

SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT : REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESENT CRISIS

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Abstract This paper argues (a) that some of the present difficulties experienced by the sociology of development can be overcome by a macro comparative historical focus on the qualitative differences between the long term development of the capitalist centre and periphery, as well as on the strikingly different developmental trajectories to be seen within the third world; (b) that Marxism in general, and the dependency approach in particular, although more suitable than alternative paradigms for such a historical comparative task, present certain limitations that can only be dealt with by the creation of new tools for the study of the non-economic spheres (particularly the political).

Introduction

That there is a crisis and a sense of impasse in the sociology of development field is generally accepted. There is less agreement, however, concerning the precise nature of the crisis and how one might go beyond it. What is certain is that the neo-Marxist dependency approach¹ which had displaced the neo-evolutionist theories of modernisation, and had generated a great deal of research and debate during the last two decades, seems to have lost momentum and is facing a barrage of attacks from both inside and outside the Marxist camp. What is equally certain is that neither the neo-liberal critics of dependency theory (whose neo-classical economic tools appear as inadequate as ever to account for the predicament of the third world), nor orthodox Marxist ones (who advocate a return to a more rigorous methodology and to Marx's more optimistic view of capitalism's ability to industrialise the third world), have been able to offer anything better. Hence the widely felt sense of crisis and the gloom of the present moment.²

In this paper, without attempting a systematic review of the voluminous development literature, I will try to discuss some of the theoretical difficulties which have led to the present situation as well as possible ways of overcoming them. In doing so it will be useful to go back a few decades and to take another look at the neo-Marxists' early critique of evolutionist/modernisation theories. That critique was based on two fundamental arguments which, even today, make a lot of sense and which, if their implications had been rigorously followed through, would have provided a sounder foundation for the study of third world capitalist societies.

The first of these arguments concerns the well known anti-evolutionist stand of neo-Marxist theory, the idea that third world societies do not go through the same developmental stages as were followed by the early European industrialisers, that they proceed along a course which, in several fundamental ways, is qualitatively different. The second major argument is that, in order to understand the qualitative differences between first and third world development, the diffusionist model of modernisation theory must be rejected and replaced by a historically oriented,

holistic political economy approach; that the diffusion of capital, technology and culture from the capitalist centre to the periphery should not be conceived of as an ahistorical, 'disembodied' process taking place in a vacuum. Instead it must be seen as occurring within a concrete, historically evolving context of domination/subordination on both the national and international level.³ Let us have a closer look at these two fundamental arguments.

The anti-evolutionist thesis and its implications

In examining such key concepts of the neo-Marxist approach as under-development, unequal development, dependent development, marginality, disarticulation etc., neither critics nor sympathisers have fully realised that – since the above terms are premised on the fundamental anti-evolutionist tenet that first and third world capitalist countries follow qualitatively different developmental routes – such concepts make sense only in the context of a centre-periphery comparison. To argue, for instance, about dependent, unequal or disarticulated development outside such a comparative perspective is pointless, given that all capitalist development inevitably creates inequalities, disarticulations, dependencies etc.

It is indeed remarkable that, despite the neo-Marxist emphasis on qualitative differences between first and third world development, and despite the fact that the major concepts of the dependency approach make sense only if such differences are seriously taken into account, there has been no attempt to study them in any *systematic* manner. Thus, the development literature in general, and the dependency perspective in particular, show a striking paucity of thorough, historically oriented comparative investigations of the capitalist trajectories of early, late, and 'late late' industrialisers.⁴ Such acknowledgments of first world/third world differences as there are contrast developments in the third world with 'western' development, presenting the latter in highly schematic, ideal-typical terms; or, worse still, the present unsatisfactory state of affairs in third world countries is contrasted with the ideal situation that might have ensued had there been no imperialist exploitation.⁵ Quite frequently, however, even such feeble attempts are sidestepped, and centre/periphery comparisons are explicitly avoided, or criticised on the grounds that they lead to teleological and/or ethnocentric approaches to the study of the third world.⁶

Let me illustrate this pervasive neglect of a historically oriented centre-periphery comparative approach by referring briefly to the key concept of dependency. I do not intend to repeat here the quite well known debate on the logical status and utility of the dependency concept. What I would like to stress instead is that this much debated concept cannot be easily dismissed as superfluous merely by proclaiming that all capitalist economies, whether technologically advanced or backward, can find themselves in dependent situations. Neither, on the other hand, can it be defended by attempting positivistically to measure the degree to which the capitalist periphery depends on the centre, or by demonstrating that there is some form of unequal exchange between rich and poor countries. The only effective way of defending the concept of dependency is by serious comparative historical work, showing for instance that late late industrialisers, whatever their degree of success, experienced a type of dependent situation that was directly linked to their different timing and to their different mode of insertion into the world economy and polity.

What is required, in other words, is to demonstrate that the late timing of these countries' industrialisation and their more subordinate position within the international politico-economic division of labour created dislocations and dependencies that, in their long term dynamic, were *qualitatively* different from those experienced by western countries during their own early phases of capitalist development.

A specific example may be useful here. Take, for instance, the problem of financial dependence of late European industrialisers. Critics of the dependency concept are quick to point out that not only peripheral but also core capitalist economies are often financially dependent, particularly during their early stages of industrialisation. For instance French development, particularly in the initial stages of railway construction, was very much helped by borrowing massively from abroad, particularly from England.⁷ Given this obvious fact, in order to defend the dependency concept one has to show (a) that the type of financial dependence that France experienced during its early industrialisation was somehow qualitatively different from the financial dependence that late late industrialisers experienced during their early phases of industrialisation; and (b) that such differences are systematically related to the late timing and the less advantageous position of late late comers within the world economy and polity. Defenders of the dependency concept may argue that France, through its successful and more balanced (in relation to late late comers) industrialisation was able in a relatively short period of time to meet its foreign debts and become in its turn an important exporter of capital (Berend and Ranki 1974:94ff). In the Balkans, on the other hand, foreign loans, because of the terms imposed and the way in which they were used, contributed to the growing dependence of these social formations. From the moment of their emergence as independent national entities, the Balkan states all had to depend on foreign loans for the development of their armies, the maintenance of their overinflated state bureaucracies, and the running of their economies. This financial dependence was not reduced, as in the case of France, with the growth of their economies; on the contrary, it increased steadily in relation to their economic misgrowth (Stavrianos 1958:493ff, Berend and Ranki 1974).

One can develop a similar argument concerning the problem of technological dependence. At the beginning of the 19th century France, for instance, was quite dependent on English technology, both in terms of know-how and in terms of personnel.⁸ But given France's international position, as well as her educational and socioeconomic infrastructure, and taking into account the simplicity of early industrial techniques, one can understand why she managed rapidly to build an indigenous and relatively autonomous technological base. For those countries, on the other hand, which started their industrialisation a century later, whether in the Balkan peninsula or in the Southern Cone of Latin America, such a solution was not so feasible any more. For them, given their weaker position within the world economy and polity, and taking into account the greater technological complexity and the cheaper transport costs, it was more realistic to import technology than to produce it indigenously (Bairoch 1971). This solution had, of course, enormous repercussions on the overall structure of their economies and on the type of relationships they were able to establish with the First World.

These examples do not make the concept of dependency less problematic, but they do point a way of moving from purely ideological squabbles to a more useful and

constructive approach. For even if serious, historically oriented centre/periphery comparisons come to a negative conclusion as far as the utility of the *general* concept of dependency is concerned, such comparisons might suggest ways of distinguishing various types of dependency which could have an 'elective affinity' with certain types of third world developmental trajectories.

Thus the argument so far has been that neo-Marxist concepts, such as that of dependency or dependent development, can acquire a precise meaning only within a centre-periphery comparative framework. In so far as they point to presumed qualitative differences between first and third world trajectories, these concepts can prove useful if based on serious evidence derived from historical-comparative research, the type of research, for instance, that Gershenkron (1962) has done in his detailed comparison of early and late European industrialisers. Unfortunately, with few exceptions neither the critics nor the champions of the dependency school have *systematically* concerned themselves with such research.

On the universalistic character of dependency theory

The concept of dependency discussed above is, of course, not meant simply for describing specific differences between first and third world capitalism; it is part of larger theories that endeavour to *explain* such differences. This brings me to neo-Marxism's second major orientation, one that can be derived from its early critique of modernisation theories. This is its objection to the ahistorical, contextless manner in which neoevolutionists were depicting the diffusion of capital, technology and culture from western, 'modern' to third world, 'traditional' societies.

From the neo-Marxist point of view, the process of diffusion is understandable only if located within a matrix of domination/subordination relationships. These, operating at both the national and international level, were supposed to be fundamental for an explanation of the qualitative differences between capitalism at the centre and capitalism in the periphery. Here again we have a sound and promising starting point that generated hopes which were hardly fulfilled. What one would expect as a logical outcome of neo-Marxism's rejection of diffusionism is a research strategy stressing *context* in terms of space and time, a research strategy that ceases to treat the third world in blanket fashion and draws attention to the enormous complexity and variation among the various countries of the so-called third world.

Instead of this, the neo-Marxist dependency tradition has proffered a plethora of theories which, in their attempts to account for the development or lack of development of the third world as a whole, repeat some of the very same mistakes that the neo-evolutionists committed in the early fifties. This is certainly true if one looks, for instance, at the early work of Gunder Frank. As critics have frequently pointed out, Frank's early work is a mirror image of the modernisation theories he so vehemently attacked. In this theory the creation of 'underdevelopment', once a peripheral country is integrated into the world market, is as automatic and unproblematic as the neo-evolutionists' idea about the generation of modernisation and development once the West diffuses its culture and technology.⁹ Even if, on the positive side, Frank's theory of underdevelopment is more aware of power, of classes, of the existence of an unevenly structured world economic system, his basic

explanation of why we have development in the capitalist centre and underdevelopment in the periphery is based on the extremely schematic idea of a chain of exploitation through which resources are systematically transferred from the periphery to the metropolitan centre.

It is hardly fair, of course, to equate the neo-Marxist approach in its entirety with Gunder Frank's early work. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since he published his controversial *Capitalism and Under-development in Latin America*. Not only has Frank himself considerably modified his initial theses (see Frank 1978), but also there have been a variety of other significant contributions leading to fruitful debates, to the elaboration of more differentiated and subtle analyses and to the proliferation of subschools within the overall neo-Marxist tradition (see Blomström and Hetne 1984). But despite all subsequent changes and reappraisals neo-Marxism still tends to show a certain insensitivity to context, still tries to find a general, overarching formula which will provide a universal explanation of how capitalism develops in the third world as a whole.¹⁰ This is true, I believe, even with respect to theoretical developments after Bill Warren's germinal critique of the neo-Marxist approach. Let us briefly review some major points of this debate.

Bill Warren (1980) argued that, contrary to neo-Marxist analyses and expectations, several third world countries are industrialising at a fast pace with the help of multinational capital; therefore Marx was right after all when he predicted that the diffusion of western capital would eventually spread industrial capitalism all over the globe.

Objecting to this analysis, neo-Marxists pointed out:

- (a) that there are very few countries that have experienced a massive infusion of foreign capital and rapid industrialisation, and that the majority of third world economies are stagnating in the manner depicted more or less accurately by Frank;
- (b) that the anti-evolutionist thesis holds true even in the case of the rapidly industrialising countries, in the sense that their industrialisation is qualitatively different from the western experience (greater imbalances and inequalities etc.). Even if, therefore, one cannot talk about underdevelopment (i.e. blocked development) in these cases, one can definitely talk about *dependent* development;
- (c) that Warren's optimistic view about the eventual industrialisation of the whole third world is as schematic and unwarranted as Frank's early views about the inevitable stagnation and underdevelopment of the capitalist periphery. (See McMichael et al. 1974, Emmanuel 1974, Hoogvelt 1982, Kaplinsky 1984).

Now it seems to me that all of the above points are perfectly valid, and that the next logical step for neo-Marxism would have been to go beyond universal generalisations of the Warren type by creating typologies and theories that give serious consideration to the differences and variations within peripheral capitalism. Such theories should try to map and *explain* the great diversity of developmental trajectories actually being followed by the countries lumped together under the blanket term 'third world'. (As well as the relationships between these developmental routes and those of both the capitalist centre and the socialist world.)

To take a very obvious example: it requires no great perspicuity to see that the type of development experienced by the economically less backward Latin American countries over the last two decades is quite different both from the more balanced

growth achieved by some rapidly advancing South East Asian economies (Korea, Taiwan) and, at the other extreme, from the stagnation or rapid economic deterioration of certain central American or African societies. This being all too obvious, the attempt to build up a general theory of dependent development relevant to all these cases seems highly problematic. It is of course perfectly possible and desirable to examine the changing global interrelationships between groups of countries occupying different positions within the world economy – and on that level of analysis it is legitimate to treat the third world as a whole or simply to split it up into a semi-periphery and a periphery. As a matter of fact, it is on that global level of analysis that some of the most interesting work on development has been done (see Evans, forthcoming). *But when one shifts the focus of analysis from the world system to the third world*, here theories which do not go beyond the periphery/semi-periphery dichotomy, i.e. theories which do not take *seriously* into account the variety of developmental trajectories within the third world, soon run into difficulties. I am not saying of course that it is impossible to formulate generalisations that apply to the third world as a whole. One could argue, for instance, that most third world countries – given the late timing of their developmental efforts and their subordinate position within the world economy – face less favourable conditions than did the West for capitalist development. This is true, but it says very little that an ideologically unblinkered lay-person does not know already. If, on the other hand, one goes beyond this very general level and spells out the specific *mechanisms* creating underdevelopment or dependent development in the third world (i.e. unequal exchange, technology transfers, the nature of multinational investments, unfavourable terms of trade, the nature of the indigenous capitalist classes, the nature of the third world state etc.) then one will very soon have to admit that the generalisations put forward apply only to certain cases.

Thus dependency theory, in so far as it tries to create a *general* theory about the third world without taking variations seriously and systematically into account, cannot escape the fate of all contextless, universalistic theorising in the social sciences. Such theorising results in statements that are either true but trivial, or inconclusive in the sense that they hold true only under certain conditions not specifiable by the theory. It is this that has partly, at least, brought today's general sense of impasse and disillusionment to a field of endeavour where on the one hand there are some quite sound studies on specific countries or regions, and on the other a plethora of generalisations that are either too obvious or inconclusive in their substantive statements.

Of course in a certain way the inadequacy of treating the third world in an undifferentiated manner and the need to take into account variations within it has become part of the conventional wisdom in the development field. But it is one thing to stress the complexity and enormous variation within the capitalist periphery and another to do something constructive about it. Rhetorical statements about the complexity and variation of the third world abound (as do polemical statements about the fundamental cause of its present predicament); *but the hard, painstaking, macro-historical, comparative work required for translating such statements into concrete analyses are missing.*¹¹ More specifically, what is missing are theories that go beyond the case study, *without sacrificing context in terms of time and space*. The only way this delicate and difficult balance between context and generality can be

achieved is by creating typologies and theories that grasp the logic and dynamic of *specific* trajectories within the capitalist periphery and semi periphery.

What I have in mind here is not, of course, placing countries into different statistical boxes according to various indices of economic growth or development (per capita income, GNP etc.). Nor do I have in mind a 'comparative statics' approach which will simply identify similarities and differences in the economic structure of different countries in an ahistorical, non-developmental manner. Instead, what I would hope for is something like the comparative, historically oriented work that Barrington Moore (1963), for instance, has done on the early industrialisers – work that attempts to trace in a 'political economy', *holistic* manner different types of developmental routes leading to the modern world. In Moore's work these routes are not merely described in terms of economic or political stages, they are conceptualised as the more or less unintended consequences of struggles among various groups (peasants, landlords, merchants, state bureaucrats etc.) which, within the limits and possibilities created by the overall structural/institutional arrangements, were striving to promote their interests by changing or defending the status quo in agriculture, and later in industry. In other terms what Moore was trying to do was to examine the different long term institutional solutions or outcomes which emerged in a more or less unintended manner as responses to a set of developmental issues or challenges, such as the modernisation of agriculture, the shift of human resources from agriculture to industry and the sociopolitical mobilisation of the lower classes that modernisation always entails.

Of course Moore has been heavily criticised both for historical inaccuracies and for neglecting to place the three routes to modernity that he examined within the overall world economy and polity. But despite such obvious weaknesses, Moore's work has made a crucial contribution to our knowledge of how the modern world has come about. Based on a sound synthesis of sociology and history, it has become a major source of inspiration for a great number of historically oriented social scientists and of sociologically minded historians, both within and outside Marxism.

It is surely fundamental work of this kind that is badly needed in the sociology of development, not only to fill the gap between the case study and general theories about the third world, but also to provide a solid foundation for clarifying and giving more substance to a number of unresolved or stalemated debates in the field. Take for instance the debate about the New International Division of Labour (NIDL), which refers to the changes in the world capitalist system that the spectacular growth of transnational corporations has brought about during the last two decades – changes which Warren's work has pointed to but which subsequent theories have examined in greater depth. These changes are:

- the growing internationalisation of productive capital, as technological developments make increasingly possible the break-down and dispersal of a firm's productive operations in different parts of the globe;
- the creation in several third world countries of 'free industrial zones' or 'free trade assembly zones' offering to multinational capital not only cheap labour but also a variety of other fiscal and legal advantages;
- the subsequent emergence of a number of newly industrialising countries (NICs) which very rapidly managed to shift their exports from mineral and agricultural to manufactured goods (see Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye 1980, Fröbel 1982, and Schiffer 1981).

Neo-Marxists have reacted to these radical transformations by stressing the negative aspects of the NIDL. They have, for instance, drawn attention to the super-exploitation of the labour force in the rapidly proliferating free industrial zones, where very often a non-unionised and predominantly female work force works very long hours for starvation wages. They have also pointed to the tendency of transnational companies actively to undermine third world democratic regimes or, at least, only to orient themselves to countries where highly authoritarian governments create, through the suppression of working class organisations, a 'favourable climate' for foreign investments. Finally they have emphasised once more the disarticulated, enclave character of the NICs' development in general and the 'free industrial zones' in particular: the fact that the technologies used are inappropriate and that the linkages between free zones and the rest of the economy are weak or negative, this situation leading to growing inequalities and balance of payments bottlenecks (Frank 1981, Lipietz 1982). In a more general way, neo-Marxists interpret the overall restructuring brought about by the NIDL as metropolitan capital's attempt to overcome the profitability crisis and the growing resistance of the strongly organised working classes in the capitalist centre by moving large chunks of their productive operations to parts of the globe where conditions for rapid accumulation are more favourable (Arrighi 1978, Frank 1981, Fröbel 1982).

Needless to say, all these interpretations have been challenged by studies which have stressed that the situation brought about by the NIDL is not as negative as neo-Marxists imply, particularly if one considers what alternative developmental solutions were or are realistically available to third world capitalist countries. Moreover, according to this view, the neo-Marxist explanation of the NIDL in terms of metropolitan capital's global strategy for overcoming the growing crisis of the capitalist system in the centre ignores the fact that transnational corporations increasingly direct their investments to the developed world; it also ignores the *active* role that certain third world states play in attracting and orienting both foreign and indigenous capital towards the course of rapid and export-oriented industrialisation (see Grahl 1983, Jenkins 1984b). Finally, the critics of neo-Marxism's pessimistic and one-sided interpretation of the NIDL point out that whether one looks at the issues of super-exploitation, authoritarianism, disarticulation or growing inequalities, the situation varies considerably from one case to the other and that across-the-board generalisations are invariably misleading (see, for instance, Corbridge 1986:155ff).

In fact, it has become by now quite obvious that the way in which overall trends on the international level articulate with specific socio-political structures and groups on the national level varies enormously within the third world. It has also become quite obvious that multinational investment in peripheral and semi-peripheral capitalist economies can have dramatically different effects according to the type of relationship that the national state establishes with indigenous and foreign capitals.

However it is not enough to leave the argument at that and simply conclude, as neo-Marxism's critics tend to do, that everything depends on 'country-specific circumstances'. If we do this we move from the vacuity of universal third world theories to the empiricist denial of the possibility of any substantive generalisations concerning the third world. It seems to me that a serious construction of different developmental trajectories can help us to get out of this dilemma.

Let me try to be more specific. If one looks for instance at the relatively 'advanced' Southern Cone Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile), there is no doubt that multinational capital did play a significant role in easing or even partially overcoming the import substitution crisis of the fifties and early sixties and in orienting their economies towards technologically more complex branches of industry and towards a decisive shift from the export of agricultural/mineral to that of industrial goods. There is also no doubt that the state in these societies is by no means the passive tool of national or international capital. In the case of the latter, for instance, after an initial period of very lenient, *laissez-faire* conditions of operation, the state managed to impose much tighter controls once it had acquired more knowledge and the specialised administrative machinery to deal with transnationals. (See Jenkins 1984).

Despite all this however it becomes increasingly obvious, particularly after the 1974 world crisis, that the type of export-oriented, foreign capital-led industrialisation of the sixties and seventies has created new more severe bottlenecks, these bottlenecks leading to extremely incapacitating balance of payments problems as well as to growing socioeconomic inequalities. Although multinationals are not entirely to blame for this state of affairs, there is no doubt that in a variety of ways (e.g. by favouring capital intensive investments, by tending to borrow locally rather than bring new funds into the host country, by actively shaping popular tastes towards 'luxury' types of consumption), they did contribute significantly to the creation of the impasse in which these countries find themselves today (Jenkins 1974:164ff).

Now if one compares this situation with that in the two major South East Asian countries (Southern Korea and Taiwan) the picture is very different. Here one sees a state which seems more capable of steering foreign investments as well as indigenous ones in such a manner that export oriented industrialisation is combined with a more balanced developmental trajectory: a developmental trajectory characterised by less severe bottle-necks and by mechanisms which ensure that the fruits of rapid growth, particularly during the last two decades, are more widely spread both in the countryside and in the urban centres. Despite the persistence of a relatively low wage structure, one does not see in these countries the degree of marginalisation that prevails in the Latin American cases. (See Morawetz 1977:40.)

These results have been mainly achieved by a highly *dirigiste* state which, as I will discuss in the next section, manages to monitor closely both indigenous and multinational capital without suffocating private initiative. It also handles trade unions in a repressive manner, keeping wages down or, more recently, making sure that wage rises are closely linked to productivity increases.

From these few points it becomes quite clear that the articulation between the international and the national levels, or more specifically the overall configuration within which transnational corporations operate in the South East Asian and the Southern Cone Latin American countries, is very different. In the former case one sees a state relatively 'insulated' from demands that emanate from a weak civil society. This state is controlled by anti-communist political-military elites which view rapid but less exclusionary capitalist growth as a means of maintaining their dominant position in a situation of permanent challenge from their communist neighbours. In the Latin American case, on the other hand, one sees a relatively stronger civil society and a state whose controlling elites are less willing or capable of

directing the activities of foreign and indigenous capital towards a more self-reliant and less marginalising type of capitalist accumulation.

It is true of course that, in comparison with the centre, capitalist industrialisation in both the Southern Cone and the South East Asian countries took a more restricted and uneven character; or to use a more recent terminology, that in terms of 'regimes of accumulation' the development of Taylorism and later Fordism¹² in all these countries took a more disjointed and incomplete form. It is also true, as Lipietz (1987:61) has recently argued, that this incompleteness has mainly to do, as in all newly industrialising countries, with the lack of indigenous skills (to run the imported technologies), the slow development of internal markets and fact that their export-oriented industrialisation requires capital and intermediate goods imports on a scale not compensated by their industrial and primary exports. But in terms of modes of regulation, there is no doubt that the state in the South East Asian cases managed to cope with these three constraints in a much more effective manner (by trying in a planned manner to create new skills, by promoting less exclusionary economic policies and by adopting a flexible, highly selective protectionism). It is not therefore surprising that these economies, having greater self-steering capacities, were able to cope much better than the Southern Latin American ones with the present world crisis.

Now in order to explain such marked differences between the two trajectories one has, of course, to adopt a long term historical perspective. Limiting our scope to this century, the Southern Cone countries, given the development of a considerable economic infrastructure during the second half of the 19th century, managed to readjust their export economies after the 1929 crisis and to make the shift to large-scale import substitution industrialisation. This shift, however, did not lead to radical change in the relations of production in the countryside. Despite the rapid rise of the middle classes and the development of urban populism populist leaders, once in power, failed to implement any serious agrarian reforms. Although the traditional export/landowning interests lost the oligarchic type of control over the state that they enjoyed in the 19th century, they managed to resist any radical changes in the highly inegalitarian and largely archaic agrarian structures. This meant a failure to modernise agriculture, a failure which, unlike the cases of some early modernisers examined by Moore, did not lead to peasant revolution. (The massive rural exodus, which started long before large-scale industrialisation, operated as a safety valve reducing social tensions in the countryside).

The non-modernisation of agriculture, however, had severe consequences for the development of the overall economy. It led, for instance, to the very slow and limited development of an internal market, to the establishment of weak or negative linkages between agriculture and industry, to the creation of an overinflated, highly inefficient state and service sector, and to severe imbalances between consumer and capital goods production. It led, in other terms, to the type of capitalist accumulation (extensively analysed by dependency theorists) whose limitations became very apparent during the import substitution crisis of the fifties and sixties.

If one briefly looks now at the South East Asian cases, here the interwar situation was quite different. During this period, both Korea and Taiwan were under Japanese rule and the occupying forces attempted to transform them into agricultural appendages of the rapidly expanding Japanese economy. However, despite the ruthless exploitation of the indigenous populations and the huge transfer

of resources to the metropolis, the colonisers effected a number of changes which, in the postwar, post-colonial period would prove quite decisive in bringing about the type of development already referred to.

First, the Japanese occupation weakened the traditional landowning elites and in that sense created a favourable background for the extensive post-liberation agrarian reforms which, in both countries, led to the drastic decline of big landed property as well as to an impressive increase in agricultural productivity. Second, during the Japanese occupation one sees a considerable development of social overhead capital, the spread of education, as well as an important industrialisation process which, although led by Japanese capital and directed towards Japan's developmental needs, had a profound impact on the economy. It was the basis for the development of postwar industry which, with important American aid, took on spectacular dimensions, particularly with the growing emphasis on industrial exports from the sixties onwards. (See Hamilton, 1983 and 1986, and Galenson, 1979.) Finally, another important legacy of the Japanese occupation was the establishment of a highly *dirigiste* state apparatus which, despite prevailing myths about the *laissez-faire* character of the South East Asian model of industrialisation, continues to be strongly interventionist and protectionist.

The above, very sketchy, remarks about the Southern Latin American and the South East Asian cases are not meant to provide a full explanation of their developmental trajectories. They are simply meant to indicate the type of consideration that one has to take into account in order to explain why these two groups of countries relate so differently to past and present trends in the world economy and polity.

Finally, although there is no space here, it could be quite interesting to compare the trajectories discussed above with more 'peripheral' ones which managed neither to modernise their agriculture nor to launch an important industrialisation during the interwar years; or with those of countries which lack even more basic preconditions for capitalist accumulation such as the decline of tribalism, the consolidation of a centralised, bureaucratic nation-state, the spread of minimum literacy skills etc. Such countries, even if they experience economic stagnation or regression, do undergo fundamental transformations as they get more integrated into the world economy, polity and culture. It is therefore imperative in these cases as well to map out and explain their overall trajectory by looking at the specificity of the economic bottlenecks and the sociopolitical crisis that they experience, as well as the ways in which various groups react to such crises within the changing world system.

Moving now to the other extreme, it would also be interesting to compare the more industrially advanced trajectories of the third world with those of countries which, despite similar starting points, managed to acquire a 'First World' developmental profile. I have in mind here countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand which, like the Southern Latin American societies, participated fully in the 19th century expansion of world trade. These countries, unlike Argentina or Uruguay for instance, managed early on to modernise their primary sector, to develop an important domestic market and to launch subsequently an industrialisation programme which was more fully integrated into their overall economies (Senghaas, 1985). Moreover, these former British colonies managed to bring about these transformations within a democratic-parliamentary framework

which, during the whole of this century, was functioning in a more stable and liberal manner than the quasiparliamentary Latin American polities or the even more repressive South East Asian ones.

A final note concerning developmental trajectories: as in Moore's analysis, in constructing a typology of third world routes to development/underdevelopment there is no reason why one should not include within the same trajectory countries which are not in the same region. *Depending of course on the problem and level of analysis*, there is no reason why one should not be able to break away from the tradition of regional studies (Latin American, Caribbean, Mediterranean etc.) and group together countries which, although geographically apart or culturally different, do show fundamental similarities in their patterns of long-term socioeconomic transformation.

For instance, despite the geographical distance and the obvious differences in cultural and historical backgrounds, Greece and (to a lesser extent) the major northern Balkan societies before their postwar collectivisation show significant similarities with the countries of Latin America's Southern Cone. Until the beginning of the 19th century Balkan as well as Latin American societies were subjugated parts of huge patrimonial empires (the Ottoman and the Iberian respectively), they both acquired their political independence in the 19th century and, during this century, adopted parliamentary forms of political rule. Despite the malfunctioning of such forms, parliamentarism evinced a surprising degree of resilience, surviving and functioning more or less intermittently from the second half of the last century until the 1930's in the case of northern Balkan societies, and until the rise of military authoritarian regimes in the 1960's and 1970's for Greece and the Southern Cone countries; the latter's dictatorial regimes, as the Greek and Argentinian cases suggest, did not necessarily entail the irreversible demise of parliamentary democracy. Moreover on the economic level, despite their relatively late start and their failure to industrialise in the last century, Greece, the northern Balkans and the Southern Latin American countries all managed, through the development of their export sectors, first to build up a significant economic infrastructure, and then to achieve (without modernising their agriculture) an impressive degree of 'disarticulated' industrialisation during the interwar and postwar years.¹³ Given the above similarities, for certain macro comparative purposes it might be useful to view them together and contrast their developmental routes with those of countries which show systematic differences, in terms of economic and political transformation.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the construction of theories focusing on different third world trajectories can provide the best basis for showing how trends and contradictions on the international, global level work themselves out and articulate with institutional arrangements and group antagonisms within specific nation-states. Given all this, it is really very strange that, with few exceptions,¹⁴ no serious historical comparative work along these lines has been done in the sociology of development. What does the third world literature have to show that is even remotely comparable to the first world focused work of such Marxist or Marxist oriented theorists as Moore, Hobsbawm, Braudel, or Anderson? Very little indeed. There is of course Immanuel Wallerstein, but Wallerstein's really interesting work (1974, 1980) focuses on the way in which changes in the world economy relate to macro-historical developments in Western European nation states, his analysis

becoming very schematic when it turns to the capitalist periphery and semi-periphery. The question should perhaps be rephrased: Why do we not have historically minded social theorists who can do for third world trajectories what Moore and Wallerstein have done for first world ones?

Before answering this question we shall have to turn our attention to a particular weakness of the dependency school which can only be dealt with by either a fundamental reformulation or the outright rejection of the Marxist conceptual framework. This weakness is Marxism's economistic, reductionist tendency, a tendency which is particularly crippling when Marxist tools are applied in the analysis of third world capitalist formations.

Marxist reductionism: its implications for the sociology of development

When viewed not as a set of 'laws' but as a conceptual framework for the analysis of specific situations, Marxism presents two fundamental advantages over other approaches. *First*, unlike neo-classical economic theory, which views phenomena in a compartmentalised manner (relegating politics and culture to the category of factors 'extraneous' to economic analysis proper), Marxism allows a far more holistic examination of social formations. Viewing development as an overall societal transformation, the Marxist political economy approach sets out to discover how contradictions and struggles within the economy are systematically related to changes in the political and cultural spheres. *Second*, unlike other paradigms in the social sciences, Marxism can suggest useful ways of looking at societies from the point of view of both agency and institutional structure (Lockwood 1974, Mouzelis 1974). I would like to elaborate this second point further.

Unlike agents as portrayed in various action-oriented theories (whether phenomenological or of the social conflict type),¹⁵ collective agents in the Marxist paradigm do not operate in an institutional vacuum. Their strategies have to be seen within existing structural/systemic constraints and contradictions, of which they may or may not be conscious. In contrast to Parsonian functionalism at the other extreme, Marxism does not conceptualise classes and collective actors in general as mere puppets of the system; it shows them as both producers and products of their social world. To be more specific, the notion of relations of production and the ensuing Marxist distinction between class locations and class practices can operate as an effective bridge between a system and an action approach. The sharper the focus on the way in which agents react to their locations by trying to maintain or transform their structural positions vis à vis the means of production, the greater the concern with issues of 'strategic conduct', i.e. issues related to the manner in which economic subjects build up their identities and their view of what their interests are, how they go about promoting them, etc. The sharper, on the other hand, the focus on how class locations cluster together and form larger institutional complexes, the more considerations of agents' practices give way to 'system integration' issues such as the manner in which institutional complexes (like private property and technology) are mutually compatible or incompatible, whether their eventual incompatibilities or contradictions provide favourable conditions for the development of specific forms of class consciousness and struggles, etc.¹⁶

Of course, the balance between agency and structure has not always been maintained in Marxism. It has been broken either by ultra-voluntaristic class theories that end up by explaining all social developments in terms of the Machiavellian machinations of a dominant class: or, at the other pole, by theories stressing structural constraints and contradictions to such an extent that actors are reduced, to use Althusser's expression, to mere 'bearers of structures'. Despite all this, the Marxist paradigm does provide the theoretical means for looking at societies both in terms of actors' goals and strategies *and* in terms of systemic wholes and their reproduction requirements. I would argue that the outstanding Marxist contributions to our understanding of how total societies persist and change are characterised by such a structure/agency synthesis.

Needless to say, a balanced action/structure holism is indispensable for the study of development. It would be pretty well impossible to account for long term developments without a conceptual scheme that is both holistic and at the same time sensitive to groups' struggles as well as to systemic contradictions as mechanisms of change. It is not surprising, therefore, that any theory which tries to account for long term societal transformations in more than purely descriptive terms tends to be influenced by Marxism. Neither is it surprising that, despite the present crisis of the dependency model and of Marxism in general, nothing has emerged to replace it as a tool for the systematic study of how global societies are constituted, persist, and change.

What has just been said must not, however, be allowed to obscure the existence of a fundamental and pervasive flaw in Marxist theory, a flaw that has grave consequences *particularly in the development field*. This flaw is Marxism's economistic, reductionist orientation. Economic reductionism was a prominent feature of classical Marxism and, despite recent attempts to overcome the theoretical difficulties it entails, it still constitutes a major, if not *the* major, weakness of the Marxian paradigm. Let us take a closer look at the problem by focusing on the way in which Marxism deals with the economy-polity relationship.

At the risk of over-generalisation, I would argue that present-day Marxist theories put forward two equally unsatisfactory views of the economy-polity relationship. The first of these consists of an approach whereby political phenomena are explained in terms of either the reproductive requirements of capital, or the interests and projects of the economically dominant classes.¹⁷ Since this type of reductive thinking has been extensively discussed and criticised, I move on to Marxism's second major approach to the economy-polity relationship. This sets out to by-pass the reductionism of the first by laying particular stress on the 'relative autonomy' of the political sphere, and on the fact that political forms cannot be automatically derived from economic determinations. Here the economy is not supposed to determine political developments directly, but merely to delimit what is possible on the level of the superstructure. What, according to this view, is going to emerge within these set limits depends on the *political conjuncture*, and this leaves no more room for a theorisation of specifically political structures and contradictions.¹⁸ Now this approach subjects the political sphere to a subtle and sophisticated downgrading. While it is conceded that economic constraints or forces can no longer be regarded as the direct determinants of politics, it is proposed that political phenomena, although relatively autonomous, are not amenable to the same kind of analysis as economic ones. On the one hand economic phenomena can be accounted

for in terms of the structural tendencies of the capitalist mode of production. On the other hand for political phenomena, given their fluid and transient character, structural analysis must be replaced by a study of the political conjuncture.

Given this position, the 'relative autonomy' emphasis does not lead to the elaboration of *specific* tools for the study of the political; instead, politics and the state continue to be defined in class/economic terms. So what is being given with the one hand on the level of substantive statements is taken away with the other on the conceptual/methodological level by the insistence that non-economic spheres *must* be conceptualised in economic terms.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a century after Marx's death Marxists still have very little to show in terms of a non-reductive theory of politics. In contrast, for instance, to Parsonian functionalism (which has generated a sophisticated, albeit unsatisfactory, corpus of concepts for the study of political development in the works by Almond, Deutsch, Apter, Nettl, Eisenstadt and others), Marxism has no conceptual armoury of this type. What we usually call the Marxist theory of the capitalist state is not in fact a theory of the state per se, but a theory of how the state contributes or fails to contribute to the reproduction requirements of capitalism.

The argument here is *not* that one cannot establish systematic relationships between political struggles and class contradictions, or that the state in capitalist societies is entirely autonomous from the economy (everybody agrees that it is not). Rather the argument is that Marxism, having failed to elaborate specific conceptual tools for the study of politics, *builds the alleged primacy of the economic into the definition of the political*. In that sense it is unable to study the complex and *varying* relationships between economy and polity in a theoretically coherent and at the same time *empirically open-ended* manner.

Let me illustrate this by briefly discussing the Marxist or Marxist-influenced literature on the rise of dictatorial regimes in the Southern Cone Latin American countries in the sixties and seventies. The emergence of these bureaucratic authoritarian regimes is invariably explained in terms of economic contradictions and class struggles. If the army is not crudely seen as a passive instrument in the hands of the indigenous or foreign bourgeoisies (Portantiero 1974), explanations put the stress on the predominantly middle class origin of the officers (Nun 1976), or on the changing requirements of capitalist industrialisation (O'Donnel 1973). What is not considered seriously and systematically are specific political contradictions and struggles which are only *indirectly* related to the economy: contradictions and struggles which have a history and dynamic of their own and which relate more directly to the chequered trajectory of parliamentary institutions in these countries, to the specific organisation of the armed forces and their dominant position within the state and to the fact that the military's interests do not always coincide with those of the dominant classes. These crucial dimensions are systematically overlooked, given the absence of conceptual tools sensitising the student to the specificity of the politico-military sphere, and this leads to explanations which are either too schematic or plainly wrong.¹⁹

To conclude and generalise: if the state in capitalist formations is defined as an instrument of the economically dominant classes, or as performing the functions of capital, this automatically rules out of court the investigation of cases where the holders of the means of domination/coercion have the upper hand over the holders of the means of production, or cases where state policies hinder rather than promote

the enlarged reproduction of capitalism. Needless to say, cases of this kind are all too common in the capitalist periphery, where civil society in general and classes in particular are weakly organised and where, very often, the reproductive requirements of the polity are quite incompatible with those of the economy, in which case the latter often give way to the former.²⁰

Given that Marxist political theory pushes under the carpet this type of issue, it is not surprising that the obviously negative, obstructionist role (vis à vis the expanded reproduction of capitalism) that the state is playing in many third world countries is not taken very seriously into account. Consider, for instance, Marxist writings that view third world formations as an articulation of modes of production within which the capitalist mode dominates but takes a 'restrictive form' (in the sense that non-capitalist modes persist on a large scale). In trying to account for this, the role of the state in 'restricting' capitalism has hardly been considered. The marked persistence of pre-capitalist or non-capitalist forms has been explained at one time or another in terms of the interests of metropolitan capital (see, for instance, Taylor 1979:220ff), in terms of indigenous capital profiting in various ways from the persistence of non-capitalist forms (Wolpe 1975), or in terms of the nature of third world pre-capitalist economies (Rey 1971 and 1975). What has not been given any serious thought is the extent to which at least the internal obstacles to the expanded reproduction of capital in the third world are more *political* than economic. The same neglect has been accorded to the fact that the way in which the third world state is organised and intervenes in the economy most often undermines rather than encourages capitalist expansion, and that the few 'success' stories of late-late capitalist development (the South East Asian type of capitalist trajectory) were possible only due to the atypical structure of the state, to its remarkable capacity for massive and selective intervention in the economy without undermining private initiative.

In respect of these later cases it is worth quoting extensively from an analysis which is unblinkered by either Marxist economism or neo-classical market orientated theories of growth:

'In terms of mainstream economics, it is paradoxical that the East Asian financial systems have both more control and more market-determination than those of many other countries. The reason why the financial controls do not produce the disasters that mainstream economics predicts is that the public-sector-in-general is more effective in these countries than in many others: more effective in promoting a competitively-oriented will to produce. So my argument does not conclude that most other developing countries should attempt to institute the same pattern of financial controls as in East Asia. The same controls in many other countries, with less effective public sectors, could be confidently expected to have the adverse consequences that mainstream economics predicts, with no noticeable beneficial ones.'

Focusing more specifically on Taiwan:

'If development strategy in Taiwan has been defined by state officials, if state officials have stressed market forces so as to create the kind of production structure which they think Taiwan should have, then the question of the basis, organisation and operation of state authority becomes exceedingly important. Given that not a few states are little more than instruments of plunder on behalf of a small group of officials, politicians and military, why has the state in Taiwan deployed its power benignly rather than malignly? How has the use

of public power been disciplined? . . . My concern has been to show that these questions do have to be addressed if Taiwan's remarkable industrialisation is to be understood, because the neo-classical explanation in terms of self-regulating markets is not adequate.' (Wade 1985:78)

It might be claimed that, if neo-classical economists do not take the political dimension seriously, it is otherwise with Marxism, whose political-economy approach attempts precisely to combat the compartmentalisation of economic and political phenomena found in conventional economics. But, as I have already pointed out, Marxism's holism is achieved at the price of seeing the whole in terms of categories exclusively drawn from the economic, and this leads to a political-economy rather than to a *political-economy* or to a *political-economy* approach.²¹

Appearances notwithstanding, Marxist theory, because of the way in which it conceptualises the non-economic spheres, does not take seriously into account that the polity may have a dynamic which cannot be derived from the economy and which, therefore, cannot be properly analysed by the use of economic/class categories. This weakness is particularly limiting in the analysis of peripheral capitalism, where all too often it is struggles over the means of domination and coercion, rather than struggles over the means of production, that seem to be central for understanding overall societal transformations.

In the light of this it becomes rather more understandable why the Marxist-oriented sociology of development literature does not have its Barrington Moore, or why Wallerstein's serious work focuses on first rather than third world trajectories.

Finally, although this goes beyond the scope of this paper, it might be worth noting that a similar neglect of the political is also found in the culture-focused modernisation theories that preceded the neo-Marxist dependency approach, as well as in the market-focused neo-classical economic models competing with it. *From this point of view one could argue that neglect of the political – as a major, if not the major, base for explaining the varied capitalist trajectories in the third world – constitutes the Achilles heel of all development theory.*

Conclusion

The following points have been made concerning the present state of affairs in the Marxist-oriented sociology of development theory:

- (a) Such key concepts in the field as dependency or dependent development make sense only within a first-third world comparative framework. A way, therefore, of clarifying the meaning of these concepts and of advancing the debate on their logical and theoretical status is to adopt a historically oriented macro comparative approach, focusing on the major differences as well as interconnections between the capitalist trajectories of the centre and the periphery.
- (b) There is an urgent need to bridge the existing gap in the literature between, on the one hand, case studies that by being centred on a single country achieve depth but fail to provide any generalisations about third world development and, on the other hand, over-ambitious theories that, by attempting to cover all third world countries, end up with generalisations which are either too obvious or wrong. I have suggested that the way to bridge this gap is to build up typologies and theories about

different types of developmental routes within the third world, and that to do this effectively requires the kind of painstaking historical comparative research that Moore and other historically-minded social scientists have conducted with reference to the early routes to modernity in the West.

Both the above points suggest that the present crisis in the sociology of development can be overcome neither by abstract armchair theorising, nor by ahistorical positivistic attempts to 'test' neo-Marxist propositions or to 'measure' dependency and related notions precisely. What is sorely lacking, and what can revitalise the sociology of development, is historical investigations which do not shy away from bold comparisons or from looking at *longue durée* transformations.

(c) For such a task the Marxist paradigm presents both advantages and limitations. As a holistic, historically oriented approach, capable of examining overall societal transformations in both systemic and agency terms, it offers conceptual tools that are quite indispensable and that alternative paradigms do not seem to provide. On the other hand, given the crucial importance of the state for understanding developments in peripheral capitalism, Marxism's reductionist treatment of the political creates serious methodological and theoretical difficulties.

Can Marxism overcome these difficulties while retaining a distinctive theoretical profile? For some theorists the idea of a non-reductionist Marxist theory of politics is a contradiction in terms, since a conceptual framework which deals with the political sphere in a non-economistic manner ceases *ipso facto* to be Marxist. For others, a non-reductionist Marxist theory of the polity is possible, provided one creates new conceptual tools which:

- (i) try to deal with the non-economic institutional spheres in a way that does not build into their very definition (and hence exclude from empirical investigation) the type of relationship they are supposed to have with the economy;
- (ii) try to avoid economism without falling into the compartmentalisation of the political and economic spheres to be found in neo-classical economics and in non-Marxist political science, i.e. without abandoning fundamental features of the Marxist paradigm such as its holistic, political economy orientation and its agency-structure synthesis.

I think that this latter possibility should be seriously explored,²² particularly since, at the present moment at least, there is no alternative macro-sociological paradigm which can deal in a more satisfactory manner with the complex ways in which whole societies are transformed within the context of the world economy and polity.

Needless to say, the elaboration of a non-economistic Marxist paradigm is not a *sine qua non* condition for the revitalisation of development studies. An emphasis on comparative, historical-sociological research on third world trajectories can do a great deal towards the overcoming of the present impasse. However, the reformulation of a non-reductionist 'political economy' conceptual framework, whether called Marxist, post-Marxist or non-Marxist, could enormously facilitate the examination of already existing work of a comparative/historical kind,²³ giving thus a new impetus and theoretical coherence to development theory.

Notes

1. As this paper does not aim to provide a detailed review of the Marxist literature on development, there is no systematic attempt to differentiate between various subschools.

Therefore the terms 'neo-Marxist' and 'dependency' are used interchangeably to refer broadly to the tradition of Marxist influenced writings on the third world which have as their starting point the seminal work of Baran (1975) and Frank (1969).

For tendencies and writings constituting the background to the dependency approach, as well as for an attempt to differentiate neo-Marxism from dependency theory, see Blomström and Hettne (1984).

2. For a recent review of the development literature which conveys clearly the sense of crisis and disillusionment see Booth (1985).
3. Both these can be clearly seen in Gunder Frank's early critique of modernisation theory. See, for instance, Frank (1966). See also Bernstein (1971).
4. There are of course a few exceptions: Bairoch (1974), Kurth (1979), Hirschman (1968) and Senghaas (1985). None of the above works derives from the mainstream dependency tradition.
5. Baran (1975), for instance, indulges in this type of comparative exercise.
6. See, for instance Taylor (1979) and Bernstein (1979). For a critique of the above works which stresses that centre/periphery comparisons need not be teleological, see Mouzelis (1980:356ff).
7. For instance, British financiers provided almost half of the thirty million pounds invested in French railways in the late 1840's (Berend and Ranki 1974:93).
8. After 1815, for instance, English engine builders came to settle in France. See Fohlen (1973:48).
9. As Taylor (1979:98) has pointed out in his critique of neo-Marxism, in the same way that neo-evolutionist theories portray *modernity* as generating processes of structural functional differentiation, in neo-Marxist theories *western development*, in an 'equally mysterious and reified fashion generates underdevelopment'.
10. For the development of a similar kind of critique see Booth (1985).
11. I would in fact argue that if there is an ethnocentric bias in the sociology of development, its primary manifestation is the failure to take seriously into account systematic variations in the historical trajectories of third world countries.
12. Concerning the theoretical elaboration of these concepts see M. Aglietta (1976).
13. For a Balkan-Latin American macro historical comparison, see N. Mouzelis (1986). For the concept of *disarticulation* see S. Amin (1973).
14. The work of Cardoso and Faletto (1979) comes immediately to mind, but I find it too schematic and class reductionist in orientation (see on this point next section).
15. I have in mind here conflict theories like those of Coser, Rex and Dahrendorf.
16. See on these points Lockwood (1974) and Mouzelis (1974).
17. For a systematic criticism of this type of literature, see Mouzelis (1980).
18. For the adoption of such a theoretical position in the study of third world capitalist countries, see Taylor (1979:132). For a more specific application to Latin America, see Portantiero (1974).
19. See Mouzelis (1986, chs. 3 and 4). In this work I argue that the post-war rise of military regimes in the Southern Cone relates directly to a contradiction between high levels of political mobilisation/radicalisation and the incorporative/exclusionist mechanisms of control that crystallised in these countries during the interwar period, mechanisms of control directly monitored by the military. In the early sixties unprecedented levels of popular mobilisation (which were only partially related to economic developments) threatened that system of controls and hence more or less directly the power position of the military within the state. Therefore the military, particularly in Argentina, in trying to stem by force the growing tide of popular mobilisation, were primarily defending their own interests rather than those of bourgeoisie.
20. For a study which shows in considerable detail how the logic of politics often prevails over the market logic in the capitalist periphery see Bates (1981).

21. Let me give another example from the area of sociology of development. In several third world countries with stagnating capitalist sectors, politico-military groups in control of the state apparatus are so powerful, and hence impervious to pressures from weakly organised economic interest groups, that it becomes patently absurd to view them as serving the interests of those who control the means of production. Such awkward cases, from the point of view of Marxist theory, are typically 'normalised' by branding these politico-military groups a 'state bourgeoisie'. Thus by attaching an *ad hoc* class label to any group which is not easily classifiable in terms of conventional class analysis, historic materialism is saved once again — but at the price of conflating the economic and the political, and of making it impossible to conduct an empirically open-ended investigation of the complex relationship between those who control the means of production and those controlling the means of domination.
The practice of stretching the concept of class to such an extent that it ends up covering all social groups in the social formation is frequently used by Marxists as a defence against criticism of their reductionist orientation. Such a practice does, of course, achieve the purpose of complying with the conventional Marxist view that the holders of the state apparatus *must* be defined in economic/class terms; but it does this by reducing the concept of class to a blanket term that not only explains very little, but also prevents the empirical examination of the complex and changing relationships between economically and politically dominant groups.
22. For an attempt to explore such possibilities see Mouzelis (1986:199ff).
23. For a recent review article which discusses such work and emphasises the importance of more research of a historical comparative kind see Evans (forthcoming).

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