

# **Title: Elements of the Modernization, Dependency, and World System Theories and Alternative Approaches to Development**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Development is a historical process, with societies developing through the centuries. As a discipline, however, the study of development began after World War II. Since then, the field has evolved with theories based on the modernization approach, dependency and world system theories, and after the eighties, a counter Neoclassical revolution was being established. New approaches like the 'basic needs' strategy appeared in the midst of these and other theoretical perspectives in the field to counteract some of the problems with them. Recently, authors such as Alvin So (1990) notes that there seems to be occurring a convergence between some of the earlier theories.

The aim of this paper is to review important aspects of the modernization, dependency and world system approaches and discuss some of these aspects as elements to be considered in new development alternatives. The paper is divided into three sections besides this introduction and concluding remarks. The first section will highlight some key aspects of the three perspectives of development outlined, e.g., the modernization, dependency, and world system theories. The second will discuss alternative approaches to development of the last decades and some of the significant actors involved in those approaches. The third section will examine a key element of the theories brought up previously, institutional change, important element to be considered in a process of development that is aimed at responding pressing problems in the realities of developing countries today, especially Brazil, and point out to strategies that could help in the implementation of such process.