

17.588f13 Week 7 “Modernization and Development”

Questions for Class Discussion

For the last sixty years, political scientists have generally remembered Lipset for the argument that modernization leads to democracy. What, in your view, is Lipset’s claim about the effect of economic development on politics?

What do you think is Dahl’s view of the political impact of modernization, and how does it differ from Lipset’s?

Moore, of course, offers a still different view. How would Lipset respond to his work?

Many of the concepts that Moore employs (“strength of the landed class”, “commercial impulse”, “routes to modernization”, etc.) are extremely difficult to measure. Should they be measured? If so, how can they be? If not, how might we determine whether his argument is right or wrong?

Skocpol’s central critique of Moore is that he “left out the state”. Was she right? How would taking the state into account change Moore’s argument?

Moore codes England as a democratic outcome and Germany as a fascist outcome. But Socialists took power in Germany before they did in England, and they remained in power for a dozen years. Since 1945, of course, both countries have been robust democracies. Was Moore wrong in classifying Germany and England as examples of examples of radically different “paths” to modernity?

One of the most memorable quotes in Moore’s book – from a right-wing German politician during the pre-Weimar period – is actually a mistranslation: Moore has Elard von Oldenburg saying “take ten men and shoot (*schliessen*) the Reichstag”; Oldenburg actually said “close down (*schliessen*)” the Reichstag (p. 35). Does it matter that Moore got this particular fact wrong? More generally, how should we treat the use of historical material in a work like Moore’s?

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