsibility be clearly separated from ethics of ultimate value. Let me explore this argument more deeply.

While Parsons assumes *Zweckrationalität* to be equatable with "ethics of responsibility", I shall follow Brubaker (1984) in his challenge of this assumption, in the light of the revised interpretation of Weber's position on value-freedom which has emerged in the 1980s<sup>58</sup>.

In *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), Parsons argues that the key to the distinction between *Wertrationalität* and *Zweckrationalität* lies in the distinction between two "formal" types of ethical attitude - *Verantwortungsethik* (ethics of responsibility) and *Gessinnungsethik* (ethics of absolute value). For Parsons,

... the distinction between the two types of rational action is to be regarded as resting on that between two polar types of ultimate-end systems (1937:643-645).

He argues that *Zweckrationalität* is the normative type of action implied by an ethic of responsibility, and *Wertrationalität* is the normative type of action implied by an ethic of absolute value.

In the light of the earlier discussion in this chapter, such a position is untenable. Having identified that the substantive ultimate value associated with maximum

---

58. See the collection of essays edited by Lash and Whimster (1987) as well as Brubaker (1984). While orthodox interpretations of Weber have consisted of "a formalised sociology that stressed the ideal type, insisted on the separation of 'fact' and 'value', tended to an ahistorical usage of Weberian typologies and took the Protestant ethic thesis as a model of modernisation for societies whose cultures neither were Christian nor shared many of the social structural principles of Western Europe" (Lash and Whimster:1987:3), recent writings have come to question Weber's role as the advocate of a "value-free" social science. On the basis of the more recent interpretations, Lash and Whimster argue that Weber in fact had a very clear stance on the relation of science politics and culture, and that towards the end of his life his views were radical rather than orthodox (ibid.:3ff.). They argue that "we now have possession of a Weber who does not simplistically exclude values, who offers a number of versions as to how societal change is to be conceived and is far less Eurocentrist in its account of the processes of rationalisation" (ibid.:3)



*Zweckrationalität* is, in the final analysis, a class-based maximisation of economic advantage, now we see that bourgeois theory has asserted that this is where "ethics of responsibility" is to be located. Responsibility for what, and to whom?

Weber himself writes that responsibility is empty unless it is responsibility to some "substantive purpose" (in Brubaker:1984:108), and that it is possible for an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility to supplement one another - they need not be absolute contrasts (1919a:127).

I contend that the ethic of responsibility cannot be independently implicated by *Zweckrationalität*. In fact, as Brubaker argues, pure *Zweckrationalität* is ethically barren, devoid of reference to ultimate values except in so far as having ends determined by "the urgency of an individual's given subjective wants" (Brubaker:1984:108), or by "maximisation of economic advantage" (Weber:1947:96). To equate ethical barrenness with an ethic of responsibility is indefensible.

Brubaker concludes that the ethic of responsibility actually demands a commitment to ultimate values. He considers the ethic of responsibility to entail the integration of a,

... passionate commitment to ultimate values with the dispassionate analysis of the alternative means of pursuing them... that ends determined in a *Wertrational* manner be pursued with means selected in a *Zweckrational* manner (1984:108-110).

There are some problems here. The consideration of alternatives and consequences of the end chosen is something which Brubaker leaves out of his solution to the problem of ethic of responsibility, but which was identified as a crucial consideration in *Zweckrational* social action. While sharing Brubaker's sentiments about the ethical barrenness of pure *Zweckrationalität*, I am not sure that I can agree with his solution of the problem.

As I understand it, the solution to the problem does not lie in selecting ends in a *Wertrational* manner - which would not take account of possible consequences, of alternates and so on, and which - as far as I can establish, is what has been happening within the dominant structures as a whole in any case (the ultimate value being maximisation of economic advantage).

Rather, the solution lies in employing *Zweckrationalität* where both means and ends are weighed relative to alternates, but being aware that whatever end is chosen, it will

inevitably have a substantive *Wertrational* component built into it. Furthermore the concept would have to be refined to include components of collective participative, communicative decision-making, rather than staying in the old framework which sees *Zweckrationalität* as purely self-interested.

That is, in recalling my discussion in section 2.1 on *Zweckrational* social action, what I am advocating is the type of action entailed in [Za] and [Zb], but with the addendum that we are no longer driven in the final analysis to defining the end in the restricted terms of maximising economic advantage, in terms of self-interested action; as I argued was built into Weber's entire theoretical schema.

To recall. [Za] entails a plurality of means oriented to a plurality of ends, each of which embodies substantive value. [Zb] entails a plurality of means oriented to a plurality of ends and where the choice of means and ends are in turn means to further other ends. The distinction between Brubaker's solution and the one which I propose rests essentially on the fact that ends, as well as means can be weighed; in the light of communicative information which informs maximum knowledge of the situation in which action is to take place. While Brubaker's ends are determined in a *Wertrational* manner, I ask whether it is not possible for ends to be determined in a *Zweckrational* manner, at least in the sense of entailing a consideration of possible consequences and possible alternates.

For Weber, the more total the knowledge of the facts of the situation, the more likely we are to be able to assess the most rational means for achieving a particular goal (1947:90-92).

Maximising communicative elements, both within goal-directed decision-making entities and between goal-directed decision-making entities (who may have differing goals) would assist in assessing not only possible consequences, but also possible alternate means and ends in the light of maximum knowledge of the situation in which action is to be carried out.

Once an end is chosen from alternates the actor would be aware of the value component and possible consequences, but the whole schema would be a more self-conscious one than in Weber's initial formula.

Calculation seen in isolation from a social context is meaningless.

All calculation is directed at substantive ends and these ends need not be taken as given.

If considerations of alternate substance must be taken into account, as well as considerations of the possible consequences of these alternatives; there is more awareness of the value component of the end, and an acknowledgement that there are always possible alternates (no matter what end is ultimately decided on). Having selected an end, and being aware of the *Wertrational* component entailed in it, only then does it make sense to follow Brubaker's line of commitment to that end using *Zweckrational* means.

Developments within the "natural" sciences have led to the acknowledgement today that there is an ethical dimension to science. To ignore this dimension is not to follow an ethic of "responsibility", but rather one of "ethical barrenness" which really amounts to "ethical irresponsibility".

As far as the separation of facts and values is concerned, the indications of modern physics point to the need to acknowledge the fact that the observer influences the system and is a part of it. This demands an awareness of the content of these relationships, if scientists are to operate with an "ethic of responsibility". To ignore these relationships, and to ignore the structural location of scientific activity and the consequent substance of the ends towards which scientific action is directed, is not to be value-free; it simply means that science has sided with the structurally powerful societal institutions and thereby protects their interests as opposed to alternatives.

## **PART TWO**

### **RATIONALITY AS AN ELEMENT IN LIBERAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE SHIFT TO PERCEIVING THE WORLD SYSTEM AS OBJECT OF ANALYSIS.**

#### **CHAPTER FIVE DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES AND THE VALUE-FREEDOM PROBLEM: SOME CAUTIONARY NOTES**

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly the value-freedom problem is developed upon as it relates to the sociology of development specifically. In this way, the problems discussed in the concluding pages of part one are considered as they relate specifically to the sociological approaches to development which are to be addressed throughout part two of the dissertation.

Secondly a brief outline of the themes of part two will be discussed, focusing specifically on the argument that the goals and structures of rational development are not necessarily determined and given phenomena, towards which all "societies" are driven to move, but rather are essentially open and nondetermined. (Such a view complements Weber's claim that the rise of capitalism was historically a consequence of a unique and accidental coalescence of variables, including fundamentally irrational elements). It is argued that new developments in evolutionary theorising point to the need to reject any notion of certain and given futures and to accept instead that voluntarist agency has a potentially significant role to play in influencing what the substance of nondetermined futures will consist of. The implication is that to direct attention at the structures of advanced industrial society, assuming this to be a given end towards all subsystems of the world system should be and are moving, and beyond which they will not move, is to take a value-rational position as opposed to a value-free position. It is necessary to demythologise the notion that development is a given and determined evolutionary phenomenon moving towards given

structures which will be repeated in various subsystems of the global system of accumulation. Such a demythologisation will demand that more attention be paid to process and agency as they relate to essentially uncertain development futures, and less to anticipating the value-rational goal of recreating the structures of the Occident in a dichotomous journey from "tradition" to "modernity".

Following the critique of the value bias underlying Weber's "pure type" of rational action in part one, it is argued in part two that sociological inputs to development theory ought to be stressing social rationality more than economic rationality; that they ought to be challenging the world-view of the economist rather than playing handmaiden to it.

An economist by training thinks of himself as the guardian of rationality, the ascriber of rationality to others, and the prescriber of rationality to the social world (Arrow:1974:16).

The analysis of Weber's broader writings indicated why the economist can only do so in a very limited context, that what is rational from one point of view is not from another. The economist is not the guardian of rationality, she is merely one player in the struggle for defining what rationality is.

Development sociology has played handmaiden to the economist because - while being aware of the existence of the reality of substantive rationality - it has tended to assume that the formal rationality with which the economist is concerned will transcend substantive rationality. It is argued that this is not the role of the sociologist.

While economists may deny the substance of development any significance, presuming a value-free formal instrumental rationality as the only reality; the subject matter of sociology forces one to question the assumptions of the economist, and not to simply specify the structural conditions under which economic assumptions might be valid.

In addition to assuming that formal rationality will transcend substantive rationality, liberal approaches to development have also played handmaiden to the economist in that they have tended to extract Weber's insights regarding the significance of the Occidental rationalisation process, whilst ignoring his writings which located this process in a position relative to other forms of rationalisation; and which stressed the uniqueness of the Occidental rationalisation process.

While such selective extraction underlies liberal approaches to development generally, it is exemplified in Benjamin Schwartz's (1972) "critical variable" approach to modernisation, where "modernisation" may be taken as a synonym for the process of rationalisation (Tipps:1973:66).

When combined with evolutionary frameworks of perceiving the world, liberal development approaches have transformed Weber's material, which was intended to show the accidental and unique nature of a case, into material to justify a worldview which presumes the necessity of that case and which furthermore claims that this case is a universal beacon towards which all social structures are fatefully driven to move.

The point is, however, that economic theory as it is taught in the west is not compatible with the conditions that characterise the developing countries (Perroux:1983). Theory built upon on the development experience of the west is implicitly normative and serves the interest of the region in which it originates. The fact is that the "market" to which developing countries are subjected forces them to participate in a system characterised by universal inequality (Perroux:1983:60). If rationality is about the maximisation of economic advantage in a market economy, then it is the actors in not yet developed regions who will be more likely to be the ones over whom advantage is maximised in this universally inegalitarian system.

While sociology has traditionally emphasised social barriers to economic development, it cannot afford to ignore the economic barriers to social development (Redclift:1984:11-12).

I can only conclude from the reading I have covered, that when it comes to development, the facts which are observed, the statistics which are selected, and the interpretations of these statistics, seem to be co-determined not only by broader power structures which finance and direct research, but also by the values which the observer holds, and which are implied in the substantive content of the end towards which the writer perceives "development" to be moving. The research process itself seems unable to be easily divorced from material and value interests, as Weber maintained it should be.

Neither science, nor research, nor the objects of research funding exist in a vacuum. Variables to be selected for study exist in much broader systems, and very often what is left

out can be as important as what is observed. Not only the interpretation of facts, but also those facts which are perceived at all, appear to depend upon the way in which the particular theorist sees the world.

Theorist A might see the world as a set of national blocs which "ought" to be moving toward the "what is" which characterises Occidental development, particularly cases like England and America. Theorist B might see the world as a system moving from the "what is" of global capitalism towards the "what ought to be" of global socialism. Theorist C might see the world as a system in which development and underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin, and conclude that underdeveloped nations "ought" to make radical breaks from the world capitalist system if they are to escape the underdevelopment trap that "is". Theorist D might say that "underdevelopment" is not a "fact" at all. Theorist E might see the system as unsustainable and heading for crisis, whilst theorist F might see it as being able to contain all contradictions indefinitely and thus to sustain itself. These views of the world will all influence the observation of and the interpretation of "facts", and indeed will to some extent influence what the "facts" are.

I question the assumption that facts **can** be discretely separated from values in so far as a sociology of development goes. This is apparent in that writers appear to be unable even to **establish** what the facts of development are in the first place - there is an enormous amount of disagreement about the "facts" of development.

Liberal and left writers disagree, for example, on the empirical question of whether or not economic development has taken place in peripheral countries. There is a major problem when not only predictions, but also interpretations of the experience of the past few decades are so divergent. The problem for how the value-freedom question relates to development only becomes exacerbated in cases where interpretations are based on the same formal statistical data, collected by the same organisations. Within the economic writings, for example, different theorists using the same historical data and the same statistical bases have managed to come to come to vastly different conclusions (Hoogvelt:1976:78-9).

How are we to distinguish facts from values, when we cannot even agree on what the "facts" are?

Not only do theorists disagree about the facts of development, they also disagree

about the ends of the development process. Both liberal and marxist approaches, however, have assumed given ends in the development process, albeit different given ends.

The notion of "end" is integral to a notion of development. The goal "development" (however it is defined) is a value-rational end - especially since it can never be completely realised, but is ongoing, or processual in nature. In short, "development" as a concept is *Wertrational* and encompasses normative elements (Coetzee:1987a:91).

In liberal theory the historical experience of the west has simply been theoretically transformed into the perceived "logic" of development. The way the is/ought problem has been dealt with is to take one case of what "is" - the Occidental one, and then to take its ends as given, as "ought". The "what is" in Occidental development is taken to be the necessary end, with other patterns being considered as deviations.

While Weber was concerned with the historical specificity of the Occidental rationalisation process, the unique case which he identified has come to be generalised within subsequent theory into the anticipated "end" of all societal development. Thus, while his Protestant Ethic thesis was an attempt to seek knowledge of an historical phenomenon that was significant "**in its individuality**" (Käsler:1988:182); the work has served dominant interests very well in attempts to argue that what "is" development in the Occident should be development *per se*.

In much of the literature, "development" amounts to little more than attempting to find the best means to reproduce on a global scale the unintended consequences of Protestant asceticism which arose in the Occident. The Occidental manifestation of rationality and rationalisation as identified by Weber, has come to be strongly associated with the concept of modernisation and development in the literature (O'Connell:1965). Rationality is considered to constitute the hallmark of the cultural outlook of modernisation (Desai:1971:94), and an increase in rationalisation has been considered as the pre-condition for the attainment of modernity (Taylor:1979:35).

Just as development has been associated with the American way of life as endpoint, rationality has also been associated with the American way of life - with American society being presented as the goal towards which other societies should aspire (Cruise O'Brien:1979:53-54).



While liberal theory has assumed the Occidental present as the developmental endpoint, Marxist theory has assumed the ultimate end as socialism, with capitalism being considered a short term end which becomes a means to furthering that ultimate end.

Both the liberal and Marxist viewpoints...share a common ideology of development....This ideology identifies progress, circumspectly redefined as development, with the development of capitalist relations of production.....It comes to identify socialism with the development of capitalist relations of production under state management. Both liberal values and socialist values are sacrificed in this way to the Moloch of rationalization, Weber's iron cage of history (Williams:1978:930).

According to Kalberg, substantive rationality orders action into patterns in relation to "value postulates", or value clusters. (A value postulate implies a cluster of values, not a single value). Such clusters of values include concepts such as communism, feudalism, egalitarianism, socialism, capitalism, Buddhism etc (1980:1155). Every existing and historic rationalisation process has been located within a framework of a particular type of substantive rationality. In consequence there is "no absolute array of "rational" values which exists as a set of perennial standards for the "rational" and for rationalisation processes" (Kalberg:1980:1155); since the rationalisation processes based on it always exist in reference to different "directions" or ultimate points of view.

In fact, both the marxist and liberal approaches to development are embedded in substantive ideologies.

This needs to be constantly recognised, since it implies the potential for alternative substance; rather than determined futures and determined structures given by a view of evolution which essentially has simply replaced eschatological beliefs of historical destiny into a subject of systematic scientific inquiry (Hoogvelt:1982:105-106).

### **5.1 THE ENDS OF RATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - ARE THEY GIVEN OR OPEN?**

In part two of this dissertation the theoretical shift towards perceiving development as taking place in the framework of a global system will be traced, as well as the implications which this system has for the conflict between formal and substantive rationality as outlined in part one.

The argument of part one concerning rationality and rational action will be developed as it relates to this conflict. It has been argued - following an evaluation of Weber's work - that the rationality which characterised capitalist development is not a criterion for assessing rationality *per se*. However one of the major problems with the development literature (especially the liberal approaches) is that it has assumed this to be the case. In consequence, much of what passes for liberal development approaches is a justification for the diffusion of the unique form of (accumulative) rationality which Weber documented in his Protestant Ethic thesis.

Although the Occidental experience of rational capitalist development may be of universal significance - as Weber asserted, does this mean that it is the role of a sociology of development to contribute in attempts to impose "what is" in the Occidental case of capitalism, onto all cases, and say that this is what "ought to be" whilst still pretending value freedom?

The primary goal of "development" in western liberal sociology has been the realisation of systems in which action will be directed at the maximisation of economic advantage, and **not** at provision for social needs.

This given end, which Weber identified as the substantive content of the "pure type" of rational action, has a "fit" with the ideology of individualism (including models of action which stress the actor as individual), with that of competition, with that of a capitalist system of economic production; and with the market principle of profit maximisation as guiding force (as opposed to production for need).

The fact that economic theory has developed largely within the utilitarian framework of thought probably goes far toward accounting for the extent to which the idea that human motivation was primarily egotistic has been associated with it. Indeed the formula of the rational pursuit of self-interest has been so widely applied that egoism has seemed to be at the very essence of the economists' outlook on human action....It is, of course, true that the postulate of rationality has been basic to all utilitarian thought ... (Parsons:1937:163).

In so far as rational actors are implicitly acting within the structures which liberal development theory addresses, these actors are considered rational when they desire the goal attributed to Weber's most rational type of action - the maximisation of economic advantage.

Liberal development approaches amount to an attempt to assess what structural conditions are necessary for these types of rational actors to dominate within a system - which will then be considered a developed system. The fact that the goals of individualist, maximally economically-rational action exist in conflict with other substantive ends is ignored.

Rather, it has generally been assumed that the expansion of a formal rationality of accumulation would automatically satisfy the attainment of other substantive ends besides capital accumulation. This assumption influenced the view that development could occur in a top-down fashion, which was at the basis of the modernisation perspective. Since liberal approaches evade the question of exploitation, it was anticipated that all would be able to simultaneously maximise their economic advantage at once.

However, more recently, several writers are pointing out that - in consequence of the failure of the top-down approach - there has to be a restructuring of thought about development away from a top-down perspective, and towards a bottom-up perspective which stresses more localised control over development directions (Abdalla:1980; Coetzee (ed.):1987; Goodwin:1991:11; Stöhr and Taylor:1981:460-461).

Such an approach would mean that the subjective motivations of actors in the development process would have to be taken serious account of, as would the substance of their goals. To date, development theory has failed to do this, preferring rather to dictate the "best interests" of actors from the outside, from an objective distance.

In both liberal and marxist development approaches there has been a theoretical neglect of ends as perceived by concrete actors. Partly as a consequence of this neglect, both the liberal and neo-marxist approaches have ultimately fallen into a functionalist static-equilibrium view of the world which stresses structure as opposed to process. Development is seen to be given by existent structures, not as a process of becoming in which agents participate actively.

It is my starting point and value position that development is ultimately about empowerment of actors to act rationally (in the sense of action directed at numerous possible alternate goals) - and not about the empowerment of capital to dispossess actors from control over not only the means of production but also the means of decision-making and goal attainment.

As long as development continues to be equated with the formal criterion of growth, without addressing the substantive nature of this growth, it is likely to continue to be associated with dispossession, increasing poverty, and increasing landlessness giving rise to growing unemployment rather than labour absorption.

If dispossession (of land, resources, control over development direction) without reabsorption is a **necessary prerequisite** of growth then growth *per se* cannot mean development. We have to try a different perspective, which I argue is to be located in an action framework which recognises the substantive value-bias inherent in the growth model. This would allow for the legitimation of other substantive developmental ends, and thus for more social groups - a broader section of society as a whole - to take control over the direction of development.

In recognising that the "pure type" rational end is itself an ultimate end - which exists in relation to other substantive ends; theory needs to address how differing substantive ends might be dealt with in a socially rational manner by concrete actors.

The tendency has been to assume that growth via the expansion of formal accumulative rationality directed at maximisation of economic advantage automatically leads to development, and to redistributive benefits for the society as a whole.

What needs to be developed is far more theory dealing with the way in which alternate ends are articulated, the mechanisms via which they might be articulated more clearly, what the content of existing alternate ends as perceived by concrete actors is, and the processes by which groups with conflicting ultimate ends deal with one another.

A focus on action and process as opposed to structure is also justified from the perspective of new developments in evolutionary theory.

The action versus social structure debate is an ongoing one. While part one analyzed the components of what is taken to be rational action in the development literature, a large proportion of part two is given to the concern of development theory with structure. I would like to place the train of my argument in perspective at this point in order that it might be easier to follow. Within liberal theory it is argued that the liberal concern with structure is rooted in an evolutionary perspective which has perceived societies as structures tending towards stability and equilibrium (Turner:1974:60), and which has also seen these societies

to be closed systems in the tradition of classical evolutionary theory. While the marxist contributions have lambasted liberal assumptions about societies as closed systems, the neo-marxist circulationist world system perspective associated with Frank, Wallerstein and Amin has ultimately presented a view which also perceives the system (now a world system) as an essentially stable equilibrium structure. In fact they go so far as to argue that this stable equilibrium has been in existence since the sixteenth century (Shannon:1989:76). One consequence has been the neo-marxist neglect of action.

The conclusion of part two points to new developments within evolutionary theorising which demand that sociological theorising rework these equilibrium assumptions which have stemmed from the input which classical evolutionary perspectives have had in the sociological tradition. Briefly, evolutionary perspectives of the last few decades are developing a perspective which sees living systems (which include socio-economic and cultural systems) as dissipative structures, not as equilibrium structures (Capra:1982; Jantsch:1980; Prigogine and Stengers:1984). In this sense, the liberal starting point of assuming a tendency toward stable equilibrium structures is being largely invalidated by contemporary research into evolution in other fields.

Recently, the principle of rejecting equilibrium assumptions has also been suggested in relation to addressing large scale social systems by Luard (1990:18). Luard argues that even if such assumptions could be applied to simple small-scale societies, they become hard to sustain when applied to modern industrial societies; and become even more difficult to sustain at the level of international society - a system which is "manifestly unintegrated and racked with conflict" (1990:18). He contends that in the case of the system of international society it is disequilibrium and instability which are the typical states, and thus it would be more reasonable to assume a systemic tendency to restore disequilibrium (as opposed to equilibrium) in this context (1990:18).

In Jantsch's work the implication is that as a system moves further from equilibrium it approaches "bifurcation points". In fact, the origin of capitalist industrialisation might be understood as such a bifurcation point. At such moments, unique events come to take on a major significance (for example the rise of the Protestant ethic?) and the system can move in a number of alternate directions. What is significant is that the direction is **not**

**predetermined**; it can move along one of a number of possible alternate paths or forks.

As I understand this approach, what it means for sociology is that voluntarism is not doomed to suppression by rigid social structures. Rather, at certain moments, the intervention of voluntarist action influences the possible direction in which the system will move. However, unintended consequences cannot be predicted, and thus total control of the future is out of the question. All that is certain is that a change in one variable can create changes in the system as a whole, and that the future is uncertain.

If these new findings in evolutionary theory are incorporated into a sociological approach to development, it is my understanding that such an incorporation demands greater theoretical emphasis on action and process as they relate to development.

Uncertain futures rather than certain futures, and the end of determinism, are essential contributions which these new evolutionary arguments have to make as far as fundamental concepts are concerned. And yet certain and determined futures characterises much of the development debate to date.

It is one of the central arguments of this dissertation that, since there are no objective criteria of the rational (or of "development"), it is imperative that the subjective intentions and motivations of people in the development process come to play a far more significant role in our conceptions of what development is. If anything, the failure of development is based upon the failure to allow people an active role in determining their own development directions. Defining development according to objective external necessities only contributes to the process of disempowerment set in motion by capitalist relations of production.

The new evolutionary approaches stress creative evolution - where actors are agents of evolution rather than subjects of an objective process. The implication is that token gestures of simply mentioning theory's neglect of the motivations of concrete actors are no longer acceptable.

Development can no longer be perceived as an attempt to imitate rigid structures - be they capitalist or socialist. Rather it is about creative evolution where future directions are not determined.

Before launching into the debates which have characterised liberal and marxist development approaches to date, I wish to give a brief overview of the development position

as it stands after the first three development decades - both in terms of theory, and in terms of practical failure. It is argued that the development crisis appears to be essentially characterised by a monopolisation of advantage in elite hands accompanied by increasing disempowerment of other actors.

The problem of alleged widening of gaps as an accompaniment to placing the profit motive at the centre of the economic stage (particularly during the 1980s) will be addressed; as will the problem of breakdown and disintegration, as opposed to the anticipated integration which characterised the expectations of earlier liberal development approaches. It is argued that the patterns which have characterised global development in the past few decades are evidence of a fundamental contradiction between the formal rationality of accumulation and the substantive rationality of distribution.

## CHAPTER SIX

### POSITION AT THE END OF THREE "DEVELOPMENT DECADES"

It appears to have become fashionable for development literature published at the beginning of decades to commence with a lamentation of the development failures of the past<sup>59</sup>.

The beginning of the 1990s poses no reason to cease the lamentations. Although the rise of the newly industrialised countries such as South Korea and Taiwan has led some to optimism about the ability of capitalism to contain its contradictions seemingly indefinitely (as regulation theory appears to argue); the fact remains that for most of the world's regions and people the condition of underdevelopment is still very much the overriding reality (O'Hearn:1989).

#### 6.1 THEORETICAL POSITION AFTER THREE DECADES

In both the marxist and liberal approaches, there has been an increasing shift towards analysing development at a global level. This shift diverges from the views of the world and the anticipated development paths held in classical theory. The underlying movement is a shift from perceiving the world as a set of autonomous societies all moving in the same direction, towards a systemic view that sees interconnections and relationships between parts of the global system as a whole.

At the end of the first three development decades, the liberal debate has moved from the modernisation position, through a concern with "limits to growth" to a concern with "redistribution" which takes into account ecological limitations and the problem of sustainability. The problem has become one of how to maintain economic growth whilst reducing inequality, satisfying basic needs, and at the same time halting ecological destruction. Whether or not these goals can be met simultaneously is extremely controversial, since they are undergirded with conflicting elements of formal and substantive

---

59. See, for example, De Kadt et al. (ed.) (1974) and Hoogvelt (1982).



rationality.

Simultaneous with the recognition of the world as a system has come a growing recognition of the diversity which characterises the subsystems of the world as a whole. Hoogvelt (1982) argues that in the earlier development decades, a problem was the **generalising** of the Third World development experience. By the early 1980s, on the other hand, the vast diversity of development experiences became increasingly apparent. The labels First, Second and Third world became increasingly clumsy and inadequate, and the diversity of the development experience became manifested in theoretical controversies.

These controversies have not abated during the course of the 1980s. If anything there is more fragmentation in the literature, and a lack of clarification of concepts. Furthermore, within the theory, there has been an increasing tendency towards abstraction and a failure to take account of the subjects of all this "development". The last decade has also seen a resurgence of theoretical awareness of the growing ecological crisis and the social implications of that crisis, where it is often the marginalised who are the first to suffer. Not only does development continue to benefit the few at the expense of the majority, but now it appears that the planetary limits may not in any case be able to sustain the western ideal of development on a scale that would benefit all strata. The belief in the potential for unlimited accumulation is being challenged, that is - the unique Occidental framework of rationality is being challenged by these debates.

The worst scenario implications of the ecological crisis, for example, see humans as cogs in a wheel, reacting to crisis after crisis with increasing technocratic temporary solutions. (This scenario implies a return to being dominated by environmental demands as in the pre-modern era). Since our conceptions of rationality have stressed domination and mastery of nature and environment it is clear that such scenarios challenge the very basis of Occidental rationality.

At a political-ideological level, the development debate also has to undergo a fundamental restructuring as a result of the termination of the Cold War following events since the late 1980s.

The influence of the Cold War on development literature has been noted by several writers (Barnett: 1988:36-7; Brookfield: 1975:25; Cruise O'Brien: 1979:52,55; George: 1988:4;

Tipps:1973:63). Liberalism and marxism have historically divided up not only the geo-political world and the geo-economic world, but also the sociology of the world. The rise of an active interest in the subject "development" coincided historically with a rise in interest in the subject by American funding agencies, which itself coincided with the rise of independence movements and the consequent competition between the Soviet Union and the west for economic and social influence.

The development literature of the 1990s will thus have to adjust to a new geo-political reality. The collapse of the wall, the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its economy throws a completely new light on a debate that has in the past been dominated by Cold War ideology.

The dominant trend in the early stages of the post cold-war era appears to be a battle for advantage and hegemony in the world system as a whole amongst dominant American, Japanese and European Community interests, and their multinational corporate agents of expansion.

The collapse of socialist experiments within the framework of blocs and states within a world characterised by the domination of the capitalist world economy, does not mean the end of socialist elements as a crucial component in the development debate. On the contrary, the ideological and geographical east/west division has possibly assisted in containing the real capitalist contradictions and evidence of polarisation while it was in existence. The fact is that capitalism as a world system of production has been unable to provide for the satisfaction of need except to privileged groups within that system. If the present tendency towards polarisation (as outlined in 6.2 below) continues, previously eastern bloc communities will also experience greater levels of inequality and marginalisation of disadvantaged groups. The inability of capitalist accumulation on a world scale to provide for human need will thus become increasingly evident. Thus the conflict between the expansion of formal accumulative productive rationality and the substantive rationality of distribution, long-term sustainability, and need satisfaction will become increasingly evident.

## **6.2 EMPIRICAL POSITION AFTER THREE DECADES: TOP-DOWN APPROACHES HAVE RESULTED IN GROWTH WITHOUT REDISTRIBUTION**

In part one it was argued that formal rationality is associated at an economic level with the principle of expansion, whilst substantive rationality is associated with the principle of sustainability. It was argued that attempts to maximise the formal rationality of accumulation, based on the principle of directing action at the maximisation of economic advantage in a system driven by the profit motive as driving force; comes into conflict with substantive rationality which is a rationality concerned with distribution with egalitarianism and with sustainability. Furthermore it was argued that the conflict in the modern era between formal and substantive rationality is likely to increase in highly inegalitarian systems.

The indications are that this is precisely what is happening in the process of development on a world-wide scale.

While the world system is still inadequately theorised, and inadequately understood (McGowan:1991:8) - the indications are that it is a highly inegalitarian system - perhaps even more so than any of its constituent subsystems (Durning:1990:137). Furthermore the literature indicates that this inegalitarianism is a growing tendency within the system as a whole - that polarisation is taking place (although not primarily between the capitalist class and the working class as early marxian theory anticipated).

According to Durning the world as a whole is probably less equitable than any nation taken in isolation. He claims that the fifth of total global population living in the richest countries have incomes 15 times higher than the fifth of total global population living in the poorest countries (1990:137). While such figures can only be very approximately determined, they do indicate a pattern which cannot be ignored.

This pattern cannot be reversed through the propagation of an ideology of maximisation of economic advantage as the most rational end of action, since this

maximisation presupposes advantage over others, and thus disempowerment of others<sup>60</sup>.

It is argued that the world system is the one which is maximising formal productive accumulative rationality. If any system approximates the capitalist mode of production most closely, it is this world economy. Here the dominant mode of production is profit-seeking capitalist enterprise - epitomised in multinational corporations, including agribusiness (McGowan:1991:1-8). Thus it is at the level of the world system that the conflict between the rationality of expansion and the substantive rationality of need satisfaction is most clearly manifest. Comparative analysis of nation-states has served to disguise this contradiction.

Instead of citing cases of successful national capitalist development with redistribution to the middle classes, the recognition that accumulation and distribution take place in a worldwide system forces us to acknowledge that as far as distribution is concerned, the system is an abject failure. While it is capable of producing for profit, it has been incapable of satisfying substantive needs.

While it is capable of expanding the formal rationality of production, it has been incapable of satisfying the substantive distributive requirements of need satisfaction.

Classical marxism anticipated that the spread of capitalist relations of production would lead to increasing polarisation of classes, increasing emiseration of the workers, culminating in social upheaval, revolution (led by the centre of course!) and the transition to socialism.

In short, they maintained that the one-dimensional reductionism of economic rationality characteristic of capitalism would have potentially emancipatory implications, in that it swept away all values and purposes that were irrational from an economic point of view, leaving nothing but money relations between individuals, nothing but power relations between classes, nothing but an instrumental relation between Man and Nature, thus giving birth to a class of completely dispossessed worker-proletarians, reduced to nothing more than an indefinitely interchangeable labour power and divested of any particular

---

60. Kevin Watkins cites a case in point in relation to agricultural policy in the United States. Republican Senator Rudy Boschwitz in 1985 defended federal support payments to United States agriculture with the following words - "if we do not lower our farm prices to discourage these developing countries from aiming at self-reliance now, **our world-wide competitive position** will continue to slide...This [discouragement] should be one of the foremost goals of our agricultural policy" (1991:41; emphasis added).

interest....These 'privates of the industrial army'...embody a human race stripped of its humanity, a human race which can only gain access to this humanity by seizing all the forces of production developed by society (Gorz:1989:19).

As soon as one considers the problem of development at a global level, the classical predictions of increasing marginalisation of the masses take on a new significance - which analysis at the level of the advanced industrial nation state overlooks completely.

However, today it appears that rather than the emiserated being constituted as a class of workers, it is Marx's "lumpenproletariat" that presently constitutes this group. Thus the emiserated consist predominantly of the marginalised, the unemployed, those caught up in semi-proletarianised roles, the casual labour, the "peasants" and so on, located predominantly within the underdeveloped peripheral areas of the global capitalist system of accumulation. The problem then becomes one of whether or not it is feasible for such groups to take any control in the absence of large-scale concentration in productive enterprises, and if so - to what extent.

### **6.2.1 WIDENING GAPS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF POVERTY**

According to Goodwin (1991:5), the economic thought of the 1980s was particularly hospitable to placing the profit motive (that is formal rational criteria) at the centre of the economic stage. During this decade, economic thought was characterised by,

... fashions that brought to centre-stage the profit motive that is the business sector's driving force, and the neoclassical institutions that are its maximum expression (Goodwin:1991:5).

What were the results of this fashion?

The literature indicates that the central trend of this decade was that industrial nations underwent a period of recovery, but that this went hand in hand with a sharp divergence between rich and poor nations (Durning:1990:135).

The 1980s had abysmal consequences for the peripheral regions, with the decade being characterised by unmitigated crisis (Othman (ed.):1989:11; Durning:1990:135). The global development crisis is thus most acutely evident in the peripheral areas (with Africa being the periphery of the periphery).

In the 1980s, 68 percent of the peripheral countries experienced negative per capita growth. 37 countries in Africa and Latin America had declines of 20 per cent or more (McGowan:1991:11). The crisis did not only hit the periphery as located in the "geographical space" of the "Third World". It also hit the economic periphery of the industrialised world. In the United States, for example, there were more people living below the poverty line than at any time since the mid-sixties when the "War on Poverty" was initiated; while in 1986 disparities in U.S. income were the worst on record with the equity of income deterioration having begun to deteriorate rapidly in 1979 (Durning:1990:140).

In Africa the 1980s have been characterised by structural adjustment economic reform programmes imposed by the centre-dominated financial institutions and development advisors. Under structural adjustment, institutions such as the IMF and World Bank,

do not merely supervise individual sectors of the economy as in the past....They now manage each country entirely. They have to approve national budgets, foreign exchange budgets...monetary, fiscal and tariff policies and give clearance certificates before countries can negotiate with other foreign lending agencies (Institute for African Alternatives:1987:7-9).

More than 30 African countries have been forced to adopt these IMF programmes in an attempt to deal with external debts and balance of payments problems, but the results over the decade have been disastrous (Othman (ed.):1989:2-13).

Critics suggest that Africa's experience of structural adjustment programmes during the 1980s has resulted in many of the participating countries landing up with massive debt problems which place them in an even more precarious position than they were at the beginning of the decade (Othman (ed.):1989).

It is argued that IMF and World Bank reports such as the 1989 report Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s which attempt to show that African economies have been growing, and that the Structural Adjustment programmes have been working, are "spurious" and "untenable" (Othman (ed.):1989:2-3)

While the liberal paradigm has rested on the assumption of a "trickle-down" effect (O'Hearn:1989:594) whereby economic growth via the expansion of formal rationality would automatically satisfy distributive requirements in society as a whole, the indications are that the assumption that economic growth and social equality can be simultaneously maximised

via such a "trickle-down" effect is invalid.

Contrary to conventional economic theory, the world seems to operate more by 'trickle up' than by 'trickle down'! (McGowan:1991:11-12).

In liberal theory, the most rational means to achieve growth, that is, rational self-interested economic activity directed at the end of profit accumulation was assumed to be also the most rational means for achieving equality, and development. In the tradition going back to Adam Smith it was assumed that if all acted in their own individual economic self-interest the greatest common good would be realised.

However, evidence of widening gaps raises the problem that there appears to be a central contradiction between the ideal of growth based upon self-interested economic activity, and that of equality. In fact, there is not one example of evenly distributed growth or development (Perroux:1983:39-40). Rather, the indications are that economic development, as presently structured, actually tends to increase inequalities among classes and groups, one consequence being to exacerbate political tensions (Cruise O' Brien:1979:64).

Brookfield (1975) and Sinaceur (1983) argue that the idea that growth automatically leads to development is increasingly taken to be unsound. Rather, there is more than enough evidence of development gone astray (Sinaceur:1983:6). Similarly, Stöhr and Taylor argue that the pervasive belief that when economic growth takes place, distribution will automatically follow to the population as a whole, is fallacious (1981:468-469).

For a good while, gross national product figures were regarded as a measure of development, and research concentrated on the growth of gross national product. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the concept of aggregate growth dominated development policy (Brookfield:1975:37, 50; Perroux:1983:15). Economic growth rates are a clear example of an indicator which measures formal rationality alone. Such an indicator takes no account of distributive factors, or ethical substantive considerations.

In the early stages of development evaluation there was little regard to income distribution coefficients. Subsequently there has been a shift away from this, and towards addressing a complex of welfare goals (Brookfield:1975:52). This shift was partly influenced at a theoretical level by attempts to apply Keynesian ideas to developing economies. At an

economic level of analysis Keynes introduced factors such as income distribution as indicators in the economic development process. Previously such factors had been considered irrational indicators (Palma:1978:905 ff.).

What evidence has the inclusion of distributive indicators brought to the surface?

Amongst others, the following writers have noted the trend towards a widening gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" - Black:1987, Brookfield:1975:43, Durning:1990, Griffin:1987, Meadows et al.:1972, Mesarovic and Pestel:1975:ix, Myrdal:1989:8, Worsley:1964.

Since 1950, the gap between rich and poor nations has grown mostly because the rich got richer. But since 1980, in many developing countries the poor have been getting poorer too. Forty-three developing nations probably finished the decade poorer, in per capita terms, than they started it. The 14 most devastated - including Zambia, Bolivia, and Nigeria - have seen per capita income plunge as dramatically since their troubles began as the United States did during the Great depression (Durning:1990:137).

In some cases the widening gap is argued to exist between rich and poor nations (Amin:1974:20; Brookfield:1975:1; Durning:1990:137; Emmanuel:1969:46; Worsley:1964:257). Elsewhere, this trend is seen to operate not only between nations, but also in the world as a whole, and within regions smaller than the nation-state. For example, a study in west Bengal showed that the probability of an agricultural labour household falling below the poverty line was significantly greater when that household was located in a district where agricultural production grew at a faster rate (Griffin:1987:9).

McGowan argues that in the world as a whole about one-tenth to one-fifth tends to do well, whilst about four fifths tend to do poorly. At all levels, national, regional, and global there is a tendency for between 10 and 20 per cent of the population to be in an advantaged elite position, while the remainder do poorly (1991:11-12).

Frank backs up this view with figures derived from the Latin American experience. While there might be growth in the money sector of the urban sectors, this is not necessarily associated with an overall increase in employment. Frank maintains that the whole development is limited to between 5 and 20 per cent of the population, with between 80 and 95 per cent of the population being excluded not only from benefits, but also from participation. In the Brazilian case he claims that 56 per cent of the population is "absolutely



marginalised", whilst approximately 75 per cent are "relatively marginalised" (1981:10). Brookfield also claims widening income inequality in the latin American region (1975:50)

As far as Africa is concerned, the Institute for African Alternatives (1987) has noted the growth of unemployment which has occurred in African countries, even in cases (such as Ghana over the period 1982-1987) where real incomes have risen.

Although averaging statistics can give us some idea of the gross disparities in income distribution which characterise the majority of countries, Durning claims that they often understate the reality. In fact, between 60 and 70 per cent of people in most countries earn less than their nation's average income (1990:137).

In the light of the pattern which such figures indicate, a central question which needs to be addressed is put by Durning;

Why does poverty continue to spread in an age incomparably more prosperous than any in history? (1990:140).

It is a fact that an increase in GNP can (and often is) accompanied by increasing poverty - both absolute and relative (Hall:1988:35).

Despite global improvements in economic growth rates, in spite of an increase in world output of agricultural products since 1960, and despite greater average prosperity, hunger continues to exist (Griffin:1987:17-18). Griffin claims that in a large number of countries a rise in average income per head has been accompanied by further impoverishment of some groups (Griffin:1987:42).

Consider the poverty statistics. The total number of people living in absolute poverty was estimated by the World Bank and U.N. Food and Agricultural Organisation in the early 1980s to be between 700 million and one billion (Durning:1990:136). That is approximately one in five humans. Of these, approximately 62 per cent were located in Sub-Saharan Africa, the periphery of the periphery. According to World Bank estimates, about one third of the population in the periphery lives in a state of "absolute" poverty (Shannon:1989:93).

By 1990 most indicators were showing an even further deterioration in peripheral regions - in 1989 poverty increased dramatically not only in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Latin America and parts of Asia. The growth in absolute poverty in these areas swamped reductions in poverty which were made in China and India over the same period

(Durning:1990:136).

As regards the problem of the conflict between formal accumulative rationality and substantive distributive rationality, it must be stressed that hunger in the world today is **not** a result of an inadequate **production** of food. In fact the physical supply of food per capita has never been greater than in the last 10 to 20 years (Griffin:1987:2-20). Despite this per capita rise in food output, poverty does not decrease - both globally and within nations and regions (Griffin:1987:6). Rather than hunger resulting from inadequate growth in production, it is the result of inegalitarian income conditions which disqualify certain groups of people from access to food supplies (Griffin:1987:5). It is also the result of the inability to participate that is consequent upon such inegalitarian conditions.

The literature suggests that the answer to Durning's question has nothing to do with the formal rationality of growth and accumulation, and everything to do with inegalitarian social relationships; relationships which can only be addressed by incorporating a greater emphasis on substantive rationality into our understanding of development. At the very least, the literature suggests that growth itself might be a necessary condition for eliminating poverty but it is by no means a sufficient one. Further conditions would include maximising the conditions for participation in order that those who are presently marginalised might gain control over the development process.

The mechanism of growth is not sufficient for the eradication of poverty, inequality and hunger. What needs to be examined is the substance of this growth. Where it is accompanied by rising landlessness, increased unemployment, loss of assets among the rural poor, for example - it can only perpetuate the phenomenon of development gone astray. Griffin (1987:18) claims that when these social and economic conditions prevail the net result may actually be an **increase** in poverty and hunger, rather than a reduction. Rather than seeing growth and the expansion of formal rationality as a panacea for development problems, theory needs to address ways in which those who are presently unable to participate in the development process might become enabled to do so.

### 6.2.2 SOCIAL BREAKDOWN WITHOUT REINTEGRATION

Social breakdown without reintegration is evidenced in widening gaps between rich and poor, in the persistence of poverty even as increasing wealth is produced in the system as a whole, and in the debt crisis which today characterises not only a large number of developing countries - but also the American economy; with America now being the largest debtor in the world. It is evidenced in high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and in the phenomenon of overurbanisation which is increasingly becoming the norm in developing countries.

Overurbanisation is a frequent problem in the periphery. Furthermore, contrary to expectations that it is a temporary phenomenon which will be overcome by the growth mechanism, studies as early as 1969 in Latin America showed that between 20 and 40 per cent of the adult squatter population were not recent urban migrants, with a potential for upward mobility out of the settlements into stable employment and residence; but had in fact been born and bred in squatter towns (Frank:1969:277; Hoogvelt:1976:100).

The problem of over-urbanisation has been linked directly to the aid policies inspired by modernisation theory. It is claimed that programmes of industrialisation and agricultural modernisation set the rural population adrift with nowhere to go but the towns. The result was not urbanisation characterised by a reabsorption of the population into the industrial sector, but rather over-urbanisation - characterised by the problem of urban unemployment with an accompanying increase in the per capita income differentials within developing countries (Baran:1957:276; Black:1987:13). In consequence, unemployment and underemployment have become one of the most serious problems for development agencies today (Pitt:1976:126)

In the South African case, mechanisation of agriculture also generated unemployment (Marcus:1989:25). However, the South African pattern was historically different from other peripheral areas in that the surplus population were removed to rural reserves and kept out of the cities through Apartheid legislation, including the application of influx control (Marcus:1989). However, since the abolition of influx control in April 1986, the normal peripheral pattern of overurbanisation is becoming increasingly evident in South Africa.

While the historical experience of the west was to integrate those who were forcibly

removed from the land into urban and industrial sectors, the history of peripheral regions has been one of removal from control over means of production, but little absorption into the industrial sector. In South Africa, for example, the restructuring of commercial agriculture has resulted in a stabilisation of the on-farm labour force, combined with an expulsion of surplus labour from the farms. This has forced many farmworkers into the position of becoming migrants - often within the agricultural sector itself (Marcus:1989:189). Thus Marcus speaks of the "migrantisation" of farm labour.

Furthermore this process of dispossession has also destroyed cultures without replacing a new meaning system for those who have been uprooted both from control over the means of production and over their own culture. Thus, the intrusion of capitalist relations into traditional societies has been effective in undermining established normative patterns, but has failed to provide a basis for constructing either a new moral system or viable structural alternatives (Cruise O'Brien:1979:59; O'Connell:1965:14-15). Such a picture is in stark contrast to Huntington's assertion that modernisation enhances human well-being, culturally and materially (1971:31).

While most liberal development literature assumes that reintegration is a certainty at some point in the future, the historical experience of the periphery has been to a large extent characterised by this break-down and disruption of pre-capitalist systems, combined with a failure to reintegrate numerous actors adequately into the capitalist economy. As Durning puts it - many countries are not so much developing as they are disintegrating (1990:137).

Because the nature of the relationship between formal and substantive rationality is inherently one of conflict and not transcendence, I argue that the trend toward disintegration (as opposed to the anticipated integration) is not going to disappear until such time as goals different to maximum accumulation of capital and forms of action corresponding to the attainment of such alternate goals, are legitimated and struggled for as part of the development process. Only then can concrete actors determine their own development goals, rather than being allocated to the scrapheap of marginalisation which the expansion of unchecked formal rationality produces.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DEVELOPMENT AS RATIONAL "DOMINATION OF THE WORLD"**

Having outlined the nature of the contemporary development crisis, I shall now address the pertinent elements underlying liberal development approaches which have rendered such approaches incapable of addressing the roots of the present development crisis.

In this chapter two central areas will be explored. Firstly the way in which rationality as "domination of the world" has fed into the liberal development approaches will be addressed. It is argued that our understanding of rationality is deeply rooted in the same world view of domination of the world and control which characterises both classical natural science and Calvinist asceticism. Secondly the links between liberal ideas of rationality and liberal ideas about evolution will be addressed. It is argued that evolution as domination of the "fittest" over natural and social environments is a logical corollary to the Occidental manner of adjusting to the world - namely rationality as "domination of the world".

It is argued that the element of rationality which underlies liberal development approaches has manifested as a theoretical legitimation for domination and control of disempowered groups of people. Disempowerment is not conducive to development.

Until such time as the interconnected ideological underpinnings of rationality as domination, evolution as domination and control by the "fittest", and development as domination of formal rationality over substantive rationality are questioned within these approaches; they will continue to reflect relations of power and advantage which operate in the empirical world (and thus contribute to a growing crisis in the long term).

#### **7.1 RATIONALITY AS "DOMINATION OF THE WORLD" - AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT IN LIBERAL VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT**

Hoogvelt makes a distinction between liberal and marxist development approaches as "diffusionist" theories and "domination" theories. She notes the failure of liberal approaches generally to acknowledge that their own ideas are a legitimation for domination. Quite

simply;

No society can successfully dominate another without the diffusion of its cultural patterns and social institutions, nor can any society successfully diffuse all or most of its cultural patterns and social institutions without some degree of domination (Hoogvelt:1976:109).

The formal relation to the world which characterised the Protestant Ethic - that is - "domination of the world", underlies Occidental ideas and practice as to what development is all about. Why does this continually fail to be acknowledged in the liberal development tradition? Why is it persistently left to the marxist tradition to provide "domination theories" as a way of understanding the spread of capitalism, while the liberal tradition persists in the myth of "diffusion" without domination?

It is argued that the reason why these approaches have failed to acknowledge that they are an ideological cover for domination is that they themselves are so deeply rooted in a rationality of domination of the world, without a recognition or legitimation of Weber's location of this formal relation to the world in a context relative to other alternate formal relations to the world. It is to these roots of the liberal notion of development which I now turn.

Firstly, it is argued that many of the concepts underlying the liberal conception of development are undergirded by and interconnected in a world view that values domination and control, components associated with the unique form of rationalization which Weber associated with the rise of the Protestant ethic. (Often reference to control is made in conjunction with reference to nature).

Secondly, it is argued that the ideal of control works together with the scientific ideal of objectification. Control is meaningless without an object to control. Thus the world view which is being identified here, perceives an objectified world which is separate from the subject, which is "out there" for the express purpose of control, manipulation and domination.

At this point the changes in attitude towards nature which characterised the rise of instrumental rationality which coincided with the industrial revolution will be discussed in some depth, in order to clarify the centrality of the theme of control in this shift.

A defining feature of the rise of instrumental rationality was a shift in man's attitude

to nature, this shift being characterised by the placing of man above nature as its master (Laszlo:1983:116). This was not unrelated to the rise of Protestant asceticism;

The drive for ascetic Protestantism is not merely for mastery, but...for rational mastery over the world (Parsons:1947:80).

Prior to the large-scale rise of instrumental rationality, the existence of fatalism and magic indicates that humans tended to see themselves as subject to manipulation by external forces. However, the shift away from fatalism and magic and towards a scientific world view resulted in the perception that the empirical world consisted of objects to be manipulated and dominated.

The attitude of mastering nature has been carried over into the defining characteristics of modernisation.

Modernity assumes that ...**mastery** rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment (Rudolph and Rudolph:1967:3-4)....Modern man is characterised by...**mastery of the environment** in order to advance individual purposes and goals, rather than being dominated by entirely environmental needs (Horowitz:1970:260 emphasis added).

Arthur Wilson has shown the parallels between the faith in progress of the *philosophies* of the Enlightenment period, with the faith in progress of twentieth-century modernisation theorists. Like rationality, progress has also been associated with mastery over nature. For the men of the Enlightenment, their faith in progress was nourished by,

... the realisation that man was continuously increasing his capacity to understand and **manipulate nature**...Diderot was wont to remark that **nature is man's constant enemy** (Wilson:1967:129; emphasis added).

The notion of progress has played a dominant role in western thought generally and in sociological thought (including sociological conceptions of modernisation and development) specifically (Coetzee:1987c; Eisenstadt:1968a:35; Huntington:1971:33). An analysis of the elements that constitute the western understanding of progress show that it bears a close affinity to the western notion of "rationality" - especially as regards the element of control. Progress, like rationality, has been associated in western thought generally with an increasing emancipation from nature, together with an increasing ability to dominate and control nature. It is linked up with the moving away from primitivity and in the direction of control (Coetzee:1987c:17; O'Connell:1965).

This is true not only of liberal thought. In early Marxist thought, too, the content of progress was defined in terms of a growing emancipation of man from nature and an increase in man's control over nature (Hoogvelt:1982:154-155). For Marx, the ideal future society would be one in which, under conditions of abundance, human beings can achieve self-realization in a new, form of social unity, in which nature, both physical and social, would come under their control (Lukes:1987:9).

Within the modernisation approach, the elements of rationality, control, manipulation and domination are regularly cited as an indication of the existence of modernisation. For Black;

As compared with individuals in earlier times, a modern personality may be described as more concerned with **controlling the environment** (Black:1976:7-8).

This view is repeated by Huntington at the societal level;

The essential difference between modern and traditional society, most theorists of modernisation contend, lies in the **greater control which modern man has over his natural and social environment**. This control, in turn, is based on the expansion of scientific and technical knowledge (Huntington:1971:28; emphasis added).

Benjamin Schwartz draws specifically upon Weber to define modernisation in terms of the expansion of man's rational control over his physical and social environment (Tipps:1973).

For Schwartz;

Modernisation refers to all those realms of life in which man can achieve the ends of world mastery by the individual and collective employment of rationally effective means. To the extent that modernisation is linked to an idea, it is precisely this idea of the mastery of the world of nature as well as the social world of man (sic) (1972:76).

In a similar vein Rostow claims that,

... man need not regard his physical environment as virtually a factor given by nature and providence, but as an ordered world, which, **if rationally understood, can be manipulated** in ways which yield productive change and... progress (cited in Wilson:1967:130; emphasis added).

Rostow's view epitomises the link between knowledge and control which characterises the Occidental approach to rationality. Thus knowledge becomes useful in so far as it can enable the subject to control the objectified world.



The notion of "control" was a central component underlying the classical Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm of natural science. The classical framework presumed a world "out there" which could be objectively assessed from a distance, and this knowledge could be used for purposes of control. As far as the social sciences are concerned, the ideal of control has entered the social sciences as a central element in that it forms an integral component of the concept of rational action.

Control...is both a means to and a goal of rational action....Control is both means to and end of calculation (Eisen:1978:59).

Hoogvelt attributes the objectification of the external world, in order to find eternal laws, to the Occidental conception of rationality, where rationality is perceived as a tool to dominate this external, objectified world, once such laws are discovered.

Nature is seen as 'object', as 'it', subject to mechanical laws, the understanding of which gives man the confidence that purposeful action in accordance with these laws (that is action in terms of cause-effect, means-end) will yield predictable results. It is in this sense that modern man's belief system is secular and rational (Hoogvelt:1976:114).

Thus, corresponding with the particular form of rationality underlying liberal development approaches, has gone the corollary of objectification. Both nature and culture were objectified. Knowledge of the object was only valuable in so far as it might be useful as a means to rationally dominate those external realities, once the laws of their operation were found.

Modernisation presumes that physical, social and psychological phenomena are law-governed, have regularities, uniformities, and causal relationship...and therefore could be modified or regulated by human reason. This rational attitude is the core process of modernisation...Man enters a modern-rational phase of acquiring skills and reaches a new level of mastery over nature to construct his own social environment based on affluence and rationality (Desai:1971:89-91).

Because of common associations of women, of rural communities, and of "primitive" cultures with nature; the principle of treating these categories as objects to be exploited and manipulated in the name of progress has been expressed in the history of western society in relation to women and other cultures (Capra:1982; Foster-Carter:1974; Redclift:1984:124-126; Shiva:1989).

In consequence, development, like science, has come to mean domination and control. Development has come to be equated with the destruction of other cultures, of other ways of relating to the world. Development means imposing a universal world view onto the whole of humankind - the world view of domination of the world.

It is ironic that the Occidental worldview has placed a faith approaching religious dimensions in the interconnected notions of progress, control and rationality.

The notion of rationality itself is closely linked to a shift of faith - namely from the religious high priest to the scientist as high priest. In both cases, those who are not the guardians of "truths" vest their faith in these priests.

Modernisation approaches actually encourage trust in science and scientists in the language of faith (Desai:1971:93). Inkeles for example, writes of rising education, urbanism and industrial experience leading to "more faith in science", less in religion (1973:339).

In this regard, it should be noted that developments this century have undermined the faith in science which characterised the late nineteenth century<sup>61</sup>. Today there is a growing recognition of conflicts between scientists themselves.

In contrast to classical physics, modern physics assumes that in principle, we cannot control everything at once, and realises that we can no longer hope to achieve perfect knowledge of phenomena for the purposes of control - "in principle we cannot aim to control everything at once" (Zukav:1979:53).

This contrasts sharply with Weber's view that increasing intellectualisation and rationalisation means that "in principle we can master all things by calculation" (1919a:139).

Prigogine and Stengers maintain that the natural sciences - at both the macroscopic and microscopic levels have accordingly.

... rid themselves of a fascination with a rationality taken as closed and a knowledge seen as nearly achieved. They are now open to the unexpected, which they no longer define as the result of imperfect knowledge or insufficient control (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:306).

---

61. As Becker writes, science is grounded on "the faith that man can know and control his world and his earthly destiny, and that such knowledge and control are worthwhile. Proof? There is none - not in the atomic age - nor has there ever been" (1968:158).

Prigogine writes that in consequence of developments which have taken place within science this century "our intellectual security is gone", that the basic external laws which we thought to be governing the world can no longer be taken for granted. For Prigogine and Boulding, the essence of this insecurity is the fact that irreversible time, or history, has begun to creep into science, raising numerous epistemological problems in the process (Boulding:1981:xv; Prigogine:1981).

While two of the most important elements in the western notion of progress are the "inevitability of the future together with hope and expectations" and "confidence in the autonomous contribution of coming generations" (Coetzee:1987c:18), such a future is no longer a certainty after the production of what E.P. Thompson (1980) has called the "means of extermination", as evidenced in between 50 000 and 60 000 nuclear weapons which have the potential to annihilate humankind in seconds (O'Connell:1965). In consequence many of the previously assumed virtues of the fundamental values associated with modernity - values such as "rationality" and "progress" have come under attack, and contemporary attitudes towards the future are more ambivalent than optimistic (McHale:1978:7; Tipps:1973:73).

Today we are faced with the problem of where to draw a line as to the limits beyond which science cannot advise<sup>62</sup>. Such a limit can only be worked out at a social and political level, which entails a rise in the significance of substantive rationality. These limits can only be articulated by living actors, and are not objectively given. The definition of these limits can only be determined in a participative conflict between the ideals of science and those of democracy.

---

62. "Economic rationality functioned as a substitute for religious morality....As a substitute for value judgement and by dispensing with such judgement, it [calculation] cannot, by its very nature, define the limits of its own applicability. These limits can only be imposed on it from the outside, precisely through value-judgements" (Gorz:1989:112,127).

## 7.2 EVOLUTION AS DOMINATION, AS "SURVIVAL OF FITTEST" - COROLLARY TO THE OCCIDENTAL FORM OF RATIONALITY

Evolutionary thought has played a profound role in the sociology of development, beginning in nineteenth century inputs to sociology, and continuing until today. In fact a direct line of descent can be traced from classical evolutionary thought, via neo-evolutionary thought to the lists of development indicators of internationally sponsored development programmes (Hoogvelt:1982:118).

Amongst the classical founders of sociology, Comte<sup>63</sup>, Spencer, Marx, Durkheim, Maine and Tönnies all held evolutionary views. These views were expressed in their dichotomous concepts such as homogeneous versus heterogeneous societies, mechanical versus organic solidarity, status and contract, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (Brookfield:1975:77-78; Coetzee:1987c:19; Huntington:1971:33).

It is argued here that the Occidental conception of rationality works hand-in-glove with the classical Occidental notion of evolution, since they both operate to legitimise domination over other systems -social and environmental - in the name of progress and development.

The link between the idea of progress and that of rationality has already been discussed. It was argued that both concepts encompassed the element of control, with reference to nature. Furthermore it was argued that scientists as the agents of such control became the high priests of modernity, that there was a shift in faith from religion to science<sup>64</sup>.

During the nineteenth century the notion of progress was fused with evolutionary concepts from biology in such a way as to produce social theories that justified European

---

63. For Comte the idea of rationalisation and that of social evolution are inseparable, social evolution is an unavoidable product of the development of the rationalisation of human thought (Coetzee:1987c:19). Comte assumed the existence of a continuous, progressive human evolution and then proceeded to investigate the stages of this evolutionary process as if it were already an established social fact (Tipps:1973:81).

64. "Spencer's God was Evolution, sometimes called Progress" (Parsons:1937:4).

"superiority" and domination (Midgley:1988:13).

It actually took a social theorist (namely Herbert Spencer) to transform Darwin's dictum "survival of the fit" into that of "survival of the fittest" (Mennell:1983:119).

Just as rationality in the development literature came to be associated with the unique formal relation to the world of "domination of the world" or "world mastery", evolution came to be understood as "survival of the fittest."

In social science this came to mean that the "fittest" was the Occident.

With a bit of help from Spencer, the Darwinian idea of adaptation to environment, thus becomes ideologically transformed in social theory, via the mechanism of Occidental ideas of rationality and progress, into the idea of adaptation as domination of environment.

Bloch argues that Darwin's dictum "survival of the fit" has resulted in misconceptions about adaptation because of its post-Spencerian translation over the years into the notion of "survival of the fittest", implying that it is the strongest that survive (1987:289).

He argues that a more appropriate way to think about "fit" is by using the metaphor of a key fitting a lock. Where a key fits a lock we don't describe it as "fittest", merely as "fit". Fit describes the key-lock congruence of system and context (Bloch:1987:289).

Such a view correlates with the systems of view of evolution in which relationships are considered as primary. In chapter twelve the contemporary view of biological evolution, which perceives evolution in terms of patterns of organisation between species and environment will be addressed. In this view the unit of survival is not an entity or organism, but rather a pattern of organisation which the organism adopts in its interactions with the environment (Capra:1982:313).

While evolutionism went out of fashion among social scientists in the early twentieth century, it was revived in the 1960s and 1970s as expressed in neo-evolutionary perspectives such as structural-functionalism.

In neo-evolutionary theory, the centrepiece of social evolution continued to be seen in terms of man's mastery over the environment. This was to be achieved by technological adaptability. (Hoogvelt:1982:109; Harrison:1988:40-41). In Parson's idea of the function of adaptation, rationality as control over, and freedom from control by, nature - plays a

significant role (Hoogvelt:1976:38).

Quite clearly, the prominent role of evolutionary thought in the sociology of development is also interconnected with Occidental notions of progress, of control, and of rationality. Crudely - the west is the fittest, the west is the most evolved on the evolutionary ladder of societies, and the west shall dominate.

The notion "survival of the fittest" is closely linked up with competition, control, mastery of the environment and domination -all aspects of the western development experience, and the western rationalisation experience. Thus development has come to be equated with the level at which social systems are controlling and mastering environments (both natural and social), as opposed to developing patterns to enhance co-survival or "fit".

Other elements underlying the conceptions of evolution in liberal development perspectives, were the principles of linearity and hierarchy, as well as the idea that the surviving entity was constituted of a closed system or organism. These themes will be briefly addressed in order to assess the role which they have played in the subsequent demise of the modernisation approach to development.

### **7.2.1 LINEARITY AND HIERARCHY**

Nineteenth century evolutionary perspectives were characterised by linear and hierarchical views of the world.

The linear and unidirectional assumptions have been noted by Parsons. He describes Marshall's ideas as representative of the evolutionary views of the nineteenth century, and as having influenced a whole generation of economists of the time. For Marshall, the absolute goal of evolution was manifested in free enterprise. His theory is linear because there is only one value system contained in it, without consideration of alternatives (Parsons:1937:155-176).

It was not only liberal thought which was influenced by a linear view of time. While in liberal thought the linear view was often reflected in dichotomous categories, in the marxist framework it was reflected in the idea of stages of history, the idea being that each stage was a development, a progression, an evolutionary advancement on the preceding stage.

In terms of hierarchy, nineteenth century evolutionary perspectives saw societies as occupying different places on a type of evolutionary ladder - with western industrial societies being perceived as being at the top of the ladder (Harrison:1988:2). Despite Parson's attempts to rid social theory of a linear approach (as will be discussed regarding neo-evolutionary theorising in section 8.2, unilinear underpinnings persisted into the modernisation approach (O'Connell:1965:13; Tipps:1973:78). The linear view of time was reflected in an increasing range of typological dichotomies, most of which implied a unidirectional view of time (Coetzee:1987c:22).

Dichotomous thinking was to underlie numerous components within the modernisation perspective (Huntington:1971:28). Besides the "traditional" versus "modern" dichotomies - located in linear time -which characterise these approaches, there is also a dichotomisation of space - as evidenced in the notions of dual economy and a separation between agricultural and industrial sectors. The binary worldview (Brookfield:1975) links the dichotomies in terms of the necessity of "modernisation" as a transition from one space to another.

Going with the dichotomous thinking is a continued theme of a ladder, or scale upon which particular societies can be placed. Huntington, for example writes that in the process of modernisation, societies are seen to begin in the traditional stage, to end in the modern stage; and that they can be ranked in terms of the extent to which they have "moved down the road" from tradition to modernity. He also claims that all societies will move through the same stages in this process, which are assumed to be ever more beneficent (1971:31-33).

The linear worldview is clearly expressed in Rostow's contribution to the modernisation approach (1960). Rostow maintained that separate societies would follow the western experience. He delineates five stages of economic growth - "traditional society", "preconditions for take-off", "take-off to self-sustained growth", "drive to maturity" and the "age of high mass consumption". All societies could be located at some point along these categories of progress.

Rostow's view of development has been criticised for representing a view of a universally encountered kind of change that will affect every country sooner or later (Perroux:1983:83). Brookfield argues that his concepts of "take-off" and "sustained growth"

passed firmly into the development literature, influencing a whole generation of students, and outliving the historical criticism which disproved their identification in country after country (Brookfield:1975:37-38).

In addition to the strong influence of linear views on modernisation approaches, hierarchical views also persisted. In modernisation theory the nations of the world tended to be placed on an evolutionary scale with the modern "western", Occidentally rationalised ones being at the apex of this evolutionary process (Harrison:1988:149-163).

### **7.2.2CLOSED SYSTEMS APPROACHING EQUILIBRIUM, ORGANIC ANALOGIES**

One reason why early liberal theory was inadequate in providing an understanding of global development dynamics, was that their notion of the evolving unit "society", was derived from the classical Darwinian assumptions about the evolutionary process; which understood evolving organisms and species as essentially closed systems. In this early view, the unit of survival was the isolated entity or organism or species (Capra:1982:313).

A number of writers have pointed to the inadequacy of the concept of "society" as a unity, as a closed system in the context of the modern world (Gellner:1974:21; Goodwin:1991:11; Harrison: 1988:44).

The idea that social change can be studied by analogy with the biological growth of individual organisms has dominated western thinking, through the eighteenth and nineteenth century among theorists of progress and social evolution, to contemporary social science (Tipps:1973:64).

In early sociological evolutionary thought, the notion of "society" was analogous to that of "species", or "organism" - in accordance with the biological evolutionary thought of the time. As far back as Saint-Simon, society was perceived as an organic equilibrium (Abercrombie et al.:1984:92). Comte also saw society in terms of an organic analogy. Parts within the "organism" were interdependent, with evolution being characterised by the growth of functional specialisation of structures and better adaptation of parts (Abercrombie et al.: 1984:92).



Sometimes, parallels were drawn between machines and organisms<sup>65</sup>. This epitomises the Cartesian view of nature which Capra (1982; 1988) has identified as being a central problem in modern science. In organic-evolutionary theory, an analogy was made between the living organism and society. Just as biological organisms changed in both size and internal complexity, societies were seen to do the same - becoming increasingly differentiated and complex. Just as biological organisms are covered by cell wall, or skin, or some form of restricting layer - societies were seen to be bounded by an assumed consensus of opinion, or agreed moral values. Just as the skin was presumed to maintain the organism as a cohesive, unified and integrated unit, the moral consensus was assumed to contain the society as a cohesive and integrated unit (Harris:1989:18).

In liberal neo-evolutionary sociological theory, including structural-functionalism and its offshoot - modernisation theory - society continued to be treated as if it were a social system in isolation, in a vacuum (Hoogvelt:1976:65). It continued to be treated in terms of an organismic model, the starting point being the adaptation of societies to their environments - where adaptation was seen to follow the principle of survival of the fittest. (Abercrombie et al.:1984:93).

While for Parsons himself (1977:6; 1971:8) society was defined not in terms of the nation-state, but rather as a "social system characterised by the highest level of self-sufficiency relative to its environments, including other social systems"<sup>66</sup>; this came to be

---

65. "A steam engine consists of cylinders, pistons, driving rods, boilers, valves, etc. Similarly an organism is composed of cells, tissues, organs. A machine can actually be taken apart...a dead organism may be dissected and its parts thus identified" (Parsons:1937:31). Subsequently, Cruise O'Brien accuses Gabriel Almond, an influential American political scientist who drew on Parsons's pattern variables and worked in a structural-functionalist framework, of a "continued use of organic and mechanical metaphors" (1979:53).

66. Even this is questionable. In his discussion on social systems (1968), Parsons begins by distinguishing "society" as a relatively self-sufficient social system from "societal community" - which in the modern era he identifies as the nation (ibid.:461). However, he then proceeds - in discussing societies and their environments, to interchange the terms "society" and "societal community", as well as that of environment and subsystem. Thus he talks of the environments of the social system, (which are also its subsystems); the "societal (continued...)

inverted in modernisation theory to the extent that the nation-state (especially newly independent nation-states with which modernisation writers were very much concerned) came to be defined as the "society", and to be treated *a priori* as closed, self-regulating systems.

Thus the closed system assumptions of evolutionary thought have manifested in modernisation theory where the nation-state comes to represent the thing, or organism "society", and where the unit of analysis was usually considered to be this nation-state (Bach:1980:292; Giddens:1985; Hulme and Turner:1990:53; Tipps:1973:65;). The national territorial state was of critical theoretical significance - even though this very often remained implicit (Tipps:1973:65)<sup>67</sup>.

In consequence of employing the nation-state as unit of analysis, emphasis was placed on factors internal to societies, at the expense of locating these societies within the context of their structural positions within a broader system of nation-states.

The modernisation approach was hugely hamstrung by the invalid assumption that societies (which are assumed to coincide with the geographical state boundaries historically drawn up by colonial powers) are closed systems. In fact these new states sometimes comprised several "societies" (in Parson's sense of the word), while in other cases a boundary might cut right across a "society" (Hoogvelt:1976:123).

Assuming society to be a closed system is quite a ridiculous assumption to make in a period of history characterised by conquest and capitalist expansion, and in which the developmental intention was to diffuse Occidental values and structures to these alleged "closed systems".

---

66.(...continued)

community and the other three primary subsystems of the society", and finally the subsystems of the societal community (ibid.:466-467). Somewhere along the line, the society appears to have become equated with the nation.

67. Early marxism too, appears to have been caught to some extent in this framework of closed systems. For example, Palma argues that Marx had in mind a "proliferation of autonomous capitalisms" which were to occur within the context of nation-states (1978:889).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### MIDCENTURY LIBERAL APPROACHES

The modernisation approach was the dominant development paradigm during the 1950s and early 1960s. There is some dispute over whether or not one could call it a theory as such, since there is interdisciplinary input, and divisions amongst the modernisation writers themselves. Contributions have come from various disciplines including economics (Hoselitz), economic history (Rostow), sociology (Smelser), political science (Riggs), and psychology (McClelland)<sup>68</sup>.

Parsons was a major contributor to the modernisation approach at the theoretical level, with empirical contributions being made by numerous writers including McClelland, Eisenstadt, Hagen, Lerner, Rostow, Smelser, Foster, Inkeles and Smith (Harrison:1988; Taylor:1979).

It is my intention to focus primarily on Parson's theoretical inputs, referring where necessary to the way in which components of the neo-evolutionary structural-functionalist approach have affected the ideas of specific modernisation theorists.

Firstly the relevant components of the structural-functionalist perspective - as epitomised in Parson's work - will be discussed.

Secondly, his shift to neo-evolutionary theorising and the way in which this shift got transposed onto the structural-functionalist framework will be addressed. Specific attention will be paid to the influence of neo-evolutionary perspectives on modernisation approaches,

---

68. McClelland's approach (1961) has come under attack for its psychologistic reductionism. His concern is with change agents and how to develop N.Ach (need for achievement) amongst entrepreneurs and innovators. He has distorted Weber's initial argument concerning the development of rationalisation in the West. Ignoring the importance which Weber placed on Calvinist religious beliefs about salvation and the anxieties they produced, McClelland simply reduces this religious anxiety to "a latent psychological drive for success" (Webster: 1984:61).

as they relate to my earlier criticisms of the classical evolutionary perspectives. Thirdly attention will be paid to the problematic manner in which Parson's pattern variables have come to be interpreted within the modernisation perspective, when they have been combined with neo-evolutionary and diffusionist arguments.

It is argued that the modernisation perspective - when addressed in an ideal-typical sense, represents a conglomeration of essentially incompatible elements. Logical inconsistencies arise from what is essentially a brew of diffusionist, evolutionary, and structural-functionalist frameworks. The problems arising from this mix are addressed.

It is argued that ultimately, the modernisation approach has reproduced a dichotomous and linear evolutionary perspective which, while capable of addressing the nature of structure, is incapable of explaining the process of change. It is characterised by a value bias which presumes the superior or "fittest" nature of the structure of advanced industrial societies, and is concerned with establishing what structural characteristics are necessary for the existence of a system in which the principle of economic rationality is primary, and in which profit maximisation might be the dominant motive of all economic agents.

In the final analysis, then, modernisation approaches are concerned with the structural conditions under which "economic rationality", or the "principle of profit maximisation" becomes the dominant motive in the determination of human behaviour.

These concerns are all couched in the language of value free science.

This goal of attaining the structural conditions under which economic rationality might become the dominant motive in determining behaviour is claimed to be determined by a logic of evolutionary necessity, and not as an unintended consequence of unique historical events. The structure of the Occident is seen as a terminal evolutionary endpoint to be imitated by all. No attention is given to the possibility of subsequent evolutionary breakthroughs which might restructure the system as it stands. On the contrary, the Occident has arrived. It has nowhere to go.

### 8.1 STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST INPUT TO MODERNISATION THEORY

Besides Parsons, other writers who could be placed in a "system-function" framework include Marion Levy, David Easton, Gabriel Almond, David Apter, Leonard Binder and Fred Riggs (Huntington:1971:46). Lerner and Eisenstadt were also schooled in functionalist theory (Tipps:1973:64).

In the structural-functionalist perspective generally, closed system and equilibrium assumptions from the organic analogy of earlier theorising is maintained. Societies are seen as "more or less self-sufficient, self-equilibrating, adaptive social systems" (Abercrombie et al.:1984:177; Harrison:1988:6). They are understood as systems which tend toward equilibrium, even if they do not reach it. Equilibrium might be understood either as a state of rest, or at the least it presupposes tendencies to restore an original condition of equilibrium. In such a view change is seen as an abnormality, as the result of strains in the system which create compensatory movement to restore the original state (Huntington:1971:48)

In adapting to internal and external environments, social systems have to solve the system requisite problems of adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance. Parsons addresses these problems in his framework of an overall action system where the organism is said to resolve adaptive problems, personality is said to resolve goal-attainment problems, the social system is said to resolve integrative problems, and the cultural system is said to resolve pattern maintenance problems (Turner:1974:52).

Change is understood to occur in a gradual, adjustive fashion within a society which is tending towards integration (although it does not achieve total integration). The source of integration is a system of values which most of the members of the "society" adhere to. Tensions and conflicts are regarded as aberrations from the dominant pattern, and where deviance exists it is understood that in the long term such deviance is resolved or institutionalised in the system which is essentially in a state of "dynamic equilibrium" (Taylor:1976:169).

While Turner writes that Parsons divides an overall action system into constituent subsystems of culture, social structure, personality and organism (1974:52), Parsons himself

divides the **social system** (itself a subsystem of his overall action system) into constituent subsystems of societal community, organic-physical environment, cultural environment, and psychological or personality environment (1968:466ff.)<sup>69</sup>.

The essential problem which underlies Parsons's approach is that - while he introduces the principle of openness between subsystems - the social system as a whole is ultimately still regarded as a closed organism itself (1968:466). All the interactions between these parts of organism, personality, culture and societal community are internal to a specific entity - a specific social system - which appears to exist in a vacuum of isolation untouched by other such entities. Quite simply, openness is acknowledged to exist between say organism and personality (1968:469); but is ignored between say the culture of Occidental rationalism and that of alternate ways of relating to the world.

The problem with such a view is that neither social systems, nor cultural systems exist in isolation. They too have permeable boundaries.

Besides the continued use of the organismic analogy with assumed closed boundaries, another of the major problems resulting from the structural-functionalist input to modernisation theory was the lack of historical method which resulted from the explicit emphasis on structure as opposed to process.

In his earlier work, Parsons wrote that "a general theory of the processes of change in social systems is not possible in the present state of knowledge" (1951:486). Subsequently he claimed that;

A parallel between organic and socio-cultural evolution is that **structural analysis** must take priority over the analysis of process and change (Parsons:1977:232).

In this regard Hoogvelt (1976:51) begs the question - how was it possible for structural-functionalist analysis, resting on equilibrium understanding of society, a closed system organismic approach to the entity "society", and stressing structure over process, to perform the acrobatical feat of somersaulting into the position of being a dominant approach to

---

69. Elsewhere he divides the social system/society into the subsystems of societal community, fiduciary, polity and economy (Parsons:1971:11).

understanding social change?

Levy, for example, in his Modernisation and the Structure of Societies (1966), is far more concerned with structure than with either modernisation, process, or any concept of "system" in a dynamic context. Rather, the bulk of the two volumes address the characteristics of societies in general, and then distinguishes between those of "relatively modernised societies" and of "relatively nonmodernised societies" (Huntington:1971:47).

Huntington raises the same question about the manner in which structural-functionalism came to dominate social science approaches to the study of change. He points to the irony of the fact that political scientists seized upon the system-function approach as a means to study political change at about the same time that it was coming under criticism within sociology because of its inability to deal with change (1971:48).

In consequence of the stress on structure as opposed to process, the modernisation writings were in general far more able to delineate the characteristics of "modern" and "traditional" societies, than they were in depicting the process of movement from one state to another (Huntington:1971:37).

When these writers refer to "processes" of modernisation it tends to amount to a listing of features which characterise the substance of advanced industrial societies coupled with a verb - for example the "spread of literacy", the "emergence of a new cultural outlook", the "development of individuality", a "growing faith in science" and so on (Desai:1971:93). As I understand it, such phenomena signify the ends of development, and not the processes of development. Process as a course of action in which actors (often with conflicting goals) participate and interact in defining and achieving goals, does not appear to enter the modernisation perspective at all.

It will be argued in chapter 12 that developments in systems theory subsequent to Parson's input have reached precisely the opposite conclusion regarding the nature of structure and process. That is, the contemporary systems view of evolution recognises the logical supremacy of process over structures (Jantsch:1980:8-10).

## 8.2 NEO-EVOLUTIONARY INPUT TO MODERNISATION THEORY

Parson's move to neo-evolutionism strongly influenced developments in modernisation theory. Harrison argues that evolutionism was more implicit than explicit in the works of Lerner, Inkeles, Smith, Smelser, Hoselitz, Rostow and McClelland. However, by the end of the 1960s, neo-evolutionism was dominant in modernisation theory (Harrison:1988).

In the neo-evolutionary approach, social change is understood as the movement from one equilibrium position to another (Abercrombie et al.:1984:89,179). However the approach is incapable of explaining the succession from one equilibrium to another.

In neo-evolutionary theory the "increasing complexity" or "social differentiation" as identified by the structural-functionalist input, was said to occur in stages, with each new stage being characterised by greater differentiation of structures calling for new patterns of integration of the parts, entailing new solidarities and new norms and values (Abercrombie et al.:1984:251; Hoogvelt:1982:109-110; Taylor:1979:25-28)<sup>71</sup>. In so far as disturbing elements from outside a system were concerned, their impact was considered in terms of the way in which they enhanced the adaptive capacity of the social system via the process of differentiation (Taylor:1979:28). The possibility that disturbing elements from the outside might not enhance the adaptive capacity of a system was not considered.

While classical sociologists tended to perceive evolution as a linear process, in neo-evolutionary structural-functionalist theory there is a distinction between "general evolution" and "specific evolution" (Abercrombie et al.:1984:93). The "general evolution" of human societies is seen as "discontinuous, a zig-zagging or a leap-frogging process, rather than as a single, neatly definable line" (Hoogvelt:1976:15-17). General evolution arises from evolutionary breakthroughs which occur in different specific evolutions, and are then passed on to other societies through cultural diffusion.

Parsons, for example, argues against the parallel linear perspectives associated

---

71. For example, Smelser's Towards a Theory of Modernisation (1964) focuses on these aspects of modernisation. He is concerned with the effect of economic growth on social structures, and addresses structural differentiation and the way in which new integrative mechanisms arise to deal with the process of differentiation.



with classical sociological evolutionary theories (1966:2; 1977:235). Evolution is not inevitable, nor do all societies pass through the same stages. Rather, he is concerned with the question of "evolutionary universals", with the evolution of society as a generalised phenomenon.

He divides social evolution into three main stages - primitive, intermediate, and modern (1966:3); he also has a subclassification of societal evolution into five stages - primitive, advanced primitive and archaic, historic intermediate, seedbed societies and modern societies (Parsons:1966). No concrete society has gone through all the phases of general societal evolution - rather the societies at the end of the evolutionary voyage have managed to incorporate (partly via transmission through cultural diffusion) the crucial evolutionary universals achieved in prior specific evolutions which had taken place historically (Hoogvelt:1976:23).

There is a problem here. At issue is the question of linearity. While neo-evolutionary theory claims to be non-linear, it does not escape linearity because it continues to assume the given developmental end as epitomised in the American structures (Tipps:1973:69).

Thus, while Parsons claims to argue against a linear theory of social evolution, he retains the idea that the destination of developing societies will resemble the structures of the United States. He argues that other societies will **necessarily** adopt the features characteristic of the United States as they move toward modernity (1977:215).

To assume that one society (for example, American society) is at the endpoint of this process is to assume that America has had diffused to it **all** the evolutionary breakthroughs which have occurred in the evolution of specific societies. While this might be valid, it is not **necessarily** valid, and thus cannot be assumed to be so. There just may be one or two of these breakthroughs that Parsons did **not** identify specifically because they have not yet been diffused to American culture! So, while attempting to break out of a closed system unilinear framework with the notion of diffusion, neo-evolutionary theory ultimately fails to break out of a unilinear, unidirectional framework *per se* because it assumes a given endpoint. In so doing, it also fails to break from a deterministic framework.

The logic of the diffusionist argument when fused with evolutionary assumptions in the modernisation approach is this: now that America has had all these evolutionary

universals diffused to it, the next step is to go conquer the world and diffuse it to all other "societies" which haven't been so lucky. Since the west was the best, development was expected to occur in a top-down fashion via the diffusion mechanism to those societies who were lower down the evolutionary scale, who had not yet had all the "evolutionary breakthroughs" - so evident in America and Western Europe - diffused to them yet.

Shannon refers to the belief that the writer's own national culture is inherently superior to others as "triumphalism". The corollary of triumphalism is the belief that one's culture and institutions should be adopted by other countries. Quite clearly, Parson's approach embodies triumphalist elements. He argues

From a comparative and evolutionary perspective, the more privileged societies of the later twentieth century have successfully institutionalised the liberal values of a century ago ....The trend has been one of reduction in conspicuous consumption among elite groups. Though not much has happened for a generation, the future trend will be toward greater equality....The United States has led the change, but its features will spread through all modern societies" (1977:208).

Shannon argues that triumphalist theories correspond with periods of hegemonic power by nations in the world system as a whole - thus Britain produced Spencer during a period of British hegemony, while America produced Parsons during the period of American hegemony -a hegemony which Shannon claims is now on the decline (1989:129).

Given the triumphalist inputs of neo-evolutionary structural-functionalist theorising to modernisation approaches, it is not surprising that modernisation theory perceived the Occidental present as the developmental end point along an evolutionary road, beyond which there was no conception of development. The modern stage is perceived to earmark the end of the human evolutionary process and is existent in the west (Cruise O'Brien:1979:51-4; Desai:1971:90; Huntington:1971:31). There is no conception of the future. Rather, the west is considered to be at the apex of this evolutionary process, at the end of the evolutionary line (Hoogvelt:1982:111-119). Ironically, modernisation theory, which is supposed to advocate a loss of attachment to the past, managed to combine a faith in its own past with no image of the potentialities of its future (Huntington:1971:34)

In assuming the developmental end point to be modernity as evidenced in the

Western World, we obstruct the possibilities of going beyond or in alternative directions to such a terminal point. The future of modernity is simply left blank.

Not only has modernisation theory tended to assume that all societies are heading in a universal direction - that is, imitation of the western form, but that all societies are coming from the same past - that is, the traditional form (Brookfield:1975:81). Yet the evidence is that socio-economic and political structures, and patterns within "traditional" societies have also varied far more than modernisation theory tends to allow for (Webster:1984:57). Tipps argues that as the knowledge of pre-contact history increases, a static image of traditional societies becomes increasingly untenable (1973:75).

### **8.3 CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF MODERNISATION APPROACH**

#### **8.3.1 BUILT ON A MIX OF INCOMPATIBLE COMPONENTS: EVOLUTIONISM, DIFFUSIONISM AND STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM**

It appears that the feat of transforming a theory focused on structure into the dominant approach to social **change** - called modernisation theory - was achieved by fusing a brew of structural-functionalism with neo-evolutionary as well as diffusionist components (Harrison:1988). It is argued that the resulting concoction was logically inconsistent.

Firstly, it is argued that the closed-system assumptions of the structural-functionalist framework, together with the corresponding idea of immanent change within systems, are incompatible with the notion of diffusion.

Secondly it is argued that the equilibrium assumptions of the structural-functionalist framework are incompatible with the notion of diffusion.

Thirdly, the problems which arise in transposing dichotomies onto the neo-evolutionary framework are addressed. It is argued that in modernisation theory, the neo-evolutionary attempts to break out of a linear perception of evolution were thwarted as a result of the extensive use of dichotomies. Essentially it was claimed that the structures which characterised "modern" societies were at one end of a continuum, while those which characterised "traditional" societies were at the other end of a continuum. Modernisation was a process of movement in a stage-like and linear direction from one state to the other.

Firstly, then, the closed-system assumptions will be addressed. How can an

approach which attempts to understand societies as closed systems in isolation adequately cope with the reality that diffusion means a penetration of systems from the outside?

On the one hand, developing societies are understood as closed systems. As far as the boundaries of societies are concerned, in modernisation theory generally, the nation-state constitutes the boundary of "society". Given the structural-functionalist input, they are supposed to be self-sufficient, self-sustaining, approaching equilibrium, and undergoing gradual evolutionary processes of increasing differentiation and complexity via a process of immanent change (O'Connell:1965; Tipps:1973:74).

In line with the structural-functionalist argument what we were expected to anticipate was increasing differentiation of social structures and social subsystems, together with reintegration at more advanced levels (Coetzee:1987c:25; Hoogvelt:1982:109-113).

This was all supposed to lead to a greater "generalised adaptive capacity" of a society (Parsons:1971:3). These societies were expected to become increasingly characterised by "self-sustaining" growth (Desai:1971:93; O'Connell:1965:14-15).

On the other hand, great emphasis is placed on the role of diffusion - which must come from the outside. Isn't this contradictory?

How does all this gradualism, and immanent change in self-sustaining systems fit in with the logic of diffusion which - to be successful, necessitates domination?

Attempting to understand developing societies in a framework which perceives them to be self-sufficient and closed systems is clearly inadequate. In reality these systems are highly permeable, and far from self-sufficient. In fact the newly independent nation-states could be better described as allopoietic systems, whose function is largely given from the outside, than as autopoietic self-sufficient systems (Jantsch:1980).

The second problem arises from the equilibrium assumptions inherent in the structural-functionalist framework.

When structural-functionalism gets transposed onto a modernisation and development paradigm, the equilibrium aspect is seen as an **obstacle** to development in underdeveloped societies. It is not seen as such in developed societies! Rather, it is desired that the form of stability which allegedly characterises the centre should be transposed onto the periphery from the outside.

Surely it is obvious that a theoretical framework which promotes a quick

**diffusion** of American technology, values, and forms of structural differentiation into vastly different societies (that is, which promotes a rapid destabilisation of other existing structures) - is in fundamental contradiction with attempting to understand these same "societies" as inherently stable phenomena?

In fact, diffusion in principle stands opposed to equilibrium - it implies disequilibrium elements being brought into the system from the outside. A society which is undergoing the domination that is an ineradicable aspect of "diffusion" cannot be understood in terms of stability and equilibrium. Diffusion - if successful - is not a peaceful, stable process, although liberal development approaches would have us believe it is:

In Parson's approach one gets the impression that the history of mankind has been one happy, relaxed and peaceful exchange of ideas, stimulating progress here, there and everywhere where contact between societies was made. Cultural diffusion appears as a friendly merchant traveller, a timeless Marco Polo, innocently roaming the world, gently picking up a few ideas in one place and harmlessly depositing them in another. Incredulously, the words "domination", "exploitation", "imperialism", and "colonialism" are **not** discussed in any of Parson's works on evolution (Hoogvelt 1976:18; emphasis in original).

Besides the problems consequent upon the fusion of structural-functionalism with the idea of diffusion discussed above, a further problem within the modernisation approach was that it regressed on developments which had taken place within neo-evolutionary theorising insofar as linear assumptions are concerned.

Because of its extensive use of dichotomies, modernisation theory reinforced the linear, deterministic evolutionary assumptions which neo-evolutionary theorising had attempted to break from in its distinction between specific and general evolution.

With nation-states as objects of analysis, the implication is that development can be equated with the movement of a state-in-isolation in the direction of the American state. Such a view was popular at midcentury but is increasingly recognised as unattainable and contrary to the principle of evolution as an open and non-determined process, a view which will be examined in chapter seven.

In short, structural-functionalism, when combined with neo-evolutionary approaches, attempted to transform an abstracted and generalised **history** of the development of the west into the **logic** of development, a logic which non-western societies were expected to follow in the long term (Hoogvelt:1982).

It was this weakness which created the space for the neo-marxist approaches to delegitimise the liberal approach on the basis that it ignored the processes which had characterised interaction between the contemporary industrialised world and the contemporary underdeveloped world.

### 8.3.2 PATTERN VARIABLES - CHOICES OR PRESCRIPTIONS?

Tipps claims that the limited cultural horizons of the modernisation approach involved a "cultural imperialism", imposing the desirability of western cultural choices upon other societies (1973:73).

It is necessary to address the manner in which Parson's pattern variables became distorted into a simplified ideological formula when they were transposed onto the traditional versus modern dichotomies of modernisation theory. It is argued that just as formal rationality was assumed to transcend substantive rationality, in the modernisation approach "modern" pattern variables were assumed to transcend "traditional" pattern variables.

While for Parsons, the pattern variables implied "alternative ways of action, preferences, predispositions and normative expectations", in modernisation theory they came to be used to distinguish between traditional and modern societies (Coetzee:1987c:25; Huntington:1971:28). That is, while the variables were developed in the framework of choices confronting an actor, in modernisation approaches they came to be used to define characteristics of social systems.

Originally Parsons had developed the pattern variables within the framework of his structural-functionalist theory. However, the revival of neo-evolutionary theory meant that these variables became interpreted within an evolutionary framework.

When we work in a framework of "traditional" versus "modern", it automatically brings an ideological dimension to fore. The ideological dimension which follows from the "traditional" versus "modern" framework becomes exacerbated when in employing organismic analogies, our object of analysis is the nation-state, or nation.

In the structural-functionalist variant, Parsons had argued that there were numerous (namely, 32) permutations of pattern variables which could characterise a society. However, with the modernisation assumption of "society" at the level of the nation-state, and the incorporation of pattern variables into the neo-evolutionary

paradigm, the tendency to equate modernisation with the elimination of one side of what now came to be seen as a pattern variable **continuum** became built into the concept of modernisation, with western society (modern society) perceived as representing one side of the continuum, and developing nations the other side (Taylor:1979:34). Development comes to be associated with eliminating the "traditional" pattern variables which Parsons specified.

It is just not as simple as that. As Tipps points out, the notion that tradition and modernity constitute separate closed and functionally interdependent systems of attributes should be questioned, and in doing so, modernisation can no longer be equated simply with the destruction of tradition (1973:76).

In fact the dichotomies of "tradition" and "modernity" exaggerate and simplify what is happening empirically. The point which fails to be confronted in this dichotomous evolutionary organismic use of the pattern variable input, is that even in a modern state - "traditional" pattern variables persist, and actually fulfil functions in holding up the modern variables, albeit low status functions. For example, it is reductionist to argue that "modernity" encourages the same orientations in all its members - the encouragement of differential gender motivation and differential achievement motivation for different social strata are two cases in point (Webster:1984:59).

If modernisation means more choices (Coetzee:1987c:25) then it is not the role of theory to advocate the replacement of one side of a continuum with the other. Rather the whole point is that in modernity there is choice itself. In all empirical societies (as opposed to ideal-type dichotomies) there will be combinations of elements of both "traditional" and "modern" ideal types present.

Rather than seeing modernity as a process of eliminating one side of the pattern variable complex - the reality of "modernity" (as opposed to the ideal) may in fact lie in the presence of numerous combinations of the 32 possible permutations of the variables, that is - in wider options. To advocate modernity as the elimination of one side of a continuum of pattern variables and then attempt to substitute them with another side does not necessarily promote "development".

However, what it clearly does promote is a rationality that is requisite for capital accumulation first, all other value postulates (Kalberg:1980) second. Quite clearly,

modernisation theories are theories of **capitalist** development; which means that they will favour the development of an accumulative rationality. Parson's "modern" pattern variables, all quite clearly hold up the principles underlying economic rationality as expressed in the maximisation of economic advantage and profit maximisation as the dominant motive of agents.

Development is supposed to occur within various spheres of society -the social, cultural, economic and political spheres. In what modernisation theory perceives to be the ideal condition there would be structural compatibility with economic growth based on profit maximisation as the market principle, democratic association, and bureaucratic administration all working hand in hand with secularisation, urbanisation and changing family structures (Hoogvelt:1982).

However, the achievement of this structural compatibility within the "modern" society rests on the assumption of profit maximisation as the dominant motive of all economic agents (Hoogvelt:1982:113-119).

It is the primacy of the economic structure in the social order which marks the modern stage in social evolution....This primacy of the economic structure is expressed in the primacy of the principle of **economic rationality**, that is the desire to maximise benefits over costs, as the highest value governing social life and as the most general of human motives (Hoogvelt:1976:151-152).

The market price as sole criterion for the allocation of resources, which Parsons (1971) stressed as an essential feature in the modern stage of evolution; cannot operate without the correlate principle that profit maximisation is the dominant motive of all economic agents (Hoogvelt:1982:113). In the modern stage of social evolution, "economic rationality", or the "principle of profit maximisation" is seen to become the dominant motive in the determination of human behaviour (Hoogvelt:1982:113).

In short, the structural compatibility which is supposed to characterise modernity, presumes a situation in which all actors have had diffused to them the ethos which was an unintended consequence of the rise of the Protestant Ethic, to have transferred to them an ethos of fundamentally irrational origin. Is this a feasible goal, or is it a goal which by the very nature of the structure of capitalism can only be attained by certain classes?



## CHAPTER NINE

### NEO-MARXIST CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND DEPENDENCY

Some brief comments about the liberal approach provide the framework in which I wish to address the neo-marxist critique.

It has been argued that the liberal approach is quite clearly an approach which legitimates **capitalist** development specifically, and understands capitalist development as manifested in the Occident as the only possible development path for all to follow. Stress has been placed on the role of the liberal conception of "rationality". It has been argued that this view of rationality, while identified by Weber as being a culturally relative one, has been carried over into sociological approaches to development as the **only** measure of rationality.

Thus liberal development approaches rest upon a model of action which stresses the individual as actor and which perceives the individual driven by a rationality of profit maximisation as the pure rational individual *par excellence*. The liberal perspective is quite clear as to what constitutes the ideal type "capitalism". Thus the type of actor who is rational in the liberal perspective, fits with the liberal conception of what constitutes the broader structural context in which her action takes place. In short, the liberal approach is internally coherent as regards their ideal type pure rational actor and her goals, as well as the social structural conditions in which her action is perceived to be taking place. This coherence is a strength of the liberal approach.

However, it has been argued that the major weakness of this approach rests essentially in the way in which it has fused this understanding of rationality and the rational actor into a deterministic view of evolutionary progress, which incorporates firstly the assumption of closed systems approaching equilibrium, and secondly the idea that the terminal point is given as the Occidental present. What happens here is that the unique form of rationality and rationalisation which Weber identified as having occurred in the Occident now comes to be generalised as a critical variable defining the terminal stage of an evolutionary voyage.

While an ideal type conception of capitalism and of the rational actor in a

capitalist social framework is useful in itself, it is fallacious to impose this ideal type onto an evolutionary framework and contend that the Occidental present is the goal of all humankind, and that this is scientifically given. Such an assumption implies that the given end of maximising economic advantage and that the principle of profit maximisation as the dominant motive of all economic agents are also scientifically given.

The whole of part one was directed to showing that this is **not** in fact correct, and that a return to Weber's writings is necessary if we are to avoid carrying through his interpretation of a unique case into a sociology of development that is valid for all social formations and strata. Rather, the type of rationality which characterised the rise of industrialisation in the Occident is unique and a consequence of fundamentally irrational factors.

Some introductory comments are necessary to set out the limitations of the categories which I intend to use from the neo-marxist contribution. I have selected the idea of a world system, the stress on domination and conflict, as well as the idea of a socialist future directed at production for need and not for profit as the essential elements of the neo-marxist contribution which are relevant to the problems which have been identified in liberal theory, and which are relevant to subsequent developments in the liberal approach.

While much of the neo-marxist debate has been caught up in debating who is more theoretically pure in a marxist conceptual framework, this is not of major concern in this dissertation. Rather I wish to address what I understand to be the essential elements which a marxist perspective can provide insights to in a broad sense, and which are elements that liberalism continually fails to confront.

This dissertation is concerned with the failure of the liberal perspective to address the element of domination which underlies its whole content but which has been disguised as a universal model of what constitutes "development". It is in this sense that the neo-marxist approaches are useful, since they show the **effects** of the Occidental attempt to maximise its economic advantage on those regions and people who did not abide by models of action which resulted from the unintended consequences of Protestant asceticism, but which rather became conditions allowing the Occident to maximise its economic advantage in an Occidentally rational fashion.

The neo-marxist critique is useful in that it addresses domination, and hence

conflict as opposed to consensus. A second major contribution has been its stress on a world system of capitalist accumulation. Thus it challenged all the closed system assumptions of liberal theory. While liberal closed systems assumptions when linked to evolutionary perspectives would like to see a world made up of rational nations constituted of rational actors all directed at the goal of maximising economic advantage, neo-marxist theory addresses the fact that parts of a bigger overall system are having advantage maximised over them.

While liberal theory, with its structural-functionalist assumptions addressed peripheral "societies" as if they were autopoietic self-sufficient systems tending toward equilibrium which were to have development diffused to them from above with a silver spoon in a peaceable benevolent manner; the neo-marxist approach argues that peripheral regions in the world system are in fact allopoietic systems - whose function is given from the outside - by the autopoietic global system of capitalist accumulation; which continually strives to reproduce itself. The means which the global system employs in order to reproduce itself, is to expand into ever greater geographical and social space, and to dominate such space.

In the marxist tradition, Luxembourg (1913:416) was one of the earliest writers to argue that capitalist development actually needed interaction with other pre-capitalist modes. In fact she claimed that capitalism could only exist in conjunction with non-capitalist systems. While the non-capitalist modes were static, capitalism is driven to constant expansion, being constantly on the lookout for labour power, raw material, and markets.

Pre-capitalist societies for Luxembourg, are covered by the category of "natural economy", systems of self-sufficiency and production for direct use. She stressed the effects that imperialist expansion had on existing pre-capitalist "natural economies", arguing that the logic of the accumulation drive led, necessarily, to the destruction of simple exchange and the conversion of primitive societies into societies of "commodity buyers" (Redclift:1984:10). This was a violent process;

A natural economy thus confronts the requirements of capitalism at every turn with rigid barriers. Capitalism must therefore always and everywhere fight a battle of annihilation against every historical form of natural economy...whether this be slave economy, feudalism, primitive communism, or patriarchal peasant economy. The principal methods in this struggle are political force (revolution, war), oppressive taxation by

the state, and cheap goods....capital is faced with difficulties because vast tracts of the globe's surface are in possession of social organisations that have no desire for commodity exchange or cannot, because of the entire social structure and the forms of ownership, offer for sale the productive forces in which capital is primarily interested...If capital were free to rely on the process of slow internal disintegration, it might take centuries (Luxembourg:1913:369ff.).

A valuable contribution of the neo-marxist approach is that it does **not** perceive the Occidental present as the endpoint of societal evolution. The notion of a socialist future demands in the long term a progression beyond a system of production directed primarily at profit and towards one directed at human need (Desai:1971:95). This is one of the fundamental categories that divide the liberal from the marxist perspective. A system of production directed at need rather than profit would rest upon a conception of rational action fundamentally different from what Weber identified the pure type to be. That is, it would entail substantive qualitative dimensions as a complement to formal quantitative dimensions.

Hoogvelt argues that given the primacy of the principle of economic rationality as a crucial component of economic development, the only area that is opened up to choice from there is that of whether or not the ultimate purpose which is to be served by profit maximisation is an end in itself, or a means to an end. This difference constitutes a central point of departure between liberal and socialist ideologies. Thus, in the capitalist model profit maximisation is seen as an end in itself, while in the socialist model profit maximisation is simply a means to other social ends (Hoogvelt:1976:152).

The distinction between capitalism as a system directed at the ultimate end of profit as opposed to socialism as a system directed at the ultimate end of social need can be traced within marxist contributions. For example, Marx stressed that use-values should never be regarded as the real aim of the capitalist (1974:151). Subsequently, Luxembourg argued that in a capitalist system of production, consideration of social needs does not motivate the producer. For capitalist producers, the manufacture of commodities is not an end in itself, rather it is a means to the appropriation of surplus value (1913:38-42).

More recently, Wallerstein, writing from within the neo-marxist perspective, clearly argues that production for use and not for profit is a minimum requirement for a socialist mode of production. For him, neither state ownership nor self-reliance

constitute socialism; there are no existing socialist governments. Rather,

Production for use and not for profit, and rational decision on the cost benefits (in the widest sense of the term) of alternative uses is a different mode of production, one that can only be established within the single division of labour that is the world-economy and one that will require a single government (Wallerstein:1979:91).

Clearly there is an essential value divergence between the liberal and marxist perspectives in that liberal ideology advocates the desirability of production primarily for profit, while marxist ideology advocates the desirability of production primarily for need. These particular values are embedded in broader "value postulates" (Kalberg:1980:1155).

The principle of profit maximisation as an end in itself coalesces with the elements of formal rationality and the accompanying institutional components as outlined in part one, while the principle of profit as a means to social ends would have to incorporate a greater cognisance of substantive rationality; since need cannot be objectively given but can only be subjectively determined.

In this sense, I maintain that the socialist alternative which attempts to gear production at assessed needs of people (as opposed to capitalism gearing it at the maximisation of profits of the private owners of the means of production) is inadequate. A central plan based on assessed needs minimises the potential for participation in defining the substance of those needs.

Throughout the discussion of the neo-marxist challenge to liberal development thought, there are two central criticisms which should be borne in mind regarding the neo-marxist perspective. The first is a failure to adequately identify what constitutes the ideal type "socialism", or "socialist mode of production" which is a failing common to both the classical and the neo-marxist perspective. While one of the strengths of the liberal approach is that it is quite clear about what constitutes the ideal type "capitalism" which is the liberal developmental endpoint; marxism, in contrast, generally appears to have been incapable of formulating the concept "socialist mode of production" adequately. The second problem underlying the marxist contributions is the inadequate conceptualisation of agency. I shall briefly address these problems, which consistently underlie the loopholes in the neo-marxist position.

Within the broad marxist approach one can, to some extent, build up an ideal type understanding of what is meant by the concept "capitalist mode of production". Besides

the marxist stress on the labour theory of value and production relations, in a broader sense there is in fact a fair amount of overlap between the marxist conception of "capitalism" and Weber's ideal type of capitalism. When marxists talk of the capitalist mode of production they usually have in mind a number of criteria which tend to include commodity production for exchange rather than use (Bradby:1975; Marx:1974), the existence of free wage labour (Brenner:1977:26; Laclau:1971:25; Marx:1974), the existence of private property, and freely transferable property rights (Laclau:1971).

However, it is very difficult to establish precisely what a **socialist mode** is constituted of in an ideal typical sense, how precisely it differs from the capitalist mode, and if it has existed in the empirical world at all.

As far as the level of analysis is concerned, there is a lack of clarity on the issue of whether an ideal type "socialism" is feasible at a nation-state level, or even a regional level, or whether it could really only exist at a global level.

When we look at the empirical world we can see that the categories capitalist/socialist are not nearly as clear cut as at first appears. There is clearly a need for clarification on what is meant by the concepts feudal, capitalist, socialist, communist when we are arguing in marxist terms. Research into Third World class structures also shows the need to conceptually clarify what we mean by some of the class categories we use too - categories such as peasant/proletarian/ bourgeois class, for example (Roseberry:1978).

Within the literature there is also disagreement on facts in the empirical world. Some argue that capitalist development is taking place in the periphery (Warren:1973), while others qualify peripheral development as dependent capitalist development (for example, the *dependistas*). Others (as in Frank's earlier writings) claim it is not taking place at all in the periphery - it is underdevelopment which is in fact taking place.

Furthermore if it is unclear whether capitalist development is in fact taking place in these regions, then it is even more unclear whether socialist development has taken place in the allegedly "socialist" states which have been described variously as "state capitalist" and as "state socialist" by different writers. When assets are simply handed over to the state does one call this socialism, or is it just state capitalism (Amin:1974:18; Brookfield:1975:25; Williams:1978) or even state socialism (McGowan:1991)?

Following from disagreements over the empirical conditions of the world, there

is disagreement over whether or not future capitalist development is possible in the dependent territories, and over the possibilities for future industrialisation. Frank (1969) believes that Third World development is unlikely, while others such as Warren (1973;1980) and Williams (1978) argue that large-scale industrial capitalist development is very probable.

There is also a diversity of means and goals of praxis in the marxist and neo-marxist writings, some of them actually being contradictory and at odds with one another. A central problem is whether or not "autonomous" capitalist development is a desirable goal in the short term in the periphery, whether a socialist path is desirable in the short term, or whether such limited and reductionist options are not the only way to go.

Thus, consequent upon the disagreement about whether "underdeveloped" regions are capitalist or not, is a disagreement as to whether the immediate goal is to build capitalism or socialism. That is, is it correct to take a voluntarist and activist role in creating a transition directly to socialism, or is it better to take the orthodox marxist position that socialism cannot emerge until the capitalist stage of development is ripe?

For example, if (from a circulationist Frankian perspective) the whole world is capitalist it makes sense that praxis should be directed at socialism now. If the whole world (from a productionist *dependista* perspective) is not capitalist then it makes sense that praxis should be directed at developing capitalist production relations and democratisation in the short term before socialism is attainable. But then, if developing capitalist relations of production only produces dependent capitalism, where does that leave the periphery in the long term?

There is theoretical disagreement over the relationship between the transition to socialism and the role of national liberation struggles in ex-colonial territories, disagreement over the extent to which one should examine international production relationships as opposed to international exchange relationships, disagreement as to whether one should focus at a national level of consciousness (as in national liberation struggles) or whether Marxists should now be examining the possibilities for the development of an international world view in response to the new conditions which transnational corporations have introduced - the idea of an international working class and the potential for international working class co-operation.

Interwoven with all these debates is an underlying tension within the marxist contributions between those who abhor the brutalising aspects of capitalist development, and those who see these aspects as necessary conditional prerequisites for attaining a higher state of socialist organisation (Palma:1978:905ff.). The latter are caught up in a scientific, materialist view, which I have argued has been transcended by developments within physical sciences which recognise the relationship between subject and object, rather than separating them, and which thus recognise the ineradicable role of ethics and of values in the scientific game.

All in all there is a huge amount of division and conceptual confusion within these debates generally (Harrison:1988; Hoogvelt:1982:196-197).

Turner (1974) has argued that it is impossible to build theory unless writers share common assumptions about the meaning of concepts. To build theory we need to use common concepts - have common agreed upon definitions. Much of these marxist and neo-marxist debates are based on different understandings of concepts such as "capitalism", "socialism", "free wage labour" and "exploitation".

I said there were two criticisms which needed to be borne in mind in discussing the neo-marxist critique of the liberal development paradigm. The first was the lack of an operationally useful concept of "socialism", the second which I shall now address is the neglect of agency in the neo-marxist approach. This is especially true of the circulationist world systems perspective associated with Frank, Wallerstein and Amin which has sometimes been accused of out-functionalising Parsons' work.

Because of its roots in a nineteenth century mechanistic ideology which attempts to reduce human relations to natural laws (Rapoport:1968:452), and because it is driven by the same nineteenth century world view which understands freedom to be located in emancipation from nature and domination over objective nature which is "out there"; a fundamental problem which pervades the neo - marxist perspectives is an almost complete absence of subjective agency.

Development is defined by science, by objective laws - not by people or agency. Where agents are incorporated (as in the *dependista* perspective) they are broad objective class interests. Wallerstein goes so far as to mention "ethno-nations" as actors, but these are also objectively defined, and their substance is inadequately explored. Like nature, culture is objectively "out there". Hence Wallerstein's ethno-nations as actors are merely



perceived as frictional obstacles to the efficient workings of the capitalist system, which has a volition of its own, given by science and the evolutionary process. In the neo-marxist perspective generally, actors are not perceived in the sense of decision-making entities which are subjectively capable of formulating and achieving alternate goals. Rather they appear to be objectively given.

### **9.1 WORLD AS ONE SYSTEM (WITH UNDERDEVELOPED DEPENDENT PARTS)**

The central component underlying the neo-marxist critique of the liberal approach to development (and derived from their insistence on the use of historical data) is the argument that the world is not made up of separate parts in the form of societies or nation-states; rather it is one overarching system in which events and history in one part impact upon the same in other parts. In world systems theory generally it is argued that the world as a whole is a system, and underdevelopment cannot be explained without reference to the structural position of "Third World" societies within the global economy.

As far as the history of capitalist expansion is concerned, dependency theory perceives development and underdevelopment to be a dialectical process. This process has a three stage history which has occurred in the world system as whole. Historically the expansion of capitalism has been accompanied by three stages - a mercantilist-capitalist stage, a colonial stage and a neo-colonial stage.

While the era of merchant capitalism was driven by a search for foreign produce, the colonial era was driven by a desire for market outlets for European manufactures. The effect of the plundering which took place during the period of merchant capitalism actually led to a regression in social structural complexity in the periphery and manifested in demographic decline, economic decline, and political decline (Hoogvelt:1976:69-71).

During this period, access to resources, power and markets became differentiated, with power and resources being withdrawn from the local to the national level (Stöhr et al:1981:462-3). When units of capitalist enterprise established themselves, they took advantage of their dominance over other elements in the system, drawing the most powerful strata into their sphere of influence (Perroux:1983).

Broadly speaking, neo-marxist theories of underdevelopment can be divided into

two camps - the "productionist" (*dependista*) position and the "circulationist" (world system) position.

The "circulationist" world system perspective was influenced by Emmanuel's Unequal Exchange (1969) thesis and these writers tend to be concerned with issues such as trade and unequal exchange in the world market system, rather than with the orthodox marxist concerns of production relations. Following Emmanuel's argument, it is claimed that the parts of the world system are asymmetrically linked in a pattern of international trade characterised by unequal exchange.

The circulationist world systems perspective, associated with Frank, Wallerstein and Amin, has been criticised as having a tendency to reduce things to some kind of objective economic reality; of tending to see internal structures as derivative of the global system and as being conditioned at a global level (Harrison:1988).

The "productionists" were a predominantly Latin American group who accused Frank of a non-marxist, circulationist, conception of capitalism, and thus reintroduced class as a central focus of their contribution, and focused on production relations in the light of the marxian orthodoxy of the labour theory of value. These writers (the *dependistas*) include Palma, Cardoso and Faletto.

The *dependistas* have taken the "productionist" route in order to stress voluntarist aspects, and concrete historical aspects which are neglected by the "circulationist" world system perspective. They thus pay more attention to internal factors within nation-states than the circulationist writers do, and look for ways in which concrete actors can intervene in nation-states in order to challenge and to change the relations of domination that have been set up by the world capitalist system. (The *dependistas* do however work within a framework which acknowledges the important role of the external conditioning factors which are created by the existence of the world system).

## 9.2 STATIC DEPENDENCY:

### FRANK'S ORIGINAL CIRCULATIONIST POSITION

The thesis that contact with capitalist expansion created conditions of dependency within the periphery can be traced back to some of the classical marxist writings, especially Marx's discussion of foreign trade and the expansion of capitalism in the third volume of Marx's Capital (1974), and in Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism

(1916:78).

However, the essential difference between pre and post 1950s marxist theory on the relationship between advanced industrial societies and peripheral regions was that the pre-1950s view was far more concerned with the **causes** of the expansion of capitalism into other regions, while the post-1950s view was more concerned with the **effects** of this expansion on the peripheral territories (Palma:1978).

Dependency theory emerged with the publication of Paul Baran's Political Economy of Growth (1957). Up until the publication of Baran's book, foreign penetration had been seen to play a progressive role in the Latin American economy. However, Baran contended that in fact foreign penetration tended to limit economic growth in peripheral countries (O'Hearn:1989:578). This resulted in dependency relations between Latin American countries in the periphery and the advanced industrial core countries.

Baran also addressed the problem of the alliance between metropolitan interests and the traditional elite (Palma:1978:888ff.) Whereas imperialism had previously been considered as good for growth, it came to be considered as an obstacle to industrialisation and development.

Frank's popularisation of Baran's work resulted in a reconceptualisation of capitalist relations in peripheral countries. While the Latin American left had previously believed that capitalist development would come about through an alliance between the state and the bourgeois classes, Frank argued that the bourgeois elites in Latin American countries were essentially puppets of the metropolitan centre, whose interests lay with the centre and not with the development of the periphery. These class relations reinforce the distorted economic structures.

Frank's strongest contribution has been recognised as his critique of the dual economy (Harrison:1988; Palma:1978:888ff). Rather than dealing with a dual economy in undeveloped nation-states, we are dealing with underdeveloped subsystems of a global economy, which is increasingly including the eastern bloc (Harrison:1988:84). Liberal theory has failed to recognise historical circumstances and the fact that the systems which they study are subsystems of a larger economy. The failure of development cannot be located within internal structural obstacles, as modernisation has attempted to do. In fact, the structural obstacles are located in the global economy, and what is happening in the

peripheral areas is not slow development at all, but rather underdevelopment. Economic development and economic underdevelopment (as opposed to undevelopment) are opposite faces of the same coin (Frank:1967a:9; Laclau:1971:20).

For Frank (1967a), the whole world has been capitalist since the sixteenth century. This is not entirely without roots in classical marxist orthodoxy. Marx himself writes of the creation of a world-embracing commerce and world-embracing market in the sixteenth century (1974:145).

Similarly, such an assertion is not divorced from the Weberian position, at a purely economic level at least. According to Giddens, Weber argued that "a market economy presumes national and international markets" and that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the main period of large-scale expansion of capitalism (1985:128).

Frank (1967a:53) claims that within the global economy there exists a chain of metropolises and satellites. His metropolis/satellite concept is a reflection of Baran's concept of core/periphery, except that Frank takes it further with his conception of a chain that runs throughout the world system, where a certain point can be at once a satellite of the global system, and at the same time a metropole of the regional system. That is, metropolitan-satellite relationships are not limited to the international level, but permeate at all levels (Laclau:1971:21).

Historically he argues that there has occurred a unilateral transfer of wealth, outwards and upwards, from the satellites to the metropolises. This happens throughout the system, with both national and international metropolises extracting the surplus. So a global satellite sucks capital out of its own regional satellites and channels part of this surplus to the global metropolis.

This original Frankian idea of a unilateral transfer of wealth has been criticised for being stagnationist (Palma:1978). The implication of his early writings was that the periphery would not develop at all and would simply remain static. His early writing implied "laws" of development, relating proximity to the "metropole" with underdevelopment in the periphery (Laclau:1971:21; O'Hearn:1989:578); and arguing that countries which had once had the strongest links with the metropolitan powers subsequently became the most underdeveloped regions.

Frank's dependency model had important political consequences.

Since his analysis claimed that the whole world was capitalist, it followed that there was no point in supporting a bourgeois democratic revolution. Thus there is a break here with the classical marxist analysis which expected<sup>72</sup> the bourgeois classes of the underdeveloped regions to lead a bourgeois democratic revolution. For Frank, the structure of the metropolis-satellite relationships and the alliances between local bourgeois classes and metropolitan interests - who were working together to maximise their advantage over the majority of people in the periphery - dictated that further cooperation with the global capitalist system from the periphery could only condemn the satellite regions to further underdevelopment (Frank:1967a:11;53). The only solution was thus to go it alone, to direct all political efforts towards an immediate socialist revolution (Laclau:1971:20).

### 9.3 CHALLENGES TO FRANK

Frank's argument resulted in heated disputes which have still not abated. While it forced theorists to transcend the nation-state as closed-system assumptions of the modernisation perspective by addressing the whole world as object of analysis, there were major problems with his analysis. I shall briefly address some of the liberal critiques before discussing the controversies within the left in some depth.

From a liberal perspective there were three central problems with Frank's approach.

Firstly it ruled out the possibility of comparative analysis. Secondly, the concept of "nondependence" is not elaborated. Thirdly, Frank's approach failed to take account of the fact that not only were western metropolises in a powerful position, eastern bloc metropolises were too. For example, Ray (1973) contended that dependency may be said to exist between the USSR and its satellites, where class structures have much in common with the capitalist periphery. He gives the example of Cuba, arguing that in the post-revolutionary era it is no less dependent on trade with the Soviet bloc than it was on the west in the pre-revolutionary era. He concludes that the problem of dependency appears to be not so much a dependency on capitalist metropolises, rather it lies in

---

72. According to Williams (1978) Lenin never took seriously the idea of the capacity for the Russian bourgeois class to lead a revolution. Ironically he believed that the bourgeoisie of the other peripheral nations could.

disparate power relationships *per se* (Harrison:1988:112-113).

(However, it can still be argued that such power will manifest at an economic level in the framework of Frank's metropole/satellite concept. Thus the metropolis/satellite concept remains useful, but what needs to be avoided is the assumption that only capitalism creates metropolises).

In addition to these liberal criticisms of Frank's approach, there was huge division within the marxist camp about Frank's contribution. It is to these divisions that I shall now turn.

Firstly, both Warren and the *dependistas* take a more optimistic view than Frank did of the possibilities for development under conditions of relations of dependency. Warren (1973;1980) contended that capitalist development (as opposed to underdevelopment) was in fact taking place in allegedly peripheral regions - for example Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and some of the East Asian countries. Thus Frank's advocacy of a radical break to socialism was premature. The correct route to follow in terms of marxist orthodoxy was to develop full blown capitalist relations of production first.

Secondly, it was contended that Frank had removed class from the analysis<sup>73</sup>. This debate was generated by Laclau and carried over into the debate on the articulation of modes of production. Laclau's critique centred on the fact that Frank had neglected the essence of production relationships by focusing on exchange relationships.

To remove class from the centre of analysis, and replace it with a concern for exchange relationships was heresy from a marxist perspective, and according to Brenner, led Marxist theorists on a long and winding wild goose chase - in which numerous Marxist writers displaced class relations from the centre of their analyses (1977:27).

---

73. Frank did later attempt to incorporate an account of internal class structure into his framework. However Brenner contends that his attempt to do so was not entirely successful (1977:28-29).

### 9.3.1 PROGRESSIVE CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IS TAKING PLACE IN THE PERIPHERY: WARREN, *DEPENDISTAS*

For Warren, who worked in the stage theory perspective characteristic of Lenin, socialism cannot materialise until capitalist relations had ripened in all regions of the world. Contrary to Frank's underdevelopment thesis, Warren claimed that capitalist development was taking place in the periphery.

He attempts to show that capitalist development (and not underdevelopment) is taking place in peripheral regions, basing his argument on empirical data based largely upon the experience of the newly industrialising countries. Hoogvelt describes Warren as representing the marxist version of a diffusionist theorist. He anticipates that capitalism will spread out from the centre to the peripheries and will reproduce capitalist economic, social and political conditions in the process. Warren expects that the control which the centre has over the peripheries in the early phases of diffusion will gradually wither away as capitalist reproduction progresses (Hoogvelt:1976:79).

He claims that peripheral regions are still in the process of developing capitalist structures and expanding the forces of production (1973:40). The implication for action is that the goal is to build capitalism first, not to make the "radical break" advocated by Frank. In fact, as far as Warren is concerned dependency theory is a "nationalist mythology" (Warren:1980:157); the effect of which has been to subordinate class struggles (given by objective history) to nationalist struggles<sup>74</sup>.

Palma (1978) has drawn an interesting parallel between the Frank/Warren debates and the earlier debates between Lenin and Narodniks at the turn of the century. The implication of Palma's argument is that Warren, like Lenin, is a "true marxist"; while dependency theorists, like the Narodniks, are merely populist writers and hence unscientific and concerned with trivia such as ethical concerns and the distinction between growth and development.

While the Narodniks claimed capitalist development was not taking place in

---

74. As a challenge to Warren's argument that dependency theory has set the class struggle back by subverting it to nationalist struggles, Wallerstein argues that in the periphery the primary contradiction is "between the interests organised and located in the core countries and their local allies on the one hand and the majority of the population on the other. In point of fact, then, an anti-imperialist nationalist struggle is in fact a mode of expression of class interests" (Wallerstein:1979:200).

Russia, Lenin said it was. In contention with the Narodniks, much of Lenin's writing is taken up with attempting to show that Russia was following a capitalist path of development, both in agriculture and industry (Williams:1978:926).

Thus Lenin argued that capitalist development was taking place in Russia at the turn of the century, just as Warren later claimed it was taking place in the Third World. On the other hand - the Narodniks were the first to argue that capitalism could not develop in a backward nation (such as Russia), just as Frank later argued that it could not develop in the Third World. (For the Narodniks, as for Frank, the alternative to underdevelopment was to take a direct route to socialism).

The Narodniks, like some of the dependency writers later, had pointed to high rates of unemployment and underemployment as "proof" that capitalism couldn't develop. However, Lenin, like Warren later (1973:40), argued that such things were the **conditions** of capitalist development, not proof that it could not happen. In the long term the end would justify the means.

In this debate, the fact that the distinction between growth and development is a major source of contention among those on the left, becomes quite clear. On the one hand Warren has been criticised for equating growth with development (Lipietz:1982a). Yet Palma criticises the dependency writers for making an ethical distinction between growth and development. He asks - how can they want capitalism without the warts? After all, Lenin had said that capitalism, warts and all, had an objective historical progressive mission (Palma:1978:900ff.).

Warren's arguments have been criticised on statistical grounds as well as ideological grounds. His use of statistics has been accused of being extremely dubious, of being used selectively rather than as representative data; and of not taking account of the heterogeneity of the Third World (Hoogvelt:1976; Lipietz:1982a:49). He leaves out of his analysis the more marginalised regions, which after all are the most likely regions to experience the underdevelopment which Frank had alleged to be taking place.

In fact, his contribution was essentially based upon the experience of the newly industrialised countries, those which Wallerstein would locate in the semiperiphery of the world economy, and not the periphery proper.

As regards the success of the "gang of Four" - Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea, Black points to factors operating in the world economy as a whole



which influenced their shift in economic advantage (1987:21-22). These factors including the fact that the rise in oil prices during the early 1970s encouraged a shift of manufacturing activity away from the western hemisphere towards the low-wage regions in Southeast Asia. Such factors can be noted in an approach which addresses the world system as whole, but which tend to be ignored in comparative analysis.

More recently, O'Hearn argues that those writers who, in the 1980s have followed Warren in pointing to the cases of the newly industrialising countries as evidence to trumpet the demise of dependency theory, have missed the point entirely. In fact, cases like Korea are actually exceptions to the rule. Dependency theory remains an appropriate mechanism to understand certain concrete cases, including Ireland. In development terms, Ireland is an abject failure, characterised by economic stagnation and an underlying trend toward rising inequality, with inequality increasing primarily because of rising unemployment (O'Hearn:1989:578-593). Dependency as evidenced in foreign penetration, limited growth and rising inequality is still far more common among developing countries than is success as evidenced in the East Asian cases (O'Hearn:1989:594).

At the scientific-ideological level, Warren has been criticised for representing mechanistic old-school hard-line objective laws of history thinking. His critique is based in assumptions of the classical Leninist perspective of a stage theory of history which dictated that the objective laws of history determined that capitalism would ripen into socialism at a global level in the long term. His version of marxism is essentially a reductionist, mechanist marxism which has little if any regard for agency and locates the driving forces of history in objective laws of history. It assumes value-neutrality whilst legitimating oppression of living agents.

Lipietz (1982a) addresses the nature of the values inherent in Warren's analysis, arguing that Warren simply accepts social marginalisation, and social inequality as functional to the attainment of a social paradise vaguely construed as objectively given in the future. Capitalism is assumed to dissolve everything other than itself (Lipietz:1982a:50). As far as Lipietz is concerned, such a view "echoes from Adam Smith to Walt Rostow" and is the hegemonic view of dominant power structures, including the universities and the press; and is also reflected in the liberal equation of growth *per se* with progress (1982a:56-57).

The Latin American *dependista* theorists (who include Palma, Petras, Dos Santos, Cardoso and Faletto), share with Warren the idea that capitalist development does in fact take place in the periphery. In line with Warren's optimism, they claim that the fact is that - at some level - people are being integrated into wage labour and that capital is being accumulated in peripheral regions.

However, they acknowledge that the type of development taking place in the periphery is dependency-associated development characterised by distortions, such that benefits accrue to consumer elites while the masses become marginalised.

They focus on the fact that the accumulation which does take place is enough to continuously generate new contradictions, new interest groups, and new expectations. Neither capitalism nor a break to socialism in the context of a capitalist world economy will provide the answers to peripheral underdevelopment. Thus it makes sense to understand localised structures, contradictions and forces, and to use this understanding to intervene in the process of development, in concrete historical cases. In this way pressure can be brought to bear so that the benefits of industrial development might be spread to the masses, and not just to the consumer elites.

Contrary to Frank's static perspective, the *dependistas* argue that the internal structures of peripheral societies are not lifeless, but dynamic. It is argued that the system of external domination is echoed as an internal phenomenon. The coincidence of interests between local dominant classes and international dominant classes is challenged by local dominated groups and classes, with the specific dynamics of a society being generated by the manner in which these contradictions develop (Palma:1978:910).

These writers argue that the concept of a world system and the internationalisation of capital should not be disregarded (Petras:1982:153), but that such arguments have limited value in terms of application. While external determinants play a significant role, it is important to address and to understand internal determinants as well. While the world system might disadvantage peripheral nations, there is room for voluntarist intervention by concrete actors to resist this tendency. In the *dependista* approaches (as opposed to the circulationist/structuralist world systems approaches), domination and struggle,

... are not carried out by the impersonal forces of a system but are, instead, experienced, lived and exerted by social groups and classes who are, in the process, the recipients and agents of social change (Harrison:1988:121).

Here lies the significance of the *dependista* productionist perspective for this dissertation. Within the neo-marxist framework, it develops on the Frankian circulationist position in that it represents the re-emergence of a concern with class struggle and the potential for voluntarist intervention - albeit primarily within a national context.

As far as Petras is concerned, the development problematic needs to be redefined away from the notion of development and towards that of "exploitation" (1982:152-154). In this way the focus would be on class relationships (at both a national and international level).

Regarding the role of the state in development, the *dependistas* argue that the state is becoming increasingly divorced from civil society. (Hoogvelt:1982). Attention is paid to the way in which the state mediates between local class struggles and metropolitan interests.

The *dependista* approach is built on a logic that demands praxis. Their long term goal is the construction of paths to socialism, however the short term goal is to achieve a democratisation of Latin American societies, to intervene at historical moments, to identify both internal and external factors, and then identify the structural limitations and possibilities for change (Hoogvelt:1982:184-5).

Such intervention as a way of dealing with dependency is proposed in contrast to Frank's advocacy of a radical break with the capitalist system. In this sense the *dependistas* place an emphasis on the potential for a voluntarist control over the direction of peripheral economies.

The *dependistas* argue that there are plenty of options for political action, but that choices will differ in concrete historical situations. They argue that in some cases it might even be beneficial to form alliances with MNC's, or the state in order to achieve their goals. MNC's cannot be treated as a homogeneous entity, rather it is necessary to understand their differing strategies and to intervene effectively (Hoogvelt:1982).

Besides analysis of Latin American cases, the *dependista* approach has also been applied to discussions of African cases in the debates of the Review of African Political Economy (Harrison:1988). Harrison notes that these writers share with the world system writers a common enemy -imperialism (particularly the American type), as well as a common end entailing some sort of self-sustained socialism.

### 9.3.2 RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION ARE NOT HOMOGENEOUS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD SYSTEM: LACLAU'S CRITIQUE OF FRANK'S CIRCULATIONIST APPROACH, AND THE NOTION OF ARTICULATING MODES OF PRODUCTION

While Warren and the *dependistas* challenged Frank's underdevelopment thesis in arguing that development (as opposed to underdevelopment) was taking place within certain peripheral areas of the world system, another line of attack began with a critique of Frank's work by Ernesto Laclau (1971).

Laclau's critique centred on Frank's focus on exchange relationships at the expense of the orthodox marxist concern with production relationships. It was this emphasis on exchange (or circulation) aspects that had allowed Frank to make the overgeneralising assertion that the whole world had been capitalist since the sixteenth century (Laclau:1971:20-32).

While Frank never defined capitalism, what he meant was "a system of production for the market, in which profit constitutes the motive of production" (Laclau:1971:24-25).

Laclau contended that in confusing the concept of capitalist mode of production with that of participation in a world capitalist economic system, Frank had confused the realms of production and exchange (1971:37-38). While Frank's approach gave primacy to exchange relationships and factors such as the extraction of national surpluses, the orthodox marxist view stresses the primacy of the production process.

For Marx, capitalism was not a mode of exchange, it was a mode of production. In fact the accumulation of commercial capital is compatible with varied modes of production, and an economic system such as the world system of capital accumulation can include different modes of production as constitutive elements (Laclau:1971:25-37).

Laclau contends that while capitalist penetration might have extended commodity exchange relations across the globe, analysis at a class level indicates that production relations are far from approaching the capitalist type. For example, free wage labour and freely transferable property rights (which both liberal and marxist analysis regard as a definitive feature of a capitalist system of production) are not the norm in peripheral areas.

In contrast to Frank's assertion that the whole world has been capitalist since the sixteenth century, Laclau contended that the penetration of capitalist commodity relations

can actually entrench and intensify **feudal** relations of production (Laclau:1971:30). So, rather than having capitalist penetration breaking up the old relations (as Luxembourg had argued), Laclau saw precapitalist social relations of production being restructured but not eliminated (Booth:1985:768). In consequence, feudal and capitalist modes can **coexist** with one another.

At the economic level this coexistence can actually help to **increase** surplus appropriation. This could be aided at the political level by alliances between pre-capitalist interests (such as traditional elites) and metropolitan capital interests. Such alliances helped to reinforce super-exploitative relations.

Laclau's argument provides some insight into the resistance of pre-capitalist relations to capitalist penetration, which has run contrary to both early marxist and early liberal development expectations. In fact his argument indicates that at a global level of capital accumulation (as opposed to either nation-state comparative analysis or ideal type models of capitalism which separate it from its linkages with other systems); it may well be that maximisation of accumulation depends upon the continued existence of and interlinkage with, precapitalist relations and modes of production.

This view has been supported in the literature which was generated in the debate around articulating modes of production which followed Laclau's critique of Frank.

Laclau's critique fused with developments in French Althusserian structuralist anthropology which were going on at the time, and subsequently a debate around the concept of the articulation of modes of production was generated. The relevant Althusserian concepts will be briefly discussed, before showing how these concepts were used in the articulation of modes of production argument.

In distinguishing the concept of "social formation" from that of "mode of production", Althusserian marxism breaks with the earlier marxist perspective of a linear stage theory of history.

Modes of production are no longer seen in a linear, chronological sense of the development of national autonomous capitalisms. Rather they are seen in an abstracted generalised sense.

Instead of a linear progression from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production characterised respectively by domination of the ideological sphere and domination of the economic sphere, Althusserian marxism argues that both

modes of production and levels or "spheres" of society can and do articulate with one another in a particular social formation, at a particular moment in history and a particular point in space.

Within a social formation, the ideological, political and economic spheres all articulate with one another, and any one could be dominant at a certain time. Furthermore different modes of production also articulate with one another. All of this means that there can be a combination of extra-economic and economic factors in the appropriation of surplus.

In other words, Weber's given goal of maximally rational action (maximisation of economic advantage), which is based upon accumulative profit-maximising orientations of action; has historically been facilitated by the coexistence of non-capitalist forms of rationality and the accompanying social and political structures. At a global level it has not rested upon the prerequisite of an ideal-typical capitalist formation. Rather, those actors who pursue the given end which Weber attributes to maximally rational action have employed the coexistence of pre-capitalist forms of rationality and the accompanying social structures as conditions in which their action takes place.

In a case where pre-capitalist modes of production articulate with the dominant capitalist mode, what happens is that surplus labour can be appropriated in more than one way. In pre-capitalist modes of production appropriation of surplus labour occurs by means of political domination or by means of ideological control. Under capitalist relations of production the mode of appropriation of surplus labour works by way of economic means (Hoogvelt:1982:154-160). In the case of an articulation between capitalist relations of production and pre-capitalist relations of production the two means of exploitation and surplus appropriation (economic and extra-economic) work together, thus compounding exploitative relationships (Laclau:1971:33-36). This phenomenon is common in developing countries<sup>75</sup>.

Empirical indicators of the articulation between modes of production include

---

75. See for example Marcus (1989) who shows how attempts to restructure South African agriculture through mechanisation, when combined with the ideological control of Apartheid, had the effect of increasing exploitation in the South African countryside.

seasonal withdrawals and high rates of labour migration between the rural and urban areas (Hoogvelt:1982:180). For the employers, migrancy means cheap labour power, since the employer does not have to bear the full costs of reproduction. For example, in South Africa, non-agricultural migrant labour supplements the income of agricultural worker families and thereby subsidises the farmers who employ them (Marcus:1989:55;92).

The articulation of different modes of production is influenced by two dominant forces. On the one hand, the capitalist mode of production struggles to reproduce itself, and this process requires expansion into non-capitalist relations. On the other hand, non-capitalist modes resist (Taylor:1979:228).

Writers such as Meillasoux (1972) and Wolpe (1972) have confirmed the arguments for perceiving peripheral development from the perspective of articulating modes of production in their studies of African cases. These writers have focused on both production and the reproduction of labour power.

Meillasoux explores the way in which migrant labour is connected up with the subsistence sector. Rather than there being free wage labour, which was identified by both Marx and Weber as a crucial component of capitalist relations of production, the relationship which these migrants have to their income is that the wage merely becomes a supplement to family income and a target goal to satisfy the demands of the state for taxes, and to obtain a few commodities.

Meillasoux argues that capital does not have to reproduce labour-power in its completeness, since the subsistence sector helps to subsidise this function. He quotes from an official Ugandan policy report which recommended,

whenever practicable to leave the care of the destitutes and the disabled in the hands of the tribal clan and the family organisation which have traditionally accepted this responsibility (Meillasoux:1972:102).

Meillasoux concludes that under such circumstances, if the capitalist sector does not provide for pensions, sick-leave, and other benefits such as unemployment compensation;

**preservation of the relations with the village and the familial community was an absolute requirement** for the wage earners and so was the maintenance of the traditional mode of production as the only one capable of ensuring survival (1972:103; emphasis added).

While liberal writers have anticipated that there would be a shift away from traditional mechanical affiliations characterised by substantive rationality as modernisation

proceeded, arguments such as Meillasoux's, above, show the way in which factors external to culture placed structural limitations on the possibilities for a such a transition.

Feminist writers have addressed the same issue (Deere:1979; Van Allen:1974). Often superprofits have been facilitated by the unpaid labour done by womenfolk of African male migrants. Van Allen argues that the level of profits extracted from Africa would have been impossible without the unpaid labour of the wives of African workers. Where families still possess means of production from which to obtain a part of their subsistence, this enables the capitalist class to pay lower wages than the necessary amount required for reproduction of the working class in a system characterised by free labour (Deere:1979:140). Deere cites the case of the Zambian copper mines, where provision was made for families to live with workers, but where the same principle of exploiting free female labour was applied. Subsistence plots were provided to these families, the expectation being that the women would work them in order to provide food for the families (1979:135).

One of the consequences of the articulationist contribution was an increasing amount of research into the peasantry, rural social structure and rural development, as well as into the informal sector (Booth:1985). These studies have focused on attempting to explain why the anticipated agrarian transition<sup>76</sup> to commercial agriculture characterised by free wage labour failed to materialise in many regions, and the ways in which the peasantry manages to survive and persist within the context of a global capitalist system. Taylor claims that the reason why capitalist relations have failed to develop in the agricultural sector of numerous peripheral areas is that a major barrier is created by the "continuing reproduction of modes of production or their elements" which act to prevent the separation of direct producers from their means of production (1979:243).

Booth writes that a striking feature of the rural studies which have been generated as a result of the articulationist contribution to the development debate, is the enormous diversity of patterns and trends which is becoming evident. In fact it appears that rural

---

76. Marcus (1989) documents the South African case. She argues that the restructuring and mechanisation of South African agriculture has resulted in a migrantisation and feminisation of the agricultural workforce. This results in super-exploitative relations in commercial agriculture, as opposed to a system where workers are free to sell their labour power.



class relations are not converging along a single path (Booth:1985:781:n.48).

As well as research into the peasantry, there has recently been a fair amount of research done into class, and into the relationship between class and state, in Africa. This has raised the problem of imposing western categories at the level of urban social structure, and as Booth argues, the sociology of class in peripheral countries is quite poorly developed (1985:773). For example, as far as class formations in Africa are concerned, it is difficult to get an operationally useful definition of what constitutes the African bourgeoisie. Classifications include metropolitan, national, domestic, bureaucratic, religious, industrial, administrative, rural, urban, regional, organisational, public sector, managerial and political-commercial bourgeoisies (Harrison:1988:140-141)!

However, what does emerge from these studies is the fact that in peripheral capitalist social formations, both the proletariat and the peasantry are highly differentiated (Harrison:1988:132). A point which follows is that both class alliances and ideology in the third world are not as rigid as in the advanced industrial centres (Harrison:1988). Rather they are in a continual state of flux, the implication being that one cannot simply read off from the economy if one is to understand the nature of these social formations. (It follows that rational action in such conditions cannot be read off in purely economic terms.)

#### 9.4 REFINEMENTS OF THE CIRCULATIONIST (STRUCTURALIST) POSITION

While the *dependistas* branched off to study concrete historical cases and the possibilities for voluntarist intervention, and the articulation writers turned their attention to attempting to understand the manner in which pre-capitalist relations were articulating with capitalist relations in peripheral contexts, the tradition of a "circulationist" world system perspective (sometimes called "international structuralist accounts") (Midgley:1988:20), was carried forward by writers such as Wallerstein and Amin.

Firstly a broad outline of this approach is given. Following this, Wallerstein and Amin's approaches will be addressed specifically.

The basic framework of the circulationist world system perspective is as follows. Firstly, the basic categories of analysis are the notions of core, semiperiphery and periphery - these categories being a development of the earlier core and periphery

(Baran), or metropolis and satellite (Frank). The phenomenon which needs to be explained is the fact that there exist different levels of national development within a unified global economy. In order to explain this, the categories of core, periphery and semi-periphery are used to specify what political roles, and what economic roles a state or even a geographic area plays within the system as a whole (Petras:1982:148). It is maintained that the underlying structure of the system has been the same since the sixteenth century (Shannon:1989:76).

Despite the fact that world system theory has attempted to include many marxist ideas into their framework, it is characterised by a large amount of functionalist reasoning (Petras:1982:153), with all the accompanying circularity.

The world system is seen to be composed of parts which work in a certain way to perpetuate the system (Barnett:1988:49). Thus, phenomena are explained in terms of their functions for the system as a whole.

Specific events within the world system are to be explained in terms of the demands of the system as a whole. Actors are acting, not for their immediate concrete interests, but because the system dictates that they act (Petras:1982:148).

World systems theory treats the entire world system, or capitalist world economy, as its basic unit of analysis, and even prior to the collapse of Soviet power the eastern bloc countries were regarded as being an essential part of the world system (Harrison:1988:93).

World systems theorists contend that the mechanism through which international inequalities are maintained is that of unequal exchange, a concept developed by Emmanuel (1969). Frank, Wallerstein and Amin all regard unequal exchange as a key component in the transfer of surplus from periphery and semi-periphery to the core countries (Harrison:1988:91-93). Emmanuel's argument was that developed countries enter the world system as senior partners and are able to maintain asymmetrical trading relationships, with the terms of trade being heavily biased in favour of the west. (One manifestation of these asymmetrical relationships is that the west encourages the Third World to produce for export, with a means to this end being foreign investment in the Third World export sector).

Leaving these economic arguments aside, one of Emmanuel's most important contributions to the debate from a sociological point of view is the assumption that lies

at the heart of his theory - that is, whilst capital is mobile across international boundaries, labour is not. He argues that labour is only mobile within nation-states at best. (Emmanuel:1969:xxxii-xxxiii; Petras:1982:149). In general, capital is mobile and labour is immobile on the international market. Capital's mobility enhances its ability to maximise economic advantage, whilst the immobility of labour reduces its chances of enhancing economic advantage.

If it is correct to argue that capital can move relatively freely to where labour is cheaper, while labour (except skilled labour) cannot move freely - it means that capitalist interests are being protected at a global level by nation-state criteria of citizenship which are essentially **ascriptive** criteria<sup>77</sup>.

The role of ascriptive criteria as an obstacle to development in liberal sociology, has been traditionally ascribed to the internal conditions of developing nation-states. In this regard it is ironic that liberal sociology pretends universalism as a dominant pattern variable in advanced economies, whilst disregarding the fact that in the world economy of formally rational capital accumulation; ascriptive criteria of citizenship play an apparently highly significant role.

This needs to be more fully explored. Whilst ideal type models of capitalism presume mobility of labour which is "free", it is clear that in the world system as a whole this is definitely not an accurate reflection of the conditions which labour faces.

Metropolitan centres are able to manipulate - through immigration regulations - the forms of labour which their structures require, whilst keeping undesired labour out in the periphery. Migrant workers are treated as disposable when national economies fluctuate (Stephenson:1981:41). At a global level, this performs a very similar function to that which influx control historically performed in the South African context, where the reserve army of labour was relegated to the "homeland" territories.

It has been established that capitalism is not a system which operates within the boundaries of states, but is a system which encompasses the globe. One conclusion which follows from this is as follows. It could be argued that only when labour is free in the

---

77. Griffin makes a similar point - "The poor of the third World, and perhaps above all the rural poor, are bound to lose in a world in which capital is free to move internationally but mass migration of labour is prohibited" (1987:32).

sense of being internationally mobile (without the restrictions of international influx by mechanism of the protection of sovereign states) will the conditions for the ripening of capitalism itself be fulfilled. The implication is that in a world system of capital accumulation, the ascriptive bonds against which Adam Smith defended free market principles, would have to be transcended even beyond the ascription of nationality, before one could speak of free labour.

As regards free wage labour, Wallerstein maintained that only when labour is "everywhere free" will we have socialism (1974:127)! If free mobility of labour is a prerequisite for socialism, or even a necessary condition for capitalism, then it follows that any attempt to build socialist states or even socialist world systems before labour really is free - at a global level - will be abortive (as contemporary history is showing us).

Sunkel's contribution to the world system debate is particularly relevant in the context of the immobility of labour. He argues that within the world system as a whole, there occurs a transnational linkage of the bourgeois classes, but that this goes together with an increasing marginalisation of the peripheral classes. Thus, in the system as a whole, and especially in the peripheral regions of the system; international integration occurs at the expense of national disintegration (1973:163ff.) For Sunkel, a central actor in this process is the multinational corporation. He claims that the capitalist system of the world economy is being reorganised into a system whose main agents are the multinationals which are backed up by the governments of the developed countries. Planning as to the deployment of natural, human and capital resources is centralised in the hands of multinational "technocrats", international organisations and the governments of developed countries (1973:168). This results in reinforcing processes of economic, social, cultural and political underdevelopment in the periphery, and in a deepening of foreign dependence and internal disintegration (1973:168). In this way, international integration and transnational linkages of peripheral elites and centre middle-classes is achieved at the expense of increasing poverty, emiseration, and marginalisation of the masses.

The world systems approach is not without major flaws, most notably the problem of generalising and abstracting to a level which loses touch with what is happening on the ground (Palma 1978). Petras has stressed the tendency for this

approach to neglect class realities, and to tend towards static analysis. Because the parts of the world system as a whole are ultimately identified at the nation-state level, he contends that the concept of world system is simply "a static description of national features abstracted from the class realities which produce it" (Petras:1982:151).

Yet, as was noted earlier, even the *dependistas* - who call for a return to the analysis of concrete situations of dependency - have implicitly incorporated the theme of a world system into their approaches. For them the concern becomes the nature of the relationships between external and internal determinants of concrete historical cases, rather than the naive assumption that autonomous capitalisms will develop along the lines of the European model.

#### 9.4.1 WALLERSTEIN

Wallerstein, like Frank, appears to have focused on exchange relationships as opposed to production relationships and to have equated capitalism with production for profit oriented to a world market. In his definition of capitalism, the essential feature is "production for sale in a market in which the object is to realise the maximum profit" (Wallerstein:1979:15).

Wallerstein's definition of the essential feature of capitalism thus corresponds with what I identified in part one as Weber's perception of the pure rational **type of action**.

For Wallerstein, in the modern era the political-economy of the world system is that it is a capitalist economy organised into an interstate system of competitive nation-states (Shannon:1989:22), and connected by market exchange (Hulme and Turner:1990:51).

Furthermore, it is three tiered, being comprised of the core, the periphery, and the semi-periphery. His three tiers can be understood in an ideal type sense, although certain countries approximate certain types in reality;

I am not trying to argue that three tiers **really** exist....Rather, I am asserting that the class struggle centres politically around the **attempt** of the dominant classes to create and sustain a third tier, against the **attempt** of the oppressed classes to polarise both the reality and the perception of reality (Wallerstein: 1979:224; emphasis in original).

Of most consequence is Wallerstein's category of the semi-periphery. Firstly, it locates the rise of the newly industrialised countries within the framework of the world economy

as a whole, and thus raises serious questions about Warren's optimism for the future development of underdeveloped areas. Secondly, it provides an explanation for the role of "socialist" states which helps to make sense of contemporary developments in the eastern bloc.

For Wallerstein, while parts of the capitalist system are capable of expanding, it is impossible for the whole system to expand at once (Hoogvelt 1982; Shannon:1989:130). While it is possible for a small number of countries to move from the periphery to the semi-periphery and even to the core group of countries, the latter is extremely difficult and rare.

Where a region has economic strength, this will correlate with, and reinforce, state strength. Because the strongest regions, or core regions, have strong states, they are in a position to reinforce unequal trade relationships which favour their own interests (Skocpol:1977:1079).

The weakest tier is the periphery proper. Here, production centres around mono-agriculture (which has been imposed during the colonial era) and there tends to be a dependence on the export of low-wage products (Harrison:1988:87).

The middle tier is Wallerstein's semi-periphery, which plays a similar mediating or "buffer" role in the world economic system to the role which a middle class plays in a nation-state. These regions are both exploiter (of peripheral regions) and exploited (by core regions), and this enables them to stabilise the tensions between the two extreme poles of the world economy as a whole (Harrison:1988:87).

The semi-peripheral category which Wallerstein uses is of particular significance regarding the alleged "collapse of socialism/communism" of recent months. As far as Wallerstein is concerned, most of the socialist societies actually fit into the semi-peripheral category in his world system which is primarily a capitalist one. For Wallerstein;

There are no socialist systems in the world economy...anymore than there are feudal systems because there is only one world system (cited in George:1988:17).

He argues that while the political role of "socialist" semi-peripheral states has differed from the so-called "capitalist" states, the economic role of both the "capitalist" and "socialist" semi-periphery is identical. The bourgeoisie in the core countries has historically operated through the multinational corporations to exert its influence in the

socialist semi-periphery. Thus it was impossible to develop genuine socialism within the context of a capitalist world economy (Harrison:1988:88-91).

More recently, McGowan (who follows Wallerstein's three-tier categorisation of core, periphery and semi-periphery) also argues that socialist societies have always had to follow the rules of the world economy - while they may operate locally according to socialist principles, "their global activities are profit-seeking capitalist in all essential respects." Still existent "state-socialist" countries are to be found in Kampuchea, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba (McGowan:1991:3-6).

Frank, too, has recently also argued that eastern bloc countries were increasingly being incorporated into the capitalist world system both as consumers and producers. In consequence he has gone so far as to abandon his initial argument that a break with the capitalist system was the only development option for peripheral regions to take - he now writes that delinking is not a realistic policy, that history has shown that adopting "socialism" does not offer independence from world economic history (Frank:1991:25).

As far as action is concerned, voluntarism is underplayed in Wallerstein's approach. In his world system actors do not act in terms of immediate concrete interests, but rather because the system as a whole dictates that they act (Petras:1982:148). Thus he stresses systemic determinants as opposed to possibilities for voluntarism.

However, given these limitations, he does address the existence of other objective bases for collective action (besides class) which marxist writers generally have tended to ignore. He contends that social class is just one possible basis for collective action. In addition nations, nationalities, and ethnic groups - categories which he subsumes under the term "ethno-nations" - are all other axes around which collective identification and action is manifested. (cf. Wallerstein:1979:23-4) The modern world system is,

... a single division of labour comprising multiple cultural systems, multiple political entities and even different modes of surplus appropriation (Wallerstein:1979:5).

However, these entities are really only considered in so far as political and cultural differences and interests act to prevent the operation of a completely open world economy (Harrison:1988:85-90).

While Wallerstein looks at "ethno-nations" as a category aside from class around which groups may mobilise, Lipietz (1982a:57-58) points to feminist and ecology movements as other such groups which have had enough of the determinism of orthodox

marxist theorising, which has reduced subjective reality to classes which while existing objectively are not necessarily the major subjective referents in live actor's meaning structures.

Lipietz contends that scientistic, mechanistic, deterministic approaches as exemplified in Warren are to blame for the present crisis in Marxism as evidenced in the fact that,

A growing number of workers both East and West, as well as the new feminist, ecological and other social movements, feel so disgusted with it that they are turning away from any reference to Marxism (Lipietz:1982a:57-58).

As I understand it, history stands at a bifurcation point at this moment where the end of determinism, as well as the moral crisis of scientific capitalism and scientific socialism will be resolved by one of at least two possible paths. Either the path posed by Wallerstein's ethno-nations will be pursued, or that posed by Lipietz's disgusted workers, ecologists and feminists - who have the potential to transcend the solidarity boundaries of nation-state; or ethno-nation, will be followed.

In reality, all these types of solidarities are likely to compete for influence and for substantive control over the workings of dominant capitalist rationality for a good while to come. However, in an age where the dominant reality is one of cultural disintegration and cultural overlap, a retreat into "ethno-national" identity is a retreat to the past which - while it may challenge the rationality of domination and control over others - will be unable to provide long-term solutions to the adaptive problems of modernity. Furthermore, while workers, ecologists and feminists are able to form organisational decision-making structures capable of rational action, ethnicity generally does not operate at this level. Rather it operates at a level of *conscience collective* and thus is unlikely in itself to lead to rational goal-directed action.

#### 9.4.2 AMIN

Hoogvelt maintains that Samir Amin has combined the best of the dependency arguments in his writings, and in so doing has produced a "genuine Third Worldist perspective". His writings attempt to bridge the gap between voluntarism and determinism, between the "productionist" (*dependista*) writings and the "circulationist" (world systems) writings; between the idea of national liberation and that of world system



(Hoogvelt:1982).

In Amin's system the world is made up of core and peripheral societies, called "self-centred systems" and "peripheral systems" (1974:9). However, drawing on post-Laclauian contributions to the debate, he sees each society as exhibiting different articulations of modes of production. For example, he argues that both economic and non-economic means will be used to subject the peripheral systems to the function of providing cheap labour to the export sector (Amin:1974:13).

Amin claims that different patterns of accumulation apply in the case of self-centred systems and that of peripheral systems. Self-centred systems are characterised by autocentric development, whereas peripheral systems are characterised by non-autocentric development.

A number of factors are unique to the self-centred systems characterised by autocentric development. Firstly, they are characterised by the Fordist phenomenon of production for mass consumption. Furthermore there is a social contract between capital and labour which minimises conflict (1974:9). They are far more self-sufficient and less influenced by external forces than are the peripheral systems. In these systems, wage rates have kept pace with productivity.

On the other hand, the periphery exists simply to meet the requirements of the self-centred systems. The centre requirements are satisfied through exports to the centre of peripheral products which have been produced at low wage costs. In the peripheral, non-autocentric systems there is not a social contract as there is in the autocentric systems; rather production is directed at elite consumption interests and at exports. The result is that internal mass markets are neglected (1974:9).

Amin's categorisation of autocentric versus non-autocentric systems corresponds with classifications in contemporary evolutionary theory (Capra:1982; Jantsch:1980). These writers make a distinction between systems that are relatively autonomous from their environments (autopoietic) and systems which depend extensively on continuous interaction with their environments (allopoietic). It is argued that the relative autonomy of organisms usually increases with their complexity (Capra:1982:291), whilst in allopoietic systems the function is given from the outside. In this sense, imposing export functions onto peripheral societies from the outside can hardly contribute to either

autonomy or the creation of complexity - that is, to the goals of modernisation.

If rational action is directed at profit maximisation and the maximisation of economic advantage, it is the allopoietic peripheral systems over whom advantage is maintained.

Amin's description of the world system has been described as almost outdoing Parson's structural-functionalism (Harrison:1988:85). However whereas in Parson's approach the system functions for the good of the whole, in Amin's approach it functions for the good of the privileged. For example, it is argued that marginalisation of the masses is actually functional to the integration of the privileged (Amin:1974).

The phenomenon of marginalisation of the masses is a consequence of the peripheral model of development which prioritises exports and the production of luxury consumption goods at the expense of goods necessary for mass consumption. In a vein similar to Sunkel's argument regarding the phenomenon of international integration of global elites at the expense of disintegration of national masses, Amin claims that;

The marginalisation of the masses is the very condition underlying the integration of the minority within the world system (1974:15).

As a result of the bias towards production for the export sector at the expense of satisfying mass consumer needs, the domestic market of a peripheral system becomes limited and distorted (Amin:1974:14). For example, when the export sector reaches a certain size, the next priority becomes the production of luxury consumption goods - which benefits only the privileged peripheral classes (1974:14).

For Amin, the model of dependent peripheral capitalist development is a dead end, since development can only be meaningful in so far as it integrates the masses (1974:16).

As far as contradictions in the system as a whole are concerned, one of Amin's central theses is that when a system is superseded the process does not start at the centre, but rather in the periphery (1980:11). This contrasts with the classical marxist perspective which perceived crises at the centre as being the driving forces of change. He hypothesises a "law of unequal development" - that systems are destroyed and transcended not at the centre, but in the periphery. The periphery constitutes the weak link in the chain where the most intense contradictions are manifested (1974:16;23).

It is in the light of his argument that changes start in the periphery of the system

(as opposed to the centre) that he addresses the relationship between national liberation struggles and the transformation to socialism. For Amin, while the class struggle is the motive force of history, it occurs within a "state-national framework which sets its scope, its modalities, and its outcomes" (1980:x). He claims that, since 1880 the national liberation struggle has become a progressively important force and that national liberation struggles are thus "the motive force of history and the primary force for the creation of socialism" (Amin:1980:195). Every national liberation struggle is simply a moment in the break towards socialist transformation, with the struggle for social liberation from class struggle being "indissolubly linked to the national liberation struggle of the people of Asia and Africa" (1980:2).

Amin claims that a consequence of the law of unequal development is that the periphery cannot catch up with centre capitalism - it can only transcend the capitalist model (Amin:1974:18). Evidently he understands the nature of this transcendence to be constituted of a humanising participatory form of socialism which would seek to realise autonomous self-centred development focusing on the production of capital goods and goods for mass consumption (Amin:1974).

He maintains that to participate from a structurally disadvantaged starting point in the capitalist model of development by adjusting decisions to the rules of profitability - can only maintain and reproduce the conditions of marginalisation and increasingly unequal income distributions within peripheral systems. By reproducing the conditions of disadvantage, the result is simply an intensification of dependent peripheral development (Amin:1974:18-22).

On the contrary the transcendent model which he proposes would entail a democratic mobilisation of people for self-reliance at all levels of society - the village, the region and the state. Furthermore, such a model entails a respect for the social reality of popular groupings (1974:19). He argues that only by developing a consciousness - an awareness - among oppressed groups - will such groups be able to conceive of effective action (1974:24).

He claims that, contrary to the working classes at the centre, a peripheral reformist consciousness is not feasible. This is because objective conditions differ between centre and periphery. In the periphery the objective functioning of the world capitalist system of accumulation is incapable of integrating the masses, and simply

forces them out and marginalises them (1974:24).

Amin asks - "where are the 'traditional' societies today"? (1974:25). He answers that the traditional society no longer exists in its traditional form - what exists today is "pseudo-traditional". He cites "pseudo-traditional" forms of resistance, such as prophetic religious protest movements, arguing that these are a response to the problems of integration into the expanding global capitalist system. While sociologists tend to ascribe such phenomena to "relics of the past", Amin contends that the pseudo-traditional forms have a substance which is "modern" but "poor" - they represent ways of surviving in the conditions of marginality (1974:25).

For Amin, a crucial question which needs to be addressed is the extent to which marginalised groups attribute their condition to the objective functioning of the system, as opposed to social or supernatural forces (1974:24). In so far as the latter is perceived as real, there will be limitations on the potential for rational political action which might challenge the structure of the system. The goal of raising consciousness would be to make actors aware of the objective conditions influencing their plight (1974:24).

## CHAPTER TEN

### LIBERAL RESPONSE TO NEO-MARXIST CHALLENGE: AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD, GLOBAL INTEGRATION

While dependency theory had stressed the manner in which peripheral development was dependent upon - and distorted by - relationships with the centre; the liberal response argued that dependency was not a one-way process. The world was not characterised so much by dependency as by interdependency.

A number of factors contributed to this shift, of which four seem pertinent. Firstly, there were challenges and critiques going on within the liberal perspective - most notably as regards earlier liberal assumptions about nation-states as closed systems.

In this regard, Harrison argues that in some respects Barrington Moore predated the popularisation of underdevelopment theory - while Moore did not emphasize the concept of world system in the single-minded manner of Frank, he did address change in a world context (Harrison:1988:50-51).

Earlier approaches of the 1950s had tended to expect the smooth transformation of traditional societies into modern ones, sometimes including a "transitional stage" between the states of tradition and modernity. Twentieth-century social scientists had been as confident of modernisation in the Third World as nineteenth century Marxists were of revolution in the First World (Huntington:1971:33). However, by the 1960s there was increasing concern with the breakdown of modernisation. Desai argues that the early optimism was replaced by more sophisticated and sceptical studies of modernisation, as evidenced in some of the work of Eisenstadt, Apter, Nettl, Robertson, Bendix and Myrdal (1971:96).

Within the liberal approach, the focus on dichotomies including the polarisation of tradition and modernity, the focus on internal factors as being the sole obstacles to development, and the assumption of societies (usually the newly independent nation-states) as closed systems, came under increasing attack; as did the expectation that a unilinear-style evolutionary growth moving towards the American prototype was the

necessary fate of all regions in the world.

Revisionist approaches attempted to incorporate external stimuli as significant variables and to break out of the unilinear tradition by presenting a multilinear view of modernisation which incorporates discontinuities as well as functional relationships (Tipps:1973:78)<sup>78</sup>.

Desai (1971) points to a shift from optimism to pessimism within the modernisation approach. Tipps, for example, advocated that after two decades of modernisation theory, revisionism was not sufficient to deal with the problems inherent in the approach. Rather the time had come to work toward an alternative paradigm (1973:85).

During the 1970s modernisation theories - which had previously been the dominant intellectual paradigm as far as development was concerned - were superseded both by the neo-marxist dependency writers, and by the liberal world development writers (Hoogvelt:1982:237).

Besides disillusionment within the modernisation approach itself, a second factor influencing the shift to seeing the world as an interdependent system was the challenge posed by dependency theory. Foster-Carter (1976) argues that the challenge posed to the modernisation paradigm by that represented in Frank's writings was tantamount to the Kuhnian concept of a scientific revolution.

Thirdly there was a rise in ecological awareness characterised by a recognition that the planet's resources were not infinite (Meadows et al.:1972; Mesarovic and Pestel:1975), which has continued to gain momentum. This realisation challenged the notion of rationality which encompassed expectations of unlimited expansion which underlay the modernisation approach.

Fourthly there were changes going on in the real world which threatened centre interests.

In the real world the phenomenon of interdependence struck home in the west partly in consequence of OPEC's stance in the early 1970s, when the cartel quadrupled the oil price in 1973, followed by further increases in 1979 (46 per cent) and 1980 (60 per cent) (Brookfield:1975:51; Myrdal:1989; Stephenson:1981:21,47-8). Subsequently,

---

78. See for example Bendix (1967) and Eisenstadt (1968a).

the fact that dependency did not operate in a unilateral direction became increasingly evident at the economic, political, and environmental levels (Hoogvelt:1982).

Following the demise of modernisation theory, the liberal approach underwent a shift which continues today - away from perceiving societies as closed self-sufficient systems and towards perceiving the world as an *interdependent* global system, rather than as a machine made up of separate autonomous parts (Brookfield:1975; Harrison:1988; Hoogvelt:1982; Mesarovic and Pestel:1975:viii).

Parsons, who earlier had had such a strong influence on modernisation theory's view of closed-system nation-states as relatively stable self-sufficient entities approaching equilibrium, came to claim that it was "only a slight exaggeration to say that all contemporary societies are more or less modern" (1977:229) and that the world had become one "world system" of modern societies (Parsons:1971). His notion of a "world system" forms a link between modernization theory, and the global growth debate, which formed the substance of dominant liberal perspectives in the aftermath of both internal critiques, and challenges from the neo-marxist approaches.

The methodology of world futures analysis is a common methodology underlying much of the literature generated by the liberal global growth debate (Hoogvelt:1982). Firstly I shall address the methodology of the liberal world futures theories, and the differing predictions which this methodology gave rise to. Subsequently the substance of the global growth debate, and the various stages through which it has developed, will be addressed in some detail, focusing particularly on the way in which the debate relates to the rationality problem.

Whereas neo-evolutionary and modernisation approaches had identified the system at the nation-state level, the methodology of world futures analysis identifies the system level at the level of a globe as a whole. In addition, assisted by the computer revolution and systems analysis, the world futures scenarios are characterised by a multidisciplinary approach, so that variables from various disciplines are entered into the models. A combination of mathematical and organismic approaches are employed, and attempts are made to quantify the interplay between variables.

Because variables from a number of fields are put into the same model, the extent to which such approaches can be considered "sociological" is definitely in question. In fact, the futures debate has become vast in scope and confused in its nature

(Cole:1978:48). While systems theorists praise the virtue of interdisciplinary approaches, I would argue the attempts to quantify variables on computer models have led to a positive lack of sociological input and insight. In The Limits to Growth (Meadows et al.:1972), for example, which appears to have profoundly influenced most of the subsequent debate, sociologically significant factors such as values are simply left out on the grounds that they are difficult to quantify. In their place there are very often moral extortions on behalf of the researchers disguised behind these "scientific" graphs and curves. It is because these studies are having an influence on policy formulators that it is essential that sociology must address them, since a failure to do so legitimates a technocratic and top-down approach to what are essentially social problems.

The methodology of world futures analysis challenges orthodox conceptions of value-freedom and the possibilities for objective analysis. This type of systems analysis is far removed from objective analysis. Rather, it tends to be predictive, normative, and very often prescriptive (Meadows et al.:1972:158; Hoogvelt:1982).

The problem with this type of analysis when dealing with a system such as the world system which contains an infinite amount of variables, is that the person who plugs in the variables is undoubtedly a part of the system being analyzed, and this will influence the variables chosen. In fact these predictions will ultimately rest on values, which will determine the variables which are incorporated into the computer model, and those which are left out. Whereas in earlier approaches the observer could theoretically stand objectively outside of the system being observed, this is obviously not possible when the system being observed is the world as a whole.

Because of the fact that the person who plugs in the data is acknowledged to be part of the observed system, and because the global system contains an infinite amount of possible variables, world futures analysis gives extremely diverse predictions about possible future paths. The only thing certain which the world futures studies have established is that the future is uncertain - in principle it is unknowable and cannot be predicted (Jahoda:1978:1).

The aim of creating world futures scenarios is to obtain information which will be useful in order to make enlightened decisions. This is an idea borrowed from organisation theory. However, when one sees the diverse predictions which this common methodology has given rise to, it is difficult to see how enlightened decisions can



actually be made at the level of a world system.

Within the substance of the diverse predictions which world futures analysis has given rise to, the heart of the global growth debate can be identified as follows.

Essentially there is a split between those who advocate economic growth and those who advocate sustainability. Differing predictions appear to arise from differing assumptions about the nature of the relationships between sustainability, growth and inequality. Broadly speaking, there is an underlying division around beliefs about the over-all capacity of the world economy for continued growth (Cole:1978).

Generally, those authors who are concerned with the possibilities of limits to growth tend to stress the need for radical restructuring of global economic arrangements, while those who are optimistic about the potential for unlimited global growth, tend to favour *status quo* economic and social arrangements.

The writers who take the technological optimist route predict a future in which the present dominant rationality continues - all players attempt to maximise economic advantage by production for profit in a world market. In order to stay on top all regions and states struggle for monopolies of and participation in world markets. The present development crisis is expected to be resolved through the growth/diffusion model on a world scale, and a materially affluent society is predicted. In this group are Kahn and Wiener (1967), Kahn et al. (1976); Kahn (1979) and Rostow (1978a; 1978b).

Kahn et al. (1976) predict a super industrial society in the early 21st century. Phenomena such as poverty, famine, resource scarcity and pollution are regarded as "temporary phenomena that society must deal with" (1976:8). Their approach assumes an inherent tendency towards the "good society". For Kahn et al. the future consists of a state where humans will be "rich and in control of the forces of nature" (1976:1) There will be "relative peace and prosperity...joy and fulfilment" for everyone, based on the attainment of the "eventual interim goal of mankind" which shall entail,

full development of postindustrial institutions and cultures almost everywhere on earth. Man turns his attention to the creation of such societies everywhere in the solar system and ... perhaps to the stars as well (1976:6).

The significant limit to growth is not resource finiteness, rather it is socially based - in the form of the anti-growth movement itself and the values espoused by the movement (Kahn et al.: 1976:8). Kahn and Wiener (1967:116) argue that the gaps between rich and poor countries should be exploited because their existence can accelerate growth.

Furthermore, "man's capacities for and commitment to economic development and control over his external and internal environment are increasingly without foreseeable limit" (cited in Cole:1978:47).

The group predicting pessimistic futures if present social relationships continue in the long term, has its origins in the Club of Rome's initial report The Limits to Growth (Meadows et al.:1972).

The reports to the Club of Rome give an indication of the shifts in liberal thinking which characterised the subsequent development of the global growth debate. Beginning with the extremely pessimistic predictions of the Limits to Growth report, there was a subsequent shift of concern to the notion of redistribution with growth, and then to the idea of sustainable growth.

Before discussing the substance of the stages in the liberal global growth debate, the fact that the ideology of growth became challenged at all by the notion of ecological limits, needs to be briefly addressed. The implications for the underlying theme of rationality will be addressed.

### **10.1 ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS AND THE GLOBAL GROWTH DEBATE AS A CHALLENGE TO ACCUMULATIVE RATIONALITY**

In development theory generally - and in liberal theory specifically, the concept of development has been linked not only to the Occidental form of rationality, which relative to other ways of relating to the world, is best described as "domination of the world"; but also to Occidental notions of progress of evolution and of growth.

Consider the growth component. The rise in significance of formal rationality in modern industrial society (Kalberg:1980:1155-1156), entailed a decisive break from the pre-capitalist view that the world and the resources it had to offer were limited (Foster:1962).

Similarly, one of the defining characteristics of the concept of modernity is that it "focuses on expectations of control and expansion" as opposed to the "limitedness" characteristic of tradition (Coetzee:1987c:18).

Quite clearly then, the ideology of growth which plays such a significant role in liberal conceptions of development and progress, is closely associated with the Occidental notion of rationality.

An underlying assumption in modernisation approaches had been the idea that the potential for economic growth throughout the world was infinite<sup>79</sup>. This assumption was clearly rooted in the occidental notion of rationality, which, as was argued in part one, was unique in its stress on formal accumulative aspects.

This formal accumulative rationality legitimated unlimited accumulation as rationality *par excellence*, rather than an essentially unintended consequence of a religiously inspired anxiety.

Essentially the rise of concern with "limits to growth," "redistribution with growth" and with the threat of environmental destruction - which has characterised the global growth debate - all point to a re-emergence of concern with **substantive rationality**. This means a return to the concept of "limited good" (Foster:1962), although now at a global system level, as opposed to at the level of isolated communities. As Meadows et al. put it "the earth is finite" (1972:86).

Having identified an essential element in the rise of industrial society as being a break from a primarily substantive rationality of subsistence in a world of "limited good" and towards a primarily formal rationality characterised by the principle of infinite accumulation, the possibility of global limits is clearly a real threat to essential elements underlying the liberal view of development.

## 10.2 STAGES IN THE GLOBAL GROWTH DEBATE

### 10.2.1 STAGE ONE OF THE GLOBAL GROWTH DEBATE: LIMITS TO GROWTH

From the faith in modernisation as a process to be imitated by various nations, there was a shift towards pessimism, towards a concern with global limits and environmental problems. The Limits to Growth: a Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind (Meadows et al.: 1972), was one of the first studies of this nature to reach wide sections of the literate public (Hoogvelt:1982:132). With the

---

79. Black, for example, writes of the most common approach within modernisation theory as being the approach which regards economic growth as the principal source of change and relates everything else to it. He describes a second approach as one which simply takes economic growth for granted and focuses primarily on political and social change (1976:5).

publication of The Limits to Growth, global modelling had come to stay (Hoogvelt:1982).

Meadows et al. (1972) drew upon Jay Forrester's (1971) work World Dynamics, also based upon the computer modelling method. Forrester had stressed the mutually reinforcing nature of events, claiming that attempts to solve one problem in isolation can actually exacerbate another (Cole:1978:27). The major weaknesses within Forrester's work were twofold. Firstly, the model distributed the values of its variables homogeneously across the globe. It failed to recognise regional variations and transformed the empirical heterogeneity of the globe into a homogenised model (Taylor:1973:32). Secondly, economic and ecological factors were addressed in the model, whilst ignoring psychological, social, political, moral and cultural variables (Laszlo:1973:5).

In The Limits to Growth, the essential problem is identified as exponential growth in a finite and complex system (1972:145;154). Trends at the time were analyzed in order to determine possible outcomes if those trends continued.

Attempts were made to calculate the effect of various exponentially growing variables upon one another. The manner in which global population, food production, industrialisation, pollution, and the consumption of nonrenewable resources interact with one another, were simulated in a large scale computer model. It was argued that all of these elements are characterised by exponential (as opposed to linear) growth.

The factor which appears to most concern the authors are the interactions between population growth and economic growth (1972:190,193)<sup>80</sup>. After tracing the complex, interrelated behaviour of these many variables simultaneously, the report concluded that within a few decades the world would be unable to support the rates of economic and population growth rates which characterised the early 1970s. This would result in a sudden and uncontrollable collapse in both population and industrial capacity (Meadows et al.: 1972:23;126). Such a conclusion is reached both if no change in the present system is assumed, and if any number of technological changes in the system are assumed

---

80. Many of the modern forecasts located in the limits to growth perspective, are variations on the Malthusian theme that there is a tendency for population growth to outstrip food supply (Cole:1978:11).

Hence it was necessary that all the problems which the report had identified be attacked simultaneously in order that the recommended transition from a growth state to an equilibrium state be achieved.

Underlying their argument is again the intent to rationally control and manipulate environments - although the object of manipulation is now the globe as a whole (Meadows et al.: 1972:24). "Mankind" is advised to initiate deliberate control of his growth, before "he" (sic) loses the chance for such control (Meadows et al.:1972:183).

Clearly the equilibrium assumptions of liberal theorising feed into the approach. In fact the report, following Forrester's advocacy of an equilibrium society (Cole:1978:27), explicitly advocates the goal of achieving an equilibrium state global society. The world societal goal advocated by the report is an equilibrium state of capital and population (Meadows et al.:1972:175). A "deliberate attempt to reach a rational and enduring state of equilibrium by planned measures" is advocated, with token reference to the fact that a shift from a growth mentality to an equilibrium mentality will ultimately rest upon changes of values and goals (1972:195).

One presumes that such changes in values are expected to come about merely by pleas to human goodwill - read our book and change your values. The question also arises whether Dr. Peccei, described as a manager of a consulting firm for economic and engineering development, as the prime force within the group of authors, and as being affiliated with Fiat and Olivetti; has had any affect on the systems with which he has close interaction in pushing them towards an equilibrium rather than growth mentality! On the contrary, the foreword proudly asserts that his consulting firm is one of the largest of its kind in Europe"!(1972:10). The implication is that his status - derived from the present growth mentality culture - empowers him to stand at an "objective" distance and tell others "out there" (for example, peripheral families) to have smaller systems.

The report acknowledges that it was criticised for being too technocratic in that it simply advocated the adoption of new value systems without specifying either the means by which such changes would arise, or the social effects of adopting new values (Meadows et al.:1972:187). In fact, as Freeman argues, one of the central problems with the report is that - while it ignores the possibility of changes of values in the system - changes in values "may be the most important dynamic element in the whole system" (Freeman:1974:8).

The report focuses essentially on structure as opposed to process. It presents the "desirable" end-state as being an equilibrium structure, simply assuming that this desirability is given.

As far as agency for change is concerned, the report recants the top-down mentality of earlier approaches, and simply appeals to the goodwill of elites. The goal of a controlled global equilibrium is to be achieved by the actions of "policy makers" and "the public" (1972:9).

While Meadows et al.'s report exemplifies the global modelling approach, there was a spate of other literature which was published around the same time that dealt with the common themes of global finiteness and the problem of sustainability as opposed to growth. Other publications along this theme included Dubos and Ward (1972) Only One Earth, Schumacher's Small is Beautiful (1973) and A Blueprint for Survival (1972), published by the editors of The Ecologist.

A Blueprint For Survival draws on the models of Forrester (1971) and Meadows et al. (1972), amongst others, and repeats the neo-Malthusian fears of those reports. Echoing a loss of faith in accumulative rationality, the blueprint begins with the premise that the ethos of expansion is not sustainable (1972:15). However, it acknowledges that a solution is difficult since it would require measures which run counter to the values fundamental to industrial society (1972:18-19).

The view of a finite planet is repeated. It is argued that environmental problems are not merely indicative of temporary malfunctions in existing systems, but are a manifestation of the incompatibility of a finite "spaceship earth" and "deeply rooted beliefs in continuous growth" (1972:26).

However, in contrast to Meadows et al.'s (1972) "global equilibrium", the Blueprint proposes smaller decentralised equilibrium systems, characterised by a shift in emphasis from "quantity to quality" (1972:50ff.).

#### **10.2.2 STAGE TWO OF THE GLOBAL GROWTH DEBATE: REDISTRIBUTION WITH GROWTH, GLOBAL INTEGRATION, AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER (N.I.E.O.)**

The "limits to growth" stage of the global growth debate was short-lived. Having addressed the liberal perspective of what rationality is about, how it is deeply rooted in a vision of unlimited resources, unlimited potential for capital accumulation and of

infinite growth, it is easy to see why this challenge to orthodox ideology was quickly squashed.

In fact it was not long before the ideas underlying the "limits to growth" paranoia were ironically transformed head over heels into a case of why **more** growth was needed to address the problems first acknowledged in the "limits to growth" framework.

While the models in the first stage of the global debate had stressed the need to limit growth, the second generation models explored futures in which global development is fostered by expanding international trade (Cole:1978:34).

Hoogvelt (1982) attributes the shift from emphasising zero growth equilibrium towards emphasising redistribution and international economic reform to the fact that the shift coincided with a period of capitalist recession in which anti-growth theories could hardly be popular! Since a recession was upon the advanced world, limits to growth represented a subversive ideology at such a time.

The shift away from "limits to growth" and towards "redistribution with growth" was not only a consequence of economic recession in the advanced states. It was also partly a consequence of a liberal embracement and reformulation of Third World demands for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The Third World demands for NIEO, and the First World response to these demands, set the framework of the North-South debate which was to characterise the development debate during the 1970s and into the 1980s.

Picture this. The "limits to growth" approach is gaining a wider audience. The capitalist world economy enters a period of recession. OPEC raises the price of a scarce resource, and for a while at least, the Third World stands together with the cartel. Furthermore "Third Worldist" demands for NIEO begin to be formulated at a series of UNCTAD conferences in the early 1970s<sup>81</sup>.

For the centre, it appeared that a crisis was at hand.

The substance of the NIEO demands included intervention in world economic exchange, higher and stable prices for commodities from peripheral countries, a

---

81. In 1973 the Algiers Action Programme was adopted at a conference of non-aligned countries. The Programme introduced the term "New International Economic Order" and led in 1974 to the Declaration and Programme of Action agreed by the United Nations General Assembly and the "Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States" (Stephenson:1981:7).

movement away from technological and scientific dependency, a reorganisation of the international division of labour (including a global redistribution and relocation of world industry), demands for legislation to govern the behaviour of multinational enterprises; and massive financial transfers from rich to poor countries (Hoogvelt:1982:6,80-85,142; Rostow:1978a:233-235).

While, initially the developed world displayed hostility toward Third world demands for NIEO, Hoogvelt argues that in fact the NIEO demands are neither radical nor marxist. Rather, the demands concentrate exclusively on exchange relations in the world capitalist system as opposed to production relations. Furthermore, the NIEO ideology rests upon fundamentally contradictory principles. On the one hand greater interdependence between the rich and poor world is demanded, on the other hand greater independence is demanded. On the one hand the ideology demands better links with the rich world, on the other hand it demands delinking from it. In the final analysis the NIEO demands ultimately amount to the developing countries wanting better opportunities for participation in the world system, and not a radical transformation of the system. However, these contradictory principles underlying Third World demands for NIEO gave the advanced states a room to manoeuvre. It was not long before their initial shock at the demands was transformed into a recognition that these demands could actually help to strengthen the global capitalist system as a whole (Hoogvelt:1982:86-96).

Third World demands for NIEO were quickly hijacked by advanced industrial capitalist interests and thrown back at the Third World in demands for **internal** redistribution and reform - thus sidestepping the issue of how to restructure inegalitarian relations within the global system as a whole.

The initial hostility of the advanced capitalist interests to NIEO demands was very quickly replaced with a De Klerk style strategy of bombarding the opposition with concessions and an ideology stressing the need for compromise and interdependence. Yes, demands for NIEO would be met. However, any international "redistribution" which would take place would only take place on condition that recipient nations reform their internal structures (Hoogvelt:1982:96).

As far as the centre was concerned what needed to be nurtured at this point was not limits to growth but rather a stress on new growth points in the developing areas. That way new consumer markets could be opened up, and the world system as a whole



could potentially recover.

The need is therefore clearly not one of no growth, but one of new economic growth points, of a new international division of labour, a new international economic deal. At the political level the United Nations's adoption of the New International Economic Order action programme in 1974 - all too often mistaken for an exclusive product of Third World demands - provided the negotiation platform for working out this new economic deal (Hoogvelt:1982:140).

Hoogvelt regards the second generation global growth models as the theoretical backup service for this platform, one example being the second Club of Rome report - Mesarovic and Pestel's Mankind at the Turning Point (1975), another product of global computer modelling, which was characterised by more global pleas for global solutions, and stress on the interconnectedness of world events.

This second Club of Rome report developed on Meadows et al. (1972) in that it paid far more attention to the problem of income redistribution on a global scale (Cole:1978:34). The authors stress the interconnectedness of world events and argue that the interrelated problems of the world require a "global" approach. The world system needs to follow a path of differentiated or "organic growth" (Mesarovic and Pestel:1975:5). This is distinguished from "undifferentiated growth" which is characterised by growth in quantity alone - where each new cell is simply a replica of the first. In biological organic growth various groups of cells differ in structure and function (1975:4). It is argued that the pattern of growth in the world system has been undifferentiated, and only "the options confronting humanity contain the genesis of organic growth" (1975:9).

In the language of the neo-evolutionary functionalist theorising which had earlier been applied at the level of "society" they claim that organic growth is characterised by "functional interdependence between constituent parts in the sense that none of them is self-contained but rather has to fulfil a role assigned through historical evolution" (1975:5). However, whilst emphasising functional interdependence between parts, the organism as society is no longer the object of analysis. What had previously been construed as self-sufficient equilibrium systems have now become constituent parts of the world system. Ignoring the dependency input which neo-marxist theorising contributed to the debate, it is argued that in the past the "world community" was made up of independent parts, but today the world community is an interdependent world

system (1975:5). This argument is then used to delegitimise attempts at self-sufficiency in peripheral countries and to justify the need to build up export potential - in order to solve world food problems (Cole:1978:35).

Another model was Leontief's (1977) model, which formed part of a United Nations study to investigate the interrelationships between future economic growth and environmental issues (Cole:1978:36)<sup>82</sup>. Unlike Meadows et al. (1972), but in common with Mesarovic and Pestel's (1975) second Club of Rome Report, this report is concerned with income redistribution and closing the gap between rich and poor nations (Cole:1978:36). The study concludes that the means to achieve this end is to accelerate development in developing regions and that the limits to growth are essentially social, political and institutional in nature. Thus the initial concerns raised in The Limits to Growth, have been transformed into an argument for more growth, with the limits having been redefined to the socio-political as opposed to planetary level.

Another backup to the liberal embracement of NIEO demands was offered by the Japanese contingent of the Club of Rome in Kaya and Susuki's contribution to the world futures debate Global Constraints and a New Vision for Development (1974). A reaction to The Limits to Growth, this study argued for a "New Plan for Development", encompassing a modification of the international division of labour, which would entail a redistribution of industry to help developing nations (Cole:1978:38). Like Mesarovic and Pestel, the Japanese team opposes policies of self-sufficiency, claiming that it would impose sacrifices on Japan and Western Europe (Cole:1978:38).

Tinbergen et al.'s contribution to the Club of Rome (1976) (not based on a computer model) was explicitly promoted by the U.N. General Assembly Sixth Special Session, 1974, to "work towards the establishment of a new international economic order" (Cole:1978:41), thus developing on the arguments put forward by Kaya and Susuki. Fears of exhaustion of natural resources as expressed in the Club of Rome reports of Meadows et al. (1972) and Mesarovic and Pestel (1975) are written off as exaggerated (Tinbergen et al. 1976:37). Hoogvelt is unconvinced by the approach of the

---

82. Cole argues that the major agenda of the futures debate can be traced in the topics of United Nations conferences, and that the focus of the debate has shifted systematically and parallel with these conferences (1978:11).

Tinbergen team.

Tinbergen and his group valiantly struggle to square the circle of a preferred world where there shall in fact be more international trade, more international investment, and a greater interpenetration of different economies under the technology-spreading tentacles of multinational firms, and where - at the same time - there will be more **independence** and self-reliance for the two thirds of the world that is poor. The way to square the circle is through a change of heart. Multinationals should adopt a code of conduct which permits their profit motives to be harmonised with the self-reliant interests of Third World countries. Similarly, the world's skyrocketing expenditure on armaments which employs...almost half the world's scientific and technological manpower should be directed to peaceful ends by a shift from a war to a peace mentality. How simple! Now why did we not think of this before? (Hoogvelt:1982:141).

A growing acknowledgement of the existence of the "global system" also led to an increasingly explicit debate about the best means for "global management". At the political level the problem became one of who is to lead and manage this system, and the solution given by liberal theory is the global elites in this global system.

In true liberal fashion, the question has now become one of the possibilities for global integration, in which there is an assumed consensus. The liberal arguments which in the past had been applied to closed system "societies" now are applied at the level of the global system. Having accepted the neo-marxist position that there is a world system, liberal theory continues to avoid analysis of domination, exploitation, disintegration and conflict, choosing instead to address the world system in terms of integration.

It is argued that there is a trend towards increasing political integration as a rational accompaniment to the power of multinationals, in order to regulate that economic power. Thus global institutions are necessary for managing the capitalist system.

There is, however, some debate about whether this leadership should be in the hands of America itself<sup>83</sup>, or in the hands of a "supra-national state" (Hoogvelt:1982:137).

In my opinion, either way, (U.N. leadership or U.S. leadership) will continue to entrench the disempowerment of people on the ground and place it in the hands of the

---

83. Rostow advocates United States hegemony in the leadership of a global community. The United States, he says, has the capacity to "define common objectives in ways that are not excessively self-serving" and the capacity to translate these objectives into a working agenda (1978a:243-245).

elite, whether of First or Third World origin. As far as the United Nations goes, the Gulf War experience has demonstrated the power that America ultimately has in that institution itself even though Third World elites may have token representation. The alliance built up against Hussain was to a large extent determined by economic manipulation with Egypt, for example, having debts scrapped for her efforts, and Yemen having future aid threatened for her efforts to oppose interventionist resolutions.

In addition to the United Nations, power in other international bodies such as GATT, the IMF and the World Bank also remains essentially in the hands of the North in general, and the United States in particular (McGowan:1991:20).

There is a fundamental problem in the liberal argument that a global political community is needed to tackle global problems through global institutions. The flaw is in the fact that this community is assumed benevolent and to have global interests as a whole at heart. This is similar to earlier functionalist arguments which assumed value consensus and the good of the whole, as opposed to the good of the ruling interests. In short, liberal theory has transferred the invalid assumption of societal consensus and the common good from the nation-state level to the world system level.

In line with earlier liberal approaches which presumed the society to be a nation-state with value-consensus, these approaches fail to see the fundamental conflicts which exist within the global system as a whole. They fail to see conflicts between those with access to resources internationally and those without it, between those who control economic power and those who are controlled by it; in general between the powerful and powerless - at an international level (Luard:1990:200).

Rather, these writers tend to vest faith in institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, as "legitimised sugar-daddies who are able to give guidance and advice" (Luard:1990:156). Wealth is to be redistributed, basic needs are to be fulfilled - all through the mechanisms of these global institutions.

Any approach to a global community also has to address the vested interests which such world-wide power structures have.

The question which fails to be addressed is whether or not relatively disempowered people will have the means to form either international solidarities, or even localised control over their own environments, in the face of the enormous power that is vested in these global institutions.

The redistribution arguments were exemplified in the Brandt report (1980), and its follow up (1983). The reports linked economic recession in North with development problems in South, and argued for the strengthening of international organisations, and the importance of redistribution within developing nations. In addition the Brandt report sees the globalisation of environmental and economic problems as an opportunity to sell the world-community idea as well as the need for strengthening the role and function of international organisations (Hoogvelt:1982:142-3).

Rather than confronting the fundamental long term irrationality of Occidental rationality, which is one thing that Meadows et al. (1972) did manage to achieve<sup>84</sup>, the argument became one of North South inequalitarian relations, and how it might be possible to redistribute wealth, provide for basic needs, and still have rapid economic growth rates.

The basic needs strategy arises out of a meeting of the Latin American Bariloche<sup>85</sup> writers with the World Bank's sudden concern with poverty. The World Bank shifted from its orthodox position of stressing growth over equality to a concern with absolute poverty, and the basic needs strategy aimed at the eradication of absolute poverty as an end in itself (Hoogvelt:1982:98).

As far as the World Bank shift from "growth" to "redistribution" is concerned, some scepticism is in order. As an international institution the idea is that this body, which has traditionally been the standard bearer of capitalist ideology, should now play a leading role in influencing the provision of basic needs and wealth redistribution.

Marxist critics would argue that this strategy might simply be an attempt to

---

84. It is ironic that the industrial revolution - which was inspired at a cultural level by a break with the concept of "limited good", has to date been achieved in large part on the material basis of nonrenewable resources, which are in fact a "limited good" in the long term.

85. The Latin American Bariloche group contribution to the Club of Rome reports was Herrera et al.'s Catastrophe of New Society (1976). The report encompassed a Third World response to the Club of Rome's early zero growth arguments. Their model is utopian rather than predictive and they advocate radically altered social conditions, encompassing ideas such as egalitarianism, full participation, non-consumer values and the allocation of resources on the basis of need rather than profit. The basic needs approach to development can be seen as originating from this perspective, which aimed to reflect the needs and development requirements of the Third World (Cole:1978:13; Hoogvelt:1982). The model is designed around the idea that full and active participation by people in the development process would be impossible without the prerequisite satisfaction of basic needs (Cole:1978:39).

reproduce the marginalised population outside of the capitalist sector as an industrial reserve army. By doing so wages within the capitalist sector can be suppressed, as can the costs of reproduction of further generations of labour (Hoogvelt:1982:100)

Ultimately the liberal interdependent world system perspective, which stresses "redistribution with growth" fails to address how all this redistribution is to take place in a world system, which as a whole, remains dominated by a rationality of maximising economic advantage, not distributing it; of producing for profit and not for need.

Internal reform cannot be effective as long as international structures of inequality in which certain states already have a monopoly advantage - now reflected also in voting and veto power in global institutions - remain unchallenged.

Even as global institutions can shift the economy around creating growth points in the new international division of labour, the fact remains that while some are maximising advantage over others, the others continue to be a significant proportion of humanity. All this shifting appears in the final analysis to be little more than an attempt to work out a redistributive deal with parts of the semi-peripheral world in order to maintain economic growth and contain the contradictions of capital accumulation for just a little while longer.

### **10.2.3 STAGE THREE OF THE GLOBAL GROWTH DEBATE: BRUNDTLAND AND BEYOND: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH?**

Given these developments in the literature, it was inevitable that at some stage an attempt would be made to relate the problems of limits to growth and ecological degradation (as outlined in the first generation models) with global development, inequality and the possibilities for global redistribution (as outlined in the second generation models and the Brandt report), to each other.

By 1983, the United Nations set up the World Commission on Environment and Development to address these issues in relation to one another, under the chair of Gro Harlem Brundtland. The resulting report was compiled in the period 1984-1987, and drew on the insights of the earlier Brandt commission on North-South issues, and the Palme Commission on security and disarmament issues. The Brundtland report Our Common Future (1987), and the critiques thereof, highlight the state of the contemporary debate, and will be dealt with in some depth.

There are numerous problems in the report. Firstly, its solutions are technocratic. Secondly there is an inherently reformist stance. Thirdly, it disregards power relations and inequality in the system it seeks to address (Trainer:1989). Fourthly it assumes (without any mention of the evidence arguing the contrary) that increased economic growth is compatible with increased environmental sustainability. It does not question whether the goals of sustainability and economic growth might in fact exist in a trade-off oppositional relationship to one another.

While the Brundtland report has made an excellent documentation of the problems, it fails to draw out the social implications of these facts. In many respects the report is regressive in that it still assumes a top-down, "trickle-down" approach to development, which predates the shift in World Bank perspective discussed earlier. Both Coetzee (ed.) (1987) and Trainer (1989) have argued that the "trickle-down" assumption is now defunct. The report neglects to mention any literature which argues that growth impoverishes the majority, that it prohibits appropriate development, and that it inevitably results in resource wastage and environmental destruction (Trainer:1989:3).

To what extent is economic growth compatible with environmental sustainability? The assumption that the two can be maximised simultaneously underlies the recommendations of the Brundtland report.

To what extent is economic growth compatible with the elimination of poverty? Again the assumption that the two goals can in fact be maximised simultaneously appears to underlie the recommendations.

The report fails to address the question posed earlier - why, in a world characterised by increasing accumulation of wealth, is there also an increase in poverty, in unemployment, in underemployment, and in dispossession?

Some of the themes which the Brundtland report addresses are the questions of sustainable development, the role of the international economy, population, food, energy, industry and the urban challenge. However, one is ultimately left with the impression that somehow common norms of global solidarity will simply come about, that entrenched power structures will give way if we talk nicely to each other. In true liberal fashion of assuming consensus and integration it is argued that all that is needed to resolve the problems is more effective functioning of environmental protection agencies, and better laws to set up more effective regulatory institutions (Trainer:1989:23).

Inequities of access to participation in creating the substance of such laws are simply ignored.

Having theoretically shifted from social system as "nation-state" based on consensus, we now have "global system" based on consensus and integration. Thus, the means to goal achievement recommended by the Brundtland report, rely (as in the liberal tradition generally) ultimately on pleas for mercy, on appeals for common-sense and political goodwill which will assumedly cross both national and class boundaries.

States shall ... not do to others what you would not do to your own citizens (World Commission on Environment and Development:1987:350)!

As far as the agency for change is concerned, it appears to be located at the level of vested power interests such as multinational corporations and global institutions. These interests are to implement the solution advocated by the Brundtland report - which in effect amounts to more of the same industrial development, while remembering to take a little more concern for the environment. The industrialised centres are advised to grow further, the assumption being once again that this wealth will trickle down.

The report contains many contradictory and ambiguous statements. For example, at one stage (1987:156) it is enthusiastically argued that we are on the brink of a new revolution - we are moving from the Green revolution to the gene revolution. Yet further along in the report the Green Revolution is treated more cautiously - it is argued that the experience of the Green Revolution raises concern over dependence on large doses of agrochemicals and on only a few crop strains (1987:219). The implications for a "gene revolution" are, however, not spelled out.

Redclift (1984) and Meadows et al. (1972:147) have documented the disastrous social consequences of the Green Revolution in which Indian peasants were forced off their land on a large scale and after the rural ecology could no longer support them, found themselves in urban ecologies which could do no better. Richer peasants had access to credit and fertiliser, exports rose, but more Indian people were ultimately hungry. This process has not been peculiar to developing countries. Similarly, three million American farms have been eliminated since 1945, with a similar process of rural displaced adding to the urban unemployment as victims of the Green Revolution in America (Capra:1982:272). Capra also criticises the Green revolution for having shifted the agricultural base from soil to oil (1982:275). While soil can theoretically be built up and



improved, oil reserves are finite and the effects of an oil-based agriculture damages soil resources in the long term.

The technocratic bias of the Brundtland report is evidenced in its approach to the reason why we need to sustain biodiversity. The reasoning is not based at all on ecological principles of system interconnectedness, but rather on the need for keeping up a good supply of genetic material for genetic engineers (1987:151). Again the familiar underlying refrain here is the will of science to rationally dominate nature.

The reformist stance and lack of questioning of power relations of the Brundtland report is evidenced par excellence in its approach to people living off rubbish dumps. It considers the establishment of recycling plants as counterproductive - rather people living off rubbish dumps should be given health advice, education and health care services to help them make a living off the rubbish tips (1987:255)!

The report cannot be written off as entirely conservative, as Trainer (1989) has done, however. There are a number of new points of departure which do emerge, yet it is crucially important that the implications of these new insights are spelled out.

Firstly, the very linking up of development and environmental degradation at the level of a United Nations report is going to redefine the goals of development, and of aid programmes. International finance institutions such as the IMF and World Bank are increasingly likely to finance programmes which take such considerations into account. There is a possibility that as the area becomes further explored, and the contradictions become clearer, a less reformist stance will become theoretically as well as practically indispensable.

Secondly the goal of sustainability in liberal ideology is going to force substantive rationality to play a growing role in the development debate.

Thirdly, contrary to classical economic wisdom there now emerges the argument against the traditionally assumed benefits of economies of scale (1987:215). When energy is brought into equations<sup>86</sup> it becomes evident that transport means huge costs to efficiency of production and distribution. There is a recognition that there might be "optimum" sizes for urban centres, an idea advocated earlier by Schumacher (1973). The

---

86. "Perhaps the single major cluster of causes that will have the greatest impact on our own future is in the area of energy - how we generate it, distribute it, and use it" (Goodwin:1991:10).

report advocates small-scale decentralised industries, the efficient establishment of which would be facilitated by new technologies in communications and information processing (1987:215) as well as a trend towards the establishment of more, smaller towns (1987:108).

The shift to quantifying energy consumption as a cost in resource production has also resulted in a recognition of the fact that while the world's population growth is becoming a major social concern, it is the child born in the wealthy country who will place more stress on the earth's ecosystems than the child born in the developing countries. The radical implications are however, not explored<sup>87</sup>.

While Trainer gives an excellent critique of the report, he does not provide a feasible way out either. His premise is that the correct path lies in precisely the opposite direction to that advocated by the report. While the report advocates more growth in the overdeveloped economies, Trainer advocates that rich countries cut their energy use to 25 per cent of their present levels and move to a conserver society (1989:11).

While Trainer acknowledges power relations in speaking for example of "the predatory international economy" (1989:18) and in noting the relationship between armaments and the preservation of inequalitarian economic systems (1989:21), he does not specify the action mechanisms by which such power relations might be changed in order to achieve his goal of reducing wealthy country energy use.

It is at this point that the broad marxist perspective has a role to play in stressing the possibilities for class action, and more recently for collective action on behalf of other agencies such as women's movements, ecological movements and so on (Lipietz:1982a:57-8). It is only concrete actors and voluntarist intervention that can challenge the existent dominant structures and interests. And what is ultimately resolved in this challenge will be very unlikely to resemble Utopian structures as outlined in models such as Trainer's, which fail to take account of all the unintended consequences

---

87. Regarding population, Coale used arithmetic to calculate that if the rate of population growth which has characterised global capitalist development were to continue - "in less than 6000 years the mass of humanity would form a sphere expanding at the speed of light" (1974:213). (It could be that the "demographic transition" was structurally built into only one part of the global system as a whole.) Coale concludes that a return to a near zero population growth rate in the system as a whole becomes inevitable within the space of not too many generations.

which arise in the process of social action and reaction.

Trainer argues that the solution to the crisis of development and environment is through appropriate development which would empower smaller communities to be more self-sufficient and independent of the national, and thus presumably also the international, economy (1989:3).

Trainer's argument tends to idealise the peasantry and advocate a "back to the past solution" which I would argue is impossible in the light of the articulation of modes of production which characterises the entire world economy at present, and the expectations which such articulations have created in impoverished communities. Isolated communities living off the gifts of the forest in isolation from the larger economies simply do not exist anymore, and the problems for integration posed by the environment and development crisis are going to demand something more than returning to the woods.

Other factors which Trainer's critique fails to address are questions of how the "rights" which are a product of the society of which he is a part are to translate into the type of social structure which he advocates. How does one, for example combine the type of education which Trainer has obviously received, with child labour upon which any small-scale subsistence systems might tend to rely? What of women's rights, which are relatively more entrenched in achievement-oriented systems than in rural land-based communities? What does Trainer perceive the role and structure of the family to be in his zero growth alternative? The problem is that Trainer fails to recognise that it is not only capitalism as a system of production which is exploitive and non-egalitarian, although it might be an extreme case.

However there is one fundamental point which Trainer confronts in his critique of the Brundtland report which is central to the concerns of this dissertation.

He maintains that any solution to the problems documented by the Brundtland report will require a radical change in our economic and cultural systems. The fact is that the Brundtland report fails to recognise that there is a "head-on clash" between the growth-obsessed (implying maximisation of formal rationality) way of life which characterises developed countries, and environmental concerns (implying a measure of substantive rationality) (1989:4).

Habermas notes - in line with my initial distinction between liberal ideology favouring production for profit, marxist ideology favouring production for need - that

late capitalist societies have difficulty in obeying the imperatives of limiting growth without giving up their basic principle of organisation,

... because the transformation of spontaneous capital growth into qualitative growth demands planned production which is oriented towards use-values (1976:37).

That is, a transition to qualitative growth, which takes into account substantive as well as formal considerations, entails an aspiration towards socialist objectives.

For Trainer the problems documented by the Brundtland report are a consequence of formal rationality itself - as manifested in free enterprise, market forces and the profit motive. Such social forces will inevitably be directed to formal ends and not substantive ones. The bottom line for Trainer is that the levels of consumption, and industrialisation which characterise the First World today are simply not sustainable at a global level, and the Brundtland report has not accepted this as a starting point.

The success of formal rationality at the level of a global system has occurred in harmony with decreasing water tables, increasing desertification, lifeless lakes, and mass starvation - all indicating a failure of the system to meet its substantive needs. If the loss of species continues to accelerate at its present rate, then by extrapolation all species will have been eliminated by 2050 (Trainer:1989:5). It is this loss of substantive rationality in the global economy and society, which the Brundtland report fails to come to grips with.

Parsons, in discussing Weber, noted that it must be emphatically denied that "an endlessly expanding bundle of concrete wants is the normal situation for mankind" (1937:514).

A system driven on maximisation of economic advantage and maximising capital accumulation is not given by laws of history. Rather, as Weber argued in The Protestant Ethic (1930), it has arisen at a particular historical juncture, and is a unique and unintended occurrence, as opposed to a fateful given. It is a unique characteristic of the spirit of capitalism that "Only the ultimate end, maximisation of money is 'sacred'" (Parsons:1937:514).

It is precisely the break towards the pursuit of gain without limit with no standard of satiation, which characterised what Weber identified as the spirit of capitalism. The implication is that the Brundtland report has not broken with the spirit of capitalism in their recommendations.

The fact that has only begun to be grasped is that it is the unchecked formal rationality of capital accumulation which has produced both the development and the environmental crisis. Yet this rationality is so deeply embedded in the culture of dominant power structures at a global level that the development and environmental crisis and its resulting social problems will increasingly challenge the very basis of rationality in our culture as a whole, a rationality which values form above substance, and which thus values profit as end in itself over socially necessary production.

The driving motor of "modern" society has been production for profit (formal rationality), and not for need (substantive rationality).

Thus profit becomes an end in itself, the decisive factor which determines not only production but also reproduction....and yet some vital needs of society for consumer goods may be left unfulfilled (Luxembourg:1913:33-34).

It was argued in part one that in this process, substantive rationality has not only been both assumed as given, but has also been systematically suppressed by the dominant powerful strata in the historical process of development. We have developed in the dominant structures of the global system a formal rationality at the expense of a substantive rationality, and the only way out is to recognise the value content inherent in the goal choices of procedural formal rationality, thus widening the choices available.

However, in practice, the conflict between production for profit and production for need may only be resolved ultimately through class struggle, or through alliances between working class structures capable of goal-directed decision-making and other groups capable of the same. In this sense the environment may become a new terrain on which this struggle is to be fought out.

In delayed consequence to the Brundtland report, the ecological debate is now firmly on the development agenda of the dominant and mainstream social science journals. Thus, for example, World Development (January 1991) brings out a special issue on the "Global Commons". In reading the debates presented here, the potential for conflicts between classes and between First and Third World realities start to emerge.

Even a brief look at both the editorial board to this journal, and the list of speakers in the seminar series which generated the papers, is evidence enough of a fundamental problem with the structure of the liberal debate. Quite simply, it is American academia that continues to determine the parameters and content of the debate.

For example, Goodwin (1991:2) identifies United Nations, the World Bank and IMF as "global commons" - institutions which he claims to be operating for the "common good" of humanity. No mention is made of the arguments that the structural adjustment programmes imposed by such institutions on marginalised African regions of the global capitalist economy have led not to a greater common good, but to an exponential growth of African debt problems, and even greater impoverishment and marginalisation of the common people (Cliffe and Seddon:1991:4; Institute For African Alternatives:1987). Critical writers contend that the overall impact of IMF and World bank programmes in Africa has been to strengthen the international capitalist system whilst simultaneously widening the gap between rich and poor countries and increasing the external dependence of peripheral countries (Institute for African Alternatives:1987:15).

Goodwin displays a total lack of understanding of the underdevelopment paradigm - a lack of understanding common to American academia in general, since American academia to a large extent pretended Frank had never happened (Harrison:1988). Perhaps, now that American academia has realised that there is world system it would do well to go back to Frank and his successors, in order to begin to obtain an understanding of concepts such as "domination", "oppression", "exploitation" and "conflict", concepts which the liberal perspective continues to evade.

Goodwin is oblivious to the fact that academic institutions are financed and controlled to such a great extent by the interests of the armaments industry (as argued in part one)<sup>88</sup>. He contentedly argues that;

Over time...a single trend tends to establish itself in the evolution of any university with ambitions for greatness: the general welfare of humankind, and the idea of abstract truth, dominate increasingly over particular interests and ideologies (Goodwin:1991:3)!

His view of the world is one "criss-crossed by students and scholars leaving their countries to learn and teach" (1991:2).

How sweet! One wonders how many of these scholars are teaching him in his

---

88. Freeman claims that in 1974 about half the total of the world's scientific and technical resources was devoted to military and prestige objectives, while less than 2 per cent of the world's research and development effort was devoted to the agricultural, environmental and industrial problems of developing countries (1974:11).

seminars - since almost all the seminar contributors listed are based in Harvard, Boston, Massachussets, New York, Pittsburgh, and Princeton.

If the experience of underdevelopment and ecological collapse has taught us anything, it is that these debates can no longer be conducted from and directed from the centre alone, and that solutions will not be found by the centre alone. To continue the debate on these terms can only reproduce the exploitative conditions already existent, and further those interests which have created the problems in the first place; since these spokespeople have objective interests at the centre and not the periphery. Global problems demand global solutions with maximally democratic input from both the centres and the peripheral areas - since each region is more in touch with its own conditions. As Griffin argues;

The great mass of the rural population is scarcely conscious of the international forces which impinge upon the Third World....On the other hand the peasantry understand perfectly well the complexities of the economy and the society of the locality in which they live and work (1987:32).

The days of believing that rational manipulation and control by the centre will provide the development answers are over. Thus there is a vital need for a radical restructuring - not only of the direction of information flow, of development goals, of development process, but also of these dominant journals themselves. The crisis will not be solved in a piece-meal fashion but demands a holistic solution which means that structural changes can no longer be directed from the centre, while the centre continues to hold to its own traditional structures. It is not only academic journals, but also the mass media that carry around the clock a lopsided flow of ideas, news, and images - lopsided in the direction of its flow from North-West to South (Abdalla:1978:17).

Bottom-up strategies will require major transformations of institutional, economic and political structures (Abdalla:1980:15; Stöhr and Taylor:1981:473). Bottom-up strategies will require major changes in the patterns of organisation between parts, and major changes in process.

**CHAPTER ELEVEN**  
**WORLD SYSTEM APPROACHES:**  
**A SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THEIR COMMON NEGLECT OF AGENCY**

A problem common to both the liberal and neo-marxist approaches to the world system has been their inability to deal adequately with the concept of agency in that system. In the liberal approach this has been a consequence of the theoretical emphasis on structure over process. Now, when the need for radical change is recognised in the liberal world system approaches, the only resort they have to agency is to political leaders, the literate public, and such elites. This is clearly problematic in a world characterised by huge divisions of interest between such elites and those who are being most directly affected by the problems identified as constituting the crisis.

Having addressed the way in which both liberal and neo-marxist theory have come increasingly to recognise the existence of a world system, the problem then becomes - where does the goal-directed actor fit into this system, as theory presently perceives it?

While in the liberal school there was a movement away from the idea of modernisation and towards a concern with interdependency, global growth and integration; there continues to be a consistent failure to address the central concepts of domination, exploitation and class interest. In consequence where agency as a factor for change appears in these formulations at all, it is usually taken to be elite interests. Often direct appeals are addressed to influential leaders, policy makers and the literate "public"; thus assuming a top-down diffusion of scientifically arrived at ideas as a valid force for change.

For liberal theory, action has traditionally been understood to be located at the level of the individual actor. Since rational action was increasingly rational the more closely it approximated the maximisation of economic advantage, it comes as little surprise to see that implicitly the primary actor in their world system is the multinational corporation. These actors direct their action at precisely the value-goal that Weber identified as most rational.



If the primary actor in liberal theory is the multinational corporation, then the secondary actor is global institutions whose function is to regulate the action of these institutions. Such institutions are still emergent phenomena. However, a background understanding of the marxist contributions to the debate, shows us that even these regulatory institutions serve the interests of elite groups.

Besides these players, the liberal theory legitimates as rational all those atomised individuals who act rationally to maximise economic advantage within smaller firms in the world market as a whole - that is - all the capitalist players.

This theory has nothing to say about the possibilities for rational action of those who are denied freedom to move and freedom of goals. It has nothing to say about those who are trapped into the world system as labour-power, with goals being directed from above; or of those lumpens who are on the peripheral margins of the system and have had both control over resources and control over culture shattered without reabsorption into the dominant system; and are thus denied both freedom and control in any sense.

The neo-marxist world system approaches have also been criticised for not dealing adequately with the actor as voluntarist agent. Actors are seen to exist objectively "out there" in the tradition of classical mechanistic assumptions. Thus, Harrison criticises Wallerstein for failing to include consideration of the **subjective meaning** attached to action by actors. Rather - as far as actors are perceived in the sense of social groups - Wallerstein tends to see them only in terms of the functional role they play in maintaining the wider economic system as a whole, as it exists. On the whole, world systems theory virtually eliminates any consideration of social action. (Harrison:1988:114-116).

While Wallerstein does address ethno-nations, he doesn't pay sufficient attention to the substance of these entities. Much of his writing appears to be at a political level, rather than at a level of meaningful social action. In general, world systems theory is inadequate in its treatment of nations, of nationhood, and of the wide variety of social groupings found throughout the Third World, since it treats such factors as derivative of economic structures (Harrison:1988:114-116).

In fact, Wallerstein's argument is based on the old Occidental assumption which has dominated social thought since at least the time of Marshall, that people are first and foremost economic actors. Harrison claims such an assumption to be totally

undemonstrable (1988:114). Such assumptions are built upon the basis of the Occidental view of what a rational actor is, and of what constitutes the rational ends of action. The Occidental view, as argued in part one, exists relative to others, it is not a truth.

As far as the *dependistas* are concerned, whilst working in the framework of a broad left world systems approach, they give quite a lot of emphasis to the possibilities for voluntarist action. Here it is advocated, using a logic of praxis, that understanding of the concrete situations in which a particular case is embedded in the world system, can inform concrete action by actors. These actors might include class and other social groups. It is thus a more bottom-up approach than most, and it does stress the potential for voluntarist intervention. However, following the conclusions of part one, I would argue that increased attention needs to be paid to the matter of decision-making structures capable of rational goal directed action - rather than broad reference to class, in order to enrich the *dependista* position.

In the concluding sections of this dissertation it will be argued that new developments in evolutionary theorising emerging in general systems theory point to the necessity for sociological approaches to overcome the neglect of agency and of process in development.

It will be argued that, while the world systems approaches share some of the origins and elements of the still developing field of general systems theory, they are still partly rooted in earlier worldviews. Thus new findings in general systems theory, derived from research in other fields, especially regarding the nature of disequilibrium, open systems and the priority of process over structure, need to feed into the sociological approaches as they stand. In this way some of their major shortcomings can begin to be transcended.

General systems theory is better described as a direction in the contemporary philosophy of science than as a theory (Rapoport:1968:452).

The classical "mechanistic" scientific world view is the one which sees the world in terms of a separation of subject and object, which sees the world as a clock made up of separate parts (Capra:1982). This scientific world view sees the object in isolation from its relationship to environment and which claims that objects "out there" can be studied, manipulated, and rationally controlled by objective scientists. Dominant in the late nineteenth century, this world-view assumed that all laws of being and becoming are

manifestations of mechanical laws. The universe was understood as a "strictly determined clockwork", and it was believed that if the totality of the components could be grasped, the operation of the clock could be fully understood (Rapoport:1968:452).

The "system scientific" world view, in contrast to the "mechanistic" one, sees "relationships", and not objects, as primary. It acknowledges that the subject/object divide is not nearly as clearcut as mechanical science would have us believe, and that what is important is the **relationships** between elements in a system, the patterns of organisation between parts. It goes beyond structuralism in that it perceives the world as constituted of systems within systems (Laszlo:1983:121). That is, a system in one perspective becomes a subsystem in another, and the level at which the system level is observed is dependent upon the system level which the observer defines (Laszlo:1972:14). Such an approach stresses relationships and patterns of organisation between a system and its environment. Furthermore, it acknowledges that - in principle - only a fraction of reality can be known and that - in consequence - it is in principle impossible to control or master the whole of reality (Berman:1981:237; Zukav:1979:2).

It appears that there is an overall shift in science taking place from the one world view to the other, with elements of the old view still residual in most specific approaches. Thus residual elements need to be identified in order to assist in breaking contemporary approaches out of their anachronistic straitjackets, wherever such straitjackets remain theoretically powerful.

Laszlo distinguishes between three basic systems approaches: systems technology, systems sciences, and systems philosophy (1983:23). While systems sciences are concerned with investigating various phenomena such as biological, social-ecological, sociocultural and organisational phenomena; applied general systems theory constitutes systems technology (1983:49). Systems philosophy encompasses broader conceptual explorations (Laszlo:1983:48).

In systems technology a distinction can be made,

... between the application of a formal mathematical system theory to **map** states and processes in the domain of the empirical world, and to **bring about** new kinds of states and processes in the light of the investigator's goals (Laszlo:1983:49).

Attempts at global modelling were influenced by the growth of interest in systems theory (Laszlo:1983:156). However, the method of attempting to quantify variables as a means

to the end of controlling the system as a whole - which characterised many of these studies - failed to recognise one of the principles arising from the philosophy of general systems theory - namely that in principle, it is impossible to control all variables in the system at once, since, in principle, only a fraction of reality can be known.

Rather, attempts at global modelling appear to have attempted the application of systems technology (which is appropriate at the suborganic level associated with subjects such as engineering sciences and computer science) to the supraorganic level which is the field of the social sciences.

Jantsch argues that the tendency in these models is to use an engineering system paradigm, which he refers to as "utopian engineering" (1976:38). The procedure entails defining a structure before values and goals, these being generated in a deterministic way by the chosen terminal state - for example Meadows et al.'s equilibrium population and capital in a global system (1972). Such a stance presupposes that it is unambiguously clear what the composition of a desirable future system would be. It takes an elitist attitude, stressing a structure oriented approach that treats the system as if it were a machine to be engineered and controlled from the outside (Jantsch:1976:38).

Hence, attempts at computer simulation of systems was in many respects still rooted in the classical scientific world view where the end is control and domination.

This science is the science which has been undermined by developments within physics this century (as argued in part one), but which still dominates the powerful interests within global social structures. Despite attempts to include system theoretic components into the world futures approaches, attempts at computer aided quantification of variables is undergirded with the will to rationally control elements in the systems being observed. Furthermore it is undergirded with attempts to drive the system to a structured equilibrium state, at the expense of addressing process.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **NEW EVOLUTIONARY PARADIGM: SYSTEMS VIEW OF EVOLUTION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AGENCY**

The lack of stress on agency within liberal global modelling approaches has already been discussed. In general agency fails to be addressed. Rather appeals are made to elite interests which - once informed of the findings of computer simulated models - are expected to adjust their goals in a benevolent manner.

In this section, it is argued that recent developments within the systems framework point to the need to place more emphasis on agency and unique events than has been done to date.

The classical evolutionary assumptions of liberal development approaches have been dealt with extensively. Since the shift to world systems approaches shares elements of general systems theory, it is necessary to address the radically different ways in which modern systems approaches address the nature of evolution to that of their classical predecessors.

Rather than going the route of attempting systems technology in application to social systems, liberal approaches would do well to address the philosophical underpinnings of the modern systems approaches in more depth and thus develop on their earlier approaches in such a way that sociological input does not become discarded in preference to the technical efficiency of impressive computer models.

While funding might be easier to obtain for the formulation of increasingly elaborate computer models, it would do theory a lot more good to question the assumption that either the end or the means of these models is rational. Attempts to control vast systems such as the global one are in principle not feasible.

If modernisation theory failed because it focused on factors internal to closed systems, and because it failed to see the interrelationships and patterns of organisation between isolated societies and the broader environments in which they were located - as has been argued here - then contemporary developments in evolutionary theorising can assist in overcoming just these faults.

Capra argues that it is difficult to grasp the systems view of living organisms

from the perspective of classical science because such a grasp necessitates a significant modification of many of the classical concepts and ideas (1982:309). As far as evolution is concerned, the systems view develops upon earlier evolutionary approaches which have undergirded liberal development approaches in a number of respects.

Firstly, systems are not considered to have closed boundaries. Rather boundaries are open.

Secondly, in consequence of assuming open boundaries, an entity such as a society is not presumed to evolve in isolation from its environment. Rather it coevolves with its environment.

Thirdly, as far as structures are concerned, the systems view of evolution contends that living systems are not systems approaching equilibrium. Rather they are characterised by disequilibrium - by dissipative structures.

Fourthly (and following from the third point) as far as evolution is concerned it is a creative process, the outcome of which cannot be predicted. Dissipative structures reach bifurcation points where unique events can play a significant role in determining future directions in which the system will move. Evolutionary goals are not given, they are open (Jantsch:1981b:4).

Fifthly and finally, the systems view of evolution stresses the priority of process over structure. This view is far removed from the liberal perspective of evolution and development. A stress on process as opposed to structure, and a stress on dissipative structures as opposed to equilibrium structures, demands that agency as an element in the development process be taken far more seriously than liberal development approaches have tended to do.

These five characteristics of the contemporary system view of evolution will be discussed in detail below.

The findings in the system view of evolution at a general level, if applied to sociological perspectives, might assist in overcoming some of the major weaknesses of earlier sociological systems theory - such as the weaknesses identified in Parson's approach.

For example, a stress on process as opposed to structure would force a greater emphasis on conflict as an element in social life, as opposed to the assumed consensus of earlier approaches. A view of society as composed of dissipative structures far from

equilibrium rather than of structures tending towards equilibrium would escape the conservative support of *status quo* which characterised earlier theorising (Black:1976:9). While it was difficult to reconcile notions about structure and function with a concern for purposeful choice by voluntarist actors (Abercrombie et al.:1984:250), the recognition of process as taking priority over structure - together with the notion that structures are essentially dissipative and do approach bifurcation points - would help to overcome this contradiction.

Furthermore the false divide between evolution and revolution which has distinguished liberal and marxist views of the future becomes irrelevant. Bifurcation points and the creation of new structures are tantamount to revolutionary developments.

### 12.1 OPEN SYSTEMS

The idea that a "society" can be construed as an "organism in isolation" has to be challenged at a scientific level by the new systems view of evolution which sees evolution as occurring in a sense of "organism in interaction with environment", rather than as "organism in isolation". New insights into evolutionary theory have argued that neither organisms, nor species are closed adapting units. Rather they are open systems which coevolve with their environment (Capra:1982; Jantsch:1980; Laszlo:1983:85-6)<sup>89</sup>.

Today biological evolution is perceived in terms of the patterns of organisation between species and environment. In this view the unit of survival is not an isolated

---

89. Parsons described "system" as a concept which refers "both to a complex of interdependencies between parts, components, and processes that involves discernible regularities of relationship, and to a similar type of interdependency between such a complex and its surrounding environment" (1968:458). However, environment for him in this context appears to mean the physical environment of a social system, as opposed to the social environments constituted by a global system of accumulation in which any social system would be embedded (*ibid.*). Similarly, in terms of his cybernetic hierarchy of control he was essentially concerned with intra and inter-systemic relations of the four action systems (cultural, social, personality and organism) (Turner:1974:53). In his discussion on societies and their environments Parsons equates the "environments" of a social system with "subsystems" of society, so that the four environments of societal community, organic-physical, cultural and psychological, are at once described as subsystems and environments of the society (1968:466ff.). It is puzzling why, in modernisation approaches, the principle of openness fails to be applied to systems in the sense of "societies" as subsystems of larger social environments. As I understand it, these problems appear to be the result of the residual framework of the organismic analogy. In Parson's hierarchy of control one perceives an essentially closed organism, without significant information coming in from other social or cultural systems, besides the specific case being addressed.

entity or organism or species. Rather the unit of survival is the pattern of organisation which the organism adopts in its interactions with the environment (Capra:1982:313).

In discussing general system theory, Laszlo notes that while it originates with the systems theory of the organism, it has developed beyond this point.

General system theory originated with the systems theory of organism, but does not infuse this now into a systems concept of society. There is a world of difference between an organismic conception of society and a systems conception (Laszlo:1983:15).

While earlier sociological theorising, drawing on organismic analogies and biological thought which characterised the time, regarded societies as essentially closed systems; the modern perspective stresses the openness of systems and the nature of the relationships between a system and the environment.

In organic-evolutionary theory the cell wall of the cell was analogous to the boundaries which moral consensus was assumed to place on a society. Both the cell and society were considered as cohesive integrated units (Harris:1989:18).

In contrast modern systems theory sees the organisms as systems themselves, and as essentially open systems;

Organisms constitute systems, that is, functioning wholes constituted by the relationship of their parts, and since these systems continually exchange materials, information and energies with the environment, organisms constitute **open** systems. Their condition of subsistence is a state of dynamic balance between themselves and their environment (Laszlo:1983:103).

It is acknowledged that organisms could not exist for more than a few minutes without a constant intake and output of energies, substance and information. While earlier biological views tended to address an organism in isolation, the systems view acknowledges the significance of environmental inputs such as air, water, food and sensory information for the existence of the organism (Laszlo:1972:40). This principle of openness in systems applies not only to organisms, but also to living systems in general (Jantsch and Waddington (ed.):1976:16). Modern systems approaches to evolution recognise that dissipative self-organising systems (which include social systems) are never isolated and maintain a constant exchange with their environment (Jantsch:1981c:107).



While earlier cybernetic thought<sup>90</sup> appears to have focussed on essentially internal feedback mechanisms of organisms, in contemporary approaches there is greater stress on the fact that information comes into the system from the environment (Laszlo:1983:104).

As far as critiques of modernisation approaches to development go, quite clearly a stress on essentially open systems would have avoided many of the pitfalls which such approaches made.

Jantsch distinguishes between autopoietic systems and allopoietic systems. The former are systems whose function is geared primarily to self-renewal, the latter are systems whose function is given from the outside (1980:33). All indications are that midcentury structural-functionalist analysis attempted to understand developing societies as autopoietic systems, while promoting a diffusion, the substance of which was in fact to determine the function of these developing states from the outside. In other words, while attempting to understand these developing states as closed systems, in fact they amounted to allopoietic systems whose function was given from the outside - their reason for being was to serve the self-renewing needs of the worldwide autopoietic system of capitalism which was directed at the end of maximising economic advantage as opposed to other possible substances. Furthermore, the direction of action toward this particular end was carried forward by one particular class, the capitalist class, which treated accumulation as an end in itself (Emmanuel:1969:357)<sup>91</sup>.

This was the pattern of organisation which characterised the relationship between peripheral regions and the world system of accumulation - the environment in which they were located.

Most peripheral countries are allopoietic, with their functions given from the outside - and as long as this continues to be the case, new insights into the evolutionary process tell us that such systems are unlikely to experience significant levels of differentiation.

---

90. Although Parsonian action theory incorporated the metaphor of information theory and cybernetics in its hierarchy of control, "these adoptions of systems theory represent little beyond the metaphorical use of system theoretic concepts" (Turner:1974:450).

91. "The capitalist mode of production is carried forward by a class that treats accumulation as an end in itself" (Emmanuel:1969:357).

Because of the failure of modernisation approaches to place at the centre of their analysis the fact that newly independent societies were located in the framework of an environment encompassing the world system as a whole, this contribution could only come from another paradigm - namely the neo-marxist challenge.

The principle of open systems vindicates Frank's challenge to the liberal perspective, especially when combined with the acknowledgement that irreversible time (history) is being progressively incorporated into physics (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:208)<sup>92</sup>. This principle contradicts sharply with the timeless equilibrium structures of classical scientific theory which the theoretical side of the *Methodenstreit* in sociology attempted to imitate, and which left its legacy on subsequent sociological theorising.

## 12.2 COEVOLUTION OF ORGANISM AND ENVIRONMENT

In classic evolutionary theory, organisms were perceived to adapt to environments, and there was no conception of a coevolution of organism plus environment.

Within liberal development approaches, neo-evolutionary theory and the modernisation approach continued to perceive society as an organism adapting to its environment. Basing their conception on the organic analogy, society was understood essentially as a bounded, self-maintaining system that maintains its equilibrium in the face of a hostile environment. Society continued to be treated as if it were a social system in isolation, in a vacuum (Hoogvelt:1976:65).

In contrast to neo-evolutionary structural functionalist theorising, the systems view of evolution recognises that the environment of the organism is *itself* a living system that adapts and evolves (Jantsch:1980; Capra:1982:311-313). Organism and context are acknowledged to codetermine each other, with elements or components of the system improving their mutual fit (Bloch:1987:289). In this view;

The focus shifts from the evolution of an organism to the coevolution of organism plus environment...Darwin proposed a theory of evolution in which the unit of survival was the species, the subspecies, or some other building block of the biological world. But a century later it has become

---

92. "The incorporation of time into physics...appears as the last stage of a progressive reinsertion of history into the natural and social sciences" (Prigogine and Stengers:1984:208).

quite clear that ...what survives is the organism-in-its-environment...From the systems point of view the unit of survival is not an entity at all, but rather a pattern of organisation adopted by an organism in its interactions with its environment (Capra:1982:310-315).

As far as development is concerned, this means that the patterns of organisation between subsystems and the overarching system are of crucial significance, and not merely residual. Quite clearly, in this view, a stress on internal factors of subsystems - as modernisation approaches were prone to do - is theoretically inadequate.

If sociology is to accept the implications of the new systems view of evolution (which goes beyond the closed system/organismic approach of earlier theory), and focuses instead on patterns of organisation adopted by an organism in its interactions with the environment, then it must have implications for theory.

Because of classical sociology's early reliance on organismic models, the "society" with its assumed closed boundaries, was the sociological equivalent of the isolated "organism". However, if we acknowledge that the boundaries of social systems are not closed, but highly permeable; then notions of survival become associated more with "survival of the fit" than with "survival of the fittest" (Bloch:1987). That is, effective adaptation does not necessarily amount to effective domination.

### **12.3 LIVING SYSTEMS CHARACTERISED BY NONEQUILIBRIUM DISSIPATIVE STRUCTURES**

It has been argued that liberal development approaches, as a consequence of the "society as organism" assumptions which they embodied, tended to assume that systems consist of essentially stable equilibrium structures. Furthermore, neo-marxist approaches echo such assumptions in their argument that the world system has been an essentially stable structure since the sixteenth century (Shannon:1989:76).

In this sense, the contemporary systems view of evolution contrasts dramatically with earlier approaches. In this view evolving systems are not assumed to be essentially stable equilibrium structures. On the contrary systems approaching equilibrium are in fact dead - equilibrium means stagnation or death. Only isolated systems are in equilibrium, at a standstill (Jantsch:1980:10,185; Laszlo:1983:43).

Closed equilibrium systems isolated from environment is the subject matter of classical thermodynamics. However evolving systems are not in equilibrium. Living

systems (which include social systems) are constituted not of stable equilibrium structures, but rather of dissipative structures which can be far from equilibrium (Jantsch: 1980:19,34; Prigogine and Stengers:1984). In fact, the further the system moves away from equilibrium the more likely it is that evolution will occur (Jantsch:1980:48).

While isolated systems in equilibrium are associated with equilibrium structures, open systems with dissipative structures have an entirely different ordering principle - which Prigogine has termed "order through fluctuation" (1976:95-96), and which Jantsch terms "dissipative self-organisation" (1981c:84-86). Nonequilibrium is an essential prerequisite for dissipative self-organisation (Jantsch:1981c:84-86).

Jantsch distinguishes between "global stability" and equilibrium, arguing that a system can be globally stable whilst being far from equilibrium. While equilibrium is the equivalent of death, both self-renewal and evolution (which are the two aspects of dissipative self-organisation) only can come into play in a system far from equilibrium (1981c:87).

Classical cybernetics focussed on negative feedback mechanisms, by means of which disturbed systems maintain stable states. That is, while earlier mechanistic approaches in the 1940s and 1950s stressed equilibrium and homeostasis through negative, or deviation-reducing feedback within a system, modern systems approaches stress the importance of addressing positive, or deviation-amplifying feedback (Capra:1982:311; Jantsch:1976:37; Maruyama:1976:198).

Nonequilibrium structures can be globally stable over long periods of time. However this stability will be constantly tested by fluctuations, some of which will eventually break through and create new structures (Jantsch:1981c:87).

In a system far from equilibrium, microscopic fluctuations will be continuously generated by the system itself. These fluctuations constantly test the macroscopic structure, the relative stability of which seeks to dampen the impact of fluctuations. Jantsch argues that as long the fluctuations remain below a critical level, the system will be "globally stable" (but not in equilibrium). In such a state the system is in a state of "delayed evolution". However at some critical point a fluctuation will drive the system over an instability into a new structure (Jantsch:1981c:95-6).

Structures which do arise, arise in consequence of amplification of fluctuations

within the system (Prigogine:1976:95). Fluctuations are an essential aspect within systems and it is fluctuations which drive a system to a new system state (Prigogine:1976:96). Fluctuations are the driving force in a creative evolutionary process. However, once new dissipative structures are formed, these will in time also move far from equilibrium towards a new bifurcation point.

In this view, the rise of the Protestant Ethic could be seen as one critical variable which, when combined with other fluctuations, helped to push the prior structure of Occidental society over a threshold into a new dissipative structure.

#### **12.4 EVOLUTION AS A CREATIVE PROCESS: NONDETERMINED FUTURES**

Rapoport discusses the fusion of biological and social theories resulting from Malthus's influence on Darwin, who in turn influenced Spencer and Marx. He claims that the central orientation of all these writers is characterised by an emphasis on the deterministic aspects of both biological and social phenomena (1968:456). Clearly such deterministic views have influenced liberal ideas about the direction of rationalisation and of development, despite Weber's stress on the uniqueness of the Occidental case.

Here it is argued that such deterministic views are no longer tenable in the light of new insights into the evolutionary process as it affects living systems.

Modern systems analysis, which stresses the logical supremacy of process over structure (and which addresses non-equilibrium dynamic structure as opposed to the assumed timeless equilibrium structures of classical theory), argues that as systems moves away from equilibrium they reach a critical (bifurcation) point where the system is forced to move to a new structure (Capra:1982:312). This is a consequence of a critical level where fluctuations are amplified within the system, as described in the previous section.

In this view of evolution, the central characteristic is creativity as opposed to adaptation (Capra:1982:310; Jantsch (ed.):1981:v). Adaptation alone is not the core of evolution. Adaptation relates to the securing of survival, whereas creation is the core of evolution (Jantsch:1981c:91). While classical theory saw evolution as a movement towards an equilibrium state with organisms adapting themselves ever more perfectly to their environment, the systems view notes an interplay between adaptation and creation.

The adaptation component is reflected in the dynamic of self-maintenance, while the creative or self-transforming tendency is reflected in the unfolding of complexity.

Self-creativity....is a response to changing conditions which cannot be offset by adjustments based on the existing structure....If systems were merely to maintain the *status quo* throughout the range of circumstances they encounter there would be no evolution (Laszlo:1972:46).

As far as evolution plays a part, it is a creative process. Evolution is a creative overcoming of the *status quo* (Jantsch:1981c:91) It is not the result of a "desperate attempt for survival", but has a self-transcendent character, whereby a system reaches out beyond its own boundaries (Jantsch:1981b:3)<sup>93</sup>.

The two complementary tendencies of adaptation and creativity are in a state of continual interplay. Evolution unfolds in this process of interplay in systems far from equilibrium (Capra:1982:309-311). Chance (stochastic factors) and necessity (deterministic factors) operate simultaneously (Jantsch:1981c:95). In this sense process and structure are complementary aspects of the same totality which is always evolving (Jantsch and Waddington:1976:9). Any lasting permanence is impossible.

Of major consequence is the insight that at the bifurcation point it is impossible to predict which way the system will move (Jantsch:1980:8-48; Prigogine and Stengers:1984).

When a bifurcation point is reached,

... the possible paths of evolution resemble a decision tree with branchings at each instability threshold (Jantsch:1980:47-8)<sup>94</sup>.

It is argued that the further the system moves away from equilibrium, the more numerous become the possible structures, the possible paths of evolution which the system can take when it hits a bifurcation point. At a bifurcation point there are usually

---

93. Writers who have focussed on the dynamics of self-transcendence include Prigogine and Eisen (chemists), Waddington and Weiss (biologists), Bateson (anthropologist) and Jantsch and Laszlo (general system theorists) (Capra:1982:310).

94. According to Parsons, Pareto mentioned the possibility of a "branching-tree type of evolution", although he did not develop on the concept (1937:178n.2). Parsons sets up Pareto's "cyclical" approach to evolution in direct opposition to the linear thought which characterised Marshall's thought and that of his generation, where free enterprise was seen as the goal of evolution.

two or more structures towards which the system can evolve - the structure which is chosen is inherently unpredictable and involves freedom of choice (Jantsch:1981c:111).

When a bifurcation point is reached

Which of these options is chosen is impossible to predict, there is true freedom of choice. As the system approaches the critical point, it 'decides' itself which way to go, and this decision will determine its evolution. The totality of possible evolutionary pathways may be imagined as a multiforked graph with free decisions at each branching point....In the systems view the process of evolution ...represents an unfolding of order and complexity...involving autonomy and freedom of choice (Capra:1982:312).

At this point the future is **not determined**, it is essentially uncertain (Boulding:1981:xv; Jantsch:1981b:4; Jantsch and Waddington:1976:7).

Furthermore, and also significantly, it is argued that at a bifurcation point unique events can take on dramatic dimensions. Evolution in such a perspective is a creative process (Jantsch:1981b:4) where actors become agents of evolution rather than subjects of an objective process.

Evolution is a process, the detailed outcome of which is inherently unpredictable (Capra:1982:313). While it cannot be predicted which way the system will go at a bifurcation point, it can be predicted that some change will take place, and that new structures will form which will also be dissipative structures; themselves subject to further disequilibrium and further bifurcation points. What is clear from such an argument is that the human developmental endpoint is **not** American society as it existed in America's hegemonic stage.

This is particularly important as far as the whole discussion of rationality in this dissertation is concerned. While in general the Occidental type of rationality has been perceived in the light of Marshallian framework where the absolute goal of evolution is manifested in free enterprise (Parsons:1937:155-157), both the discussion of Weber's views of rationalisation which have not been carried into the development literature, and the notion of evolution as an essentially open process; undermine such assumptions.

Furthermore, as far as discussions concerning the *Methodenstreit* in part one are concerned, these contemporary insights into the evolution of living systems clearly vindicate Weber's position that a focus on unique historical events such as the rise of the Protestant Ethic is of crucial importance to social scientific inquiry. In the light of the

systems evolutionary insights, the rise of the Protestant Ethic could very well have been a unique event occurring in a system far from equilibrium which (when combined with pressure from other fluctuations) pushed the system over a critical threshold into a new structure - which is itself a dissipative one in the long term. Such an argument implies that in the absence of the rise of the Protestant Ethic as a critical variable, the system would still have crossed a threshold, but it would not necessarily have taken the direction which it did - it may have branched in another direction in the absence of the rise of the Protestant Ethic.

Allen (1980) discusses the significance of the principle of dissipative structures as it relates to nondetermined futures. He addressed the consequences of the fallacious analogy of assuming isolated systems with a tendency to equilibrium. He argues that a consequence of this assumption was an underlying belief that there was an "invisible hand" guiding evolution towards the equilibrium state. This led to a pervasive belief that governments and planners simply had to alleviate marginal pathologies while the system would inevitably move to the best solution. In contrast to this view, he writes that the new perspective denies us the assumption of an inherent evolutionary tendency towards the "best" solution. Rather he proposes the existence of a choice of futures. These possible futures entail different "optimalities", being more "efficient" from some points of view than from other points of view. The implication is that there is a need to abandon dogma and to attempt to understand firstly the nature of the choices open to us, and secondly, the means by which the system can be guided in some direction, whilst acknowledging that the final outcome will be a compromise through discussion mediated by power relations. The system is made up of numerous actors with differential values and differential access to power in the system, and these factors will influence the direction in which the system will move (Allen:1980:50,70).

### 12.5 PRIORITY OF PROCESS OVER STRUCTURE

Desai argues that the pro-western bias built into structural-functionalist static analysis of structure, has distorted the ability of modernisation theorists to observe and analyze the processes of change in peripheral regions, and has created a faulty vision of the nature of the relationships between developed and underdeveloped regions (1971:90).

The systems evolutionary view, in contrast to the structural-functionalist view,



stresses process over structure and the fact that the unique, or individual micro-element can have profound impact on the direction of a system at particular moments when the system is far from equilibrium (Jantsch:1980).

While for Parsons, in drawing on the parallels between organic and socio-cultural evolution claimed that "**structural** analysis must take priority over the analysis of process and change" (1977:232)<sup>95</sup>, contemporary system approaches to organic evolution, take exactly the opposite position. The systems view of evolution recognises the logical supremacy of process over structures (Jantsch:1980:8-10).

Modern systems science argues against the view that structure should take precedence over process, arguing that such a view is rooted in a 2000 year history of western physics which has devoted its interest to the recognition of structure in order to describe it by reducing the whole to its parts (Jantsch:1980:77), a goal which is unattainable by the very nature of a system. While sociology recognised the fact that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts as far back as Durkheim, Parson's position *on structure and process vis-à-vis* organic analogies, is indicative of the kind of residual classical mechanistic worldview which was discussed earlier. Thus, while Durkheim had already established what biological thought was only to recognise later, the input of classical biological thought to sociology in the earlier twentieth century has held it back in a strait jacket.

## 12.6 AGENCY IN CREATIVE EVOLUTION: RATIONAL ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

It has been established that to view social systems as stable structures approaching equilibrium - a view derived from classical biological theorising - is not consistent with contemporary developments in evolutionary theorising. Stable equilibrium structures are dead structures, characterised by entropy, while living systems are self-organising systems characterised by creativity and negative entropy. While structure-preserving systems approach equilibrium, evolving systems are far from equilibrium and "evolve through an open sequence of structures" (Jantsch:1980:34).

---

95. Similarly, early cybernetics was concerned with structure as opposed to process (Jantsch:1980:5).

Furthermore it was argued that contemporary evolutionary perspectives understand evolution to be a creative process where actors become agents of evolution rather than subjects of an objective process (Jantsch:1980:8).

There is a fundamental point which follows from these developments within evolutionary theory. Given the fact that evolutionary ideas have influenced liberal approaches to such an extent in the past, it follows that such a revised view of the evolutionary process implies the necessity to revise many of the assumptions underlying the sociology of development. The important point which emerges from these discussions of the new evolutionary paradigm is that a sociology of development should direct more attention at voluntarism and at agency, and less at the value-rational attempts to reproduce the existent structures of the Occident with which it has traditionally been concerned.

Furthermore, it follows that more attention should be directed at process than at structure. The structure is not given, it is constantly evolving and attention needs to be paid to this process, rather than attempting to create rigid and static models of the world and assuming rigid evolutionary goals. As Jantsch argues;

A future theory of a creative and evolving human world will take a fresh look at such phenomena as social and institutional change, value dynamics, competition and cooperation, conflicts, crises and revolutions (as potentially creative fluctuations furthering evolution)...It will do away with any "optimisation" according to utility or other economic and static criteria and emphasise dynamic criteria instead. It will realise the basic openness of evolution and that there are usually many ways into the future (Jantsch:1981a:213).

In addressing voluntarism and process, there are two points with which this dissertation is centrally concerned. Firstly, as argued in part one, there is the point that rational action can and is carried out by agents other than individuals. Related to this is Touraine's point that collective agency is of more consequence for change than is individual agency (Luard:1990:23). The second point of central concern is that the goal of rational action is not given as the maximisation of economic advantage, as Weber argued. Such a given end has a substance of its own, and is relative to other possible substances.

In part one it was argued that the dominant conception of rationality stresses formal aspects, and neglects substantive aspects. In discussing Weber's concept of

rationality and of the rationalisation process which accompanied the rise of the west, the unique nature of the western rationalisation process was stressed. Using Weber's work and more recent interpretations of his work, it was argued that the rationalisation process which characterised the rise of capitalism is not rationalisation *per se*, rather it was one process among many - although it has had universal consequences.

An analysis of the notion of rationality showed that in social thought, "rationality" has come to be equated with the maximisation of economic advantage, and that the value aspect of such a concept of rationality has been neglected. It was argued that, in recognising that the maximisation of economic advantage is a value-end in itself, the possibility for alternate ends should be explored as a component in the development debate, and that the concept of rational action should be extended to collectivities that are capable of decision-making processes and action directed at ends with differing substantive components to that of profit maximisation and the maximisation of economic advantage.

While Parsons conceptualised voluntarism in terms of the subjective decision-making processes of individual actors (Turner:1974:41), it was argued in part one that rational action can also be carried out by collectivities which have decision-making structures capable of formulating goal-directed activities. Such a view corresponds with that of Alain Touraine (1974) who maintains that,

... action is not 'just a response to a social situation' but an autonomous force and the source of values. It is concerned above all with 'creation and control', and its effect is to transform the actor's situation and his social relationships. But the most important actions are not those of the individual but of the collective group or social movement (for example organised labour): it is this 'historical personality' and the emergent 'structures' which such forces can create, which are the main force of change within society (cited in Luard:1990:23).

Touraine's view collaborates with the stress on transcendence (as opposed to adaptation) within the systems view of evolution.

As I understand it, the development crisis is in large part a crisis in human agency. There are many problems which cannot be solved by either markets or governments (Goodwin:1991:5).

Furthermore, I maintain that the crisis in development theory is also a result of a neglect of agency and of addressing ends which living actors desire and the processes

by which such ends might be rationally pursued.

Other writers make the same point. Harrison writes that theorists of all persuasions have often failed to recognise the ability of actors to bring about change - both individually and collectively (1988:163). Cliffe and Seddon, in addressing classic socialist theory, maintain that labour and intellectuals tended to be stressed at the expense of popular forces (1991:11). They argue that one consequence of today's questioning of the Marxist-Leninist tradition should be the recognition of the potential power which ordinary people - **once organising** for popular democracy - can exert in reaction to dominant bourgeois interests.

In liberal theory goals have been determined by that which is perceived to be rational in an Occidental sense, while in marxist theory goals are determined objectively by objective material conditions and by the historical role and moral right of the working class. As far as culture is concerned, liberal theory is concerned with culture primarily as a factor to be eliminated in the development process, hoping that all cultures will come to resemble its own. Marxism generally has tended to deny its existence in the name of scientific materialism. Thus, for example, while marxist critics point to a failure in world systems theory to deal adequately with social class as it operated within Third World internal structures, they, too, underestimate the importance of culture within national boundaries (Harrison:1988:113). Wallerstein, for example, attributes little if any importance to either cultural values or the institutional structures of Western Europe as factors in the development process (Janowitz:1977:1093).

The fact is that the world is not homogeneous, this century has shown us that it is unlikely to become so. What does this mean for development from below? It means the end of a worldview which passively submits to the idea of determinism by objective forces. It also challenges Occidental rationality which presumes that it can create a homogeneous world which reflects only its own world view.

Perroux argues that development has everything to do with man (sic) as subject, as agent, and with the aims and evolving objectives of human societies (Perroux:1983:13).

Foster-Carter argues that despite the structuralist strengths which neo-marxist approaches have in analysing economic phenomena, it is much weaker when it comes to understanding culture (1987:204). What is missing is "*vox populi*, the voice of the

people, everyday life and experience" (1987:224). Regarding the role of the theorist *vis-à-vis* the actor of the "Third World" Foster-Carter argues that;

Our knowledge of them (theory, analysis) must proceed via a dialogue with their knowledge, and indeed be fashioned out of their knowledge (1987:223).

He contends that a methodological position which takes people's ideas and experiences seriously - in the sense of treating them as constituting reality as opposed to imposing reality from the outside - is at least likely to have an affinity with democratic politics (1987:227).

Continuing the same theme, Harrison argues that to deny culture and values any status in the development debate,

... is to assert that what people think, believe and act upon is of no consequence....Apart from anything else, it is the people themselves, in their various nations, classes and groups, who bring to the process of social change their own evaluations of what is good and bad about industrialisation and other forms of modernisation. They too have ideas about what constitutes development, and we must beware of selecting as their 'representatives' only those whose political ideology may coincide with our own (1988:179).

Amin, too, argues that authentic democracy demands a respect of social reality. It is only when social reality is respected that the conditions for transcendence exist. He argues that the,

bureaucratic denial of reality blocks evolution and enables a treacherous and negative reappearance of this reality which is officially denied (1974:26).

Here we get to the heart of the matter, the tough point which follows from advocating a bottom-up as opposed to a top-down understanding of development. While quotes such as those above demonstrate there is obviously a growing recognition of the need to investigate the possibilities for development from below in such a way that it might be a socially meaningful and democratically based phenomenon<sup>96</sup>, Stöhr and Taylor caution that an approach to development which stresses development from below is politically and ideologically unacceptable to both the right and the left - although for different

---

96. "A task of the first importance for the final decade of the twentieth century is to investigate the possibilities for decentralised bottom-up, democratic, pluralistic planning" (Goodwin:1991:11).

reasons (1981:459).

While I drew on the neo-marxist perspective in order to offer alternate worldviews to the liberal perspective in at least two senses - firstly that the worldview that production might be for need rather than profit, secondly that evolution is not yet terminated; here I intend to go beyond the neo-marxist contribution in stressing that "socialism" might not be the only direction in which future development might move. The future is not determined.

The implication of part one of this dissertation is that capitalist development is actually an historical accident, and not a necessary and determined phenomenon, which operates according to iron laws. The implications of the systems view of evolution also point to the possibility that the rise of capitalism is an historical accident. The rise of the Protestant ethic, for example, can be seen as a unique event which took on dramatic dimensions and influenced the evolutionary path in one of a number of possible directions.

If it is correct to argue that the rise of capitalism is not an evolutionary given, then neither is socialist development a necessary and objectively given phenomenon, since socialism is presumed to emerge objectively from the ashes of advanced capitalism<sup>97</sup>.

It is necessary to identify concrete actors as decision-making entities capable of rational goal-directed action, to address the substance of their goals, the nature of the relationships and patterns of organisation between these actors and the dominant actors in the world system of accumulation; and to observe the processes by which these concrete actors interact and coevolve with one another.

In the final section I shall address some of the players who are likely to be directing rational action at goals other than an individualistically based maximisation of economic advantage, and who are thus significant players in the contemporary unfolding of a non-determined evolutionary process.

---

97. In the marxist perspective the future was determined by the iron laws of history as we marched towards socialist liberation. Booth has argued that "Curiosity about why the world is the way it is, and how it may be changed must be freed not from marxism but from marxism's ulterior interests in proving that within given limits the world has to be the way it is" (1985:777; emphasis in original).

### 12.6.1 WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

While traditionally the nation-state has been understood to constitute the boundary of cultural consensus, today the nation-state cannot be regarded as the primary meeting point for the definition of collective goals. It is necessary to address at a preliminary level which other players are playing a role in influencing development directions.

Firstly, organised labour will be addressed. The role of organised labour will be discussed in the context of the changed conditions created by the phenomenal rise in significance of multinational corporations as agents of maximising economic advantage, which has characterised the development of the new international division of labour. Lipietz argues, and I agree, that it is necessary to adopt a critical approach to the concept of Third World industrialisation through a new international division of labour (Lipietz:1982b:33).

It is necessary to address the way in which the NIEO is simply reproducing conditions of maximising economic advantage for the centre interests. While the advanced states attempted to pacify Third World demands for NIEO by creating new growth points in the world economy in areas of the semi-periphery, the substance of the role which these new growth points play in the production process as a whole needs to be addressed.

Essentially, the new international division of labour encompasses a trend to shift labour-intensive manufacturing processes to sources of labour in selected countries in the South (Othman (ed.):1989:22). Given the technological leaps which are taking place at the centre of the system the trend now is to place the "grey matter" activity in the developed countries, whilst shifting unskilled industrial jobs to areas of the Third World in which there are cheaper wage zones (Lipietz:1982b:38). This all takes place within the framework of a global economy in which multinational corporations are in a position to shift different parts of the production process to different regions of the world, depending on the prevailing conditions and how they might influence the potential for such corporations to maximise their economic advantage.

Secondly, other non-labour solidarities capable of rational goal-directed action which are significant players both at local and global levels will be addressed. Such solidarities include feminist groups, ecological groups as well as numerous other special interest groups organising around issues such as human rights, consumer rights, and the

disarmament movement. Such groups are increasingly networking at a global level (Morss:1991), assisted by new information technologies which facilitate rapid communication and defy state control of cross-border information.

Thirdly, it will be argued that groups capable of linking up at a global level are insufficient to articulate the needs of those who are most marginalised by the expansion of global capitalism.

Clearly the nation-state has been an inadequate mechanism for adequately articulating or addressing the needs of these groups. In a similar vein it is likely that groups capable of the empowerment which follows from the ability to link up at a global level constitute a new form of elite interest which is incapable of articulating the goals of the marginalised. Such articulation can only come about if the mechanisms are established via which the marginalised themselves might come to organise around issues directly affecting them. Without this, no development<sup>98</sup>. And it is to the conditions under which this process might be maximised that research needs to address itself if it is to follow Goodwin's (1991:11) advocacy of investigating the possibilities for decentralised bottom-up, democratic, pluralistic planning - that is the possibilities for maximum participative control over development directions.

Firstly, then, I shall address the new conditions of the world capitalist system which define the parameters in which voluntarist intervention can take place. New conditions arise from the phenomenal growth of multinational corporations (Giddens:1985; McGowan:1991; Morss:1991:61) and give rise to new objective conditions for cross-national working class solidarity.

The significance of the increasingly dominant role of multinational corporations is that there has been a qualitative change in the organisation of the world economy itself - a shift away from international trade and towards international production (Giddens:1985:279 Hoogvelt:1982:57-59). Multinational corporations are playing an increasingly significant role in the world economy, with their number and influence in the world economy having grown phenomenally.

International production has come more and more to displace the central

---

98. "Government intervention in favour of the poor is unlikely to occur to a sufficient degree unless the poor are organised" (Griffin:1987:48).



role of international trade (Giddens:1985:279).

The MNC represents the increasing concentration of capital and the integration of production on a world scale (Webster:1984:80). In 1989 the 50 largest MNC's had combined foreign and domestic sales that were equal to 38 per cent of the entire U.S. economy (McGowan:1991).

Figures on the annual budgets of the largest of the modern transnational corporations show them to be much greater than those of the majority of states (Giddens:1985:290). For example, in 1987, Toyota, which McGowan identifies as the sixth largest MNC, had a gross product greater than Iraq's entire economy, while the fourth largest MNC (Royal Dutch Shell) had a gross product larger than South Africa's entire economy (McGowan:1991:14). In 1982 the four largest multinational corporations together had an annual turnover greater than the total gross national product of the whole African continent (Hoogvelt:1982:57-8). Morss, in discussing the considerable economic power of firms relative to nations notes that in 1988 there were 105 firms producing sales of \$110 billion to \$119 billion, as compared with 43 states with comparable GDP. In the \$1 billion to \$9 billion bracket the respective frequencies were 620 firms as against 52 countries (Morss:1991:61).

Addressing these entities in the world economy indicates that they may well be far more significant players in the economic and social game than are numerous nation-states<sup>99</sup>.

These firms - through the maxim of maximising their economic advantage - are driven to capture and monopolise existing markets, potential markets, as well as resources. In consequence, many of the social, political and economic realities of the world today are determined not by nation-states implementing democratically arrived at decisions over development directions, but rather by the rivalries between these corporations (Hoogvelt:1982:57).

Not only do their gross products outstrip that of the majority of states, but their control centres and decision-making structures are located in predominantly western

---

99. The rise of multinationals as an important player in recent decades raises questions as to the limitations of treating "societies" as stopping at the borders of nation-states (Giddens:1985:267), and of measuring development within the framework of bounded nation-states as economists are prone to do.

headquarters (Amin:1974:21). In 1989, for example, of the 50 largest MNC companies, 48 were located in the advanced industrial core countries of Japan, North America and Europe (McGowan:1991:14). This means that most of the decisions regarding Third World export-oriented industrialisation are taken in these headquarters. In such cases the potential exists for entire national economies to be controlled from the western centres, leaving little room for democratic control over the direction of development.

For those for whom working class interests have the high ground, the rise of the multinational phenomenon has led to a reinterpretation of the potentials for the international role of the working class. Since the material basis of international labour is shifting, since there are changed conditions in the international division of labour; it is argued that there will be a consequent new basis for voluntarist intervention by the working class. That is, the changes in the international division of labour which are consequent upon the rise of the multinational provide a different material basis for cross national worker solidarity. Cohen argues that these conditions create both a different and a stronger basis for collective organisation than the early internationals did (Cohen:1987:12).

For Cohen, the potentials raised by the emergence of multinational corporations are significant. He cites examples of initiatives such as the promotion of visits by shop stewards from different countries to branches of the same industry, the convening of industry-specific conferences, the growth of multinational bargaining and the cases of dockers preventing imports of products from repressive regimes such as South Africa and Chile (1987:12). Yet he cautions that the conditions under which a genuine labour movement can arise depend in part upon the capacity of workers to respond effectively to the changes which are being brought about by the shift towards globalisation of capital (1987:23).

In a similar fashion, Olle and Schoeller (1987:26-47) also warn against making a reductionist assumption that the development of a multinational labour strategy can automatically parallel the strategies of multinational capital.

That is, it can only do so if more emphasis is placed on voluntarism and on the possibilities for rational goal directed action to challenge the strategies of multinational capital - whose primary motive is profit accumulation and whose primary goal is the maximisation of economic advantage - and not the provision of socially necessary

products.

As far as the working class is concerned, the rise of the multinational corporation creates the possibilities for trade union action itself to transcend nation-state boundaries such that workers in different regions might - with the facilitation of information technology - increasingly join together at an international level to confront the strategies of transnational capital collectively. This could occur in alliance with feminist groups, ecological groups, and other groups capable of rational decision-making and goal directed activities, in cases where common interests are shared.

It has been argued that the capitalist world system is incapable of integrating humanity as a whole in a beneficial manner, as long as it is driven primarily by a rationality which stresses production for profit as opposed to production for need.

However, needs cannot be imposed from the outside. Production for need depends upon the articulation of need by concrete actors. Such articulation requires processes and institutions which do not exist at present. The state and capital to date have proved incapable of either being vehicles for the articulation of such need, or of implementing programmes for the satisfaction of such need.

Out there are all sorts of struggles in progress - ethnic struggles, nationalist struggles<sup>100</sup>, capital struggles, socialist struggles, feminist struggles, ideological struggles, religious struggles, ecological struggles, and so on.

What needs to be addressed are the mechanisms by which all these different interests (and different interests there always will be) might come to have dialogue with one another in order to facilitate maximum knowledge of situations so that actions themselves might be more rational, since rational action assumes knowledge of the maximum facts of the situation.

What is advocated here is an approach to development which (in recognising

---

100. "Many of these new political forces opposed to communist rule derive their strength from their appeal to ethnic and national identity and/or religious affiliation, always regarded as 'reactionary' and problematic in socialist ideology and strictly controlled under 'state socialism' but now developing again as a focus for mobilisation.... Surely, the lesson from the East is that ethnic affiliations have to be reckoned with and cannot just be assumed away?" (Cliffe and Seddon:1991:5-6). However, it is worth noting that the rise of these separatist movements has not been absent of American intervention. According to Cliffe and Seddon "The Bush administration ...sought to encourage the development of nationalist and separatist movements" (ibid.).

Frank's point that in the market place one dollar counts for one vote and by implication that one million dollars amounts to one million votes), creates conditions in which there might be a maximisation of "civil democracy" (Frank:1991:30) to counteract this reality. For those over whom economic advantage is maximised, this is a rational route to take. It is an approach which recognises a lack of consensus, the reality of different goals within societies, as opposed to one which assumes common values and societal goals. Only once conflicting ends are acknowledged, can they begin to be dealt with in a socially rational manner.

One of the major implications of the phenomenal rise of multinationals which has accompanied the new international division of labour is a decline in the significance of the state. These corporations, together with global institutions which prescribe structural adjustment programmes and internal reforms, in many cases yield more power than states do. While governments are accountable in democratic societies, multinational corporations are not - there are no mechanisms of accountability. Because multinationals are growing as an increasingly significant and increasingly powerful phenomenon relative to states, it is likely that state mechanisms of democracy will become less and less efficient for articulating such needs. It is in this sense that the international labour movement has a crucial role to play. However the problems of accountability of multinational corporations extend beyond the interests of the working class proper. Multinational activity does not stop in urban factories where organised workers are most likely to be found. It extends, for example in the case of agribusiness into "rural" hinterlands as well. While forced removals are regarded as a crime under racial legislation such as in South Africa, the same process is regarded as legitimate in the name of "development".

The only way to counteract the power of these global actors whose primary goal is to maximise economic advantage, and not to provide for social need, is for people to organise at all levels of society and to know and identify their own development needs and goals. Representation at the state level is not a sufficient mechanism for democracy.

Development...needs more than freedom of opinion and universal suffrage. It needs participation in the process of decision-making at all levels and in every area: the family, the village community, the urban neighbourhood, the enterprise, the cooperative, the school and the

hospital... (Abdalla:1980:15).

However, it appears that the conditions of marginalisation - whilst engendering a sense of injustice - are inhibitory factors operating against the potential for collective and organised resistance (Marcus:1989:90). There is no necessary connection between being poor and oppressed and being engaged in struggles to radically transform those conditions (Foster-Carter:1987:217).

Marcus argues that the means by which groups such as farm workers, dispossessed peasants and the unemployed, can defend their interests is through better organisation (1989:192). However, theory and empirical research needs to address the ways in which such organisation becomes maximally feasible. For example the extent to which the condition of marginalisation itself works against the potential to organise and thus creates a catch-22 situation could be explored.

Marcus argues that in the South African case the level of rural mobilisation demands further research (1989:193). I would argue that such research should be done in relation to other regions in which super-exploitive conditions exist to explore cases where successful mobilisation has occurred. In this regard, Barrington Moore cautions that no successful peasant revolution has ever occurred in the absence of a fusion of peasant grievances with those of other strata,

By themselves the peasants have never been able to accomplish a revolution (1966:479).

It is a task of development theory to identify the conditions under which such organisation and participation becomes feasible and the conditions under which it does not. It is a task of development theory to identify the conditions under which goal directed action - directed at diverse substance - is most likely and least likely to occur.

Such knowledge could be applied to concrete cases in such a way as to contribute to an empowerment of the marginalised, and not to contribute to the process of marginalisation which has been set in process by attempting to define the goals of rational action in terms favouring the economically powerful.

It is not the task of a theory of development to prescribe the ends of either social evolution or of rational action. It can, however, play a role in assessing the conditions under which alternate ends might be most clearly articulated.

The acknowledgement of alternate substance allows for an increase in social

rationality (Harman:1987) in the decision-making process, since it increases knowledge of the conditions of the situation in which rational action is to take place. Such knowledge is a *sine qua non* for social action as opposed to simply action or reaction<sup>101</sup>.

Consciousness of the ends which living actors desire would enable the minimum condition for assessing the most rational means to attain such ends. Without such knowledge, any consideration of the most efficient means to attaining ends amounts to development that is meaningless to participants.

Weber claims that;

In the last analysis, the processes of economic development are struggles for power (1946:35).

If capitalism is carried forward by a class that treats accumulation as an end in itself, then any transcendence will be dependent upon organised collectivities developing the capacity to employ the formal processes of rational action in order to direct production at other substantive ends. Without consciousness of the desired substance, and the employment of the formal processes of rational action to work towards the attainment of such alternate substance; the likely trend will be for the class which carries forward the capitalist mode of production to continue to maximise its advantage relative to other groups and classes. Such a scenario would mean that other groups and classes continue existing as conditions for the attainment of the goals of the class which treats accumulation as an end in itself, rather than becoming agents participating actively in determining future development goals and directions.

---

101. For Weber, "Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual...it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (1947:88).

## LIST OF REFERENCES

- Abate, Y. and Wubneh, M. 1987. Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa. Boulder, Colorado: Westview.
- Abdalla, I. 1978. "Heterogeneity and Differentiation - The End For the Third World?" Development Dialogue. 2:3-21.
- Abdalla, I. 1980. "What Development?". International Development Review. 22:13-16.
- Abercrombie, N.; Hill, S. and Turner, B. (1984) 1988. Penguin Dictionary of Sociology. London: Penguin.
- Agassi, J. and Jarvie, I. 1974. "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic". pp.172-193 in Rationality edited by B. Wilson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Albrow, M. 1987. "The Application of the Weberian Concept of Rationalisation to Contemporary Conditions". pp. 164-184 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Alexander, J. 1987. "The Dialectic of Individuation and Domination: Weber's Rationalisation Theory and Beyond". pp.185-206 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Allen, P. 1981. "The Evolutionary Paradigm of Dissipative Structures". pp.25-72 in The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution edited by E. Jantsch. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Althusser, L. 1969. For Marx. London: Allen Lane.
- Amin, S. 1974. "Accumulation and Development: A Theoretical Model". Review of African Political Economy. 1:9-26.
- Amin, S. 1976. Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism. Sussex: Harvester Press.
- Amin, S. 1980. Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis. London: Heinemann.

- Andreski, S. 1983. Max Weber on Capitalism, Bureaucracy and Religion. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Arrow, K. 1974. The Limits of Organisation. London: Norton.
- Bach, R. 1980. "On the Holism of a World-Systems Perspective". pp.289-310 in Processes of the World-System edited by T. Hopkins and I. Wallerstein. London: Sage.
- Baehr, P. 1990. "The 'Masses' in Weber's Political Sociology". Economy and Society. 19:242-265.
- Baran, P. (1957) 1973. The Political Economy of Growth. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Barnes, B. and Bloor, D. 1982. "Relativism, Rationalism and the Sociology of Knowledge". pp. 21-47 in Rationality and Relativism edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barnett, T. 1988. Sociology and Development. London: Hutchinson.
- Barnett, T.; Booth, D. and Oxaal, I. (ed.) 1975. Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Beattie, J. 1974. "On Understanding Ritual". pp. 240-268 in Rationality edited by B. Wilson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Becker, H. 1968. Through Values to Social Interpretation: Essays on Social Contexts, Action Types and Prospects. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bendix, R. 1967. "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered". Comparative Studies in Society and History. 9:292-346.
- Berman, M. (1981) 1988. The Reenchantment of the World. London: Bantam Books.
- Bernstein, H. (ed.) (1973) 1976. Underdevelopment and Development: the Third World Today. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Black, C. 1976. "Introduction". pp.1-9 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.



- Black, C. (ed.) 1976. Comparative Modernisation. New York: The Free Press.
- Black, P. 1987. Development Economics: "Trustee for the Poor" or "Guardian of Rationality". Grahamstown: Rhodes University.
- Bloch, D. 1987. "Family/Disease/Treatment Systems: A Coevolutionary Model". Family Systems Medicine. 5:277-291.
- Booth, D. 1975. "Andre Gunder Frank: an Introduction and Appreciation". pp. 50-85 in Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa edited by T. Barnett, D. Booth and I. Oxaal. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Booth, D. 1985. "Marxism and Development Sociology: Interpreting the Impasse". World Development. 13:761-787.
- Boulding, K. 1981. "Foreword". pp.xv-xvi in The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution edited by E. Jantsch. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1987. "Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber's Sociology of Religion". pp.119-136 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Boyd, R.; Cohen, R. and Gutkind, P. (ed.) 1987. International Labour and the Third World: The Making of a New Working Class. Aldershot:Gower.
- Bradby, B. 1975. "The Destruction of Natural Economy". Economy and Society. 4:125-61.
- Brandt Commission (1980) 1982. North-South: A Programme for Survival. London: Pan Books.
- Brandt Commission 1983. Common Crisis: North-South: Co-operation for World Recovery. London: Pan Books.
- Brazier, P.; Cohen, R. and Gutkind, P. (ed.) 1979. Peasants and Proletarians: The Struggles of Third World Workers. London: Monthly Review Press.

- Brenner, R. 1977. "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism". New Left Review. 104:25-93.
- Brookfield, H. 1975. Interdependent Development. London: Methuen.
- Brubaker, R. 1984. The Limits of Rationality: An Essay on the Social and Moral Thought of Max Weber. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Capra, F. (1982) 1987. The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture. London: Fontana.
- Capra, F. 1988. Uncommon Wisdom: Conversations with Remarkable People. London: Fontana.
- Capra, F. and Ryder-Smith, J. 1982. Einstein and the Buddha. London: BBC Radio 4 programme.
- Carling, A. 1986. "Rational Choice Marxism". New Left Review. 160:24-62.
- Chilcote, R. (ed.) 1982. Dependency and Marxism: Toward a Resolution of the Debate. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Clammer, J. (ed.) 1978. The New Economic Anthropology. London: Macmillan.
- Clammer, J. (ed.) 1987. Beyond the New Economic Anthropology. London: Macmillan.
- Clammer, J. 1975. "Economic Anthropology and the Sociology of Development: 'Liberal' Anthropology and its French Critics". pp.208-228 in Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa edited by T. Barnett, D. Booth and I. Oxaal. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Cliffe, L. and Seddon, D. 1991. "Africa in a new World Order". Review of African Political Economy. 50:3-11.
- Coale, A. (1974) 1976. "The History of the Human Population". pp.201-213 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- Coetzee, J. 1987a. "A Microfoundation as Alternative for Development Thought". pp. 86-107 in Development is for People edited by J. Coetzee. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.

- Coetzee, J. 1987b. "Introduction". pp.1-15 in Development is for People edited by J. Coetzee. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.
- Coetzee, J. 1987c. "Modernisation: an Idea and Model of Progress". pp.17-36 in Development is for People edited by J. Coetzee. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.
- Coetzee, J. (ed.) 1987. Development is for People. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.
- Cohen, R. 1987. "Theorising International Labour". pp.3-25 in International Labour and the Third World: The Making of a New Working Class edited by R. Boyd, R. Cohen and P. Gutkind. Aldershot:Gower.
- Cole, H.; Freeman, C.; Jahoda, M. and Pavitt, K. (ed.) 1974. Thinking About the Future: A Critique of The Limits to Growth. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Cole, S. 1978. "The Global Futures Debate 1965-1976". pp.9-50 in World Futures: The Great Debate edited by C. Freeman and M. Jahoda. London: Martin Robertson.
- Collins, R. 1980. "Weber's Last theory of capitalism: A Systematization". American Sociological Review. 45:925-942.
- Creighton, C. and Shaw, M. (ed.) 1987. The Sociology of War and Peace. London: Macmillan.
- Cruise O'Brien, D. 1979. "Modernisation, Order, and the Erosion of a Democratic Ideal: American Political Science 1960-1970". pp.49-76 in Development Theory: Four Critical Studies edited by D. Lehmann. London: Frank Cass.
- Debray, R. 1971. "Marxism and the National Question". New Left Review. 105:25-41.
- Deere, C. 1979. "Rural Women's Subsistence Production in the Capitalist Periphery". pp.133-148 in Peasants and Proletarians: The Struggles of Third World Workers edited by P. Brazier, P. Gutkind and R. Cohen. London: Monthly Review Press.
- De Kadt, E. and Williams, G. (ed.) 1974. Sociology and Development. London: Tavistock.

- Desai, A. (1971) 1976 "Modernisation: Need for Revaluation of the Concept". pp.89-103 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- De Souza, A. and Vogeler, I. (ed.) 1980. Dialectics of Third World Development. Totowa: Allanheld, Osmun.
- Draper, M. 1986. Jürgen Habermas: An Exploratory Account of his Contribution to Sociological Theory. Unpublished paper. University of Natal Pietermaritzburg: Department of Sociology.
- Dube, S.C. 1988. Modernisation and Development: The Search for Alternative Paradigms. London: Zed Books.
- Dubos, R. and Ward, B. (1972) 1974. Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Durkheim, E. (1933) 1964. The Division of Labour in Society. New York: The Free Press.
- Durning, A. 1990. "Ending Poverty". pp.135-153 in State of the World 1990: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress toward a Sustainable Society edited by L. Starke. New York: Norton
- Eisen, A. 1978. "The Meanings and Confusions of Weberian 'Rationality'". British Journal of Sociology. 29:57-69.
- Eisenstadt, S. 1968a. "Reflections on a Theory of Modernisation" pp.35-61 in Nations by Design: Institution Building in Africa edited by A. Rivkin. New York: Anchor Books.
- Eisenstadt, S. 1968b. "The Protestant Ethic Thesis in an Analytical and Comparative Framework". pp.3-45 in The Protestant Ethic and Modernisation edited by S. Eisenstadt. London: Basic Books.
- Eisenstadt, S. 1973. "The Implications of Weber's Sociology of Religion for Understanding Processes of Change in Contemporary Non-European Societies and Civilisations". pp.131-155 in Beyond the Classics? edited by C. Glock and P. Hammond. London: Harper and Row.
- Eisenstadt, S. (ed.) 1968. The Protestant Ethic and Modernisation. London: Basic Books.

- Eldridge, J. 1971. "Introductory Essay: Max Weber - Some Comments, Problems and Continuities". pp.9-72 in Max Weber: The Interpretation of Social Reality edited by J. Eldridge. Oxford: Nelson.
- Eldridge, J. (ed.) 1971. Max Weber: The Interpretation of Social Reality. Oxford: Nelson.
- Elster, J. 1982. "Belief, Bias and Ideology". pp.123-148 in Rationality and Relativism edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Elster, J. 1988. "Marx, Revolution and Rational Choice". pp.206-228 in Rationality and Revolution edited by M. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elster, J. (ed.) 1986. Rational Choice Oxford: Blackwell.
- Emmanuel, A. (1969) 1972. Unequal Exchange: A Study in the Imperialism of Trade. London: New Left Books.
- Etzioni, A. and Etzioni, E. (ed.) 1964. Social Change. New York: Basic Books.
- Forrester, J. 1971. World Dynamics. Massachusetts: Wright-Allen.
- Foster, G. 1962. "Peasant Society and the Image of limited Good". American Anthropologicals. 67:293-315.
- Foster-Carter, A. 1974. "Neo-Marxist Approaches to Development and Underdevelopment". pp.67-103 in Sociology and Development edited by E. de Kadt and G. Williams. London: Tavistock.
- Foster-Carter, A. 1976. "From Rostow to Gunder Frank: Conflicting Paradigms in the Analysis of Underdevelopment". World Development. 4:167-180.
- Foster-Carter, A. 1978a. "Can we Articulate 'Articulation'". pp.210-249 in The New Economic Anthropology edited by J. Clammer. London: Macmillan.
- Foster-Carter, A. 1978b. "The Modes of Production Controversy". New Left Review. 107:47-77
- Foster-Carter, A. 1987. "Knowing What They Mean: Or Why is there no Phenomenology in the Sociology of Development?". pp.202-229 in Beyond the New Economic Anthropology edited by J. Clammer. London: Macmillan.

- Fowles, J. (ed.) 1978. Handbook of Futures Research. Greenwood: London.
- Frank, A. 1966. "The Development of Underdevelopment". Monthly Review. 18:17-31.
- Frank, A. (1967a) 1969. Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Frank, A. (1967b) 1969. The Sociology of Development and the Underdevelopment of Sociology. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Frank, A. (1969) 1970. Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution. London: Monthly Review Press.
- Frank, A. 1981. Crisis: In the Third World. London: Heinemann.
- Frank, A. 1991. "No Escape From the laws of Economics". Review of African Political Economy. 50:21-32.
- Freeman, C. 1974. "Malthus with a Computer". pp.5-13 in Thinking About the Future: A Critique of The Limits to Growth edited by H. Cole, C. Freeman, M. Jahoda and K. Pavitt. London: Chatto & Windus
- Freeman, C. and Jahoda, M. (ed.) 1978. World Futures: The Great Debate London: Martin Robertson.
- Fromm, E. (1973) 1977. The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Garcia-Bouza, J. 1980. A Basic-Needs Analytical Bibliography. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Gellner, E. 1974. "Concepts and Society" pp.18-49 in Rationality edited by B. Wilson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Gellner, E. 1975. Relativism and the Social Sciences. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gellner, E. 1982. "Relativism and Universals". pp.181-200 in Rationality and Relativism edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Oxford: Blackwell.

- George, V. 1988. Wealth, Poverty and Starvation: An International Perspective. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Giddens, A. 1978. "Introduction". pp.1-12 in Max Weber The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Giddens, A. 1985. The Nation-State and Violence. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Glock, C. and Hammond, P. (ed.) 1973. Beyond the Classics? London: Harper and Row.
- Goodwin, N. 1991. "Introduction". World Development. 19:1-15. (Special Issue Global Commons).
- Gorz, A. 1989. Critique of Economic Reason. London: Verso.
- Griffin, K. 1987. World Hunger and the World Economy. London: Macmillan.
- Habermas, J. (1981) 1984. The Theory of Communicative Action. London: Heinemann.
- Hacking, I. 1982. "Language, Truth and Reason". pp.48-66 in Rationality and Relativism edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hall, A. 1988. "Sociologists and Foreign Aid: Rhetoric and Reality". pp.33-46 in Development Policies: Sociological Perspectives edited by A. Hall and J. Midgley. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hall, A. and Midgley, J. (ed.) 1988. Development Policies: Sociological Perspectives. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hardin, G. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons". Science. 162:1243-1248.
- Harman, W. 1987. For a New Society, a New Economics. London: World Goodwill Occasional Paper.
- Harris, G. 1989. The Sociology of Development. London: Longman.
- Harrison, D. 1988. The Sociology of Modernisation and Development. London: Unwin.
- Harriss, J. (ed.) (1982) 1985. Rural Development: Theories of Peasant Economy and Agrarian Change. London: Hutchinson.

- Harriss, M. (1966) 1980. "India's Sacred Cattle: Rational Management Under Hinduism". pp.79-97 in Dialectics of Third World Development edited by A. de Souza and I. Vogeler. Totowa: Allanheld, Osmun.
- Herrera, A.; Scolnik, H.; Chichilnisky, G.; Gallopin, G.; Hardoy, J.; Mosovich, D.; Oteiza, E.; de Romero Brest, G.; Suarez, C. and Talavera, L. 1976. Catastrophe or New Society? A Latin American World Model. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Heston, A. (1971) 1980. "India's Sacred Cattle: Irrational Management under Hinduism". pp.98-109 in Dialectics of Third World Development edited by A. de Souza and I. Vogeler. Totowa: Allanheld, Osmun.
- Hindess, B. 1987. "Rationality and the Characterisation of Modern Society". pp.137-153 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Hindess, B. 1988. Choice, Rationality and Social Theory. London: Unwin.
- Hollis, M. and Lukes, S. 1982. "Introduction". pp.1-20 in Rationality and Relativism edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hollis, M. and Lukes, S. (ed.) 1982. Rationality and Relativism. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hoogvelt, A. (1976) 1978. The Sociology of Developing Societies. London: Macmillan.
- Hoogvelt, A. 1982. The Third World in Global Development. London: Macmillan.
- Horowitz, I. (1970) 1976. "Personality and Structural Dimensions in Comparative International Development". pp. 257-277 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- Horton, R. (1967) 1974. "African Traditional Thought and Western Science". pp.131-171 in Rationality edited by B. Wilson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Horton, R. 1982. "Tradition and Modernity Revisited". pp.200-260 in Rationality and Relativism edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hulme, D. and Turner, M. 1990. Sociology and Development: Theories, Policies and practices. London: Harvester.



- Huntington, S. (1971) 1976. "The Change to Change: Modernisation, Development and Politics". pp.25-61 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- Inkeles, A. (1973) 1976. "A Model of the Modern Man: Theoretical and Methodological Issues". pp. 320-348 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- Institute for African Alternatives. 1987. The IMF, World Bank and Africa. London: Institute for African Alternatives.
- Institute for African Alternatives. 1990. Alternative Strategies for Africa: Coalition for Change. London: Institute for African Alternatives.
- Institute for African Alternatives. 1991. Alternative Strategies for Africa: Environment, Women. London: Institute for African Alternatives.
- Jahoda, M. (1978). "Introduction". pp.1-8 in World Futures: The Great Debate edited by C. Freeman and M. Jahoda. London: Martin Robertson.
- Janowitz, M. 1977. "A Sociological Perspective on Wallerstein". American Journal of Sociology. 82:1090-1097.
- Jantsch, E. 1976. "Evolution: Self-Realisation Through Self-Transcendence". pp.11-36 in Evolution and Consciousness: Human Systems in Transition edited by E. Jantsch and C. Waddington. London: Addison-Wesley.
- Jantsch, E. 1980 (1987). The Self-Organising Universe. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Jantsch, E. 1981a. "Concluding Remarks: Outlook". pp.209-214 in The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution edited by E. Jantsch. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Jantsch, E. 1981b. "Introduction". pp.1-14 in The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution edited by E. Jantsch. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Jantsch, E. 1981c. "Unifying Principles of Evolution". pp.83-116 in The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution edited by E. Jantsch. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

- Jantsch, E. (ed.) 1981. The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Jantsch, E. and Waddington, C. 1976. "Introduction and Summary". pp.1-9 in Evolution and Consciousness: Human Systems in Transition edited by E. Jantsch and C. Waddington. London: Addison-Wesley.
- Jantsch, E. and Waddington, C. (ed.) 1976. Evolution and Consciousness: Human Systems in Transition. London: Addison-Wesley.
- Kahn, H. (with the Hudson Institute). 1979. World Economic Development, 1979 and Beyond. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Kahn, H.; Brown, W. and Martel, L. 1976. The Next 200 Years. New York: Quill.
- Kahn, H. and Wiener, A. (1967) 1969. The Year 2000: A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years. London: Macmillan.
- Kalberg, S. 1980 "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalisation Processes in History". American Journal of Sociology. 85:1145-1179.
- Käsler, D. 1988. Max Weber: An Introduction to His Life and Work. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kaya, Y. and Susuki, Y. 1974. "Global Constraints and a new Vision for Development". Technological Forecasting and Social Change. 6.
- Kuhn, T. (1962) 1970. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Laclau, E. 1971. "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America". New Left Review. 67:19-38.
- Lane, D. 1974. "Leninism as an Ideology of Soviet Development". pp.23-37 in Sociology and Development edited by E. de Kadt and G. Williams. London: Tavistock.

- Lash, S. and Whimster, S. 1987. "Introduction". pp.1-34 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Lash, S. and Whimster, S. (ed.) 1987. Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Laszlo, E. (1972) 1984. The Systems View of the World. New York: George Braziller.
- Laszlo, E. 1973. "Uses and Misuses of World System Models". pp.1-18 in The World System: Models, Norms, Applications edited by E. Laszlo. New York: George Braziller.
- Laszlo, E. 1983. Systems Science and World Order. New York: Oxford.
- Laszlo, E. (ed.) 1973. The World System: Models, Norms, Applications. New York: George Braziller.
- Lenin, V. (1916) 1934. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. London: Martin Lawrence.
- Leontief, W. 1977. The Future of the World Economy. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, D. 1981. "Rationality and Freedom: Weber and Beyond". Sociological Inquiry. 51:5-25.
- Levy, M. 1966. Modernisation and the Structure of Societies. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Levy, M. 1972. Modernisation: Latecomers and Survivors. New York: Basic Books.
- Lipietz, A. 1982a. "Marx or Rostow?" New Left Review. 132:48-58.
- Lipietz, A. 1982b. "Towards Global Fordism?" New Left Review. 132:33-47.
- Loewith, K. 1970. "Rationalisation and Freedom: Weber's Interpretation of the Bourgeois-Capitalistic World in Terms of the Guiding Principle of 'Rationalisation'". pp.101-122 in Max Weber edited by D. Wrong. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Luard, E. 1990. International Society. London: MacMillan.

- Lukes, S. 1974. "Some Problems about Rationality". pp.195-213 in Rationality edited by B. Wilson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lukes, S. 1987. Marxism and Morality. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Luxembourg, R. (1913) 1963. The Accumulation of Capital. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Mann, M. 1983. "Rationality". pp.321-322 in Student Encyclopedia of Sociology edited by M. Mann. London: Macmillan.
- Mann, M. (ed.) 1983. Student Encyclopedia of Sociology. London: Macmillan.
- Marcus, T. 1989. Modernising Super-Exploitation: Restructuring South African Agriculture. London: Zed Books.
- Marcuse, H. 1971 "Industrialisation and Capitalism". pp.133-152 in Max Weber and Sociology Today edited by O. Stammer. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Maruyama, M. 1976. "Towards Cultural Symbiosis". pp.198-213 in Evolution and Consciousness: Human Systems in Transition edited by E. Jantsch and C. Waddington. London: Addison-Wesley.
- Marx, K. (1867) 1974. Capital. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- McClelland, D. 1961. The Achieving Society. New York: The Free Press.
- McGowan, P. 1991. "The World Political-Economy in the 1990s: Character, Trends, and Implications for Southern Africa". (Paper delivered at the Broederstroom Conference on Southern Africa into the 1990s and Beyond). Department of Political Science, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ USA 85287-2001.
- McHale, J. 1978. "The Emergence of Futures Research". pp.5-15 in Handbook of Futures Research edited by J. Fowles. Greenwood: London.
- Meadows, D.; Meadows, D.; Randers, J. and Behrens, W. (1972) 1983. The Limits to Growth: a Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind. London: Pan Books.

- Meillasoux, C. 1972. "From Reproduction to Production: A Marxist Approach to Social Anthropology". Economy and Society. 1:93-105.
- Mellor, A. 1983. "Critical Theory". pp.71-72 in Student Encyclopedia of Sociology edited by M. Mann. London: Macmillan.
- Mennell, S. 1983. "Evolutionism". pp.118-120 in Student Encyclopedia of Sociology edited by M. Mann. London: Macmillan.
- Mesarovic, M. and Pestel, E. 1975. Mankind at the Turning Point. London: Hutchinson.
- Midgley, J. 1988. "Sociology and Development Policy". pp.10-32 in Development Policies: Sociological Perspectives edited by A. Hall and J. Midgley. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mommsen, W. 1987. "Personal Conduct and Societal Change". pp.35-51 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Morss, E. 1991. "The New Global Players: How they Compete and Collaborate". World Development. 19:55-64.
- Moore, B. (1966) 1973. The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Myrdal, G. 1989. "The Equality Issue in World Development". American Economic Review. 79:8-17.
- Nelson, B. 1973. "Weber's Protestant Ethic: Its Origins, Wanderings, and Foreseeable Futures". pp. 71-129 in Beyond the Classics? edited by C. Glock and P. Hammond. London: Harper and Row.
- O'Connell, J. (1965)(1976). "The Concept of Modernisation". pp. 13-24 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- O'Hearn, D. 1989. "The Irish Case of Dependency: An Exception to the Exceptions?" American Sociological Review. 54:578-596.

- Olle, W. and Schoeller, W. 1987. "World Market Competition and Restrictions Upon International Trade Union Policies". pp.26-47 in International Labour and the Third World: The Making of a New Working Class edited by R. Boyd, R. Cohen and P. Gutkind. Aldershot:Gower.
- Othman, H. (ed.) 1989. Alternative Development Strategies for Africa. London: Institute for African Alternatives.
- Palma, G. 1978. "Dependency: A Formal Theory of Underdevelopment or a Methodology for the Analysis of Concrete Situations of Underdevelopment?" World Development. 6:881-924.
- Parsons, T. (1937) 1964. The Structure of Social Action. New York: The Free Press.
- Parsons, T. 1947. "Introduction". pp.1-86 in M. Weber The Theory of Social and Economic organisation edited by T. Parsons. Illinois: The Free Press.
- Parsons, T. (1951) 1964. The Social System. New York: The Free Press.
- Parsons, T. 1964. "Evolutionary Universals in Society". American Sociological Review. 29:339-57.
- Parsons, T. 1966. Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Parsons, T. 1968. "Social Systems". pp.458-473 in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences edited by D. Sills. London: Macmillan.
- Parsons, T. 1971. The System of Modern Societies. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Parsons, T. 1977. The Evolution of Societies. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Perroux, F. 1983. A New Concept of Development: Basic Tenets. London: Croom Helm.
- Petras, J. 1982. "Dependency and World System Theory: A Critique and new Directions". pp. 148-155 in Dependency and Marxism: Toward a Resolution of the Debate edited by R. Chilcote. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Pitt, D. 1976. The Social Dynamics of Development. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

- Prigogine, I. 1976. "Order through Fluctuation: Self-Organisation and Social System". pp.93-133 in Evolution and Consciousness: Human Systems in Transition edited by E. Jantsch and C. Waddington. London: Addison-Wesley.
- Prigogine, I. 1981. "In Memory of Eric Jantsch". pp. viii-ix in The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution edited by E. Jantsch. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Prigogine, I. and Stengers, I. (1984) 1985. Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature. London: Heinemann.
- Rapoport, A. 1968. "General Systems Theory". pp.452-458 in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences London: Macmillan.
- Ray, D. 1973. "The Dependency Model of Latin American Underdevelopment: Three Basic Fallacies". Journal of Inter-American Studies. 15:4-20.
- Redclift, M. 1984. Development and the Environment: Red or Green Alternatives? London: Methuen.
- Richards, S. (1983) 1987. Philosophy and Sociology of Science: An Introduction. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Rivkin, A. (ed.) 1968. Nations by Design: Institution Building in Africa. New York: Anchor Books.
- Roseberry, W. 1978. "Peasants as Proletarians". Critique of Anthropology. 3:3-18.
- Rostow, W. 1960. The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rostow, W. 1978a. Getting from Here to There: A Policy for the Post Keynesian Age. London: Macmillan.
- Rostow, W. 1978b. The World Economy: History and Prospect. London: MacMillan.
- Roth, G. 1987. "Rationalisation in Max Weber's Developmental History". pp.75-91 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.

- Rudolph, L. and Rudolph, S. 1967. The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Runciman, W. 1972. A Critique of Max Weber's Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schluchter, W. 1981. The Rise of Western Rationalism: Max Weber's Developmental History. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schluchter, W. 1987. "Weber's Sociology of Rationalism and Typology of Religious Rejections of the World". pp.92-118 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Schumacher, E. (1973) 1975. Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered. London: Blond and Briggs.
- Schwartz, B. 1972. "The Limits of 'Tradition versus Modernity' as Categories of Explanation: The Case of the Chinese Intellectuals". Daedalus. 101:71-88.
- Seers, D. 1969. "The Meaning of Development". International Development Review. 11:2-6.
- Seers, D. 1977. "The New Meaning of Development". International Development Review. 3:2-7.
- Shannon, T. 1989. An Introduction to the World-System Perspective. London: Westview Press.
- Shiva, V. 1989. Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development. London: Zed Books.
- Sica, A. 1988. Weber, Irrationality and the Social Order. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sinaceur, M. 1983. "Development - To What End?" (Foreword). pp.1-11 in F. Perroux A New Concept of Development: Basic Tenets. London: Croom Helm.
- Skocpol, T. 1977. "Wallerstein's World Systems Theory: A Theoretical and Historical Critique". American Journal of Sociology. 82:1075-1090.



- Smelser, N. 1964. "Towards a Theory of Modernisation". Social Change edited by A. Etzioni and E. Etzioni. New York: Basic Books.
- Stammler, O. (ed.) 1971. Max Weber and Sociology Today. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Starke, L. (ed.) 1990. State of the World 1990: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society. New York: Norton.
- Stephenson, P. 1981. Handbook of World Development: The Guide to the Brandt Report. Essex: Longman.
- Stöhr, W. and Taylor, D. 1981. "Development from Above or Below? Some Conclusions". pp.453-480 in Development from Above or Below? The Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries edited by W. Stöhr and D. Taylor. New York: John Wiley.
- Stöhr, W. and Taylor, D. (ed.) 1981. Development from Above or Below? The Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries. New York: John Wiley.
- Sunkel, O. 1973. "Transnational Capitalism and National Disintegration in Latin America". Social and Economic Studies. 22:132-176.
- Swidler, A. 1973. "The Concept of Rationality in the Work of Max Weber". Sociological Inquiry. 43:35-42.
- Taylor, A. 1973. "Some Political Implications of the Forrester World System Model". pp.29-68 in The World System: Models, Norms, Applications edited by E. Laszlo. New York: George Braziller.
- Taylor, A. 1976. "Process and Structure in Sociocultural Systems". pp.169-184 in Evolution and Consciousness: Human Systems in Transition edited by E. Jantsch and C. Waddington. London: Addison-Wesley.
- Taylor, J. 1979. From Modernisation to Modes of Production: A Critique of the Sociologies of Development and Underdevelopment. London: Macmillan.
- Taylor, M. (ed.) 1988. Rationality and Revolution. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Tenbruck, F. 1975 "Wie gut kennen wir Max Weber?" Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie. 131:719ff.
- Terray, E. 1972. Marxism and "Primitive" Societies. London: Monthly Review Press.
- The Ecologist. 1972. A Blueprint for Survival. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Thompson; E. 1980. "Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilisation". New Left Review. 121:3-31.
- Tinbergen, J.; Dolman, A. and van Ettinger, J. 1976. Reshaping the International Order: A Report to the Club of Rome. New York: Dutton.
- Tipps, D. (1973) 1976. "Modernisation Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective". pp.62-88 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- Touraine, A. 1974. "Towards a Sociology of Action". Positivism and Sociology edited by Anthony Giddens. London.
- Trainer, T. 1989. Towards a Conserver Society: A Rejection of the Brundtland Report. Future in our Hands, 120 York Road, Swindon, Wilts. SN1 2JP, England.
- Turner, J. (1974) 1982. The Structure of Sociological Theory. Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
- Turner, J. and Beeghley, L. 1981. The Emergence of Sociological Theory. Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
- Van Allen, J. 1974. "Women in Africa: Modernisation Means More Dependency". The Center Magazine. 12:60-67.
- Wallerstein, I. 1974. The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century. New York: Academic Press.
- Wallerstein, I. 1979. The Capitalist World Economy. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Warren, B. 1973. "Imperialism and Capitalist Industrialisation". New Left Review. 18:3-44.

- Warren, B. 1980. Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism. London: New Left Books.
- Watkins, K. 1991. "Agriculture and Food Security in the GATT Uruguay Round". Review of African Political Economy. 50:38-50.
- Weber, Marianne. 1975. Max Weber: A Biography. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Weber, M. (1919a) 1982. "Politics as a Vocation". pp.77-128 in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Translated, edited and with an introduction by H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Weber, M. (1919b) 1982. "Science as a Vocation". pp.129-156 in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology Translated, edited and with an introduction by H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Weber, M. (1920) Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie. Tübingen: Mohr.
- Weber, M. (1927) 1981. General Economic History. London: Transaction Books.
- Weber, M. (1930) 1978 The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Translated by T. Parsons, with an introduction by Anthony Giddens. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Weber, M. (1946) 1982. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Translated, edited and with an introduction by H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Weber, M. 1947. The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation. Translated by A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons. Illinois: The Free Press.
- Weber, M. (1968) 1978. Economy and Society. Edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Webster, A. 1984. Introduction to the Sociology of Development. London: Macmillan.
- Weiss, J. 1986. Weber and the Marxist World. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Weiss, J. 1987. "On the Irreversibility of Western Rationalisation and Max Weber's Alleged Fatalism". pp.154-163 in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity edited by S. Lash and S. Whimster. London: Allen and Unwin.

- Wertheim, W. 1974. "The Rising Waves of Emancipation - From Counterpoint Towards Revolution". pp.315-328 in Sociology and Development edited by E. de Kadt and G. Williams. London: Tavistock.
- White, S. 1988. The Recent Works of Jürgen Habermas: Reason, Justice and Modernity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, G. 1978. "Imperialism and Development: A Critique". World Development. 6:925-936.
- Wilson, A. (1967) 1976. "The Philosophes in the Light of Present-Day Theories of Modernisation". pp.116-130 in Comparative Modernisation edited by C. Black. New York: The Free Press.
- Wilson, B. (ed.) 1974. Rationality. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Wolpe, H. 1972. "Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid". Economy and Society. 1:425-456.
- Woods, R. 1990. "The Aid Monster". New Ground. 2:28-29.
- World Bank and U.N.D.P. 1989. Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s. Washington: World Bank.
- World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Worsley, P. 1957. The Trumpet Shall Sound. New York. Schocken Books.
- Worsley, P. (1964) 1973. The Third World. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Wrong, D. 1970. Max Weber. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Zukav, G. (1979) 1984. The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics. London: Fontana.