
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE THIRD WORLD

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ABSTRACT

It is axiomatic to posit that the term "Third World" is a multifaceted phenomenon. More over, the post- cold war politics and globalization process have added to this confusion. Various contending theses have emerged to explain the Third World phenomenon. This paper is equally a part of the debate. The primary interest of this paper therefore is the relationship between theory and practice, particularly as it affects the realization of significant socio-political transformations in these societies. At the epistemological level, it is possible to discern a variety of theories competing for recognition and to gain paradigmatic status in terms of explaining Third World transformations. It is the central thesis of this paper that the relevance of each of the main theories in the field is determined by both historical and political developments and considerations.

INTRODUCTION

Early use of the term "Third World" was to describe nations which fell neither into Western capitalist camp of the First World nor the Soviet-dominated socialist Second World. It was meant to suggest political neutrality or non-alignment. Over the years, however, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain this distinction. For one thing, Third World societies in general have become increasingly disunited while individual countries have aligned themselves more and more to either of the other two blocs. Today, therefore, the term "Third World" has come to be simply used to describe the underdeveloped or developing and dependent world.

It is axiomatic to posit that Third World societies share certain socio-economic and political characteristics. The United Nations, the World Bank among other bilateral and multilateral agencies, have been in the fore front of popularizing such indicators. Similarly, political scientists have come to associate developing polities with a common pattern of political arrangement and behaviour. As a result of the above antecedents, the periodic setbacks to the attempts at revolutionary transformation of Third World societies occasioned by both internal and external forces call for serious evaluation in the light of contending theories that presume to explain and predict social change. The fundamental interest of this paper, therefore, is the linkage between theory and practice, particularly as it affects the realization of necessary social and political changes in the Third World.

Although at the purely epistemological level it is possible to discern a variety of theories competing for recognition and to gain paradigmatic status in terms of explaining Third World

change and development. It is the central thesis of this paper that the significance and relevance of each of the main theories in the field are determined by both historical and political considerations (Mars, 1989:373). Within this framework, the paper therefore, seeks:

1. To identify and evaluate the major theories and definitions of Third World in terms of their capacity to explain the concept;
2. To explore the social bases for their significance or prominence, and
3. To be able to develop some criteria for the identification of the most relevant theory based on the problems that each theory poses in terms of its implications for political practice.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Third World

Third World refers to the group of countries that, during the cold war, supposedly took the side of neither the Western alliance nor the Eastern alliance. More generally used to describe the societies of Latin America, Africa, and Asia most of which were at one time or another European colonies. David Schmitt (1974) has identified the following problems of crises in the process of Third World development "National identity' government legitimacy, mass participation, penetration of government authority, national integration and resource distribution. These, he goes further, are a result of the combined effect of colonialism, rapid urbanization, cultural change and the drive for economic development and technological change (Ayeni, 1988:3) Historically, these problems cannot be said to be peculiar to contemporary developing societies. Third World countries have to confront these problems simultaneously and in no manageable sequential order. Third World societies simply find themselves overwhelmed with crises, which, to compound issues, they lack requisite resources to contend with.

Political development in the Third World also differs from what developed countries underwent in that the latter did not have to contend a neo-colonially structured international system, the sort, the former now experience. All these together explain the different manifestations of "Third Worldness": Political instability, wide spread corruption, poverty, disease, ignorance, exploitation, mass despondence among others. No doubt, these are familiar features of the Nigerian State. The circle of military rule and political instability as well as the generally underdeveloped and dependent state of the economy despite a boom of oil wealth, rightly though auspicious at the time; aptly illustrate this fact (Ayeni, 1988:3)

In the late twentieth century, the concept "Third World" refers to a dynamic and Multifaceted Phenomenon. The revolutions of 1989, the disintegration of socialist regimes, the end of the cold war, and the globalization process all have profound implications for the group of countries said to constitute the Third World. To assess the contemporary relevance of this concept for international relations, the place to begin is with its origin and alternative definitions. In a popular parlance it is a term commonly used to designable the countries of Asia, Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere that were economically less developed. The phrase is attributed to French analyst Alfred Sauvey, Who in 1952 used "tiers monde" to describe

neutral countries in the cold war. By inference, the United States of America led Western bloc and the Soviet Union led Eastern Bloc were the other two worlds. But since most of the neutral countries were also relatively poor, the phrase had a double meaning. The phrase contains an allusion to the Third Estate of pre-Revolutionary France that is, to social groups other than the most privileged groups of the day, the clergy and the nobility (the First and social Estates, respectively) Analogously, then, Third World refers to the marginalized strata of the international system. That is, based on this second meaning, Third World come most commonly to designate, the less development countries of the world; whatever their political orientation. The phrase is less often used since the end of the cold war; although some analysts continue to employ it to designate the less developed countries (Rouke and Boyer, 2003:346). Another interpretation of equated the Third World with poverty in general. For the World Bank, the Third World composes low-income countries. These maybe subdivided according to Gross National product per person. But thus definition is replete with empirical contradictions. Some Middle East Countries have a higher average per capita income than those, the United State, and there is a greater incidence of poverty in some US inner cities than in many parts of the Third World. Furthermore, emphasis on statistical indicators such as per capital income often deflects attentions from qualitative social conditions.

From a slightly different perspective, the term "Third World" means oppressed nations, suggesting the existence of states that are exploited and of others that are exploiters. According to Vernengo (2004:3-4) the care of the dependency relation between the center and periphery lays the in ability of the periphery to develop an autonomous and dynamic process of technological innovation. Technology - the promethean force unleashed by industrial Revolution - is at the center stage. The center countries controlled the technology led to limited transmission of technology; but not the process of innovation itself. In a common usage, the Third World comprises all countries not included in the First World and the Second World. The Western capitalist countries plus Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, Israel, and South Africa as well, are widely regarded as constituting the First World. The Second World - a constitution of the cold war era-consisted of the socialist countries of Eastern and Central Soviet bloc. The third World encompasses the nations of Africa. Asia and Latin America, most of them former colonies, which to varying degrees could be characterized as underdeveloped.

The ambiguities associated with the term third World are manifold. One complication is the role of the oppressed populace outside the three continents. Are Afro-American, Native Americans, and the Australian aborigines' part of the Third World? In addition, ethno centrism may be detected in assigning first place to the countries that ranked ahead of the others according to an economic and technological yardstick. Yet another snag is the disagreement over whether china belongs to the Third World. The Chinese position is that the United States and the soviet Union make up the First World, the other developed Countries form the Second World, and with exception of Japan, the while of Africa; Asia and Latin America constitute the Third World (Kurgun and Kurgun, 1993). Although China has

proclaimed itself to be part of the Third World, Beijing's new of the matter has been treated with skepticism at meetings of the nonaligned nations. Although China may not qualify as a super power, a country with over one billion people, bountiful national resources, and nuclear hardware is, by any standard, a great power.

Ambiguities aside, some observers reject the term Third World altogether. An influential Commission headed by Willy Brandt, Preferred a dichotomy, as indicated by the title of its report: North-South: A programme for Survival (1980). This distinction is between two hemispheres; a more economically advanced "North" and a less developed "South". However, there are well-to-do nations south of the equator, (Australia and New Zealand, and more problematically, South Africa) as well as several poor countries in the "north" (India, South Asia, South East Asia, Central America, the Central America and the Caribbean.

Another viewpoint is that the World should be analyzed in more unitary terms. World System theorists such as Immanuel Wallerstein reason that there is a single world economy and that is capitalist. The analysis that follows from this thesis identifies three tiers of the world economy; core, periphery and semi periphery. The danger, however, in employing such broad strokes lies in omitting the fine detail, which precisely what in substance must be discerned (Kurgan and Kurgan, 1993:909). Clearly, the division or classification of the world into zones is a reality. But the components are changing. Most significant is the disintegration of the Second World. Moreover, the global political economy is increasingly differentiated, with important distinctions between the first generation of states to have penetrated Japanese and Western Markets (Among them are the Asian Tigers (Taiwan, Korean Republic, Singapore and Hong Kong), possible competition from second generation of newly industrializing economies, and on the other end of the spectrum, Sub-Saharan Africa, which is the most marginalized area in the mosaic of globalization.

In sum, the Third World is a geo-political category referring broadly to the three continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, not a precise analytical concept. The main pitfall to Third Worldist thinking are sentimentality, the tendency to romanticize struggle waged by the poor national, and the impressions that only the development societies are the oppressors without due emphasis on locally dominant forces and transnational coalitions. Despite its pitfalls, the term Third World is a convent short hand to depict the group of countries struggling to escape from underdevelopment.

Theoretical Perspectives of Third World

A variety of theories relevant to Third World experience range in significance according to their capacity to explain and help the process of social change. By these criteria also, it becomes easy to eliminate those that time has proved to be inadequate. The earlier structural functional perspective, for example; which Almond (1960, 1966) utilized to develop a theory of Third World development, has already been found inadequate for its ethnocentric

and status quo biases. Again, modernization theories that seek to explain Third World development simply in terms of the absolute negation of traditional practices and values prove to be very limited fundamentally in terms of their very mechanistic and linear interpretation of political and social development and processes (Black, 1966; Apter, 1965 and Lerner, 1958). The major theories that can be considered most relevant to the Third World experience, although with varying degrees of importance and impact, are what are called (1) the plural society theory (2) dependency theory and (3) the Marxist theory of change based on Marxist's conception of the mode of production. These theories are more relevant than the previous theories based on the consideration that they are relatively more powerful in their capacity to explain more fundamental levels of social and political change in the Third World. But beyond a basic agreement on the significance of fundamental social change in the Third World, these three theories display a wide variety of fundamental differences with corresponding differential impacts on Third World political practice in general and the process of political change in particular (Mars, 1989:374). Plural society claims relevance to Third World experience in the sense that its analytical focus is on the highly differentiated nature of the Third World universe, characterized as it is by the coexistence of a diversity of peoples and cultures whose roots are not significantly connected with the particular geographic region within which they exist (Furnival, 1948; and Smith, 1965).

According to Mars (1989), this primary claim to belonging to a single society is the fact that they interact "as cultivators and nothing more" within the same political unit. The major consequences of these polyglot societies are; according to Furnival, (1948), an organic division of labour in the economic sphere along strict ethnic or racial lines and basic instability as a result of ethnic conflict. Furnival's theses according to (Mars 1989) were significantly extended by Smith (1965) to embrace other Third World societies beyond South East Asia, Caribbean and some part of Africa. Smith's significant contribution to the theory are the observable by each district group of basically in compatible cultural-institutional practices, the necessary political dominance of a simple cultural section over the rest, and inevitable ethnic and political violence, particularly during times of political crises. The major problem in the plural society analysis of the Third World conditions is that it deliberately ignores the economic and material basis in its explanation of socio-political process. It is in this respect that the plural society theory becomes eclipsed and in some instances superseded by the "dependency" perspective in the explanation of Third World reality.

Dependency theory describes a relationship in which a former colony has achieved political independences but is still economically dependent on the Western capitalist powers. With dependency theory, the fundamental level of analysis tends to shift from the internal to external dynamics of change. Whereas plural society theory locates the source and explanation of change in the sub national unit-that is, the institutional practice of local ethnic or cultural groups-dependency theory sees the world capitalist system beyond the national unit as primarily responsible for the problems within Third World societies. Although there is broad agreement among dependency theorists on the determinative power of international

capitalism, exemplified by the advanced socialist power vis-à-vis peripheral Third World countries, there are relevant differences about the nature and scope of the impact of capitalist penetration within these Third World social formation. For example, Baran's (1957) and Frank's (1969) almost totally negative interpretation of this impact as necessarily and invariably responsible for underdevelopment of peripheral societies is contrasted with the somewhat more positive vision of Cardoso (1979) and Amin (1976), who see in capitalism the possibilities of its own regeneration and development even within the dependent Third World context. In this respect, Cardoso speaks of the possibility of "dependent development", while Amin suggests that a radical revision" of capitalism might lead to development, or transformational prospects, in Third World societies.

In keeping with these differences with regard to the effects of dependence on peripheral societies, the explanation of change within the dependency perspective also tends to differ, although a consensus exists among dependency theorists about the need for fundamental structural change. The differences in this regard relate to the particular goal towards which dependent societies should strive, and the particular way in which the linkage between international capital and the formation and development of class forces within the periphery is discerned (Mars, 1989) while theorists such as Gunder Frank insist that the entire social fabric established by capitalism must necessarily be completely dismantled in the quest for socialist development, others of the Cardoso and Amin persuasion envision the possibility of development even within an overall capitalist framework. As regards the conception of class development within the closer periphery, Frank's emphasis would seem to be on a direct linkage between international capital and a local bourgeoisie, as he called it, "lunpen" bourgeoisie, which plays essentially a negative role in preventing the development of indigenous capitalism within peripheral social formations. On the other hand, Cardoso and Amin would seem to go further than Frank. Cardoso, for instance, discerns the creation of a national capitalist bourgeoisie with the potential both to resist external capitalist penetration and to create centers of capitalist development within the periphery. Amin sees the creation of a growing peripheral proletariat, not only in developing a dependent industrial work force, but in gradually eroding the independent basis of existence of a peasantry by the incorporation of peasants into a part-time labour force dependent on urban industrial employment, or by the necessity of their producing cash crops for sale in the capitalist market structure.

Although, dependency theory is an advanced over the plural society thesis, in its fundamental understanding and analysis of the Third World problems (especially, the problems of economic exploitation and political domination by external forces), it harbours some serious pitfalls that can indeed inhibit its very capacity to explain change and become a tool to guide successful social transformation. In particular; the theory remains weak with regard to generating understanding of determination and dynamic of the motive forces of change, particularly those related to the subordinate classes such as the peasantry. It exaggerated economistic emphasis in its analysis of Third World problems tends to inhibit understanding

of how and under what conditions class forces take the initiative in political struggle. Classes and corresponding political organizations within the framework are discerned merely as authorized effects rather than as motive forces for the achievement of desired changes. The stress is on the constraints rather than the facilitating factors in favour of change, and the dynamics of political process would seem to be sacrificed to the elaboration of relatively static structures. In this sense, the relevant questions of political practice become subordinated to relatively abstract theoretical constructs and considerations (Mars, 1989:378). Beyond static structural considerations of both plural society and dependency theories is the alternative posed by Marxist analysis of commoditization process, and the attention to class dynamics central to its particular approach. But while this particular aspect of Marxist analysis might represent a decided theoretical advance over its main rivals, the puzzle of its relevance and applicability to the Third World conditions is not always obvious.

A fundamental difference between Marxist approach and dependency theory relates to the very premises from which each begins its analysis of the problems and issues affecting change and development. Whereas for the latter, analysis proceeds from the more general, universal, and relatively abstract consideration of international capitalism, the former allows for analysis that proceeds from the concrete considerations of active human and social forces and their dynamic interaction with their material and practical environment. Put differently, the Marxist or deterministic explanation of social change regard human behaviour and change in human behaviour as primarily determined by ecological, external, or material conditions. The crux of Marxist theory implies that the stage of technological development determines the mode of production and the linkages and institutions that constitute the economic system. In other words, social change accounted for in terms of the material forces of production in the sense that the forces are subject to change and as Marx posits, are the principal determinants of the entire social order.

The particular methodological focus of the Marxist thesis allows for an appreciation of the crucial relevance of internal as well as external factors in the determination of fundamental change. It allows further for coming to grips with the specificities of particular social formations, a requirement that is significant for understanding such contexts as the very problematic conditions of the Third World. The Marxist conception of the modes of production is in this sense fundamental to the understanding of particular socio-economic formations. Applying mode of production analysis to the Third World context leads to the discernment of significant variations within the Third World, depending on the specific nature of the combination and interaction of different modes (pre-capitalist and capitalist) within each particular social formation. This approach naturally challenges such absolute assumptions as the ubiquity and universal dominance of capitalism, as is characteristic of dependency theory (Tylor, 1979).

It is the particular of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production that gives to Third World formations their peculiarity as regards class formation and interaction, different and

distinct from what obtains in the more clearly developed capitalist centers of the World. A closer examination of Marx's writings with particular reference to the Third World conditions reveals many of the aforementioned specificities in terms of the explanation of the Third World process of change. In particular, the writings of Marx and Engles on colonialism, although relatively unsystematic and undeveloped compared with their writings on European capitalism, cannot be ignored as one of the bases for our understanding of these specific processes (Avineri, 1969).

Thus, Marxist theory in relation to the explanation of Third World change is much more dynamic and penetrating than the simple, linear economic determinism of dependency. Similarly, the Marxist analysis departs fundamentally from the essentially cultural deterministic tendencies of plural society theory.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

This paper will adopt the radical political economy approach as its framework of analysis. There are numerous schools of thought related to international political economy. These are the economic nationalists, economic internationalists and economic structuralists. These approaches are both descriptive and prescriptive; in that they, all purport to describe how any why conditions occur and make arguments about how policy should be conducted. The core of economic nationalism is the belief that the states should use its economic strength to further national interests. By extension, economic nationalists also advocate using a state's power to build economic strength. To accomplish their ends, economic nationalists rely on a number of political economic strategies. These include the use of imperialism and neo-imperialism (that is direct control imperialism) and indirect control (neo-imperialism) economic incentives and disincentives (economic carrots (favourable Trade policies and foreign aids) and disincentives (sanctions) to promote the state's national interest; and protectionism and domestic economic support. From this perspective, economic nationalists are suspicious of economic interdependence on the ground that it undermines state sovereignty and weakens the national economic strength. Economic nationalists would prefer that their local economies use trade barriers, economic subsidies and other policies to protect national industries, especially strategic ones. A second major theoretical perspective and policy approach to political economy is economic internationalism.

This approach is closely associated with such terms as capitalism, laissez-faire, economic liberalism, and free trade respectively. Economic internationalists are liberals. They posited that international economic relations should and can be conducted cooperatively because, in their view, the international economy is non-zero sum game in which prosperity is available to all. Economic internationalists contend that the best way to create political and economic prosperity is by freeing economic interchange from political restrictions. They, therefore, oppose tariff barriers, domestic subsidies, sanctions, and any other economic tools that distort the free flow of trade and investment capital.

The origins of economic liberalism lie in the roots of capitalism. Adam Smith and David Ricardo used it to theorize about the market economy and to attack mercantilist policies. James Mills and Jeremy Bentham used it to integrate representative government with the calculus of utilitarianism, equating good policy with the aggregation of individuals' preferences. Economic structuralists believe that economic structure determines politics. That is, the structuralists contend that society is divided between the haves and the have-nots and that the former work to keep the latter in order to exploit them. To change this, economic structuralists favour a radical restructuring of society and the economic system designed to end the uneven distribution of wealth and power. The structuralists can be divided into two major camps. The first is the Marxist Theorist Group, which sees the state and Capitalism as inherent sources of economic evil. The second group includes dependency and world system analysts, who do not necessarily share the view of the evils of capitalism. Instead, they advocate fundamental reforms to end economic oppression.

Marxism is perhaps the best-known strand of structuralist thought. Communalist ideology, associated with Karl Marx, maintains that the economic order determines political and social relationships. Thus, the distribution of wealth and the struggle between the propertied and powerful bourgeoisie and the poor and oppressed proletariat is the essence of politics. According to Beckman (1983) "the theory and method of Marxian political economy is based on historical and dialectical materialism" (Beckman, 1983:106). Momoh and Hundeyin, (2005) adds: "Marx believes that it is the material existence of an individual that determines his/her consciousness. Marxian political economy thus gives primacy to the material existence and production of the society, especially the role of the economy in the study of society. For the sake of emphasis, the commoditization process is the basis of the scientific analysis of the Marxian political economy. According to this approach (especially under capitalism), those who control the means of production (economic/sub structure are those who also control the polity (super structure), to this extent, the societal ideology, values, philosophy, legal and political institutions all reflect and reinforce the economic interest of the dominant ruling class. It is only this approach that has strongly established the linkage between the economy and policy.

The state therefore is an organ of oppression by the ruling class. It exists as a result of the irreconcilable antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and proletariats contrary to the claims of bourgeois political economy that state exists as a neutral entity regulating conflicts among social forces in the society. This assertion has led to accusation by bourgeois scholars that Marxist analysis amounts to economic determinism or a unilinear analysis of society. This claim can hardly be sustained because what Marxist analysis emphasizes is the role of the economic as the determinant in the last instance" (Momoh and Hundeyin, 2005:46). According to Ibeanu, the very separation of the state from the economy is a capitalist phenomenon. To understand why this is so, we need to understand the nature of production relations in class societies generally, and subsequently, their specificity under capitalism. In a society divided into classes, the commodification relations appear as a double interaction:

(a) The interaction between man as the agent of production and the objects and instruments of labour, and through this,
(b) Relations among these agents of commoditization, which are class relations. These two interactions involve .The relationship between the non-worker (the owner) and the objects and instrument of labour, and the relationships between the direct producer (the worker) and the objects and instruments of labour. These relationships define two crucial issues. First, they define economic ownership. By this we mean the real economic control of the means of production that is, "the power to assign the means of production to given uses and so to dispose of the product obtained" second, they define possession that is, "the capacity to put the means of production – always corresponds with economic ownership. "It is the owners who have real control of the means of production and thus exploit the direct producers by extorting surplus labour from them in various forms" (Poulantzas, 1975: 18-19, Ibeanu, 2006:5).

Applying this approach in the analysis of the study to the Nigerian situation, the analysis goes as follows: it is only under capitalism that the direct producer loses possession of the means of production, leading to the emergence of the "naked worker". This occurred by forceful means initially (primitive accumulation). But, importantly, underlying all of these elite perceptions and struggles and the mobilization of identities to garner popular support for their political projects is the imperative of capital accumulation dependent on the character and role of the Nigerian state in capitalist development as nurtured and conditioned by its colonial origin and the mono-cultural and rentier nature of the modern, post-colonial Nigerian economy. Jega (2003:17) remarked that: Critical to understanding these, is an appreciation of the nature and character of the postcolonial state in Nigeria. Many scholars (e.g.: Graf, 1988; Forest, 1993; Joseph, 1987; Diamond, 1986.) have identified capitalist rent seeking; patrimonialism as the major characteristics of the postcolonial Nigerian state. Some have even fancifully referred to the Nigerian state as a 'rogue state' (e.g. Joseph, 1996). These characteristics have combined with one another, and with many others, in complex dynamics, to undermine the Nigerian state's capacity to discharge those fundamental obligations of a modern state to its citizens, such as socioeconomic provisioning, guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms, ensuring law and order and facilitating peace and stability as preconditions for growth and development. Those who have presided over the state have tended to personalize power and privatize collective national resources, while being excessively reckless in managing the affairs of the nation. Indeed, the state has become the prime mover of capitalist development and class formation, with all the associated contradictions that this is wont to spew up. As noted elsewhere, in Nigeria: The ruling class derived both its origin and wealth from the state, around which it gravitates, using every available means to secure power and access. Hence, in the competition and struggles for state power, especially in the period of economic crises, identity politics become heightened and tend to assume primacy. The state tends to resort to politics of identity for its legitimation, while those excluded tend to resort to identity politics to contest this exclusion.

The state, thus, is projected as the critical variable in identity transformation, and the resurgence of identity politics (Jega, 2000:19)

According to Jega (2003), the colonial state pursued a capitalist development strategy initially through the promotion of primary commodity production for export, through which foreign commercial interests established a firm footing in the Nigerian economy; facilitating the rise of an indigenous commercial comprador class and the introduction of capitalist relations of production. Subsequently, in the postcolonial Second World War epoch, manufacturing enterprises controlled by foreign capital burgeoned, with the growing comprador classes playing a supporting role. With this came an accelerated process of urbanization and proletarianisation, the development and consolidation of capitalist production processes and relations. Jega (2003) goes on to posit that the role of the indigenous class in the capitalist production processes and accumulation increased in the era of decolonisation, as foreign capital sought willing partners to protect its investments, and then even more swiftly in the post-independence period when the post-colonial state became a prime mover of capitalist development. These forces of self-serving "urban parasites" repressed oppositions (middle class professionals and the working/unemployed poor) by justifying their actions using capitalist ideology. The self-serving "urban parasites" in the 1970s till date not only colluded with colonial trading and manufacturing firms, but also recruited from the critical organs of the state such as the police, the military, bureaucracy, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary and the state itself has been the major source, facilitator and protector of their wealth, either through deliberate policies, such as indigenization, economic reforms or through corruption.

Thus, given the critical role of the state in capital accumulation in the post-colonial epoch, political contest for the capture of state power became intense, more with the expanded revenue base, it came to acquire from oil and gas earnings, which rose dramatically and profoundly in the late 1990s. Clearly, also, this phenomenon is associated with, if not directly caused by, the dynamics of the accumulation processes under economic crisis and economic reforms, as dominant social forces compete for access to the state for its power and resources. According to Jega, "the onset of economic crises in Nigeria in the decade of the 1980's, which was accompanied by the introduction of structural adjustment programme (SAP) by the Babangida regime, gave rise to a profound crises of legitimacy of the postcolonial SAP was acclaimed to have, not only structurally adjusted the Nigerian economy to the requirements of global capitalism, but also created mass poverty in Nigeria. (Jega 2002:37). As noted elsewhere: The incidence and magnitude of poverty has increased dramatically in Nigeria since the 1980's, with the result that about 67% of Nigerians are decisively entrapped in conditions of acute poverty. Poverty has ravaged communities and families, it has torn the moral fabrics of society, and it is now threatening the country with violent eruptions. Most of the recent violent ethno-religious and communal conflicts can also be explained by poverty, joblessness and intense competition over scarce resources and services both in the urban and rural contexts. The mass of unemployed youth in both the

rural and urban areas of Nigeria need little motivation or mobilization to partake in riots and 'reprisal attacks', given the inducement or 'opportunity' for looting that often accompany these. Thus, poverty and joblessness, especially amongst the youths, are important causal and facilitating factors in violent conflicts. Such objective economic conditions nurture the subjective conditions of frustration and aggression, which create conducive atmosphere for violent conflicts to erupt (Ayoade and Jega, 2002). Beyond this, this paper has made very interesting revelations about the specificity of the dynamics of the resurgence of capital accumulation in Nigeria in particular and the Third World in general.

Implications for Class and Political Practice

The practical implications of the several themes examined above are closed linked both the historical context in which they are derived and to the class-political interests they intend to protect. Several closely related hypotheses are therefore suggested within this thesis. These could be summaries as follows:

1. The emergence of rival theories is largely determined more by the nature of the political problems generated by the particular historical conjectures of Third World formations than the crises in the themes themselves.
2. The ability of the particular theory to retain its dominance and gain paradigmatic status is dependent on its ability to support or protect the dominant or controlling political interest in the system (Mars, 1989; 184). Plural society theory emerged principally in response to crucial political problems created by colonial rule, particularly over disparate people living within colonized society. The very title of Furnivall's work, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (1948), is indicative of the attempt to address this political issue during the particular colonial epoch of the historical development of Third World peoples. The fundamental problems then according to Mars (1989) were the legitimacy of political authority as a foundation for the very conceptualization and definition of society. Smith (1965) in particular was concerned with the crucial elements that holds a policy together in the context of conflicting political loyalties, such as are exemplified among the different peoples in artificially created political units among the different peoples in artificially created political units like the Dutch colonies of South East Asia and the British colonies in the Caribbean.

One of the serious implications of this kind of analysis is to produce justification for the authoritarian type of colonial control often displayed by the external colonial authorities and a variety of colonial governments in these multiracial societies. Dependency theory; as is commonly recognized grew out of the need to resolve the crucial problems of economic stagnation and backwardness in Latin America, which has realized political independence for well over a century. Starting from the now discredited ECLA approach, the methodology of dependency theory was more adequately developed into its current form as highlighted and brilliantly defined by Cardoso (1977). In his article, Cardoso recognized the inherent economic bias of dependency theory and suggested the need for the complementary development of more thorough going political analysis within the dependency theory

theoretical framework. But it is precisely because of its pitfalls that dependency analysis tends to restrict political practice to an outcome based either on mass spontaneity, which Frank (1969), anticipated in his prescription of violent revolution. The Marxist relevance to Third World conditions resides precisely in its ability to deal directly with the problems of human emancipation and liberation from native as well as foreign domination. Although Marxist theory was a dynamic one, it seems to have underplayed the independent roles of ideas and values which later became a dominant theme in social political theory.

CONCLUSION

It is axiomatic to posit that the relevance of theory to Third World political practice is bound up with a necessary shift from theory as commodity to be bought and sold in the intellectual market place. Conditions in the Third World are sufficiently specific to warrant a particular approach to theorizing based on criteria that focus on fundamental change. Among the theories examined in this paper; the Marxist approach, based on the concept of the mode of production, more closely approximates such criteria although it remains ambiguous with respect to crucial questions relating to the precise path towards the required changes and social transformations in the Third World. Both plural society and dependency theories are relatively inadequate in the sense that the significantly cultural deterministic character of the former and the economic deterministic emphasis of the latter render these theories incapable of explaining the more complex political element or motive forces in the process of Third World change.

The merit of the Marxist thesis, which allows for the more thoroughgoing analysis of the motives forces of change, is grounded in its recognition of the relevance of the political over the econo-cultural conditions obtainable in most Third World societies. That is, capitalist penetration has not yet clearly or absolutely displaced pre-capitalist interest and tendencies. However, the incompetences in the development of Marxist theory so far are a reflection of the existence of significant gaps in the theory with regard to the resolution of crucial problem within the Third World context. Among the issues that are as yet inadequately theorized with respect to the Third World experience are rather complex and indeterminate Linkage between class and ethnicity, a peaceful transition to socialism, which at the same time ensures the suppression of the most oppressed and exploited classes over the traditional dominance of the more advantaged classes, and the transformation of the theory itself from an intellectual commodity to a practical tool in the struggle for change and development in the Third World.

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