CONSENSUS, CONFLICT, AND INTERNATIONAL STRATIFICATION THEORIES OF MODERNIZATION: AN EVALUATION

WILLIAM C. LANE
Kansas State University


ABSTRACT

This paper reviews two of the major sociological theories of modernization, the consensus and conflict perspectives. These two theories are used to analyze some aspects of the economic and political situation in Chile. The international stratification approach is then presented as a third theory. Based upon criteria developed during the critique of the consensus and conflict theories, it is argued that the international stratification paradigm offers a synthesis of these two approaches which may be able to fulfill the requirements for a comprehensive sociological theory of modernization.

From the classical period to the present sociologists have been concerned with social change and development. Comte, Spencer and others, under the influence of Darwin, were particularly concerned with social progress. Social progress has been defined as “attempts to trace the evolution of specific social forms or entire societies from some earlier, less advanced state to a terminal, advanced state ...” (Apelbaum, 1970:18). While sociologists no longer discuss social progress, they are concerned with development and, the more inclusive process, modernization. This interest in modernization became an urgent area of study at the end of the Second World War as a result of the changing international situation, particularly in relationship to the colonial countries (Bernstein, 1971).

This paper examines two general approaches to the sociology of modernization, the consensus and conflict theories. The work of Smelser and Marx will be examined as important and representative examples of each of the respective theories. Data on social change in Chile is then used to examine the explanatory abilities of each theory. The international stratification approach, an alternative model to the conflict and consensus models, will be discussed. Based upon the evaluation of each of these approaches, some requirements for a sociological theory of modernization will be presented.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bonjean, Charles M., Richard J. Hill and S. Dale McLemore

Coleman, James S.

Gordon, C. Wayne
1957 The Social System of the High School (Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.).

Hollingshead, A. B.
1949 Elmtown's Youth (J. Wiley, New York).
The conflict model views society as a "continually contested political struggle between groups with opposing goals and world views" (Horton, 1966:704). Horton (1966:704) continues by stating that "order follows from the conditions of social organization and not from the state of cultural integration. Whereas the consensus model is geared toward the maintenance of social institutions, the conflict model reflects a positive attitude toward change. While the conflict approach questions the legitimacy of existing normative structures, the consensus model accepts them as the standards around which society stabilizes (Horton, 1966:705). Conflict theory has its roots in the works of Marx, with Dahrendorf and Frank as contemporary examples.

Dahrendorf (1973:105) has summarized the basic underlying assumptions of the structural-functional and conflict theories of social change. The summary focuses attention upon the most fundamental criticism of the consensus model: How can a model which emphasizes maintenance of the social system, integration, the functional importance of each element in society, and consensus account for social change?

The conflict model views society as a "continually contested political struggle between groups with opposing goals and world views" (Horton, 1966:704). Horton (1966:704) continues by stating that "order follows from the conditions of social organization and not from the state of cultural integration. Whereas the consensus model is geared toward the maintenance of social institutions, the conflict model reflects a positive attitude toward change. While the conflict approach questions the legitimacy of existing normative structures, the consensus model accepts them as the standards around which society stabilizes (Horton, 1966:705). Conflict theory has its roots in the works of Marx, with Dahrendorf and Frank as contemporary examples.

Dahrendorf (1973:105) has summarized the basic underlying assumptions of the structural-functional and conflict theories of social change. The summary focuses attention upon the most fundamental criticism of the consensus model: How can a model which emphasizes maintenance of the social system, integration, the functional importance of each element in society, and consensus account for social change?

Consensus Model
1. Every society is a relatively persisting configuration of elements.
2. Every society is a well integrated configuration of elements.
3. Every element in a society contributes to its functioning.
4. Every society rests on the consensus of its members.

Conflict Model
1. Every society is subjected at every moment to change.
2. Every society experiences at every moment social conflicts.
3. Every element in a society contributes to its change.
4. Every society rests on the constraint of some of its members by others.

For the consensus theorist, rebellion is equated with alienation, while conformity is equated with equilibrium (Horowitz, 1972b:483). Horowitz (1972b:487), in contrasting the two theories, places this fundamental criticism into perspective.

In short, consensus differs from conflict as organization differs from deviance. Thus to discuss social structure is by definition not to examine conflict situations and, of course, to examine conflict situations is to discuss something extraneous to social structure.

This recurring controversy over the degree of prominence accorded conflict as a factor in social organization and change (Hobbs, 1971:65) will continue to be examined throughout the paper.
Consensus Model of Modernization

This scheme may be summarized as follows:

1. Differentiation characterizes a social structure that is moving toward greater complexity (modernization).

2. Integration balances the divisive character of differentiation but may also work to increase differentiation.

3. Social disturbances result from the discontinuities between differentiation and integration. (Smelser, 1968)

This sequence may recur, always establishing a new level of integration (Hobbs, 1971:241). Smelser’s theory of modernization is therefore clearly evolutionary and Durkheimian in nature. Although he does not contend that such a path leads to uniform social structures, his model for development is clearly capitalist-industrial society.

The characteristics of consensus theory are clearly visible in the construction of Smelser’s theory. He is concerned with integration, stability, maintenance of the social system, and authority. Conflict is viewed as deviant, a social disturbance that is outside the system. Lauer (1973:72), after reviewing this theory, concludes that “we are left with the feeling that the structural-functionalist perspective will not carry us very far in understanding change.”

Conflict Model of Modernization

Conflict theories, as Appelbaum (1970:81) has noted, “constitute the legacy of Karl Marx.” From the Marxian perspective, if the social world exists in equilibrium it is a consequence of conflict situations and not from consensus. “Although conflict theorists do acknowledge the presence of order, they cite coercion rather than consensus as a more realistic basis for such order” (Hobbs, 1971:28).

Avineri (1969) warns against making a simplistic, one-dimensional interpretation of the Marxian view of modernization. While various commentators acknowledge that Marx postulated four modes of production, “nowhere does Marx indicate that the Asiatic mode of production changes into one of the other three forms” (Avineri, 1969:180). In fact, according to Avineri (1969:181), the basic trait of Asian societies is that of “stagnant, unchanging, non-dialectical, particularistic, limited, and devoid of societal mechanisms for change.” If this historical description is correct, then there is no chance for internal change. While Marx and Engels condemn “the motives of colonialism—and the capitalist society that gives rise to them” they understand the necessity of colonialism within the wider scheme of things (Avineri, 1969:185).

One example of a contemporary conflict theory of modernization is that of Frank (1967). Frank contends that underdevelopment in Latin American countries, such as Chile, “is the product of four centuries of capitalist development and of the internal contradictions of capitalism itself” (Frank, 1967:3). According to Frank (1967:3):

... capitalist contradictions and the historical development of the capitalist system have generated underdevelopment in the peripheral satellites whose economic surplus was expropriated, while generating economic development in the metropolitan centers which appropriate that surplus—and, further, that this process still continues.

Frank argues that the course of modernization, and the existence of underdevelopment, is a consequence of the capitalist system. Because of the capitalist mode of production, it is in the interest of the advanced nations to exploit the less developed nations or Third World countries. Therefore, the causes of economic stagnation within the Third World countries are not intrinsic, but extrinsic.

Consensus and Conflict Theories Reconsidered

From the analysis above, it is quite clear that the conflict perspective leads to a different kind of analysis than consensus theories. Smelser’s theory of modernization views the problem of development “as related to the inner functioning of the underdeveloped society,” whereas the conflict perspective views modernization as extrinsic to the nation and closely related to the problems of the advanced nations (Horowitz, 1972a:31). There are, of course, problems with conflict theories. As Horowitz (1972a:30-1) has asserted, “Frank’s position ... imposes a new set of restrictions, namely, the assumption that the victory of the cosmopolitan center over the peripheral areas is inevitable.” However, elsewhere Horowitz (1972b:495) has stated that “from a descriptive point of view, conflict theory covers a wider and more profound range of questions than consensus theory.”

Thus far, we have only outlined the fundamental principles of both consensus and conflict theory. However, the question we have not yet confronted is at the heart of our evaluation: Does consensus theory or conflict theory offer the greatest explanatory power in analyzing development? To examine this question, we will briefly consider modernization in Chile.
THEORIES OF MODERNIZATION

CHILE: INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OR EXTERNAL CONTROL

Chile had the first freely elected Marxist president in Latin America. Running as the candidate of the Unidad Popular, a broadly based coalition of Communists and left-socialists, the independent Catholic revolutionaries, and the old Radical party, Salvador Allende was elected by popular vote (Zeitlin, 1973:17). "He pledged to put Chile on the road to socialism by taking over the major corporations (domestic and U.S.), the banks, the insurance companies, and the large agrarian estates, and by instituting democratic economic planning" (Zeitlin, 1973:7).

From a consensus perspective, prior to the election of Allende, Chile would be viewed as one of the most stable nations in Latin America. The ruling coalition of the rich and powerful had ruled Chile for over a century through parliamentary government—a parliamentary democracy which enjoyed considerable legitimacy (Zeitlin, 1973:18). However, along with political stability, there had been significant social conflict.

Why had Chile, with an enormous supply of copper, remained largely underdeveloped? Why did 5 percent of the population (primarily urban owners of capital) receive 40 percent of the national income, while 30 percent (largely rural agricultural workers) received only 5 percent (Frank, 1967:106-7)? The standard consensual analysis would lead to a "remnants of feudalism" explanation with modernization as the answer to the problem. With increasing structural differentiation, the nation would move toward industrialization, status ascription would decrease, social mobility would increase, and a more equal distribution of income would result. That is, the benefits of development and modernization would eventually reach all sectors of society through what has been called the "spread effect" (Berger, 1976:48).

The conflict approach to modernization uses a very different kind of analysis and yields very different answers. The conflict theorist would examine the monopoly structure of capitalism in Chile (Frank, 1967:7), and the degree of exploitation or control by capitalist interests outside the nation (Zeitlin, et al., 1974). Zeitlin and others (1974:109) found that the 37 largest national nonfinancial corporations owned by Chilean nationals in 1964, were controlled by "complex kinship units in which economic and kinship bonds are inextricably intertwined." Frank (1967) found that Chile's copper mines were 90 percent American owned. In addition, reports of the Senate hearings on the CIA's involvement in the overthrow of the Allende government uncovered vast economic interests by U.S. corporations in Chile (Cristobal, 1975). While consensus theory focuses on the internal aspects of modernization, conflict theory examines both external and internal factors.

The overthrow of the socialist coalition government in Chile (with the backing of the CIA, ITT, and others) has led to the installation of a new military regime and the end of years of democratic rule. For the conflict theorist, this action would come as no surprise. As Baran has pointed out, when a nationalist administration begins to oppose foreign domination, "all leverages of diplomatic intrigue, economic pressure, and political subversion are set into motion to overthrow the recalcitrant national government and to replace it with politicians who are willing to serve the interest of the capitalist countries" (Baran, 1973:394).

For the theorist operating from the consensus perspective, the situation is quite different. Smelser (1968:144) simply notes that foreign infiltration and intervention in support of protest groups is one factor in the "genesis and molding of social disturbances." Moreover, Dahrendorf (1958:120) has stated that it is difficult to understand how a society based on universal consensus can allow for structurally generated conflicts.

Based upon the evaluation presented thus far, we maintain that conflict theory holds much more potential for explanatory and causal analysis than does consensus theory. However, as Hobbs (1971:12) has stated, "there is no single theory of social change [and] each identifiable branch of sociological theory has developed its own perspective and propositions regarding change." With this in mind, Irving Horowitz (1973b) has attempted to construct a synthesis of the conflict and consensus theories which he terms the international stratification approach to development.

THE INTERNATIONAL STRATIFICATION APPROACH


Quite simply, the book hypothesizes that the world can be analyzed from an economic, a political, a military, or a social perspective as existing in a condition of unstable equilibrium, specifically, in a triadic relationship: The First World led by the United States, the Second World led by the Soviet Union, and the Third World comprising the Afro-Asian bloc and portions of Latin
America. The Third World remains incapable of preserving either its goals or its functions apart from either of the major power centers . . . . Horowitz has attempted to forge a theory which is a “model of models,” an attempt to synthesize a number of theories of development while leaning toward the conflict approach. The globe is stratified into three worlds which are defined in terms of economic, political, and social characteristics. The First World consists primarily of the United States and Western Europe and is both colonialist and capitalist. The First World is a “highly mobile, commodity-oriented, and ideologically egalitarian social system” (Horowitz, 1972b:8). By contrast, the Second World has historically consisted of Russia and the Soviet bloc countries. These countries are both technologically advanced and artistically backward, with skilled workers and a backward peasantry (Horowitz, 1972b:15). The Third World tends to be defined by the following characteristics (Horowitz, 1972b:17): (1) it tends to be independent of both power centers; (2) the bulk of the countries were under colonial rule until the Second World War; and (3) it draws on the First World for technology and the Second World for ideology. “The Third World is a self-defined and self-conscious association of nation-states” (Horowitz, 1972b:17). The leading nations are India, Ceylon, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Cuba, and China. (It should be noted that this work was first published in 1966 and revised in 1972. The Third World is in a state of flux in terms of prominent or influential nations. China, it appears, now wishes to influence and remained aligned with the Third World, but independent of it. The Arab nations, because of the oil situation, hold a much more important position today than they did in the past.) According to Horowitz (1972b:27), the formal political systems of the Third World nations are generally republican, while their real systems are usually authoritarian.

**Emerging Issues of Development**

Set against this backdrop of a tripartite configuration of nations, Horowitz (1972b:499) sketches the emergent issues in development. First, there is the problem of uneven development. While neither continents nor nations develop, there are “specific geographic areas which have particular ecological patterns, economic properties, and psychological orientations” that foster their development (Horowitz, 1972b:499-500). It is agriculture and the peasants that suffer the most from development. The second issue is the irreversibility of development. Horowitz (1972b:452) states that “. . . once the wheels of guided social change are set in motion, little can be done to halt the process.” Third, and an important issue for Horowitz, is the necessity of coercion versus internecine terrorism.

Totalitarian models, where there is a total appropriation of power by a single group, may be contrasted with authoritarian models. Although they are highly repressive, authoritarian models allow considerable latitude at the level of informal life. According to Horowitz (1972b:454), “legal safeguards are clearly going to be violated whenever a high priority is placed on rapid industrial development.” The Third World countries may be forced to use coercion when private industries fail to accelerate developmental patterns. This is one point which is completely outside the scope of consensus theorists.

Fourth, there is the issue of achievement and ascription in the developmental process. For Horowitz (1972:458), “Development implies that for a class, as opposed to particular individuals, ‘getting ahead’ may involve changing occupations and not simply abandoning ascribed status in exchange for achievement status.” In this stage Horowitz finds an emerging class of technical workers suffering from “relative exploitation.”

The fifth issue involves risk-taking and policy making. What direction will the social system take? Horowitz (1972b:463-65) postulates that “development in underdeveloped areas tends strongly to be socialist because planning is itself a consequence of the self-awareness of development.” The critical issue here is that the struggle for development is no longer a struggle between the capitalist and socialist bloc (Cold War politics), but is a conflict between the have and the have-not nations.

The sixth emerging issue in development revolves around the imbalance between life-styles and industrial styles. After the take-off period, as Horowitz labels the start of rapid development, standards of living go up. However, the economy stagnates and the nation must gain outside assistance, while depending upon agricultural exports to maintain its balance of payments. Therefore, in the Third World, “agriculture remains the core of the economy precisely because of modernization . . .” (Horowitz, 1972b:466-67).

The imbalance between industrial availability and educational achievements constitutes the seventh issue. “. . . the initial problem in most Third World countries is an ignorance bred of illiteracy and a lack of training” (Horowitz, 1972b:472). Even following the establishment of an educational system, status ascription and low social mobility impeded the utilization of the system.
Finally, there is the issue of the imbalance between political and economic development. Horowitz (1972b:473) notes that while Argentina has the highest per capita output in Latin America, it has the "typical Latin American government." That is, it has a strong centralized military authority which acts as a political formulator and stabilizer. "The stratification of future societies is clearly being shaped by the decisions taken now" on fundamental issues of development (Horowitz, 1972b:499).

Paradigms and Principles in Development

Development, as defined by Horowitz (1972b:511), "refers to the level of rationality achieved by a social structure, and also to the degree of complexity compatible with advanced techniques of production." There are also the social conditions of underdevelopment, in which anticipated processes and structures are being aborted, and overdevelopment where processes and systems can no longer be absorbed by the system of production and labor exchange. Horowitz (1972b:513-15) then examines the variables in the determination of the structure of the economy (capitalist, state capitalist, socialist, and the like), the operation of coercion and consensus, the shape of the political structure, and the social structure of the society.

The paradigm involves a consideration of the economic underpinnings of social change. According to Horowitz (1972b:518), "Consciousness of underdevelopment produces emphasis on social change; whereas consciousness of being highly developed produces emphasis on stability." The paradigm continues with an examination of development, underdevelopment, and overdevelopment, with some attention given to the structures and processes associated with each. In the final section of the paradigm, Horowitz (1972b:531) states that, for most nations, "the choice is not between development and underdevelopment . . . , but between public sector and private sector economies."

In examining the data presented in the previous section on Chile, the paradigm covers the fundamental issues raised by the conflict approach. Specifically, the paradigm accounts for the overthrow of the Allende government.

The conflict between the developing nations and the advanced nations often appears as a struggle between the nationalism of the former and the imperialism of the latter. That is so because capitalism, socialism, and peasant socialism, whatever their differences, represent forms of national control and allocation of wealth, while imperialism, whether of an "enlightened" or "despotic" variety, represents the foreign control and allocation of wealth. (Horowitz, 1972b:516)

Horowitz's work appears to be a major advance in the area of the sociology of modernization. He has confronted the various dilemmas of underdevelopment and overdevelopment, as well as development.

TOWARD A SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY OF MODERNIZATION

Having examined, in general, the consensus and conflict approaches to modernization, briefly presented data on Chile for examination, and reviewed the international stratification approach, we may now summarize some requirements concerning the character and scope of a workable sociological theory of modernization. First, we would agree with Geiger (1971:66) that the world of nations should be viewed as a global community of interconnected systems. Second, theories of modernization should not be bound to a culture or form of social organization. That is, capitalist-industrial society should not be the only model of development, with all other types of economic organization viewed as deviant cases.

A third requirement is that the theory account for the existence of both inter-nation and intra-nation conflicts. A theory of modernization must account for the advantageous positions of the developed nations, that is, the system of international stratification. Moreover, if a sociological theory of modernization is to be complete, it must account for the demographic, institutional, and social-psychological changes that accompany development.

Finally, a theory must account for the linking up of the operations of key industries between nations and the superordinate and subordinate relationships that insure control of the primary industries of the world. As Horowitz (1971:139) has stated, "If we continue to operate within national confines, it will not be possible to determine how production is affected by the character or alteration of social systems."

Based upon the requirements presented above, the international stratification theory conforms to more of these requirements than the more pure types of theories discussed in the early portions of the paper. The consensus model does not conform to any of these requirements. While concepts within the theory, particularly structural differentiation, may be very useful for analytical purposes, the theory is too bound to the capitalist-industrial model of social and economic organization. The Marxist conflict model, while much broader in scope, tends to focus on the economic aspects of international development at the expense of social-psychological and other factors.
Mid-American Review of Sociology

The primary advantage of the international stratification approach of Horowitz is that it represents a synthesis and is, therefore, able to account for sociodemographic and social-psychological variables, as well as the structural components. In addition, because it emphasizes the conflict approach, conflict is not assumed to be simply a social disturbance resulting from an imbalance between differentiation and integration. What is needed now are studies of the type conducted by Frank (1967) and Zeitlin and others (1974) to test and examine the international stratification paradigm.

NOTES

1. According to Bernstein (1971), the discipline of the author may have more important influence on the choice of terms than actual conceptual differences. Economists seem to favor development, while sociologists have tended to employ modernization.

2. While Horton uses the term order, for the purposes of this paper the term consensus has been substituted as an equivalent term.

3. It should be noted that Parsons (1961; 1971) has attempted to answer this criticism to some extent. For a complete critique of the functionalist theory of social change see Smith (1973).

4. For a more complete discussion of peripheral capitalism and dependency theory see Frank (1967) and Hill (1975).

5. For example, Cutright (1963), in his comparative analysis of political systems, finds that Chile has the highest rate of political development of any Latin American government.

6. It should be noted that this statement was made prior to the Arab oil embargo of 1973.

7. A paradigm, in this sense, is of the type developed by Merton (1968) as a guide to functional analysis. Horowitz's paradigm is a codification; "the orderly and compact arrangement of fruitful procedures of inquiry and the substantive findings that result from this use. This process entails identification and organization of what has been implicit in the work of the past rather than the invention of new strategies of research" (Merton, 1969:69).

REFERENCES

Appelbaum, Richard P.
1970 _Theories of Social Change_ (Chicago: Markham).

Avineri, Shlomo

Baran, Paul

Berger, Peter L.
1976 _Pyramids of Sacrifice_ (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press).

Bernstein, Henry

Cristobal, Kay

Cutright, Phillips

Dahrendorf, Ralf

Frank, Andre Gunder

Geiger, H. Kent

Gusfield, Joseph

Hill, Helen

Hobbs, Daryl J.

Horowitz, Irving Louis

Horton, John

Inkeles, Alex
STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION

ROBERT H. HINGERS
University of Kansas


ABSTRACT

Hillery's constructed types are used as a framework to develop a hypothesis regarding the relationship between forms of social organization and the integration and longevity of the group. The hypothesis is tested using: (1) failure rates of businesses and marriages, and (2) failure rates of variously structured intentional communities. Both tests support the hypothesis that communal organizations, which permit structural freewheeling, are more stable than formal organizations, which do not.

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists interested in the field of organizations, particularly community organization, have of late been presented with an empirical anomaly which appears with notable regularity in various societal frameworks. The commune, or intentional community, has again appeared on the American landscape quite visibly and has attracted the attention of a number of social commentators and sociologists (Fairfield, 72; French and French, 75; Kanter, 72, 73; Muncey, 73; Roberts, 71, 74; Veysey, 73; Zablocki, 71). Indeed, most sociologists interested in the intentional community recognize not only its contemporary appearance in the United States, both in terms of separatist organizations and as alternatives designed under the name of planned communities, but also on the international scene, particularly as it occurs in communist countries as an established form of social organization. Interestingly, however, most American sociologists have confined their inquiries to this continent while developing historical analyses and comparisons. The present article also makes no pretenses of comprehensive scope for a very good reason: American sociologists have not yet fully mapped nor understood this phenomena as it has occurred within our own societal framework.

The analysis presented here draws on the work of recent innovations in the vein of constructed typologies and community theory in America (Poplin, 72). The main thrust of this analysis dwells on the unique types of social integration which are associated with particular types of social