

FOUR MAIN THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT: MODERNIZATION, DEPENDENCY, WORLD-SYSTEM, AND GLOBALIZATION

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SUMMARY

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1. Introduction

The main objective of this document is to synthesize the main aspects of the four major theories of development: modernization, dependency, world-systems and globalization. These are the principal theoretical explanations to interpret development efforts carried out especially in the developing countries. These theoretical perspectives allow us not only to clarify concepts, to set them in economic and social perspectives, but also to identify recommendations in terms of social policies.

For the purposes of this paper, the term development is understood as a social condition within a nation, in which the authentic needs of its population are satisfied by the rational and sustainable use of natural resources and systems. This utilization of natural resources is based on a technology, which respects the cultural features of the population of a given country. This general definition of development includes the specification that social groups have access to organizations, basic services such as education, housing, health services, and nutrition, and above all else, that their cultures and traditions are respected within the social framework of a particular country.

In economic terms, the aforementioned definition indicates that for the population of a country, there are employment opportunities, satisfaction -at least- of basic needs, and the achievement of a positive rate of distribution and redistribution of national wealth. In a political sense this definition emphasizes that governmental systems have legitimacy not only in terms of the law, but also in terms of providing social benefits for the majority of the population. (1)

2. Theory of Modernization

According to Alvin So, there are three main and historical elements which were favorable to the inception of the modernization theory of development after the Second World War. First, there was the rise of the United States as a superpower. While other Western nations, such as Great Britain, France, and Germany, were weakened by World War II, the United States emerged from the war strengthened, and became a world leader with the implementation of the Marshall Plan to reconstruct war-torn Western Europe. (2)

Second, there was the spread of a united world communist movement. The Former Soviet Union extended its influence not only to Eastern Europe, but also to China and Korea. Third, there was the disintegration of European colonial empires in Asia, Africa and Latin America, giving birth to many new nation-states in the Third World. These nascent nation-states were in search of a model of development to promote their economy and to enhance their political independence. (3)

According to the modernization theory, modern societies are more productive, children are better educated, and the needy receive more welfare. According to Smelser's analysis, modern societies have the particular feature of social structural differentiation, that is to say a clear definition of functions and political roles from national institutions. Smelser argues that although structural differentiation has increased the functional capacity of modern organizations, it has also created the problem of integration, and of coordinating the activities of the various new institutions. (4)

In a political sense, Coleman stresses three main features of modern societies: a) Differentiation of political structure; b) Secularization of political culture -with the ethos of equality-, which c) Enhances the capacity of a society's political system. (5)

The major assumptions of the modernization theory of development basically are: Modernization is a phased process; for example Rostow has 5 phases according to his theory of economic development for a particular society, and I will mention them later. Modernization is a homogenizing process, in this sense, we can say that modernization produces tendencies toward convergence among societies, for example, Levy (1967, p. 207) maintains that : "as time goes on, they and we will increasingly resemble one another because the patterns of modernization are such that the more highly modernized societies become, the more they resemble one another". (6) Modernization is a europeanization or americanization process; in the modernization literature, there is an attitude of complacency toward Western Europe and the United States. These nations are viewed as having unmatched economic prosperity and democratic stability (Tipps: 1976, 14). In addition, modernization is an irreversible process, once started modernization cannot be stopped. In other words, once third world countries come into contact with the West, they will not be able to resist the impetus toward modernization. (7)

Modernization is a progressive process which in the long run is not only inevitable but desirable. According to Coleman, modernized political systems have a higher capacity to deal with the function of national identity, legitimacy,

penetration, participation, and distribution than traditional political systems. Finally, modernization is a lengthy process. It is an evolutionary change, not a revolutionary one. It will take generations or even centuries to complete, and its profound impact will be felt only through time. All these assumptions are derived from European and American evolutionary theory. (8)

There is also another set of classical assumptions based more strictly on the functionalism-structuralism theory which emphasizes the interdependence of social institutions, the importance of structural variables at the cultural level, and the built in process of change through homeostasis equilibrium. These are ideas derived especially from Parsons' sociological theories. (9)

These assumptions are as follows: a) Modernization is a systematic process. The attribute of modernity forms a consistent whole, thus appearing in a cluster rather than in isolation; (10) b) Modernization is a transformative process; in order for a society to move into modernity its traditional structures and values must be totally replaced by a set of modern values; (11) and c) Modernization is an imminent process due to its systematic and transformative nature, which builds change into the social system.

One of the principal applications of the modernization theory has been the economic field related to public policy decisions. From this perspective, it is very well known that the economic theory of modernization is based on the five stages of development from Rostow's model. In summary, these five stages are: traditional society, precondition for takeoff, the takeoff process, the drive to maturity, and high mass consumption society. According to this exposition, Rostow has found a possible solution for the promotion of Third World modernization. If the problem facing Third World countries resides in their lack of productive investments, then the solution lies in the provision of aid to these countries in the form of capital, technology, and expertise. The Marshall Plan and the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, are examples of programs which were influenced by Rostow's political theories. (12)

The strengths of modernization theory can be defined in several aspects. First, we can identify the basis of the research focus. Despite the fact that the main studies of modernization were carried out by a psychologist, a social psychologist, a sociologist of religion and a political sociologist, other authors have extended modernization theory into other spheres. For example, Bellah examines the role of the Tokugawas religion on pajanes economic development in South-East Asia with effects on villages of Cambodia, Laos and Burma; Lipset addresses the possible role of economic development in the democratization of Third World countries, and Inkeles discusses the consequences of the modernization process for individual attitudes and behavior. (13)

A second feature of the modernization perspective is the analytical framework. Authors assume that Third World countries are traditional and that Western countries are modern. In order to develop, those poor nations need to adopt Western values. In third place, the methodology is based on general studies; for example the expositions regarding the value factors in the Third World, and the differentiation between unstable democracies, dictatorships and stable dictatorships.

Modernization theory, on the other hand, was popular in the 1950s, but was under heavy attack at the end of the 60s. Criticisms of the theory include the following: First, development is not necessarily unidirectional. This is an example of the ethnocentricity of Rostow's perspective. Second, the modernization perspective only shows one possible model of development. The favored example is the development pattern in the United States. Nevertheless, in contrast with this circumstance, we can see that there have been development advances in other nations, such as Taiwan and South Korea; and we must admit that their current development levels have been achieved by strong authoritarian regimes. (14)

A second set of critiques of the modernization theory regards the need to eliminate traditional values. Third World countries do not have an homogeneous set of traditional values; their value systems are highly heterogeneous. For example Redfield 1965, distinguishes between the great traditional values (values of the elites), and the little tradition (values of the masses). (15) A second aspect for criticism here is the fact that traditional and modern values are not necessarily always mutually exclusive: China, for example, despite advances in economic development continues to operate on traditional values and this appears to be the same situation in Japan. Moreover, it is not possible to say that traditional values are always dichotomous from modern status, for example, loyalty to the Emperor can be transformed to loyalty to the firm.

The similarities between classical modernization studies and new modernization studies can be observed in the constancy of the research focus on Third World development; the analysis at a national level; the use of three main variables: internal factors, cultural values and social institutions; the key concepts of tradition and modernity; and the policy implications of modernization in the sense that it is considered to be generally beneficial to society as a whole.

However, there are also important distinctions between the classical studies and the new studies of the modernization school. For example, in the classical approach, tradition is an obstacle to development; in the new approach, tradition is an additive factor of development. With regard to methodology, the classical approach applies a theoretical construction with a high-level of abstraction; the new approach applies concrete case studies given in an historical context. Regarding the direction of development, the classical perspective uses an unidirectional path which tends toward the United States and European model, the new perspective prefers a multidirectional path of development. And finally, concerning external factors and conflict, the classicals demonstrate a relative neglect of external factors and conflict, in contrast to the greater attention to external factors and conflicts practiced by the new approach. (16)

3. Theory of Dependency

The foundations of the theory of dependency emerged in the 1950s from the research of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean -

ECLAC-. One of the most representative authors was Raul Prebisch. The principal points of the Prebisch model are that in order to create conditions of development within a country, it is necessary:

- a) To control the monetary exchange rate, placing more governmental emphasis on fiscal rather than monetary policy;
- b) To promote a more effective governmental role in terms of national development;
- c) To create a platform of investments, giving a preferential role to national capitals
- d) To allow the entrance of external capital following priorities already established in national plans for development;
- e) To promote a more effective internal demand in terms of domestic markets as a base to reinforce the industrialization process in Latin America;
- f) To generate a larger internal demand by increasing the wages and salaries of workers, which will in turn positively affect aggregate demand in internal markets;
- g) To develop a more effective coverage of social services from the government, especially to impoverished sectors in order to create conditions for those sectors to become more competitive; and
- h) To develop national strategies according to the model of import substitution, protecting national production by establishing quotas and tariffs on external markets. (17)

The Prebisch and ECLAC's proposal were the basis for dependency theory at the beginning of the 1950s. (18) However, there are also several authors, such as Falleto and Dos Santos who argue that the ECLAC's development proposals failed, which only then lead to the establishment of the dependency model. This more elaborated theoretical model was published at the end of the 1950s and the mid 1960s. Among the main authors of dependency theory we have: Andre Gunder Frank, Raul Prebisch, Theotonio Dos Santos, Enrique Cardozo, Edelberto Torres-Rivas, and Samir Amin. (19)

The theory of dependency combines elements from a neo-marxist perspective with Keynes' economic theory - the liberal economic ideas which emerged in the United States and Europe as a response to the depression years of the 1920s-. From the Keynes' economic approach, the theory of dependency embodies four main points: a) To develop an important internal effective demand in terms of domestic markets; b) To recognize that the industrial sector is crucial to achieving better levels of national development, especially due to the fact that this sector, in comparison with the agricultural sector, can contribute more value-added to products; c) To increase worker's income as a means of generating more aggregate demand in national market conditions; d)

To promote a more effective government role in order to reinforce national development conditions and to increase national standards of living. (20)

According to Foster-Carter (1973), there are three main differences between the classic orthodox Marxist movement and the neo-marxist positions, the latter providing a basis for the dependency theory. First, the classical approach focuses on the role of extended monopolies at the global level, and the neo-marxist on providing a vision from peripheral conditions. Second, the classical movement foresaw the need for a bourgeois revolution at the introduction of national transformation processes; from the neo-marxist position and based on current conditions of Third World countries, it is imperative “to jump” to a socialist revolution, mainly because it is perceived that national bourgeoisies identify more strongly with elite positions rather than with nationalistic ones. Third, the classical Marxist approach perceived the industrial proletariat as having the strength and vanguard for social revolution; the neo-marxist approach emphasized that the revolutionary class must be conformed by peasants in order to carry out an armed revolutionary conflict. (21)

Although the modernization school and the dependency school conflict in many areas, they also have certain similarities, the most important being: a) A research focus on Third World development circumstances; b) A methodology which has a high-level of abstraction and is focused on the development process, using nations-state as a unit of analysis; c) The use of polar theoretical structural visions; in one case the structure is tradition versus modernity -modernization-, in the other it is core versus periphery -dependency-. (22)

The major hypotheses with regard to development in Third World countries according to the dependency school are the following: First, in contrast to the development of the core nations which is self-contained, the development of nations in the Third World necessitates subordination to the core. Examples of this situation can be seen in Latin America, especially in those countries with a high degree of industrialization, such as Sao Paulo, Brazil which Andre G. Frank uses as a case study.

Second, the peripheral nations experience their greatest economic development when their ties to the core are weakest. An example of this circumstance is the industrialization process that took root in Latin America during the 1930s, when the core nations were focusing on solving the problems that resulted from the Great Depression, and the Western powers were involved in the Second World War. (23)

A third hypothesis indicates that when the core recovers from its crisis and reestablishes trade and investments ties, it fully incorporates the peripheral nations once again into the system, and the growth of industrialization in these regions is stifled. Frank in particular indicates that when core countries recuperate from war or other crises which have directed their attention away from the periphery, this negatively affects the balance of payments, inflation and political stability in Third World countries. Lastly, the fourth aspect refers to the fact that regions that are highly underdeveloped and still operate on a traditional, feudal system are those that in the past had the closest ties to core. (24)

However, according to Theotonio Dos Santos, the basis of dependency in underdeveloped nations is derived from industrial technological production, rather than from financial ties to monopolies from the core nations. In addition to Dos Santos, other classical authors in the dependency school are: Baran, who has studied conditions in India in the late 1950s; and Landsberg, who has studied the processes of industrial production in the core countries in 1987. (25)

The principal critics of the dependency theory have focused on the fact that this school does not provide exhaustive empirical evidence to support its conclusions. Furthermore, this theoretical position uses highly abstract levels of analysis. Another point of critique is that the dependency movement considers ties with transnational corporations as being only detrimental to countries, when actually these links can be used as a means of transference of technology. In this sense, it is important to remember that the United States was also a colony, and this country had the capacity to break the vicious cycle of underdevelopment. (26)

The new studies of dependency theory are due to the work of Enrique Cardozo (1979), and Falleto (1980). These authors take into account the relations that exist in a country in terms of its systemic -external-, and its sub-systemic -internal- level, and how these relationships can be transformed into positive elements for the development of peripheral nations. O'Donnell studied the case of relative autonomy between economic and political elements within conditions of Third World countries, especially those in South East Asia. Evans studied the comparative advantage that Brazil has with its neighbors in South America, and Gold studied the dependency elements which were operating at the beginning of the process by which Taiwan constituted itself in a country. (27)

A predominant point of the new dependency studies is that while the orthodox dependency position does not accept the relative autonomy of government from the powerful elites, the new authors of this school perceive a margin of movement of national governments in terms of pursuing their own agenda. These arguments originated mainly from the writings of Nikos Poulantzas. For this political scientist, governments in Third World countries have a certain amount of autonomy from the real axis of power within the nation. (28)

One of the main current critiques of the theory of dependency and the theory of modernization is that they both continue to base their assumptions and results on the nation-state. This is an important point that allows us to separate these aforementioned schools from the theoretical perspective of world-systems or globalization theory. These last movements have focused their attention mostly on the international connections among countries, especially those related to trade, the international financial system, world technology and military cooperation.

4. Theory of World Systems

A central element from which the theory of world-systems emerged was the different form that capitalism was taking around the world, especially since the

decade of the 1960s. Starting in this decade, Third World countries had new conditions in which to attempt to elevate their standards of living and improve social conditions. These new conditions were related to the fact that the international financial and trade systems began to have a more flexible character, in which national government actions were having less and less influence. Basically these new international economic circumstances made it possible for a group of radical researchers led by Immanuel Wallerstein to conclude that there were new activities in the capitalist world-economy which could not be explained within the confines of the dependency perspective. These new features were characterized mainly by the following aspects:

- a) East Asia (Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore) continued to experience a remarkable rate of economic growth. It became more and more difficult to portray this East Asian economic miracle as “manufacturing imperialism”;
- b) There was a widespread crisis among the socialist states which included the Sino-Soviet split, the failure of the Cultural Revolution, economic stagnation in the socialist states, and the gradual opening of the socialist states to capitalist investment. This crisis signaled the decline of revolutionary Marxism;
- c) There was a crisis in North American capitalism which included the Vietnam War, the Watergate crisis, the oil embargo of 1975, the combination of stagnation and inflation in the late 1970s, as well as the rising sentiment of protectionism, the unprecedented governmental deficit, and the widening of the trade gap in the 1980s, all signaling the demise of American hegemony in the capitalist world-economy. (29)

These elements created the conditions for the emergence of the world-systems theory. This school had its genesis at the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economics, Historical Systems, and Civilization at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Having originated in sociology, the world-systems school has now extended its impact to anthropology, history, political science, and urban planning. I. Wallerstein is considered one of the most important thinkers in this theoretical field. At the beginning of his career he studied the development problems that the recently independent African nations needed to face taking into account the new capitalist economic and political conditions of the world in the 1960s. (30)

Wallerstein and his followers recognized that there are worldwide conditions that operate as determinant forces especially for small and underdeveloped nations, and that the nation-state level of analysis is no longer the only useful category for studying development conditions, particularly in Third World countries. Those factors which had the greatest impact on the internal development of small countries were the new global systems of communications, the new world trade mechanisms, the international financial system, and the transference of knowledge and military links. These factors

have created their own dynamic at the international level, and at the same time, these elements are interacting with the internal aspects of each country. (31)

The main assumptions of the world-systems theory establish that: a) There is a strong link between social sciences - especially among sociology, economics and political disciplines. This school recognizes that more attention is usually given to the individual development of each one of these disciplines rather than to the interaction among them and how these interactions affect in real terms the national conditions of a given society; b) Instead of addressing the analysis of each of the variables, it is necessary to study the reality of social systems; c) It is necessary to recognize the new character of the capitalist system. For example, the approach followed by the classical political economy perspective is based on the conditions of the capitalist system during the industrial revolution in the United Kingdom. There was concrete evidence to support open competition, more productive patterns in the industrial sector, and wide groups of population which provided labor for the new established factories. (32)

Today this is not the situation especially when we consider the important economic role of transnational corporations, the international political climate, the interdependence that affects the governments of poor nations, and the role of speculative investments. For the world-systems school, present economic conditions are not fully explainable within traditional development theories. This criticism of the capitalist system has been present since its birth. Under current international conditions, there are specific features of monopoly capital, its means of transaction, and its concrete operations worldwide which have affected international relations among nations to a considerable degree.

The principal differences between the world-systems approach and the dependency studies are: a) The unit of analysis in the dependency theory is the nation-state level, for the world-system it is the world itself; b) Concerning methodology, the dependency school posits that the structural-historical model is that of the boom and bust of nation states, the world systems approach maintains the historical dynamics of world-systems in its cyclical rhythms and secular trends; c) The theoretical structure for the dependency theory is bimodal, consisting of the core and the periphery; according to the world systems theory the structure is trimodal and is comprised of the core, the semiperiphery and the periphery; d) In terms of the direction of development, the dependency school believes that the process is generally harmful; however, in a world systems scenario, there is the possibility for upward and downward mobility in the world economy; e) The research focus of dependency theorists concentrates on the periphery; while world systems theorists focus on the periphery as well as on the core, the semiperiphery and the periphery. (33)

Given the aforementioned characteristics, the world-systems theory indicates that the main unit of analysis is the social system, which can be studied at the internal level of a country, and also from the external environment of a particular nation. In this last case the social system affects several nations and usually also an entire region.

The world systems most frequently studied in this theoretical perspective are systems concerning the research, application and transference of productive

and basic technology; the financial mechanisms, and world trade operations. In terms of financial resources, this development position distinguishes between productive and speculative investments. Productive investments are financial resources which reinforce the manufacturing production in a particular nation, while speculative investments normally entail fast profits in the stock market, they do not provide a country with a sustainable basis for long term economic growth, and therefore are more volatile.

When the world-systems theory considers trade mechanisms, it distinguishes between the direct transactions, which are those who have a greater, more significant and immediate effect on a country; and those operations which are indirect trade transactions, such as future trade stipulations, and the speculations on transportation costs, combustibles prices, and forecasts on agricultural crops, when they depend on weather conditions to obtain their productivity and yield. (34)

5. Theory of Globalization

The theory of globalization emerges from the global mechanisms of greater integration with particular emphasis on the sphere of economic transactions. In this sense, this perspective is similar to the world-systems approach. However, one of the most important characteristics of the globalization position is its focus and emphasis on cultural aspects and their communication worldwide. Rather than the economic, financial and political ties, globalization scholars argue that the main modern elements for development interpretation are the cultural links among nations. In this cultural communication, one of the most important factors is the increasing flexibility of technology to connect people around the world. (35)

The main aspects of the theory of globalization can be delineated as follows:

- a) To recognize that global communications systems are gaining an increasing importance every day, and through this process all nations are interacting much more frequently and easily, not only at the governmental level, but also within the citizenry;
- b) Even though the main communications systems are operating among the more developed nations, these mechanisms are also spreading in their use to less developed nations. This fact will increase the possibility that marginal groups in poor nations can communicate and interact within a global context using the new technology;
- c) The modern communications system implies structural and important modifications in the social, economic and cultural patterns of nations. In terms of the economic activities the new technological advances in communications are becoming more accessible to local and small business. This situation is creating a completely new environment for carrying out economic transactions, utilizing productive resources, equipment, trading products, and taking advantage of the “virtual monetary

mechanisms". From a cultural perspective, the new communication products are unifying patterns of communications around the world, at least in terms of economic transactions under the current conditions;

- d) The concept of minorities within particular nations is being affected by these new patterns of communications. Even though these minorities are not completely integrated into the new world systems of communications, the powerful business and political elites in each country are a part of this interaction around the world. Ultimately, the business and political elite continue to be the decision makers in developing nations;
- e) Cultural elements will dictate the forms of economic and social structure in each country. These social conditions are a result of the dominant cultural factors within the conditions of each nation. (36)

The main assumptions which can be extracted from the theory of globalization can be summarized in three principal points. First, cultural factors are the determinant aspect in every society. Second, it is not important, under current world conditions to use the nation-state as the unit of analysis, since global communications and international ties are making this category less useful. Third, with more standardization in technological advances, more and more social sectors will be able to connect themselves with other groups around the world. This situation will involve the dominant and non-dominant groups from each nation.

The theory of globalization coincides with several elements from the theory of modernization. One aspect is that both theories consider that the main direction of development should be that which was undertaken by the United States and Europe. These schools sustain that the main patterns of communication and the tools to achieve better standards of living originated in those more developed areas. On this point it is important to underline the difference between the modernization perspective and the globalization approach. The former follows a more normative position -stating how the development issue should be solved-, the latter reinforces its character as a "positive" perspective, rather than a normative claim. (37)

Another point in which the modernization and the globalization theories coincide is in terms of their ethnocentric point of view. Both positions stress the fact that the path toward development is generated and must be followed in terms of the US and European models. Globalization scholars argue that this circumstance is a fact in terms of the influence derived from the communications web and the cultural spread of values from more developed countries.

Globalization theories emphasize cultural factors as the main determinants which affect the economic, social and political conditions of nations, which is similar to the "comprehensive social school" of Max Weber's theories. From this perspective, the systems of values, beliefs, and the pattern of identity of dominant -or hegemony- and the alternative -or subordinate- groups within a society are the most important elements to explain national characteristics in economic and social terms. (38) It is obvious that for the globalization position

this statement from 1920s Weberian theory must apply to current world conditions especially in terms of the diffusion and transference of cultural values through communication systems, and they are increasingly affecting many social groups in all nations.

Based on the aforementioned elements it is clear that the globalization and world-systems theories take a global perspective in determining the unit of analysis, rather than focusing strictly on the nation-state as was the case in the modernization and dependency schools. The contrasting point between world-systems theory and globalization, is that the first contains certain neo-marxist elements, while the second bases its theoretical foundations on the structural and functionalist sociological movement. Therefore the globalization approach tends more toward a gradual transition rather than a violent or revolutionary transformation. For the globalists authors, the gradual changes in societies become a reality when different social groups adapt themselves to current innovations, particularly in the areas of cultural communication. (39)

The globalization and world-systems theories take into account the most recent economic changes in world structure and relations that have occurred in the last couple of decades, for example: a) In March 1973, the governments of the more developed nations, began to operate more flexible mechanisms in terms of exchange rate control. This situation allowed for a faster movement of capital among the world's financial centers, international banks, and stock markets; b) Since 1976 trade transactions base their speculations on the future value of the products, which is reinforced through the more flexible use of modern technology in information, computers, and in communication systems; c) The computer revolution of the eighties made it possible to carry out faster calculations and transactions regarding exchange rates values and investments, which was reinforced by the general use of the fax machine; d) During the nineties the main challenge is from the Internet which allows the achievement of more rapid and expansive communication. The Internet is increasingly creating the conditions to reinvigorate the character of the "virtual economy" in several specific markets.

Under the current conditions, the main aspects that are being studied from the globalization perspective are: a) New concepts, definitions and empirical evidence for hypotheses concerning cultural variables and their change at the national, regional and global level; b) Specific ways to adapt the principles of "comprehensive sociology" to the current "global village" atmosphere; c) Interactions among the different levels of power from nation to nation, and from particular social systems which are operating around the world; d) How new patterns of communications are affecting the minorities within each society; e) The concept of autonomy of state in the face of increasingly flexible communication tools and international economic ties, which are rendering obsolete the previous unilateral effectiveness of national economic decisions; and f) How regionalism and multilateralism agreements are affecting global economic and social integration.

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NOTES

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(5) Ibid, pp. 276-278.

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(13) See, So. Op.Cit. pp. 89, and Vaitos, C. *Una Estrategia Integral para el Desarrollo*. (Santo Domingo, República Dominicana: PNUD, 1992), pp. 45-53.

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