

It is generally held that economic development occurs in a succession of capitalist stages and that today's underdeveloped countries are still in a stage of history, sometimes depicted as an original stage, through which the now developed countries passed long ago. It is also widely believed that the contemporary underdevelopment of a country can be understood as the product or reflection solely of its own economic, political, social, and cultural characteristics or structure. Yet historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the structure and development of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole.⁹