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Delineating the Sustainable Development Goals

A comprehensive assessment from a development research perspective

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Abstract

The objective of this master's thesis is to critically assess the Sustainable Development Goals from a development research perspective. These seventeen goals and their associated targets are analysed from the perspective of modernization, dependency and postdevelopment theories regarding their relevance, attainability and associated indicators. The analytical result illustrates an entirely different assessment of the agenda by these three development theories. Whereas modernization theory is very affirmative of it, the other two theories have major reservations. Dependency theory questions the agenda's attainability because the agenda does not address international dependencies as the actual root cause of underdevelopment. Postdevelopment theory not only questions the purpose of an international development agenda altogether, but also criticizes ideological implications of the Sustainable Development Goals. As the agenda reflects the fundamental features of modernization theory as a long-established development paradigm, it does not have the potential to fulfil its own vision of "17 Goals Transform Our World".

Ziel dieser Masterarbeit ist eine kritische Beurteilung der Ziele für nachhaltige Entwicklung aus entwicklungstheoretischer Perspektive. Diese siebzehn Ziele und die damit verbundenen Unterziele werden aus der Sicht von Modernisierungs-, Dependenz- und Post-Development-Theorie in Bezug auf ihre Relevanz, Erreichbarkeit und dazugehörigen Indikatoren analysiert. Das Analyseergebnis veranschaulicht eine grundlegend verschiedene Beurteilung der Agenda aus Sicht dieser drei Entwicklungstheorien: Während die Modernisierungstheorie ihr gegenüber äußerst positiv eingestellt ist, haben die anderen beiden Theorien starke Vorbehalte. Die Dependenztheorie stellt die Erreichbarkeit der Agenda infrage, da sich diese nicht mit internationalen Abhängigkeiten als eigentlichem Grund von Unterentwicklung auseinandersetzt. Die Post-Development-Theorie stellt nicht nur den Zweck einer internationalen Strategie für Entwicklung infrage, sondern kritisiert auch die ideologischen Implikationen der Ziele für nachhaltige Entwicklung. Indem die Agenda die Grundannahmen der Modernisierungstheorie widerspiegelt, hat sie nicht das Potenzial, ihre eigene Vision von „17 Zielen für die Transformation unserer Welt“ zu erfüllen.

The Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

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List of Abbreviations

CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IHR	International Health Regulations
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OWG	Open Work Group
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SE4ALL	Sustainable Energy for All
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the 2030 Agenda or the Global Goals, are a set of seventeen goals. They were adopted on 25 September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly as the United Nations official global development agenda and are aimed to be achieved by 2030. The goals are supposed to be implemented not exclusively by the United Nations Organization itself, but, more importantly, by national governments and civil society.

The Sustainable Development Goals succeeded the Millennium Development Goals and included new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice (United Nations Development Programme 2017). In contrast to the Millennium Development Goals, they are applicable to all UN member states. The seventeen goals are considered indivisible, which means they are dependent on each other. The agenda has often been described as ambitious and unrealistic to achieve by 2030, but it is nevertheless broadly considered an important global framework for sustainable development.

Even though the goals are broadly accepted by national governments and civil society, they remain a controversial topic in academia, particularly in development research. Critical aspects include the selection of goals, targets and indicators, their ambitiousness and their potential to be evaluated. The aim of this master's thesis is to critically review the agenda from the perspective of development research and raise the question of how much the goals can contribute to a worldwide assessment of development. The perspectives of selected development theories are intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of the agenda from a development research perspective that puts the overall benefit of the agenda into question. This assessment is going to analyse the individual goals and targets from the different perspectives. It is going to illustrate which goals are perceived as valuable and which ones are perceived as less beneficial or even harmful; it might also point out potential alternatives to the goals.

While previous studies mostly aimed to evaluate the Sustainable Development Goals from an empirical and descriptive viewpoint, this master's thesis is going to add a normative angle from a development research perspective. Its analysis will reveal to what extent endogenic, exogenic and ideological factors play a role in the agenda. It is going to call its concept of development into question and critically examine it from different viewpoints. In addition to the previous studies, this master's thesis is hence going to add a more critical and normative perspective on the Sustainable Development Goals that may be beneficial for future concepts.

The epistemological interest of this master's thesis is how the Sustainable Development Goals are perceived by different theoretical approaches within development research. This question will be answered by a content analysis of the 169 targets which are associated with the goals, from the perspective of three theoretical approaches in development research: modernization theory, dependency theory and postdevelopment theory. They were chosen based on their different perception of the causes for underdevelopment and how these can be overcome, and therefore are likely to allow for a comprehensive perspective on the Sustainable Development Goals. To answer the research question mentioned above, the perspectives of these theories will be considered equal and compared to reach a comprising assessment.

In terms of its order, this master's thesis is going to begin with a description of the United Nations development agenda in the twenty-first century, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, while the latter will be discussed in more detail. After a historic and conceptional overview, this master's thesis is going to elaborate on the most important characteristics of the Sustainable Development Goals. As their name implies, the centrepiece to the goals is the concept of sustainable development, which can be considered independent from the fundamental theories in development research. Other important aspects include the associated targets and indicators as well as the evaluation process. In addition to that, important criticism of the agenda will be discussed.

The content analysis will be conducted on the target level by reference to three aspects which are essential to the agenda's potential: the target's relevance, the target's attainability and the relevance of its associated indicators. An analysis of these three aspects will facilitate a comparison of the different perspectives within development research. This content analysis will be conducted using a three-tier ordinal scale, comparing the wording of each target and the characteristics of the three development theories. In the end, this comparison will provide an overview of significant commonalities and differences across the goals along with their associated targets and indicators regarding the development research perspective.

The next chapter will summarize the overall findings across the three theories and highlight commonalities and differences, before elaborating on the analysis from the perspective of each development theory. This final comparison shall give an idea about the conceptional and ideological background of the agenda.

The conclusion will provide a final statement on the perception of the Sustainable Development Goals from the viewpoint of development research. In the end, this assessment will provide a few suggestions on aspects that should be more prioritized in the future.

2. The United Nations development agenda

2.1. The Millennium Development Goals

On 8 September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which contained “a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century” (United Nations 2000). The declaration embraced four thematic areas that became key to the Millennium Development Goals: (a) peace, security and disarmament, (b) development and poverty eradication, (c) environmental protection, (d) human rights, democracy and good governance (United Nations 2000). The goals themselves and their associated targets and indicators were enhanced by the IMF, the OECD, and the World Bank (United Nations General Assembly 2001: 55).

The agenda was published by the Secretary-General and adopted by the General Assembly in 2001. It encompassed eight goals, associated with 18 targets and 48 indicators, which were intended to be achieved by the end of 2015. The list of targets and indicators was changed a few times, and their number increased to 21 targets and 60 indicators (UNICEF 2014).



Figure 2.1 – The Millennium Development Goals – United Nations 2014

Unlike previous development agendas throughout the twentieth century, the Millennium Development Goals were very specific in terms of their ambition, time-frame and evaluation. The 21 targets formulated a clear ambition that was intended to be fulfilled by 2015. The first target became most prominent, as it urged to “halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day” (United Nations General Assembly 2001: 56). Even though the agenda emphasized the responsibility of developed countries for foreign aid, it was primarily addressed to developing countries (according to UN classification).

The agenda setting of the Millennium Development Goals was criticized regarding their aim, content and framework. These include critics that said the goals were too ambitious and that they were mostly shaped by a Western understanding of development. In addition to that, individual goals and targets were criticized as they seemed to miss the point. This applies to the first target especially, as it implied that poverty could be measured simply by applying the World Bank's poverty threshold of \$1.25 per day (Financial Times 2015).

The Millennium Development Goals were evaluated in 2015. As was outlined in the agenda itself, the data on the indicators was compared to 1990, to allow for an objective assessment of the agenda's success. Nevertheless, the official evaluation report laid the focus on a few targets that were most effective. The United Nations Development Programme claimed that the agenda was overall successful, even though the goals were only partially achieved:

"Since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half. The proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half. The primary school enrolment rate in the developing regions has reached 91 per cent, and many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago. Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, and maternal mortality is down 45 per cent worldwide. The target of halving the proportion of people who lack access to improved sources of water was also met."

(United Nations Development Programme 2015)

Many experts agree that the Millennium Development Goals were overall a step forward for worldwide development. Indian economist Sanjay Reddy stated that "we had a crisis from 2008, but on the whole the 2000s was a good decade for development" (Financial Times 2015). Other scholars commended the UN's achievements in poverty reduction, which, according to the Financial Times, "everybody agrees (...) is something to celebrate" (Financial Times 2015).

In contrast to the assessment by the United Nations themselves, the evaluation process was not entirely approved, but also criticized by academia and the media. Despite the targets that were not achieved, the success of the Millennium Development Goals is not necessarily a success of the agenda itself. For example, a large share of poverty reduction can be ascribed to the economic growth in China during the period in question. It is one of many methodological and statistical criticisms of the agenda's evaluation process (Financial Times 2015).

The Millennium Development Goals were refined during the Post-2015 Development Agenda process, which sought to define a future global development framework to succeed the MDGs. Many of the criticisms mentioned above were addressed in the development process of what would later become the Sustainable Development Goals. Even though they follow the same fundamental idea, they were subject to significant changes compared to their predecessors.

2.2. The Sustainable Development Goals

2.2.1. Overview

The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the 2030 Agenda or the Global Goals, are a set of seventeen goals. They were adopted on 25 September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly as the United Nations development agenda and are aimed to be achieved by 2030. They succeeded the Millennium Development Goals and included new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice (United Nations Development Programme 2017) and are applicable to all UN member states. The seventeen goals are considered indivisible, which means they are interdependent.



Figure 2.2 – The Sustainable Development Goals – United Nations Brussels 2018

The Sustainable Development Goals were conceptualized on five key themes, as it is written down in the outcome document of the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. These principles, also referred to as the “five Ps”, are people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership (United Nations General Assembly 2015). They are considered the five guiding principles of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the Sustainable Development Goals are the main research topic in the scope of this master’s thesis, the following subchapters will further elaborate on certain aspects of the agenda. These include their development process from a historical perspective, conceptional and substantial differences to the Millennium Development Goals, the role of the concept of sustainable development for the agenda, the role of targets and indicators, the agenda’s evaluation process as well as the most important criticisms of the goals.

2.2.2. Development process

The development process of the Sustainable Development Goals was initiated the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. In reference to the first conference of this kind in 1992, the 2012 conference is commonly known as “Rio+20”. The conclusions from this conference laid out the framework for the future UN development agenda, although no specific goals or targets were decided upon at the conference itself. In the final document entitled “The future we want”, the member states formulated their vision as follows: “We (...) renew our commitment to sustainable development and to ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations” (United Nations General Assembly 2012: 1).

The subsequent development process of the new UN development agenda, then referred to as the “Post-2015 Development Agenda”, was led by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and facilitated by the United Nations Development Group. They established the *UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda*, which involved 60 UN agencies as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (United Nations 2012). In addition to that, Ban Ki-moon nominated a 27-member *High-Level Panel of eminent persons* to advise him on the agenda. It included representatives from governments, civil society and the private sector. The panel released its final report on 30 May 2013, in which it advocates for a new agenda on poverty eradication, sustainable development and global partnership (United Nations 2013a).

The United Nations Development Group facilitated consultation processes on the national, regional and global level, which reached more than one million people. Its report “A Million Voices: The World We Want” summarized regional perspectives as well as the main points from eleven thematic consultations of the following themes: Addressing Inequalities; Conflict, Violence and Disaster; Education; Energy; Environmental Sustainability; Governance; Growth and Employment; Health; Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition; Population Dynamics; and Water (United Nations Development Programme 2013: 105). These themes would later become keystones for the Sustainable Development Goals.

All these examinations were taken into consideration by the *Open Working Group* for the draft of the Sustainable Development Goals. The group was created in January 2013 by the UN General Assembly and comprised 30 UN member states (United Nations 2013b). In July 2014, the group presented its proposal consisting out of 17 goals and 169 associated targets to the public. At the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General, the UN General Assembly adapted the group’s proposal as the new UN development agenda on 25 September 2015.

2.2.3. Differences to the MDGs

While the Millennium Development Goals were focused on several aspects that were considered highly important for international development, the Sustainable Development Goals follow a more comprehensive approach. This is evident from the number of goals and targets, which increased significantly with the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals. The number of goals rose from eight to seventeen, the number of targets from 21 to 169 and the number of indicators from 60 to 232.

Another significant difference between the two agendas is the countries they apply to. The Millennium Development Goals were designed primarily for developing countries, as the perception was that their situation needed to be ameliorated. Developed countries were mostly incorporated through the involvement of financial and strategical partnerships. This limitation was subject to criticism, as it seemed that developed countries would not need to implement some changes. The scope of the Sustainable Development Goals was hence expanded. The new agenda applies to all countries equally, regardless of their development status.

Beyond the conceptual changes, the development process and therefore the content of the new agenda were fundamentally different. After the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals were determined by expert groups within the United Nations system. The Sustainable Development Goals on the other hand were conceptualized in a more democratic and extensive process that involved governments, civil society, the private sector and individuals, who were invited to share their ideas and perspectives on sustainable development. The new agenda thus included new thematic areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice (United Nations Development Programme 2017). The Sustainable Development Goals hence addressed some criticisms which argued that the Millennium Development Goals were not comprehensive enough.

In September 2015, the British newspaper *The Guardian* listed seven aspects in which the SDGs have gained advantage over the MDGs: (1) They are more globally collaborative, (2) The private sector has a greater role to play, (3) They are rooted in human rights standards, (4) They are inclusive, (5) The indicators present opportunities for civil society engagement, (6) They are inspirational to the world, (7) They can be complemented by the Paris Agreement (The Guardian 2015). Altogether, the new agenda allows for a much broader framework of coordination between the goals and cooperation among the stakeholders, which is the reason why the agenda is generally perceived much more positively by civil society and private industry.

2.2.4. Sustainable development

As their official name implies, the concept of sustainable development is a cornerstone to the Sustainable Development Goals. The concept was acknowledged by the United Nations as a guiding principle in the face of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit) in 1992. This conference is recognized as a key event for the inclusion of environmental affairs and sustainability into the global political agenda. The outcome of the conference was monitored by the newly-founded United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. This was replaced in 2013 by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which is composed of all UN member states and responsible for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The concept of sustainable development itself was shaped by the World Commission for Environment and Development (also called “Brundtland Commission” in reference to its then-chairperson Gro Harlem Brundtland) with a definition of the term in 1987. The Brundtland Report “Our Common Future” defines it as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 41). Sustainable development aims to conciliate economic growth, environmental protection and social equality (Borowy 2014).

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro declared sustainable development a guiding principle of the United Nations throughout the twenty-first century. Subsequently, it played a major role in the drafting process of multiple international agreements, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and, naturally, the Sustainable Development Goals. With the concept’s implementation into national policy making, it became relevant beyond the political sphere and was adapted by many private companies which started to publish annual sustainability reports. The implementation of the new UN development agenda accelerated this process and set a new standard for the significance of sustainability.

Alongside the United Nations and the political sphere, the concept of sustainable development became a much-debated concept in the scientific community. The subject of “sustainability science” became a recognized academic discipline in the early twenty-first century. In addition to that, sustainable development is now perceived as a concept in development research, which adds a new aspect to existing concepts and paradigms. Sustainable development is hence not considered an independent theory, but an addition to existing ones. Therefore, this concept is not going to play a key role in the analytical process of this master’s thesis.

2.2.5. Targets and indicators

2.2.5.1. Targets

Like the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals are associated with a predefined set of targets and indicators. The 169 targets were an integral part of the original proposal by the Open Working Group and hence of the 2015 resolution in which the United Nations General Assembly implemented the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly 2015). In addition to global targets included in the resolution, each member state is called upon to develop its own national targets. The purpose of the targets is described in clause 55 of the declaration:

“(…) Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. It is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields. “

(United Nations General Assembly 2015: 13)

While the goals can be understood as a general guideline, the targets formulate specific aims and aspirations that should be fulfilled by 2030. In contrast to the indicators, the targets are an integral part of the agenda, as they can be considered its most essential part. The list of targets was determined along with the goals in September 2015 and cannot be changed.

2.2.5.2. Indicators

Unlike the 169 targets, the 232 indicators (as of 2017) are not an integral part of the agenda itself. They were developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators and agreed upon at the forty-eighth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission held in March 2017 (United Nations Statistics Division 2017). The objective of the indicators is to define statistical measures to be evaluated to make the goals and targets measurable.

The selection of the right indicators was a long and disputed process, and the final set of indicators remains a controversial topic. Concerns about the final set of indicators include their objectivity, reliability, validity and access to the relevant data. Even though these indicators have already been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, they remain subject to annual refinements. Their composition and number have been changed several times and can be further adjusted until the evaluation process of the Sustainable Development Goals. This procedure is a crucial aspect in measuring the agenda's success, as it is the same aspect that has been and remains most controversial regarding the evaluation of the MDGs.

2.2.6. Evaluation process

Evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals seems easier at first glance than it might in fact be. Experiences with the evaluation process of the Millennium Development Goals showed that allegedly objective findings can be very controversial and perceived from different perspectives, which can call the success of the agenda into question. The relevant data on the indicators will be collected on the national level, which means that the United Nations rely on government and national agencies in order to gain access to this data. The objectivity of this data can thus be called into question. In addition to that, global issues such as climate change affect the whole planet regardless of national boundaries and hence cannot be effectively evaluated on the national level. All this makes the evaluation process quite complicated.

The Sustainable Development Goals are going to be evaluated by the United Nations Statistics Division, which is responsible for collecting data on the indicators. According to the establishing resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, the follow-up and review processes are going to take place on the national, regional and global levels. These reviews are voluntary and country-led, “as national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development” (United Nations General Assembly 2015). The evaluation will take place on the national level. This method is sometimes criticized as it is useful for some but not all goals and targets.

In addition to the evaluation process by the United Nations themselves, the agenda calls upon the member states for the creation of national targets and their evaluation.

A prototype of SDG evaluation was presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in the form of the *SDG Index and Dashboards Report*, which was co-authored by the German Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The most recent report was published in July 2018 and examined the performance of UN member states regarding 88 global indicators and 111 for OECD countries (Sachs et al. 2018: 39). It contains dashboards for the different goals, targets and indicators as well as the countries that were examined. The report has been taken into consideration by several governments and legislative bodies for their national evaluation. An example is the Congress of Spain, which uses the *SDG Index and Dashboards Report* as a national reference point (SDG Index 2018).

The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 also assessed which countries have implemented national indicators to measure the progress on the SDGs, as was intended by the agenda:

“Our survey results indicate that a majority of G20 countries have developed or are in the development process of developing national indicators of progress on the SDGs (...). There is no common approach for identifying the nature and number of national indicators to monitor progress on the SDGs, which range from 63 in Germany to 201 in Italy (...). (Sachs et al. 2018: 4)

2.2.7. Criticism

The Sustainable Development Goals are the most comprehensive international development agenda that has ever been conceptualized and encompass a broad range of aspects. Despite their broad approval by national governments and civil society, they have been criticized by academia, the media (The Economist 2015) and non-governmental organisations. While some critics point out that there are too many goals which are contradictory to some extent, others complain that relevant issues have not been considered in the agenda. These include slavery, racism, unfair terms of trade and global distribution of food (Dearden 2015).

In academia, the Sustainable Development Goals have been a research focus across different disciplines, which all have a different perspective on the agenda. In general, scientific articles and the media tend to be more critical of it than non-governmental organisations. While some scholars have endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals as a suitable global development framework, they have received criticism from scholars for several reasons. These include the goals' lack of focus, contradictions of certain goals, their attainability and the high cost of achieving all goals on a global scale. However, most criticisms focus "on the large number of goals and targets, which are viewed as too complex to communicate to the public or drive policy, and too ambitious, universal and absolute to be successful" (Liverman 2018: 178).

German philosopher Thomas Pogge was among the first scholars to write a comprehensive criticism of the Sustainable Development Goals. In his article "The Sustainable Development Goals: Brilliant Propaganda?" (2015), he formulates six key criticisms: an insufficient division of responsibilities, insufficient definitions and measurement procedures, labelling the agenda as "sustainable", the under-ambitious treatment of inequality, the lack of attention to structural and institutional reforms and understanding freedom from poverty as a human right (Pogge 2015). In the context of this master's thesis, his fifth criticism is the most relevant.

Despite these critical views, the overall perception of the Sustainable Development Goals is rather positive. They are broadly perceived as a better and more elaborated concept compared to the Millennium Development Goals, which have received even more fundamental criticism. Despite these improvements, some scholars and journalists have expressed their concern that the Sustainable Development Goals might be rather harmful than beneficial.

The following analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals will provide a comprehensive assessment from a development research perspective. This is going to include criticism from different development theories and their implications for a better development agenda in line with expressed criticisms from other academic disciplines.

3. Analytical framework

3.1. Development theory

3.1.1. Overview

An academic analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a more comprehensive approach, as the goals encompass a broad range of issues that are attributed to various academic disciplines. Hence, it would be insufficient to analyse the agenda from the perspective of a single discipline only. Instead, it is essential to combine these perspectives in a transdisciplinary approach in order to meet the entire scale of the agenda.

Under these considerations, it seems straightforward to further examine the perspective of development theory. This transdisciplinary approach comprises different theories on economic and political development which have been established after the end of World War II. Development theory has changed over time with changes in ideology as well as the international environment and its conceptions of development and governance (Halperin 2013). Due to the wide range of development theories, it is practical to focus on the most relevant approaches, which can provide the most comprehensive analysis of the research object.

Overview	Modernization theory	Dependency theory	Postdevelopment theory
Time of origin	1950s/1960s	1960s/1970s	1980s
Characteristics of underdevelopment	dualism traditional vs. modern	dualism core vs. periphery	ideological attribution
Causes for underdevelopment	endogenic	exogenic	stigmatisation
Goals of development	catching up	dissociation/self-reliance	alternative concepts

Table 3.1 – Characteristics of selected development theories

The following analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals will thus be conducted from the perspective of three theoretical approaches: Modernization theory, dependency theory and postdevelopment theory. In addition to their continuing relevance within development theory, their conceptions of development and governance are fundamentally different. This is particularly the case in terms of their understanding of the characteristics and causes for underdevelopment, as well as the goals for a development strategy (see above).

In the further course of this chapter, each of the three theories will be further explained in reference to the Sustainable Development Goals. As all of them have been shaped by several scholars and none of them can be considered consistent, the following remarks are also going to provide a definition of these theories for the purpose of the subsequent analysis.

3.1.2. Modernization theory

Modernization theories are considered the oldest approach in development theory. They emerged in the 1950s “as an explanation of how the industrial societies of North America and Western Europe developed” (Crossman 2018). The objective of the theories was therefore to explain “why countries have failed to develop, focussing on what cultural and economic conditions might act as ‘barriers’ to development” and to “provide a non-communist solution to poverty” (ReviseSociology 2015). According to modernization theories, development depends primarily on political, social and technological conditions within a given country. The causes for underdevelopment are therefore perceived as endogenic. Modernization on the other hand is perceived as “a process that involves industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, bureaucracy, mass consumption, and the adoption of democracy” (Crossman 2018). In contrast to dependency and postdevelopment theories, modernization theories disregard the influence of international economic interrelations and exogenic economic factors.

The most influential work in modernization theory is arguably the 1960 book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* by US-American economic historian Walt Whitman Rostow. In his book, Rostow elaborates a growth model through which all societies must pass, consisting of five linear stages: “the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high-mass consumption” (Rostow 1960: 4). Rostow believed that an initial injection of aid from the west in the form of training, education and economic investment would be enough to jolt a society into economic growth (ReviseSociology 2015). Most importantly, underdeveloped countries need to overcome their traditional system to enter an evolutionary development process throughout the five stages. His model provides two implications: a duality of traditionality and modernity as well as a standardized way of development, in which there is no way back. As he classifies various countries into the five stages, he is earmarking the industrial and capitalist societies of North America and Western Europe as economic role models for the rest of the world.

Stage 1 Traditional society	Stage 2 Preconditions for take-off	Stage 3 Take-off	Stage 4 Drive to maturity	Stage 5 Age of high-mass consumption
Economies are dominated by subsistence farming. Societies have little wealth to invest and limited access to industry and technology. There are cultural barriers to development.	Western aid packages bring Western values, practises and expertise in the form of science, technology, infrastructure or industry, which provides investment conditions.	New practices lead to economic growth and the overcome of subsistence economy. Profits are reinvested in infrastructure and a new entrepreneurial class emerges that is willing to invest.	More economic growth and investment in education, media and birth control. The citizens start to realize new opportunities and strive to make the most of their lives.	Economic growth and production are at Western levels.

Table 3.2 – Rostow’s five-stage model of development – ReviseSociology 2015

While Rostow's work received a lot of criticism and seems outdated in the post-Cold War era, its basic ideas laid the foundation of subsequent modernization theories. Some scholars underlined the importance of certain aspects that prevent modernization in "underdeveloped" countries. These include US-American economist Berthold Frank Hoselitz, who stressed the role of education and urbanisation, and US-American sociologist Alex Inkeles, who laid emphasis on the media's role to diffuse modern ideas and values (ReviseSociology 2015). Their ideas were fundamental for development politics in the 1960s and 1970s, both for political strategies as well as for international development cooperation, and remain relevant to date.

Common features of modernization theories include a duality between traditional and modern societies that is caused by endogenic factors. Such factors primarily include cultural, economic, political and technological structures that preserve the traditional society. Hence development requires a fundamental change of these structures, that can be induced by either national progress or, as proposed by modernization theorists, a concurrent input by more developed societies. This supposition legitimated Western development cooperation while it emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, as cultural, economic, political and technological dominance was seen as beneficial for underdeveloped countries, which had just become independent from their colonial powers several years earlier.

Modernization theories have received broad criticism ever since the 1960s, notably by those scholars who developed subsequent concepts and theories in development research. They criticized the duality of traditionality and modernity with its implicit stigmatisation of "traditional" societies, as well as the homogenic way of development envisaged by the model. Other critics labelled different concepts of modernization theory as Eurocentric, as Western societies are usually considered to be the role-model of a development process. Nevertheless, the ideas of modernization theory were incumbent in foreign aid policy during the Cold War and remain an influential concept in contemporary development politics.

In the context of the following analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals, the assumptions and statements listed below shall be considered central to modernization theory:

- (a) There is an international dualism between traditional and modern societies.
- (b) Underdevelopment is caused by and can be solved through endogenic factors.
- (c) There is a single prescribed path of development without any alternatives.
- (d) Developing countries should follow the example of developed countries.
- (e) All countries can catch up and reach the highest development stage.

3.1.3. Dependency theory

Dependency theories are a cluster of different theories that emerged as critical examination of modernization theories. They were developed in the late 1960s and 1970s under the guidance of the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Raúl Prebisch (Ferraro 2008: 58). In contrast to modernization theories, dependency theories perceive the reasons of underdevelopment to be exogenic. While Rostow and other modernization theorists claim that developing societies would be impelled towards development once they encountered Western European and North American societies, scholars of dependency theories argue the converse (Halperin 2013). According to their understanding, underdeveloped countries are neglected in the international division of labour and can only overcome this marginalisation by diminishing their dependency on developed countries.

Dependency theories divide the world into two economic areas, which are most often labelled as core and periphery. Countries in the periphery are characterized by a subsistence economy which produces and exports primary commodities. Core countries import these commodities and further process them into industrial commodities and manufactured goods. In this international division of labour, core and peripheric economies are dependent on each other.

A foundation stone of dependency theories was the Prebisch–Singer hypothesis, formulated in 1950 by Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch and German-born British economist Hans Singer. It proclaims “a secular decline in the terms of trade of internationally traded primary commodities vis-à-vis manufactures” (Ocampo/Parra 2003: 85), implying that exporting manufactured goods would be more beneficial to a national economy than exporting primary commodities. A trade constellation between periphery and core as described above would hence create an economic imbalance to the core’s benefit. The prevailing international division of labour therefore consolidates a global disparity in terms of development.

Immanuel Wallerstein refined dependency theory by adding semi-periphery as a new element, as he criticized the duality of core and periphery as too limited. His concept is known as world-systems theory or world-systems analysis, which he himself describes as a system “defined as a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems” (Wallerstein 1974: 390). He also added a historic component to his theory, as he explains the emergence of economic imbalances through the spread of capitalism during the era of colonization. While the capitalist system was originally limited to Europe, other regions became the new periphery when they were incorporated into the capitalist world economy. In many ways, Wallerstein’s world-systems theory can be considered a refined dependency theory.

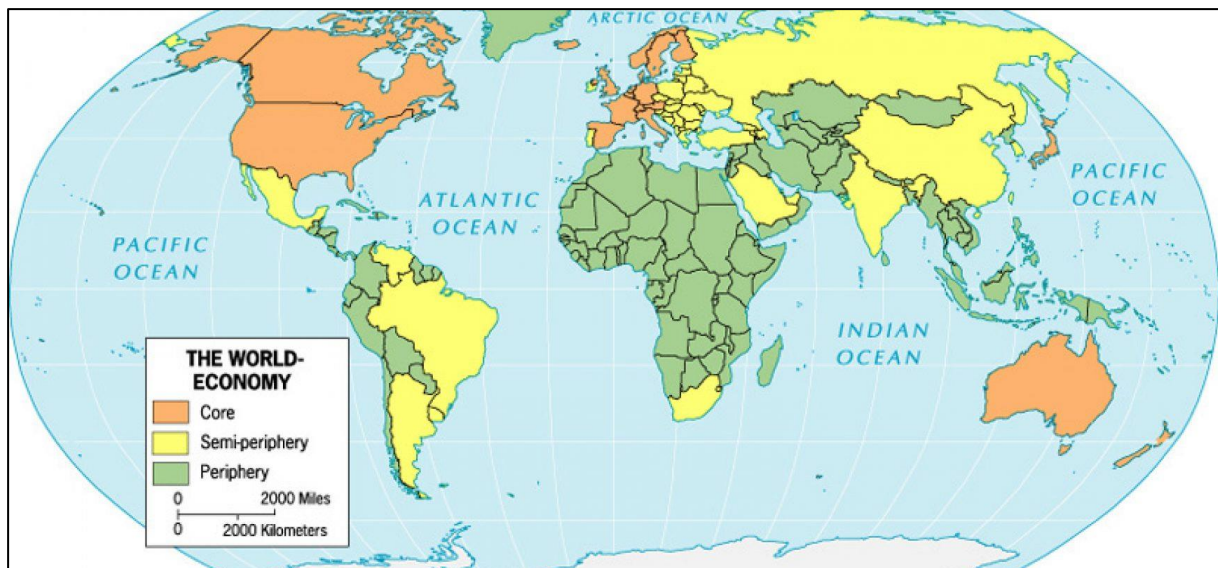


Figure 3.1 – The world economy according to world-systems theory – Pramod 2016

A major difference between modernization and dependency theories is their perception of development in the meaning of progress. While modernization theories are rather optimistic and state that a high level of development can be achieved by all societies, dependency and world-systems theories are much more sceptic. According to them, there is an economic imbalance caused by international dependencies. This imbalance is increasing in the light of globalisation as these dependencies are becoming stronger. Therefore, dependency theories negate the statement that traditional societies can overcome their underdevelopment. Instead, they are necessary for developed societies to maintain their high level of development.

The principal criticism of dependency theory is its lack of empirical and historic evidence. Economic developments in emerging countries seem to contradict the statements made by dependency theories. As the key elements of their economic success were primarily internal, critics have concluded that underdevelopment cannot be caused by endogenic factors only. Other scholars have criticized that countries, development processes and economic relations are too complex to be explained in such a model, which is therefore too simplistic.

In the context of the following analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals, the assumptions and statements listed below shall be considered central to dependency theory:

- (a) There is an international dualism between core and (semi-)peripheric countries.
- (b) Underdevelopment is caused by and can be solved through exogenic factors.
- (c) There is no a single prescribed path of development; alternative ways exist.
- (d) Developing countries should diminish their dependencies on developed countries.
- (e) Not all countries can catch up as long as international dependencies exist.

3.1.4. Postdevelopment theory

Postdevelopment theories, also referred to as antidevelopment theories, emerged in the 1980s and became prominent in development research throughout the 1990s. They are described as being “critical of Western models of development, arguing that development was always unjust, that it never worked, and that developing countries should find their own pathways to development” (ReviseSociology 2017). Postdevelopment theory is not a consistent development theory but rather an alternative perspective that results from a broad range of development and hegemony critics. In contrast to the two theories mentioned above, it puts the idea of national economic development as well as the existence of a hierarchy of developed and underdeveloped countries into question. Therefore, postdevelopment theory can be considered the most critical approach within development research.

In the face of the end of the Cold War and the subsequent decrease of foreign aid volume, several scholars in development research started reviewing the concept of development from a different angle. This new perspective can be depicted very well with a famous quote by German sociologist Wolfgang Sachs: “The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work” (Sachs 1992: 1). His conclusion is that as “the age of development (...) is coming to an end” (Sachs 1992: 1), the term development and its conception need to be reconsidered. Postdevelopment theory therefore questions the purpose of development and seeks alternatives. While the theory opposes the term of development itself, it is still open to structural changes to create a better society. It is therefore important to be careful with certain terms in this context.

The most influential work in postdevelopment theory is presumably the 1995 book *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* by US-American and Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar. He perceives the concept of development as “both an ideological export (...) and a simultaneous act of cultural imperialism” (The Guardian 2012), which is therefore comparable to colonialism. The idea of development would hence be a tool to justify global power structures beyond the decolonisation process in the mid-twentieth century. According to postdevelopment theorists, it was created by US president Harry S. Truman’s inaugural address in 1949, in which he advocates for “the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (Truman 1949). From Escobar’s perspective, Truman’s speech “represents a Eurocentric approach which fails to recognize the range of societies in the South and also the needs and requirements of the local populations” (Willis 2005: 39).

Since postdevelopment theories criticize the entire concept and meaning of development, their perception of “underdevelopment” as ideological attribution is fundamentally different from modernization and dependency theories. Escobar and other scholars criticized contemporary development research as ethnocentric, induced by an underlying social ideology, and its universal self-conception. Nevertheless, they recognize that positive change can take place in the form of alternative concepts, such as *sumak kawsay* (or *buen vivir*) in the Andes and *Gross National Happiness* in Bhutan. These concepts should be established by the local community, represent local culture and knowledge and address the needs of the local citizens.

Even though postdevelopment theories generally oppose universal concepts of development, their perspective can be beneficial for the analysis of such concepts. They provide a different viewpoint on development as they advocate for overcoming its ethnocentricity, universality and Westernisation. As paradoxical as it sounds at first, a general concept of development can therefore be considered beneficial from a postdevelopment perspective if these aspects play a key role in it. An analysis from this perspective might therefore reveal underlying Western hegemonic structures and understanding of development of which it is so critical.

As a critic of the predominant conception of the term “development”, postdevelopment theory has received broad criticism from scholars of development research and other disciplines. While many acknowledge the key elements of the theory, they argue that it misses the mark. The rejection of any development concept, as proposed by some postdevelopment theorists, would prevent any kind of cultural, economic, social or technological progress. While progress is evidently not always beneficial for the local people, it certainly is in some cases. For example, Jan Nederveen Pieterse criticized that “post-development articulates meaningful sensibilities but does not have a future programme” (Nederveen Pieterse 1998: 345). Other scholars have argued that historically, development concepts have often been promoted by Southern countries and hence cannot be at their complete disadvantage. It would thus be wrong to assume that development was and is entirely imposed by Western countries.

In the context of the following analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals, the assumptions and statements listed below shall be considered central to postdevelopment theory:

- (a) There is no objective classification of developed and underdeveloped countries.
- (b) Underdevelopment is an ideological attribution imposed by hegemonic societies.
- (c) There is no universal way of development; alternative ways are more expedient.
- (d) Every society should create its own concepts considering its local particularities.
- (e) All countries should be able to act independently in terms of development policies.

3.2. Methodology

The following analysis will examine the Sustainable Development Goals on the target level from the perspective of the three development theories outlined above. While each of them has another viewpoint on different aspects and characteristics of development, the objective is to carve out commonalities and differences of their perception of the agenda's constituents.

The analytical chapter will be subdivided into the 17 goals, as this structure is the most useful. Each of their 169 associated targets will be examined in a content analysis regarding three categories: relevance, attainability and associated indicators. These categories will be assessed from the perspective of each of the selected development theories. They will be rated in a table using a three-tier ordinal scale, which is colour-coded green, yellow and red. While the analysis will examine the perspective of the three theories on these categories in more detail, the table is intended to provide a general overview and allow for statistical processing of the findings.

The first category (relevance) will examine whether the respective target is relevant and worthwhile for the respective conception of development. As the perception of causes for underdevelopment and effective development strategies is different among the selected development theories, their perception of each target's relevance will be different as well. Assessing the relevance of all targets is going to provide an assessment of the relevance of the agenda according to the three development theories.

The second category (attainability) will examine whether the target is attainable under the international system's prevalent framework conditions. Even though a certain target might be considered beneficial for development, it might be perceived as unattainable due to the causes of international differences in terms of development status. In addition to that, irrelevant or even undesirable targets might be perceived as attainable due to unfavourable structures or interests of certain actors. Assessing the attainability of all targets is going to provide an assessment of the attainability of the agenda according to the three development theories.

The third category (indicators) will examine whether the associated indicators are relevant and allow for an effective evaluation of the agenda. Even though different approaches in development theory might have a similar perception of a target's relevance and attainability, their idea of relevant indicators might still be fundamentally different. The choice of the right indicators is important for the evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Assessing the relevance of all indicators is going to provide an assessment of the evaluability of the agenda according to the three development theories.

Preliminary to the analysis itself, there will be a short introduction about the respective goal. This introduction will include the full objective as outlined in the agenda, its connection to the Millennium Development Goals, a short description of why it is perceived as relevant by the United Nations and an overview of its associated targets. It will furthermore include a brief summarization of the goal's assessment by the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030, which assigns a rating from A to F to the goals and sorts them into three categories ("reform", "revolution" and "reversal"), as well as the SDG Index and Dashboards Report by the Bertelsmann Stiftung, which ranks the UN member states in terms of their progress on the goals.

Subsequently, each target will be analysed regarding these three categories in terms of its compatibility with the assertions of each development theory. This analysis will be conducted by applying the analysis criteria stated below. They depict the key points and differences of the three development theories. Additional aspects might play a role depending on the target.

Target analysis criteria	Modernization theory	Dependency theory	Postdevelopment theory
Relevance (R)	▸ Improve endogenic conditions for development ▸ Overcome the traditional society obstructing development and modernization	▸ Improve exogenic conditions for development ▸ Overcome dependencies at the expense of (semi-) peripheral countries	▸ Improve framework conditions detached from any ideological presupposition ▸ Overcome international hegemonial structures
Attainability (A)	▸ Draft a universal concept based on the role-model of developed countries ▸ Retain the framework of conceptual hegemony	▸ Diminish international dependencies and enhance self-determination ▸ Retain the framework of economic hegemony	▸ Facilitate maximal flexibility for independent and alternative concepts ▸ Retain the framework of ideological hegemony
Indicators (I)	▸ Assess endogenic factors ▸ Evaluate the impact of national policies/strategies ▸ Focus on universal concepts only	▸ Assess exogenic factors ▸ Evaluate the impact of international dependencies ▸ Focus on both universal and alternative concepts	▸ Assess ideological factors ▸ Evaluate the impact of hegemonic structures ▸ Focus on alternative concepts only

Table 3.3 – Target analysis criteria

Each target will be evaluated in these aspects on the three-tier colour-coded scale. To facilitate a comparison of the goals, the median for each category will be identified and depicted at the end of result tables. A table with the medians of all goals will be presented in the next chapter, which will summarize and compare the findings of the analytical chapter.

In addition to the colour-coded scale, the findings of the analysis will be explored further in detail from the viewpoint of each development theory. The description will include a general overview of the theory's perception of the goal and its associated targets, as well as a more detailed description of the three categories, in which the results will be justified. Comparisons between the different theories will be highlighted wherever it seems expedient.

4. Target analysis

4.1. Goal 1: No Poverty

4.1.1. Overview

The first goal's objective is to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”. The goal derived from target 1a of the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (then defined as living on less than US\$1 a day). According to the evaluation report, the global extreme poverty rate dropped by 68 per cent between 1990 and 2015. Most significantly, the extreme poverty rate in China dropped by 94 per cent (United Nations 2015: 14). With their aspiration to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, the Sustainable Development Goals build on these achievements and go a step further.

Goal 1 and its associated targets aim to “eradicate extreme poverty” according to national and international definitions, “implement appropriate social protections systems and measures”, “ensure (...) equal rights to economic resources and basic services”, “build the resilience of the poor and vulnerable to climate-related extreme events and disasters”, “ensure significant mobilization of resources (...) to provide adequate means for developing countries” and “create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels”.

Based on target 1.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of B (“reform”) to goal 1, which means that “the world is on course to get more than halfway towards, thereby making considerable progress towards the target by 2030” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by many European and Asian countries, while major challenges remain particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.1.2. Target analysis

Goal 1	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
1.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.1 – Results of the target analysis for goal 1

4.1.2.1. Modernization theory

The target analysis reveals a strong alignment with the idea of development as it has been conceptualized by modernization theorists. According to this perspective, eradicating poverty could be achieved by worldwide modernization and the overcoming of traditional societies, whose antiquated conditions determine poverty. Hence, developing countries should take the example of developed countries and implement their strategies to induce change on the national level. In addition to that, receiving foreign aid and assistance by developed countries would enable them to follow their path and set the framework for an economic take-off.

The first goal is highly relevant from a modernization theory perspective, as modernization theory itself “developed in the 1950s and 1960s as a mean of explaining the relative backwardness and poverty of Third World Countries” (Tukai 1988: 13). These explanations focus on endogenic factors, and so do the targets associated with goal 1. These include a universal definition of people living in poverty (on less than US\$1.25 a day), an emphasis on economic resources and an optimistic attitude towards foreign aid and capital spending. All of them bear the hallmarks of neoliberalism, which “can be described as a new version of modernization theory” (Kiely 1998: 64). The only exceptions to such universal concepts among these targets are calls for national definitions and strategies in targets 1.2 and 1.3, which nonetheless do not contradict the targets’ overall compliance with modernization theory.

The associated indicators mostly follow this pattern, as they imply a universal and prescribed path of development with a clear goal that can be measured by universal and quantitative indicators. While some of them take national measures into account, most of them attempt to apply universal guidelines regardless of national particularities or alternative development models. The indicators imply a very specific model of society that fundamentally reflects the vision of modernization theory. An evaluation based on these indicators would allow for a classification of countries into the five stages that were envisioned by Rostow.

As one of the classic objectives of development policies, eradicating poverty can be considered as among the key goals or even as the most successful goal from a modernization theory perspective. Despite its overriding role, all the other goals are essential for the attainment of goal 1. Above all, this applies to goals that foster economic growth and industrial development, such as goals 7, 8 and 9, as well as goal 16, which ensures improved framework conditions. Additional key elements according to Rostow include health, science and education, which are reflected in goals 3 and 4. All these goals are thus mutually dependent from a modernization theory perspective.

4.1.2.2. Dependency theory

The perception of the first goal from a dependency theory perspective reveals a more sceptical viewpoint. While most of its associated targets are considered at least somewhat relevant, global conditions for international development obstruct the attainability of the first goal. With targets and indicators that are more focused on endogenic causes for underdevelopment, the objectives related to this goal deal with symptoms rather than the causes.

In contrast to modernization theory, dependency theory has a more complex understanding of poverty conditions. Its perception is that “poverty at all levels is attributable to inhibiting relationships (internal colonialism) between the developed communities (urban areas) and their satellites (rural areas) and also between individuals with different economic powers” (Matunhu 2011: 68). Therefore, poverty is a phenomenon caused by dependence structures on different levels. This assumption implies a rather harmful than beneficial effect of targets 1.a and 1.b, which intend to enhance development cooperation and strategies on the international level, leading to increasing dependency of peripheric countries and regions on those in the centre. While the other targets can be endorsed, dependency structures in general are not reflected in the agenda. This deficiency, combined with prevailing international dependency structures, calls most targets’ and the goal’s overall attainability into question.

While the goal’s attainability is perceived as more critical by dependency theory compared to modernization theory, its associated indicators can be endorsed from both perspectives. From a dependency theory perspective however, these indicators reveal symptoms of dependency structures and thus have different implications than from a modernization theory perspective. The most crucial point in that context are not the indicators themselves, but their interpretation upon evaluation of the agenda. Both theories mentioned are likely to provide fundamentally different explanations for inequalities among countries that are assessed. Therefore, it can be argued that these indicators cannot adequately assess the determining factors for poverty and are unable to measure the agenda’s success.

All in all, poverty eradication is among the most important development objectives from a dependency theory perspective. The most crucial factor nevertheless is the measurability of determining factors of poverty, while the attainability of the goals and its associated targets is questionable. From a dependency theory perspective, eradicating poverty relies especially on goals 10, 16 and 17 to reduce global dependencies and allow for independent development strategies. This aspect can also be criticized about goal 1, as its associated indicators provide very limited margins for alternative concepts of development.

4.1.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

Even though the objectivity and measurability of poverty can be called into question, the overall aspiration of eradicating poverty is not a contradiction to suppositions of postdevelopment theory. Hence the targets can be considered partially useful from that perspective, while the indicators would be perceived as more critical. Eradicating poverty seems more realistic compared to the dependency theory perspective but would not provide the global transition that captions the agenda.

Postdevelopment theorists claim that poverty is not to be taken for granted but lies in the eye of the beholder (Pieterse 2000: 177). The prevalence of subsistence economy for instance is not equal to poverty, although such structures are not compatible with most economic indices. Both the objectivity and measurability of poverty can hence be called into question. Nevertheless, fighting poverty where it is in fact prevalent is no contradiction of the propositions raised by postdevelopment theorists, even though such a classification is highly determined by cultural images of poverty and hegemonic ideological perceptions. Attaining the goal and its associated targets seems realistic from a postdevelopment theory perspective, although the remaining question is whether this would actually be a desirable outcome. Especially targets 1.a and 1.b might be rather harmful than beneficial for international development.

As a result, the targets can be considered positively to some extent, whereas some indicators are very critical. Most indicators reflect Western and capitalist perceptions of development and disregard the potential of alternative solutions. Their attempt to compare statistical data on certain phenomena among different countries is not expedient. For example, it is evident that US\$1.25 a day provide a different standard of living based on geographic location. Jan N. Pieterse even suggests disregarding poverty-related statistics, stating: “The step from a statistical universe to a moral universe is worth taking, but a moral universe also involves action” (Pieterse 2000: 177–178). While not all postdevelopment theorists might be of the same opinion, his statement underlines the scepticism towards universal concepts and allegedly objective datasets that many of these scholars share.

While postdevelopment theory is not opposed in general to eradicating poverty where it is actually prevailing, it is highly critical of the attribution of poverty and underdevelopment. The perception of targets and indicators is based mostly on their potential for ideological influences, which also applies to the other goals. Since postdevelopment theory is nevertheless open for the improvement of living conditions, less ideologically contested goals, such as goal 2 and 3, might be more useful in this context.

4.2. Goal 2: Zero Hunger

4.2.1. Overview

The second goal's objective is to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". Just like the first goal as described above, it derived from the Millennium Development Goals, whose first goal was to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger". Target 1c of the agenda aimed to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990 and 2015, with a focus on children under five years of age and the minimum level of dietary energy consumption. Despite a significant growth of the world population, the number of undernourished people halved between 1990 and 2015, which was claimed as a success of the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations 2015: 20).

Goal 2 and its associated targets aim to "end hunger", "end all forms of malnutrition", "double the agricultural productivity", "sustainable food production systems", "maintain the genetic diversity of seeds", "increase investment (...) in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services", "correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets" and "ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets".

Based on target 2.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of D ("revolution") to goal 2, which means that "progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond (...) one quarter (...) of the way there" (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal is far from being achieved and that significant or major challenges remain in most of the world, especially in Africa, as well as in many Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and Oceanian countries (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.2.2. Target analysis

Goal 2	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
2.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.2 – Results of the target analysis for goal 2

4.2.2.1. Modernization theory

The target analysis shows that all these targets that could be assessed are compatible with the concept of modernization theory. In many ways and aspects, the general concepts underlying the first two goals are the same. This is not surprising, as modernization theory views them both among the constituent factors of marginality (von Loebell 2010: 39). In that scope, it is the aspiration of development to overcome these archaic and marginal structures, as a highly developed society would be able to provide enough nourishment to all its members.

The second goal is highly relevant from a modernization theory's perspective. As a basic need of human beings, adequate nutrition constitutes a major requirement to advance towards higher stages of development. As pointed out by Manfred Schulz, modernization theory lays an emphasis on international market incorporation to diminish hunger and malnutrition: "Within agriculture, modernization theory favours export-oriented cash crops for markets to the detriment of subsistence-economy. (...) Regarding access to food, modernization theory favours the monetarization of exchange modes" (Schulz 1999: 14). These ideas are reflected in the targets which cover agricultural productivity, investment, international cooperation and preventing trade restrictions and distortions. While modernization theory perceives all such targets as relevant, they also seem to be achievable under those guidelines. Yet it is evident that some targets remain quite vague, as they do not specify how hunger and malnutrition can be fought against. Modernization theory "foresees the imitation of Western consumption patterns in the Third World" (Schulz 1999: 14), which is reflected in the 2030 Agenda.

What has been said for the targets can also be said for the indicators. Both cover a broad range of aspects of hunger and malnutrition and can be measured with easily accessible data. Some of them reflect concepts that are endorsed by modernization theory, such as increased official development assistance and decreased agricultural export subsidies. They also apply the same guidelines to all countries, which allows for a universal assessment of the goal.

While there is an obvious connection to goal 1, since both poverty and hunger reduction were constituted in goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals, some scholars have perceived that the most important link can be drawn to goal 13 (Mugambiwa/Tirivangasi 2017: 352), as the changing climate is an increasing threat to nutrition safety. Food production relies on infrastructure, equality, environmental protection and the right framework conditions, and therefore most of the other goals, especially goals 6 to 17, to some extent have an impact on the reduction of hunger and malnutrition.

4.2.2.2. Dependency theory

Just like modernization theory, dependency theory considers the fight against hunger and malnutrition a central aspect of development. As can be seen from the target analysis though, the similarities do not go beyond the perception of this issue's relevance. Due to the structure of the international economic system and the agricultural market in particular, the global eradication of hunger and malnutrition is perceived as much less likely. Regarding the set of indicators that was chosen for this goal, its benefits will depend on the interpretation of the data.

The difference to modernization theory lies in the need for international trade of agricultural goods, as formulated by Manfred Schulz: "The agricultural sector is here seen as an important base for development in contrast to strategies which promote industrialization first. According to this theory, agriculture is able to provide food for attaining self-sufficiency and also supplies a growing internal consumer market" (Schulz 1999: 14). This means that in an international economy that benefits the centre, countries in the periphery will inevitably continue to provide the centre with cash crops and suffer from a lack of aliments. Despite technological advancement in the industry, an eradication of hunger or malnutrition seems thus unlikely. As Schulz describes it, "a radical consequence of dependency theory is the proposal for some sort of dissociation from the world market or at least protection from its supposed detrimental influences (...) to attain self-reliant and self-controlled development" (Schulz 1999: 14).

Regarding the indicators, the assessment is similar to that of goal 1. The general perception from a dependency theory perspective is mostly satisfactory, although the key is the interpretation of the data. Although some indicators will provide data on international economic relations and dependencies in the food market, their interpretation would be fundamentally different from that of modernization theory. Nevertheless, this data would still be relevant and allow for an international comparison. Also, an assessment below the national level would have been helpful to further examine domestic economic structures and their impact on food security. While the targets are very specific and comprehensive, their associated indicators are much vaguer and more reliant on interpretation.

In combination with the first goal, eradicating hunger and malnutrition can be considered a key factor for development from a dependency theory perspective. In addition to goal 1, important links can be drawn to goals that have a focus on domestic industrialization (goals 8 and 9), the international economic system (goals 10 and 17) and environmental protection (goals 13, 14 and 15).

4.2.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

Like eradicating poverty, ending hunger and achieving food security can be considered a reasonable aspiration for development, even from a postdevelopment perspective. In contrast to both modernization and dependency theory though, it is sceptical towards modern methods of agriculture and food production. According to Walden Bello, capitalist-industrial agriculture is moving towards a dead end in social and ecological terms and is to be considered the main factor responsible for contemporary nutrition crises (Bello 2010: 25). A popular alternative to food security is the concept of food sovereignty, which is defined as “the right of a people to operate and control their own food and agricultural systems (Herrera/Lau 2015). Food sovereignty is a concept that is particularly supported by the degrowth movement.

In terms of goal 2 and its associated targets, the target analysis provides a diversified result for postdevelopment theory. Whereas the general objective of ending hunger is endorsed by this conception of development, some targets were formulated in accordance with a capitalist economic system. Most notably, this applies to the last three targets, which seek to “increase investment” (target 2.a), “correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets” (target 2.b) and “adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets” (target 2.c). In addition, targets 2.3 and 2.4 seek to increase agricultural productivity and production, implying an industrialization of the agriculture sector. Alternative concepts of development, such as food sovereignty, are thus not fully compatible with the targets associated with goal 2. The same arguments apply for the selection of indicators, which partially reflect ideological and Western concepts of food production to an even greater extent.

Postdevelopment theory not only questions the targets themselves, but also their attainability. Most of them derive from the high-tech agricultural economies in the industrialized countries and cannot be adopted one-to-one by all countries. An improvement of the contemporary situation is certainly possible but would often be at the cost of other aspects of development. International investment and trade are considered the most achievable objectives of this goal, although they might increase international dependence on industrialized countries and obstruct the right of self-determination in terms of nutrition.

In conclusion, postdevelopment theory supports the overall aim to end hunger and achieve food security. Nevertheless, it is sceptical about the targets and strategies to this goal that are envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. Alternative concepts such as food sovereignty should also be considered an adequate strategy to counter hunger and malnutrition.

4.3. Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

4.3.1. Overview

The third goal's objective is to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages". Health issues played a key role in the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed at reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The evaluation report claimed important successes in all these aspects (United Nations 2015). With the new agenda in place, health issues are covered to a greater extent.

Goal 3 and its associated targets aim to "reduce the global maternal mortality", "end preventable deaths of newborns and children", "end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria" and other diseases, "strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse", "halve the number of global deaths and injuries from traffic accidents", "ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services", "achieve universal health coverage" and improve the financial, institutional, political and technological framework conditions for health.

Based on target 3.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of C ("revolution") to goal 3, which means that "progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond one third (...) of the way there" (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that some challenges remain in Europe and Oceania, while Africa, Asia and the Americas face significant or even major challenges (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.3.2. Target analysis

Goal 3	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
3.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.d	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.3 – Results of the target analysis for goal 3

4.3.2.1. Modernization theory

According to Wolfgang Zapf, modernization theory considers health and well-being a key element of development (Zapf 2008: 231). Like the eradication of poverty and hunger, a modern health system based on Western standards should thus be an aspiration for traditional societies to enter the “modern” era. Even though health is rarely mentioned as a factor by modernization theorists themselves, there are some conclusions that can be drawn from the underlying principles of the theory. Since many targets and indicators of goal 3 are compatible with Western ideas and medical standards, so they are with modernization theory.

The agenda does not provide a certain development strategy for goal 3, which would be highly relevant for its achievability. In that respect, the agenda does not necessarily reflect a certain development theory perspective. Many Western countries however already fulfil the targets associated with goal 3 and can thus be seen as a role model for less developed countries. If all countries followed their example, these targets would all seem achievable from a modernization theory perspective. In addition to the improvement of medical conditions and the eradication of epidemics and other medical threats, the goal foresees increased financial and technical support for developing countries, hence covering all essential aspects.

The indicators associated with goal 3 are numerous and provide a sound basis for the evaluation of this goal. Due to their universalist approach, they also allow for a comprehensive comparison both among and within countries. While indicators 3.1 to 3.9 can be considered very technical and thus universal, indicators 3.a to 3.d mostly reflect Western or neoliberal models and concepts of medicine and international cooperation. In contrast to other goals, the indicator set for goal 3 can be seen as very comprehensive and appropriate from a modernization theory perspective.

Altogether, goal 3 is entirely compatible with modernization theory. As specified in the indicators, important links can be drawn to infrastructure (goals 9 and 11), good governance and international partnerships (goals 16 and 17). In addition to the first two goals, all of them work well together from a modernization theory perspective. Other goals play a key role in certain aspects, such as goal 5 in reference to sexual and reproductive health-care services, goal 8 in reference to health workforce, as well as goals 13, 14 and 15 in reference to water and soil pollution.

It would be naïve to assume that a topic as technical as health would be unaffected by different ideological and theoretical perceptions, as can be seen in the assessments from the perspective of the other two selected development theories.

4.3.2.2. Dependency theory

As an initial objective of development policies, increasing health and medical conditions is of utmost relevance from a dependency theory perspective. In contrast to modernization theory though, it has a different perception of political strategies of how this goal can be achieved and the international framework conditions that have an influence on this process. Hence the relevance of the twelve targets is mostly high, while their attainability and selected indicators are perceived more critically.

Although most targets of this goal are highly relevant from a dependency theory perspective with only two exceptions (3.c and 3.d), they do not outline a political strategy of how those objectives can be achieved. Lynn Morgan affirms that “imperialism, colonialism and capitalist penetration are identified as the major precipitating determinants of disease” (Morgan 1987: 134). In order to improve health conditions, it is thus necessary for developing countries to overcome these dependencies, which are neglected in the 2030 Agenda. In contrast, targets 3.c and 3.d partially reinforce these structures, which means they are potentially harmful for international development.

Of the twelve targets associated with goal 3, only two seem attainable according to dependency theory: Targets 3.b and 3.c are based on international dependencies as they are prevailing, hence their achievement seems very likely. Decreasing international dependencies would facilitate attaining the other targets but seems unlikely in the scope of international dependency structures. This applies to target 3.d in particular, which seems very unlikely to be achieved by developing countries.

In terms of the indicators, the assessment shows a similar picture to the target’s attainability and previous goals. Whereas these indicators might be helpful to some extent, their scope neglects international dependencies and hence those structures that determine differences in development. The only exception are the indicators associated with target 3.b, as they will provide data on those structures, although their final assessment will depend on the interpretation of such data. Other than that, those indicators merely assess the symptoms of underdevelopment and do not provide any data on its causes.

All in all, dependency theory is more critical of the attainability and selected indicators of goal 3. As specified in the indicators, important links can be drawn to infrastructure (goals 9 and 11), good governance and international partnerships (goals 16 and 17). In addition to that, goal 10 plays an important role as it can be considered the key to dependency theory.

4.3.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

An assessment of goal 3 from a postdevelopment theory provides remarkable results, as it is mostly affirmative of the associated targets and indicators. Nevertheless, medicine is a very contentious field in many parts of the world, where traditional local methods are challenged by Western methods. The first waves of postdevelopment theory denied all improvements through development, including modern medicine that lowers child mortality rates (Ahorro 2008: 3). In response to subsequent criticisms however, scholars of postdevelopment theory acknowledged that positive changes are possible provided they are not ideologically induced. This ideological antagonism is barely reflected in goal 3, with the result that postdevelopment theory is supportive of most targets and indicators.

The target analysis shows that postdevelopment theory supports ten of the twelve targets associated with goal 3. Most of these targets envision to improve overall health conditions and eradicate diseases without providing specific strategies, leaving a wide scope of measures and alternative ways. Exceptions to this are the last two targets, which seek to “support the research and development of vaccines and medicines” (target 3.b) and “substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce” (target 3.c).

In terms of attainability, postdevelopment theory is more sceptical than modernization theory, but does not perceive any of the targets as unattainable. Target 3.c, which is considered the most ideological, is also considered the most attainable. The success of this goal depends on many additional factors and is likely to vary in different countries, depending on their national strategies. As a result, it is difficult to estimate whether the goal as a whole is likely to be achieved on the global level.

As in the case of the twelve targets, postdevelopment theory is mostly affirmative of their indicators. While those indicators related to health and well-being as such only have a few ideological tendencies, this does not apply to those associated with the last three goals. They are based on a capitalist system following the Western example and do not consider potential alternative systems. For example, the indicators associated with target 3.b assess vaccinations, official development assistance and health facilities, all of which are not necessarily required for an effective healthcare system.

As specified in the indicators, important links can be drawn to infrastructure (goals 9 and 11), good governance and international partnerships (goals 10, 16 and 17).

4.4. Goal 4: Quality Education

4.4.1. Overview

The fourth goal's objective is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The general concept derived from the second goal of the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed at achieving universal and world-wide primary education. The associated indicators covered the enrolment and completion rate of primary education as well as the literacy rate of 15- to 24-years-olds.

Goal 4 and its associated targets aim to “ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education”, “ensure access to early childhood development, care, pre-primary education”, “ensure equal access (...) to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education”, “eliminate gender disparities in education”, “ensure that all youth (...) achieve literacy and numeracy”, “ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development”, “build and upgrade education facilities” and “to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers”.

Based on target 4.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of C (“revolution”) to goal 4, which means that “progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond one third (...) of the way there” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved in some countries, which include Canada and Japan, while major challenges remain in large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, as well as several other countries (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.4.2. Target analysis

Goal 4	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
4.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.4 – Results of the target analysis for goal 4

4.4.2.1. Modernization theory

Education is a key element of modernization theory (Zapf 2008: 23) that forms the basis of international economic and human development. As Leftwich puts it, “a ‘modern’ society, according to modernization theory, is one that has such features as an ethic of science and rationality” (Leftwich 1996: 6). In contrast to the traditional society, which places high value on religion and the sacred, modern society places high value on education and science (Harber 2014: 71). These beliefs are reflected by goal 4, its associated targets and indicators to a great extent, complemented by additional side factors.

The targets lay out universal guidelines for quality education worldwide that are quite ambitious. In contrast to previous goals, the concept of education itself is disputably less technical and more ideological. Goal 4 nevertheless ignores this ideological aspect and potential alternatives to Western-like education systems. Quality education, according to the 2030 Agenda, includes early childhood development, pre-primary, primary and secondary education for all members of society, which indicates a clear focus on formal education. Targets 4.b and 4.c endorse international cooperation and development assistance through scholarships and teacher training for developing countries. Target 4.7 mentions a few topics that all learners are supposed to acquire knowledge and skills about, all of which can be considered important aspects of a modernized society.

The indicators chosen are quite apparent from a modernization theory perspective and allow for an objective evaluation of progress on goal 4. The only indicator that seems slightly vague is 4.7.1, which does not specify a measurable value, but nevertheless is still a valid addition to its respective target. Some indicators disaggregate data by sex and are therefore related to goal 5. Several indicators only capture a fraction of their respective targets and should therefore be supplemented by additional indicators. An example is indicator 4.4.1, which only captures ICT-related skills, although target 4.4 refers to technical and vocational skills in general. Despite the indicators’ compatibility with modernization theory, the set of indicators is thus still insufficient for several targets.

In conclusion, it can be said that these targets and indicators are both relevant and achievable from a modernization theory perspective. As education requires good framework conditions, it is dependent on goal 16. Modernization theory also asserts a close relationship between education and inequality (Crenshaw 1992), hence there is a link between goals 4 and 10. Goal 4 also functions as an enabler for many other goals, including goals 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9. Although the targets cover most aspects of education, some indicators are not comprehensive enough.

4.4.2.2. Dependency theory

In contrast to modernization theory, dependency theory suggests a different path towards a developed education system. As put forward by Angela Little, “the implication of dependency theory – to include an analysis of education within international economic and political relations – was largely ignored by those whose knowledge of educational contexts drew largely from ‘developed’ countries whose education systems (...) had been largely immune from external influence” (Little 2000: 290). The targets and indicators associated with goal 4 however are by no means critical of such external influence.

The targets associated with goal 4 are mostly endorsed by dependency theory apart from targets 4.b and 4.c, which envision closer international cooperation in terms of education. The targets cover many aspects of education, which is a key to overcoming international dependencies. In terms of attainability however, it is more critical of those targets. This applies particularly to the first three, which refer to a formal education for both children and adults. Since developed countries have a high interest to maintain the international division of labour, in which high-skilled work is conducted in the global north, they are better off economically when keeping education levels in the global south at low levels.

Like previous goals, the indicators only reflect the outcome of development policy, but do not provide evidence about the causes of these results. Only three targets (4.5, 4.7 and 4.b) are associated with indicators that examine domestic or international structures of dependency, which is perceived as the most important cause by dependency theory. In the case of school attendance for instance, it would be important to examine the reasons why children might not go to school in some countries. Many of these indicators are closely related to economic framework conditions, which are captured in goals 8 and 9. In some countries, children’s education is expensive, and families cannot afford to send them to school, while the lack of funding also results in a shortage of qualified teachers (Hollingsworth 2013: 44). This forms a great contrast with developed countries, as primary and secondary education is free in most of them.

Altogether, the conclusion is very similar to that of goal 3: While the targets are compatible with dependency theory to a high extent, it is critical about their attainability. The associated indicators are somewhat appropriate, but insufficient for examining the actual causes of underdevelopment. In addition to goal 10, close links can be drawn to achieving goals 8 and 9, which contribute to goal 1. Beyond that, all goals are affected positively through internationally increased educational levels to a greater or lesser extent.

4.4.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

According to postdevelopment theory, development is an ideological component of Western hegemony over the world in which academics are implicated through knowledge production (Sachs 1992). Even though it does not contest the need for education in general, it recognizes that education becomes training to consume in a consumerist society (Illich 1974: 137). The theory endorses alternative education systems. An example are indigenous communities in Mexico that have risen against the national government and built autonomous structures, such as schools that provide education in indigenous languages which is less academic (Ziai 2012: 163). Whereas postdevelopment theory is sceptical of both content and form of formal education, most of the targets associated with goal 4 focus on the latter aspect.

Postdevelopment theory is generally supportive of targets that are non-ideological, which applies to one target that is associated with goal 4: Target 4.6 seeks to “ensure that all youth and substantial proportion of adults (...) achieve literacy and numeracy”. On the other hand, it is opposed to five targets, namely 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.b and 4.c, which foresee a particular form of education or training and an increase of international cooperation, fostering ideological dominance of Western countries. While this latter aspect is considered mostly achievable, that is not necessarily the case for other targets.

In terms of the associated indicators, postdevelopment theory is predominantly disapproving. The only indicator that could provide information on hegemonic dominance is indicator 4.5.1, which assesses “parity indices for all education indicators (...) that can be disaggregated”. Whereas indicator 4.6.1 provides a sound basis for an evaluation of the goal, the indicators of the remaining eight goals are opposed by postdevelopment theory due to their inability to assess hegemonic or ideological structures.

In conclusion, education is perceived as a very sensitive topic by postdevelopment theory, both in terms of its content and form. Out of the ten targets associated with goal 4, target 4.7 is the only that advocates for education in a particular field, namely sustainable development. The remaining six numerical targets all relate to the form of education, and thus are mostly opposed by postdevelopment theory, which is also sceptical of their attainability. Similar to the assessment of dependency theory, it only considers those targets as attainable that seek to increase international dependencies but is afraid that such targets will only reinforce prevailing structures that are unfavourable for peripheral countries and hence obstruct the development process altogether. From a postdevelopment perspective, these targets, in addition to those that seek to implement certain forms of education, reinforce hegemonic dominance.

4.5. Goal 5: Gender Equality

4.5.1. Overview

The fifth goal's objective is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". Gender equality is another aspect that was already covered by the Millennium Development Goals, although the relevant indicators were limited to gender disparities in education, non-agricultural wage employment and seats in national parliaments. As with the goals previously described, the scope has been widely expanded with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Goal 5 and its associated targets aim to "end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls", "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation", "recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work", "ensure women's (...) equal opportunities for leadership", "ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights", "give women equal rights to economic resources", "enhance the use of enabling technology (...) to promote the empowerment of women" and "adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality".

Based on target 5.3, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of E ("revolution") to goal 5, which means that "progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond (...) one fifth of the way there" (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has not been achieved in any country and still faces major challenges in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, but also some OECD member states, including Japan, South Korea and the United States (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.5.2. Target analysis

Goal 5	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
5.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.5 – Results of the target analysis for goal 5

4.5.2.1. Modernization theory

From a modernization theory perspective, gender equality is a matter of economic growth and a modern society. It argues that “some traditional cultures, and especially the religious ideas that underpin the values, norms, institutions and customs of the developing world, ascribe status on the basis of gender” (Thompson 2017a). Gender inequality is therefore caused by cultural factors. Modernization would be emancipatory for women as industrialization, technology and modern values would undermine the patriarchy of traditional societies and give women increased access to economic resources (Jaquette 1982: 268–269). Therefore, as can be seen in the results of the target analysis, goal 5 is highly compatible with the general ideas and perceptions of modernization theory on gender equality.

The assessment of the targets associated with goal 5 show that modernization theory views them as both relevant and attainable. The only exception to this is target 5.4, which calls for recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work. While the intention of this target is to appreciate these forms of work, they do not necessarily contribute to economic growth in the understanding of modernization theory. Its aspiration is to provide both men and women with equal opportunities, particularly in relation to economic and work-related activities. In that regard, developing countries should follow the example of more developed countries, since “gender equality is generally greater in more developed countries” (Thompson 2017a).

The indicators are mostly technical and directly linked to the respective targets. Whereas indicator 5.1.1 might be subject to interpretation, this is not the case for the others. All indicators portray the targets very well and are comprehensive in their approach. In reference to indicator 5.5.1, several country studies have been undertaken in the past on the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments. The hypothesis of modernization theory is that “the more developed and service-oriented the economy of a geographical unit is, the higher its share of women in elected bodies should be” (Stockemer/Sundström 2014: 697). In addition to those indicators that seek improved balance of men and women in different aspects, certain indicators focus on women exclusively. Aspects like child marriage and genital mutilation can be considered traditional customs that will discontinue over the course of development and modernization.

In conclusion, the targets and indicators associated with goal 5 are highly compatible with modernization theory. Since there is a close relationship between gender equality and economic growth (Thompson 2017a), connections can be drawn to goals 8 and 9. Since gender equality depends on sound framework conditions, it is also linked to goals 10, 16 and 17.

4.5.2.2. Dependency theory

Unlike modernization theory, dependency theory perceives international relations and Western influence on developing countries as a threat to gender equality. According to its perspective, this is especially the case for work-related issues, as “increased participation in the work force also implies increased hazards for women.” (Thompson 2017b). As a result, globalisation and capitalism worsen the deplorable situation of women, as their labour is exploited, and the environment depleted to their detriment (Arku/Arku 2011: 32). Therefore, a detachment of developing countries from globalisation and capitalism would facilitate gender equality in those countries separate from Western gender roles, which was already criticized in 1970 by Esther Boserup’s book *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* (Boserup 1970).

The assessment of goal 5 from a dependency theory perspective shows a very similar result to that of previous goals: Whereas all of them can be considered highly relevant, their attainability can be put into question, depending on the interests of developed countries on their attainment. This applies particularly to the first three targets and less for the targets related to international cooperation (5.b and 5.c), which will foster existing international dependency structures. Several targets emphasize the economic role of women, which is of particular relevance according to dependency theory. In that regard, many studies have been contributed to this matter from the perspective of gender studies and feminist approaches, which argue that dependent development exacerbates gender inequality (Marshall 1985: 219).

The indicators associated with goal 5 are somewhat relevant from a dependency theory perspective, but insufficient for a comprehensive evaluation. As with previous goals, these indicators do not assess the effects of international dependency structures and do not allow for alternative concepts of development, as they are mostly based on Western ideas of gender equality. While all indicators included in goal 5 can be considered useful to some extent, they do not grasp the entire extent of this development aspect. In conclusion, an additional set of indicators assessing such dependencies and international power structures would be required for a comprehensive evaluation of this goal.

The overall assessment from a dependency theory perspective is hence similar to that of goals 3 and 4, which share nearly the same pattern in terms of their target analysis. While the targets’ relevance is unquestioned, the majority will most certainly not be achieved. In addition to that, the associated indicators do not assess international structures and are hence insufficient for evaluating progress in international development.

4.5.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

With its demand to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, this goal is ideologically charged by default. Whereas modernization theory perceives gender equality as an aspect of a modern society, postdevelopment theory is rather critical of such ideological implications. With its aspiration to empower women and girls, the goal neglects the existence of maternalistic societies, even though they exist in some countries. On the other hand, from a feminist perspective, “the SDGs (...) do not adequately address the many additional challenges women face on the road to development, including the feminisation of poverty and employment, social reproduction, women’s unpaid reproductive and care work, and the intersection between vertical and horizontal inequalities” (Struckmann 2018: 16). In conclusion, a universal concept is not reasonable from a postdevelopment theory perspective.

As a result, even though some approaches like feminism insist on gender equality, goal 5 and its associated targets are considered somewhat critically by postdevelopment theory. This applies in particular to target 5.a, which aims to “undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources” and target 5.b, which aims to “enhance the use of enabling technology (...) to promote the empowerment of women”. Both targets relate to economic and technological aspects that are perceived as important aspects of international development by hegemonic ideologies, yet they cannot be universally applied to all societies worldwide.

In addition to their relevance, postdevelopment theory is also somewhat critical of the targets’ attainability. The only exception is target 5.c, which aims to “adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality”, gearing towards the implementation of Western ideologies in all countries. The implementation of the nine remaining targets is questionable, as such universal concepts are difficult to enforce on a global level. Nevertheless, hegemonic dominance of Western countries and ideologies makes it very likely that these targets will be achieved to a significant extent.

The assessment of the associated indicators comes to a mixed result. Postdevelopment theory supports the indicators that are associated with target 5.4, assessing “time spent on unpaid domestic and care work” and target 5.5, assessing the “proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments” (indicator 5.5.1) and the “proportion of women in managerial positions” (indicator 5.5.2). These indicators allow for an evaluation of their respective targets with only minor ideological implications. On the other hand, both targets that are opposed by postdevelopment theory (targets 5.a and 5.b) are equipped with indicators that are not helpful for a reasonable evaluation of goal 5.

4.6. Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

4.6.1. Overview

The sixth goal's objective is to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. This aspect was covered by target 7c of the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation between 1990 and 2015. While the proportion of people using an improved drinking water source rose from 76 to 91 per cent, the proportion of people using an improved sanitation facility only rose from 54 to 68 per cent (United Nations 2015: 58–59).

Goal 6 and its associated targets aim to “achieve universal access to safe and affordable drinking water” as well as “adequate and equitable sanitation”, “improve water quality”, “increase water-use efficiency”, “implement integrated water resources management”, “protect water-related ecosystems”, “expanding international cooperation and capacity building support in water- and sanitation-related activities” and “support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management”.

Based on target 6.2, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of D (“revolution”) to goal 6, which means that “progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond (...) one quarter (...) of the way there” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by Thailand and Ukraine, while major challenges remain in Africa, Central America and South Asia. Also, most OECD countries face some or significant challenges in achieving the goal (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.6.2. Target analysis

Goal 6	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
6.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.6 – Results of the target analysis for goal 6

4.6.2.1. Modernization theory

“Clean water and Sanitation” is an aspect of development that has been researched marginally by modernization theorists within the broader contexts of environment and infrastructure. Conclusions can be derived nevertheless from the perspective of ecological modernization theory, which emerged in the 1980s as a “modernist and technocratic approach to the environment that suggests there is a techno-institutional fix for the present problems” (Hajer 1995: 32). It perceives that “the era of modernity offers promise that industrialization, technological development, economic growth, and capitalism are not only potentially compatible with ecological sustainability but also may be key drivers of environmental reform” (Atampugre et al. 2015: 369). In conclusion, international development and modernization can go hand in hand with environmental protection and the objectives laid out in goal 6.

The target analysis of this goal reveals a high level of accordance with the main features of modernization theory and ecological modernization theory. With different focuses, the single targets have a broad focus, relating to poverty eradication (target 6.1), health (target 6.2), environment (targets 6.3 to 6.6), international cooperation (target 6.a) and participation of local communities (target 6.b). These aspects resemble different aspects of ecological modernization theory and cover several areas that are considered important for sustainable development from a modernization theory perspective. Hence all targets can be considered relevant and attainable. The only exception to this is target 6.b, as the participation of local communities is not very easy in a capitalist system.

In terms of the associated indicators, modernization theory is very supportive. They allow for an objective measurement of progress and comparison among different countries. Since many of them directly translate from the targets, they are also more comprehensive than those of most other goals, as they also cover a broad range of aspects of this goal, including poverty, health, infrastructure, innovation and international cooperation. As a result, all selected indicators are perceived as very useful by modernization theory.

In addition to other goals related to economic growth and environmental protection (8, 9, 13, 14 and 15), this goal is among the key goals whose objective is to improve infrastructure in conjunction with goals 7, 11 and 12. Since modernization theory is also predominantly supportive of these goals, the framework for achieving and evaluation goal 6 in the scope of the 2030 Agenda can be assessed as positive.

4.6.2.2. Dependency theory

Dependency theory is very supportive of the targets associated with goal 6, many of which cover classic fields of international development. Several studies have shown a correlation of economic dependencies. A study by Shandra et al. for instance found “substantial support for dependency theory hypotheses that debt, structural adjustment, and industrial exports increase organic water pollution” (Shandra et al. 2008: 51). As a result, diminishing international dependencies would be a key to decreasing water pollution and to achieving this goal.

Even though this strategy is not included in the targets, they formulate clear objectives that are endorsed by dependency theory. As in the case of other goals, the targets 6.a and 6.b are an exception to this, as they seek to reinforce international cooperation and thus dependency structures between developed and underdeveloped countries. With these two exceptions, the targets make up a reasonable set of objectives for development in the field of clean water and sanitation but fail to address a sound strategy for achieving these objectives. It is hence not surprising that the goal’s attainability is considered rather unlikely. Only target 6.a, which is perceived as rather harmful for the overall goal, is realistically attainable. On the other side of the spectrum, especially targets 6.1 and 6.2 seem to be unreachable, as they advocate for universal access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene, which appears quite unrealistic under the prevailing economic framework conditions.

Regarding the indicators, dependency theory perspective is rather difficult, similarly to previous goals. Whereas dependency theory is mostly in favour of the selected indicators themselves, their scope is missing an assessment of the international dependency structures that are perceived as the root cause of underdevelopment. An exception to this is indicator 6.a.1, which allows for an estimation of international dependencies through the survey of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance. Despite the vagueness of this indicator both in terms of its scope and interpretation, it is the only indicator associated with goal 6 that might contribute to an investigation of underdevelopment causes.

All in all, while dependency theory is generally affirmative of the goal’s intentions, its achievement remains conditional on a change of international dependency structures. This applies particularly to targets 6.1 and 6.2, which are certainly the most important targets of the goal as a whole. In conclusion, the goal can be assessed as positive on the surface, while a look at the details reveals several contentious points.

4.6.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

From a postdevelopment theory perspective, goal 6 is one of three goals whose associated targets are predominantly considered positive. An explanation for this supportive view is the relatively low proportion of ideologically-induced targets, as most of them provide a basis for an objective improvement of people's life. Even though the goal's attainability is seen more critically, although not as critical as by dependency theory, its overall assessment from a postdevelopment theory perspective is much more positive than that of most other goals.

Postdevelopment theory supports five of the goal's eight associated targets, which can be described as technical and objective requirements for a good quality of life, such as "universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all" (target 6.1). In terms of the numerical targets, only target 6.5 is perceived somewhat critically, seeking to "implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate". While such water resources management in general is a sound approach, it is a potential constraint to self-determination. Target 6.a is the goal's only target which is rated negative, as it seeks to "expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to development countries", reinforcing ideological configurations. In reference to target 6.b, Ariel Salleh provides a perspective on its economic implications: "Such schemes sound sensible, but it is essential to understand the top-down political economy of water in today's world. Ten major firms (...) now control water supply in over 100 countries" (Salleh 2016: 958).

In terms of attainability, postdevelopment theory is optimistic by tendency. However, this applies mostly to those targets that are opposed or perceived critically, especially those that seek to strengthen institutions and international cooperation (targets 6.a and 6.b). The only target that is considered both relevant and achievable is target 6.6, which aims to "protect and restore water-related ecosystems". Target 6.5 is considered rather unattainable due to its universal approach to "implement integrated water resources management at all levels". Apart from that, even those targets that are considered partially achievable are flexible enough to incorporate alternative concepts for water and sanitation.

The assessment of associated indicators mirrors the result of the targets' relevance. Although they do not provide a tool for an assessment of ideological hegemony, they are a reasonable selection to evaluate the goal's technical achievements. In conclusion, goal 6 with its targets and indicators is among the agenda's most reasonable goals. Even though it does not address the issue of ideology, it has the potential to provide objective improvement for people's lives.

4.7. Goal 7: Clean and Affordable Energy

4.7.1. Overview

The seventh goal's objective is to "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all". The sustainable energy aspect is new to the United Nations development agenda, as it was not part of the Millennium Development Goals. Nevertheless, it has played a considerable role in the United Nations development policies. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon founded the global initiative "Sustainable Energy for All" in December 2010. By doing so, he acknowledged that this important aspect was not included in the development agenda. In addition to that, the United Nations General Assembly decided "to declare 2012 the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All" in a resolution adopted in February 2011 (United Nations General Assembly 2011). As global energy consumption is rising rapidly, so are the threats for both environment and climate. In that regard, the goal is closely related to goals 11, 12 and 13.

Goal 7 and its associated targets aim to "ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services", "increase substantially the share of renewable energies in the global energy mix", double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency", "enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology" and "expand infrastructure and upgrade technology (...) in developing countries".

Based on target 7.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of D ("revolution") to goal 7, which means that "progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond (...) one quarter (...) of the way there" (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by several countries around the world, including Brazil, Canada and the Scandinavian countries. Major challenges remain in Africa, Central America, South Asia and Oceania (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.7.2. Target analysis

Goal 7	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
7.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.7 – Results of the target analysis for goal 7

4.7.2.1. Modernization theory

In addition to the previous goal, goal 7 is among the key goals in terms of improved infrastructure. The assessment from a modernization theory perspective is therefore very similar, as it reveals a positive attitude towards the relevance and attainability of the targets, as well as the adequacy of their associated indicators. As in the case of goal 6, conclusions can be derived from the perspective of ecological modernization theory, which is very favourable towards environmentally-friendly energy types. Since energy is perceived as a major prerequisite for poverty eradication, industrialization and development in general, modernization theory has a very positive perspective on this goal.

It is expectable that all five targets associated with goal 7 will stimulate international development as perceived by modernization theory and ecological modernization theory. This applies to the technical targets 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, which outline a clear path towards a universal idea of development, as well as those targets that promote international cooperation and supporting developing countries, namely targets 7.a and 7.b. In this configuration, it seems most likely that all targets are attainable. Developed countries should take a leading role in the development and implementation of innovative and environmentally-friendly energy sources and at the same time assist developing countries that upgrade their own energy networks.

In addition to the targets themselves, their relevant indicators also seem adequate from a modernization theory perspective. For targets 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, they provide statistical data that allows for an objective evaluation of progress among countries. In the case of targets 7.a and 7.b, they provide sound measures on financial flows and investments on the international level. The key for an overall achievement of the goal is the expansion of global energy supply networks while enhancing their sustainability and environment-friendliness.

With its focus on infrastructure, goal 7 is closely related to goals 6, 8 and 9. Nevertheless, all goals of the 2030 Agenda would benefit significantly from the achievement of affordable and clean energy and would likewise have a positive impact on that aspiration. Modernization theory would thus agree with the statement by the United Nations that “sustainable energy is a key enabler of sustainable development for all countries and all people” (UN-Energy 2014: 1), particularly in the fields of food security and health (UNIS Vienna 2017).

4.7.2.2. Dependency theory

The assessment of goal 7 from a dependency theory perspective reveals a few differences in comparison with the other goals. On the one hand, the share of targets rated as relevant is considerably lower than it is for most other goals. On the other hand, goal 7 is the only goal whose associated indicators are predominantly rated as attainable. Causes for this conclusion however are attributed to the division and formulation of targets rather than their actual propositions.

As in the case of previous goals, most targets can be considered relevant for international development, namely targets 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3. This does not apply to targets 7.a and 7.b, which seek to enhance international cooperation and foreign aid, hence reinforcing international dependency structures. In terms of their attainability, the target analysis indicates a positive outlook for three of the five targets, namely 7.2, 7.3 and 7.a. In contrast to previous goals, the focus of goal 7 and these three indicators is an improvement on the global level regarding the “share of renewables in the global energy mix” (target 7.2), the “global rate of improvement in energy efficiency” (target 7.3) and “international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology” (target 7.a). The attainability of targets 7.1 and 7.b is perceived more critically, since their aspiration is aimed at universal access to energy (7.1) and foreign aid for developing countries (7.b).

As for the indicators, the same observation as for previous goals can be undertaken for goal 7. International dependency structures are only assessed by the indicators associated with targets 7.a and 7.b. The indicators for the other three targets are an important factor for the goal’s evaluation, but insufficient for assessing the causalities for those factors. As a result, the indicators for goal 7 are relevant, but only to a limited extent. This observation is coincident with that of previously examined goals.

In conclusion, most of the assessment’s deviation can be explained by the small number of associated targets. As in the case of goal 13, five targets whose assessment range across the spectrum are not enough for an overall analysis of the goal. Therefore, the findings described above should be treated with caution, as the assessment in none of the three categories is uniform, although certain tendencies can be observed.

4.7.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

Whereas goals 6 and 7 are considered two sides of the same coin both by modernization theory and dependency theory, this is not the case from a postdevelopment theory point of view. On the one hand, clean water and sanitation can be understood as an objective necessity for people's life. On the other hand, affordable and clean energy is not a universal human need, but mostly required in an industrialized society. Even though this austerity cannot be traced back to ideological differences exclusively, it is certain that the aspirations of this goal are not universally relevant to all societies worldwide.

Out of the five targets that are associated with goal 7, postdevelopment theory considers the three numerical targets as somewhat relevant, whereas it is opposed to the two remaining targets. These two targets seek to “enhance international cooperation” (target 7.a) and “expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries” (target 7.b). As these targets imply a reinforcement of ideological dominance of Western countries, they are opposed by postdevelopment theory due to similar reasons as dependency theory. This applies in part for the first three targets as well, although their aspiration is not as ideological by far. Since so-called “modern” energy is widespread in today's world, these targets are somewhat reasonable in consideration of alternative methods.

As target 7.1 calls for “universal access to (...) energy services”, it is perceived as unattainable. The universal and worldwide access to energy and electricity is not only unrealistic as such, it might also be unwanted by some ethnic groups. While target 7.3 is perceived as potentially achievable, postdevelopment theory is optimistic about the remaining targets in that regard. Nevertheless, as observed in previous goals, it mostly considers those goals achievable that are not relevant and vice versa.

Postdevelopment theory's scepticism of the targets is also resembled in the indicators. While it considers those associated with targets 7.1 and 7.2 as somewhat reasonable, it is opposed to those of the remaining three targets. Once again, they reflect Western and capitalist ideologies and therefore are insufficient to provide an objective evaluation of the goal. In conclusion, the assessment of goal 7 from a postdevelopment theory perspective provides different results than that of the previous goal and reveals a high influence of Western ideology. While most of its associated targets are perceived as attainable, they do not necessarily contribute to a better world in the theory's understanding.

4.8. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

4.8.1. Overview

The eighth goal's objective is to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Its formulation is similar to target 1b of the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all”. While the general goal or target has remained the same, it covers many more aspects in the scope of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Goal 8 and its associated targets aim to “sustain per capita economic growth”, “achieve higher levels of economic productivity”, “promote development-oriented policies”, “improve (...) global resource efficiency in consumption and production”, “achieve full and productive employment”, “reduce the proportion of youth not in employment”, “eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking”, “protect labour rights”, “increase aid for trade support for developing countries” and “develop (...) a global strategy for youth employment”.

Based on target 8.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of B (“reform”) to goal 8, which means that “the world is on course to get more than halfway towards, thereby making considerable progress towards the target by 2030” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by a few countries, including China, Cuba and Malaysia, while major challenges remain in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia and in Greece as the only European country (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.8.2. Target analysis

Goal 8	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
8.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.8 – Results of the target analysis for goal 8

4.8.2.1. Modernization theory

Goal 8 and its objective of decent work and economic growth can be considered a key goal from a modernisation theory perspective, as it perceives economic growth as the cornerstone of development: “Modernisation theory underpinned the idea of development as growth, with modernisation defined as a linear path towards a developed industrial society. Economic development through industrial transformation would lead to economic growth, allowing poorer countries to catch up with industrial countries” (Poulton/Busse 2014). Modernization theory perceives lack of skills in the work force as an economic barrier to development, as it makes developing countries unattractive to investors (ReviseSociology 2015).

While all targets are considered relevant, there are some that are of particular importance for the development process. These are primarily those which focus on economic growth and productivity (8.1 and 8.2) and international aid (8.a), which resemble the basic assumptions of modernization theory, as described by Phil Green: “At the heart of Modernisation theory is the idea that economic growth can be stimulated in any country, by following a US/European model” (Green 2008: 1). International aid is perceived as an effective trigger from outside that can accelerate development towards the take-off, as it was described by Rostow. Within this framework, targets referring to decent work can be considered equally relevant, as they are equally based on such a model. As a result, the attainability of all targets seems very likely if this model is followed by developing countries.

Like the targets, their associated indicators resemble classic modernization theory concepts. This applies particularly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which plays an essential role in the case of targets 8.1, 8.2, 8.4 and 8.9. While it is perceived much more critically by other development theories, modernization theory considers a country’s GDP as the main indicator of development (Green 2008: 5). Focusing on this variable implies an intention of economic growth to the highest possible extent as the objective of international development without the consideration of alternative economic systems, but clearly based on a Western model. Such a universal agenda reflects well the ambitions of modernization theory.

Both the targets of goal 8 and their associated indicators are fully compatible with the basic assumptions and strategies of modernization theory. From this point of view, the goal is complementary with goal 9, as both goals endeavour to intensify economic growth and industrialization. These processes require stable framework conditions, hence are linked to goals 16 and 17. This applies especially to strong institutions, as political instability is a major barrier that makes developing countries unattractive to investors (ReviseSociology 2015).

4.8.2.2. Dependency theory

Although dependency theory derives its origin from different determining factors of under-development than modernization theory, economic development remained a primary goal of international development. However, dependency theory objects to the idea that economic growth is indefinite, as indicated by Vincent Ferraro: “Prebisch and his colleagues were troubled by the fact that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in poorer countries. Indeed, their studies suggested that economic activity in the richer countries often led to serious economic problems in the poorer countries” (Ferraro 2008: 58). It is hence important to undertake a more detailed assessment.

Dependency theory considers all targets as relevant, apart from targets 8.a and 8.b, which seek to increase aid for developing countries and international cooperation. While achieving these two targets is in the interest of developed countries and thus quite realistic, this does not apply to the other ten. According to the analysis, four of them are potentially attainable (targets 8.2, 8.6, 8.9 and 8.10), but the remaining six are very unlikely to be achieved. In most cases, these targets would require overcoming the international division of labour and lowering the hierarchy between the economic centre and the global periphery. Achieving these targets is thus not possible under the contemporary international economic system.

In terms of associated indicators, the conclusion is like that of previous goals: Most selected indicators are relevant for an evaluation of the agenda, but important aspects are neglected. Except for target 8.a, the indicators do not assess the degree of international dependency structures. The indicators are hence unable to represent the determining factors of underdevelopment, but merely reflect their symptoms. As mentioned above, several indicators associated with goal 8 are linked to the GDP, which is perceived rather critically by dependency theory in contrast to modernization theory. In addition to that, the targets and indicators of goal 8 do not outline an effective development strategy that can overcome macroeconomic structures, nor do they consider alternative development concepts as an actual alternative.

In conclusion, goal 8 is of high relevance according to dependency theory, as it envisions a major objective of international development. However, the agenda’s approach to economic development does not reflect the assumptions of dependency theory. As the targets advocate for increased international cooperation and development based on a Western model, they aim to reinforce international dependency structures and harm economic growth of developing countries to the benefit of developed countries. While the indicators allow for an evaluation of economic macro data, they are insufficient to elaborate on the related causalities.

4.8.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

In the scope of its criticism of the capitalist economic growth model, it is not surprising that postdevelopment theory is strongly opposed to those goals of the 2030 Agenda that promote economic growth as a model for development. A popular alternative approach within this theoretical framework is the degrowth movement, whose proponent Serge Latouche suggests “that we should work toward the creation of ‘integrated, self-sufficient, materially responsible societies’” (Latouche 2004). These aspirations do not require economic growth as proposed by both modernization theory and the 2030 Agenda.

Out of twelve targets that are associated with goal 8, seven are opposed by postdevelopment theory. These targets include some of its most criticized aims and objectives of development policy altogether, including to “sustain per capita economic growth (...) in the least developed countries” (target 8.1), “achieve higher levels of productivity” (target 8.2) and “increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries” (target 8.a). Although postdevelopment theory is partially supportive of five targets, this should not distract from its strong opposition of the goal as a whole. Despite this, it is more optimistic of its attainability as it considers five targets as achievable, including those that allow for a certain flexibility for alternative concepts (targets 8.4, 8.9 and 8.b) as well as those that aim to increase financial aid (targets 8.10 and 8.b).

The associated indicators are viewed as even more critically than their respective targets. The only indicators that could be useful to a limited extent are 8.7.1, 8.8.1 and 8.b.1. All others are ideologically coined and cannot provide any implications for improvement. Some scholars of the degrowth movement might even disagree to that extent that some measurements like “annual growth rate of real GDP per capita” (indicator 8.1.1) or “annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person” (indicator 8.2.1) are useful, as they advocate for a non-increase of these numbers. In opposition to both modernization theory and dependency theory though, postdevelopment scholars do not consider an increase of these numbers as a desirable result of the development process, as the numbers are decisively shaped by capitalist ideology.

All in all, goal 8 is among the agenda’s goals that are strongly opposed by postdevelopment theory. Both its associated targets and indicators bear the hallmarks of capitalist ideology and do not allow for any alternative concepts or strategies in respect of labour and the economy. Instead, this goal attempts to promote the Western economic system to all countries, whose established and traditional economies are thus called into question. In defence of such systems, postdevelopment theory thus neglects this goal’s potential for a valuable contribution.

4.9. Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

4.9.1. Overview

The ninth goal's objective is to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”. All these aspects are new to the United Nations development agenda but are considered crucial. It is argued that “economic growth, social development and climate action are heavily dependent on investments in infrastructure, sustainable industrial development and technological progress” (United Nations 2018a). The aspiration to build resilient infrastructure applies to all forms of infrastructure, including energy, communication, water, disposal and transportation. Therefore, the aspiration formulated in this goal is very broad and shares many commonalities with other goals.

Goal 9 and its associated targets aim to “develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure”, “promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization”, “increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises”, “upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable”, “enhance scientific research”, “facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries” and “support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries”.

Based on target 9.2, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of E (“revolution”) to goal 9, which means that “progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond (...) one fifth of the way there” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that goal 9 has been achieved only by Singapore, while significant or major challenges remain in most countries around the world (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.9.2. Target analysis

Goal 9	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
9.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.9 – Results of the target analysis for goal 9

4.9.2.1. Modernization theory

Modernization theory perceives lack of infrastructure as an economic barrier to development, as it makes developing countries unattractive to investors (ReviseSociology 2015). That is why modernization theory advocates for extensive investments in infrastructure, particularly in developing countries, that would provide a structural basis for industrialization. According to Sylvan K. Cibangu, infrastructural development is one of four key conceptions of development in general (Cibangu 2013: 87). It describes development as the product of urbanization and the construction of infrastructure and facilities (Perry 2001). Both technical and social innovations are considered essential to modernization (Rogers 1962). All in all, the three aspects of this goal are all considered important by modernization theory.

In consequence, all associated targets are considered relevant for the development process. Once again, they include technical objectives (targets 9.1 to 9.5) and framework objectives (targets 9.a to 9.c), including the aim of enhanced international cooperation and financial aid. These targets can be considered adequate and comprehensive for achieving this goal. The targets show a tendency of the goal towards an infrastructure focus, which is compatible with the hypotheses of modernization theory that were described above. Therefore, all targets are also perceived as attainable by modernization theory, if the development process proceeds along the assumptions and strategies that it has laid out.

The indicators associated with the eight targets can be considered appropriate. Whereas some of them are not necessarily enough to evaluate the target's entire scope (such as in the case of target 9.4), those indicators that have been selected are clearly an important tool for the goal's evaluation. A modernization theory analysis of the indicators is hence very similar to that of previous goals, which found them partially insufficient in their scope, but mostly adequate in terms of their underlying concepts.

All in all, it can be concluded that goal 9, along with its associated targets and indicators, bears the hallmarks of modernization theory. The goal itself resembles basic assumptions of the theory, while the targets and indicators reflect concepts that are widely popular among its scholars. In addition to the close link to goal 8, which has been described above, common ground further exists with goals 11 (in terms of infrastructure) and 12 (in terms of innovation). As a major prerequisite and phenomenon of development however, this goal is considered crucial for the attainment of all Sustainable Development Goals.

4.9.2.2. Dependency theory

Like modernization theory, this goal includes some aspects that are considered basic requirements for development by dependency theory. In contrast though, it does not affirm that such development can be achieved by all countries, because “economic and political power are heavily concentrated and centralized in the industrialized countries” and “the success of the advanced industrial economies does not serve as a model for the currently developing economies (Ferraro 2008). The target analysis of goal 9 from a dependency theory perspective finds most associated targets to be relevant, but is doubtful about their achievement and evaluability, as it also has reservations regarding its associated indicators.

Six of the eight targets are considered relevant, with 9.a and 9.b falling out of alignment. These targets seek to enhance financial, technological and technical support for developing countries both on the international level (target 9.a) and the national level (target 9.b). As in the case of previous goals, such objectives endanger developing countries to an increased dependency on developed countries, which would harm their development process in the long run. These two targets are hence not reasonable but rather harmful for these countries.

In terms of attainability, the assessment shows a divide between potentially attainable and unattainable. Targets in the latter category are those referring to developing “quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure” (target 9.1), enhancing scientific research and upgrading “the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries” (target 9.5), supporting “domestic technology development” (target 9.b) and increasing “access to information and communications technology” (target 9.c). All these targets would require diminished international dependencies, particularly in economic terms. However, such a process would require overcoming contemporary economic structures at the cost of developed core countries, which desire to remain the most advanced in terms of industry, innovation and infrastructure.

The attitude towards the associated indicators is like that of other goals. The only reasonable exception is indicator 9.a.1, which allows for an evaluation of official development assistance regarding infrastructure and therefore an assessment of international dependencies. It is thus the only indicator covering any sort of international dependence.

In conclusion, while dependency theory perceives goal 9 and its associated targets mostly as relevant, it is sceptical about its attainability and evaluability. The international economic system obstructs the development of industry, innovation and infrastructure in developing countries in the periphery. Nevertheless, such causes are not addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals, hence it seems very unlikely that fundamental changes will be reached.

4.9.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

With its focus on economic growth and industrialization, an assessment of this goal from a postdevelopment perspective comes to a similar result as that of the previous goal. In fact, goal 9 is assessed even more negatively than goal 8 in all three categories with a remarkable consistency. The goal encompasses many ideological aspects that are fundamentally opposed by postdevelopment theory. As one of its most prominent scholars, Wolfgang Sachs claims that capitalist industrialization is responsible for the increase of global disparities and poverty as well as ecological crises, hence “the ‘advanced’ societies are no model” (Sachs 1992: 2). Stefan Andreasson adds that resource scarcity and environmental degradation set limits for economic growth and technical innovation (Andreasson 2007: 7–9).

All eight targets that are associated with goal 9 are opposed by postdevelopment theory, as they advocate for development strategies whose criticism ultimately became the foundation of postdevelopment theory itself. Most of them reflect a Western and capitalist interpretation of development, as they aim to “develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure” (target 9.1), “promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization” (target 9.2) and support “developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support” (target 9.a). None of these targets can be considered an objective improvement to people’s life regardless of their individual situation. This weakness also calls the targets’ attainability into question, although their high level of compatibility with capitalism as the hegemonic ideology compensates for such doubts to a certain extent. Nevertheless, a universal concept like the Sustainable Development Goals is both impractical and unattainable in that matter.

The associated indicators are equally shaped by Western ideology and have a strong focus on capitalist aspects. Many refer to capitalist measures, such as GDP and official development assistance. In the viewpoint of postdevelopment theory, none of them can indicate any improvement or progress in reference to “development”. In addition to that, they have a clear focus on industrialized societies which makes such measurements useless for alternative concepts of society and development.

In conclusion, goal 9 is fundamentally opposed by postdevelopment theory, both regarding its associated targets and indicators. Even though it is potentially achievable due to its alignment with capitalism as the global hegemonic ideology, it would not contribute to sustainable development or a better living for human beings. In combination with the previous goal, it is therefore considered harmful for both the planet and human beings, especially those that live in societies which are dominated by Western ideology.

4.10. Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

4.10.1. Overview

The tenth goal's objective is to "reduce inequality within and among countries". This includes "inequalities based on income, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class ethnicity, religion and opportunity" (United Nations 2018b), even though the goal's associated targets and indicators have a clear economic and political focus.

Goal 10 and its associated targets aim to "achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population", "empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion", "ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome", "adopt policies", "improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions", "ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions", "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people", "implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries" and "encourage official development assistance".

Based on target 10.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of F ("reversal") to goal 10, which means that "current trends have to be completely reversed to have any chance of being reached by 2030" (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by Denmark, Norway and Ukraine, while major challenges remain in most countries around the world, except for central Europe. Out of all the goals, this goal shows the largest deficit in terms of data availability (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.10.2. Target analysis

Goal 10	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
10.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.10 – Results of the target analysis for goal 10

4.10.2.1. Modernization theory

In the scope of international development, modernization theory is very supportive of the developed countries taking a leading role and acting as a role model to underdeveloped countries. Consequently, reducing inequalities is a difficult balancing act and can only be achieved if countries follow the prescribed path to development in the sense of modernization. Modernization theory “links global inequality to different levels of economic development and suggests that low-income economies can move to middle- and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth” (Smith 2015: 3). In consequence, inequalities can only be reduced in the long term and as the result of the development process.

In contrast to the previous ones, goal 10 is among the most critical goals of the Agenda 2030. Despite a positive tendency in the assessment of the three categories, only six of the ten targets are considered relevant from a modernization theory perspective. This is not the case for those targets which advocate for “the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions” (target 10.5), to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people” (target 10.7) and to “reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances” (target 10.c). These targets harm financial markets and facilitate international migration that could lead to a brain drain in developing countries. The most crucial target however is 10.6, which seeks to “ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions”, which undermines the role model function of developed countries. In terms of attainability, doubts remain for two of them: Target 10.5, as it is against the interest of the financial sector, and target 10.a, as it calls for special treatment for developing countries.

While the associated indicators might not be comprehensive enough for some targets, they are clearly inadequate for others. Their assessment shows the same pattern as for the targets’ relevance, opposing the indicators for targets 10.5, 10.6, 10.7 and 10.c. All these indicators do not fully allow for a statistical evaluation of the respective targets, as their wording is quite vague and does not refer to a specific measurable variable. Regarding members and voting rights of developing countries (indicator 10.6.1) and countries that have implemented well-mannered migration policies (indicator 10.7.1) for instance, a final assessment will depend on interpretation and differing views, which harm an objective evaluation of the agenda.

As reducing inequality is an overarching objective of development, there are links to all goals. According to Edward Crenshaw, modernization theory asserts a close relationship between education and inequality (Crenshaw 1992), hence there is a link between goals 4 and 10.

4.10.2.2. Dependency theory

From the perspective of dependency theory, goal 10 can be understood as the 2030 Agenda's overarching key goal. Overcoming global inequality is perceived as the only way to diminish economic and political hierarchy between countries in the core and those in the periphery. Dependency theorists argue that the ideal way to break out of the dependency trap and end global inequality is for the periphery to separate from the core (Sekhri 2009: 242).

Out of ten targets associated with goal 10, seven can be considered relevant by dependency theory. Exceptions to this are those targets that aim to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people” (target 10.7), “encourage official development assistance and financial flows” (target 10.b), and “reduce (...) the transaction costs of migrant remittances” (target 10.c). According to Senghaas, dependency theory opposes international migration as it has merely negative consequences for developing countries in form of a brain drain (Senghaas 1974). Official development assistance and financial flows on the other hand is given to developing countries “because of economic interest of the donor country” (Kabonga 2017: 9), reinforcing economic and political dependencies on the international level.

Although the other targets are considered relevant to achieving the overall goal, the agenda lacks a comprehensive strategy of how this goal can be achieved. Due to the economic and political dependence of peripheric countries on those in the core, achieving these targets within the contemporary economic and political systems seems very unlikely. The only exception to this is the already mentioned target 10.b, since its achievement is in the interest of developed countries in the economic core region.

A significant result of the target analysis is a positive attitude of dependency theory towards the indicators that are associated with goal 10. An evaluation of this goal will however depend widely on the interpretation of these indicators. In fact, dependency theory would interpret several indicators in a very different way than modernization theory. For example, whereas modernization theory endorses a high amount of resource flows for development (indicator 10.b.1), dependency theory advocates to diminish such international flows. Like other goals' indicators that assess foreign aid, such evaluation will be subject to interpretation.

In conclusion, goal 10 and its associated targets are considered crucial by dependency theory, although it is not very optimistic of its attainability. A particular danger for the development process is a facilitation of international migration processes and financial flows, as envisaged in targets 10.7, 10.b and 10.c. Evaluation data of the associated indicators will be subject to interpretation, but it might provide an opportunity to assess international dependencies.

4.10.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

Postdevelopment theory calls the concept of development altogether into question, as both modernization and dependency theory have been unable to overcome global inequality: “The persistence of problems such as poverty and inequality after decades of attempts at bringing about development is considered by postdevelopment theorists as testimony to the failure of development” (Matthews 2010). Nevertheless, postdevelopment theory is still supportive of changing such disparities, although it sees them rather in ideological terms. Whereas it is thus generally supportive of goal 10, this does not necessarily apply to its associated targets.

Despite a generally positive attitude towards reducing inequalities, postdevelopment theory is only supportive of target 10.6, which seeks to “ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions”. This goal might not only strengthen the position of underprivileged countries on the international level, but also diminish the influence of capitalist ideology in politics. On the other hand, four targets are disapproved of, namely those related to financial politics (targets 10.4 and 10.5) and development assistance (targets 10.a and 10.b).

In addition to the negative perception of most targets, postdevelopment theory is irresolute upon their attainability. Two targets are considered as attainable, target 10.1 is flexible enough for alternative concepts, whereas target 10.b can be accomplished due to capitalist hegemony in the international system. Two more targets are considered as unattainable (10.6 and 10.a) due to similar reasons like as the case of dependency theory, as their implementation requires hegemonic countries to refrain from their political powers in international organizations.

As an exceptional case, postdevelopment theory endorses more indicators than targets that are associated with goal 10. The targets in question are 10.2 and 10.3, which are both shaped by ideological aspects, such as “social, economic and political inclusion of all” (target 10.2) and eliminate “discriminatory laws, policies and practices” (target 10.3). In both cases though, their respective indicators can deliver valuable assessments of people with low income and people that are discriminated. As in the case of dependency theory, the final evaluation of these indicators and conclusions to draw will depend on interpretation and the theoretical approach which will be used for an evaluation of the 2030 Agenda altogether.

All in all, despite its general support for a reduction of inequalities, postdevelopment theory remains sceptical about goal 10’s relevance and attainability. In comparison with the other goals though, it is still among those that are supported the most, particularly in terms of its associated indicators.

4.11. Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

4.11.1. Overview

The eleventh goal's objective is to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. This aspect is new to the United Nations development agenda, taking account of the fact that 55 per cent of humanity is living in cities, which is expected to increase to 68 per cent by 2050 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2018).

Goal 11 and its associated targets aim to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services”, “provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems”, “enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization”, “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage”, “reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected (...) by disasters”, “reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities”, “provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces”, “support positive (...) links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas”, “increase (...) policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change” and “support least developed countries”.

Based on target 11.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of F (“reversal”) to goal 11, which means that “current trends have to be completely reversed to have any chance of being reached by 2030” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved only by Brunei, while major challenges remain in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Syria and Yemen (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.11.2. Target analysis

Goal 11	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
11.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.11 – Results of the target analysis for goal 11

4.11.2.1. Modernization theory

The target analysis of goal 11 reveals a positive disposition of modernization theory towards relevance and attainability of both its associated targets and indicators. It considers urbanization as a componential element of social modernization (Goorha 2010: 2), hence as a premise to overcome underdevelopment. In fact, many targets are closely related to previous goals, of which modernization theory is predominantly affirmative. The emphasis on urbanization underscores the agenda's orientation towards a Western model of development.

Several targets reflect typical aspects of a modernist understanding of development. These include a certain standard of housing and basic services (target 11.1), transport infrastructure (target 11.2), enhanced resilience towards economic and other disasters (target 11.5), among others. An achievement of these objectives can be understood as a matter of time under the right economic conditions. According to a working paper by Sean Fox, modernization theory for example “portrays slums as a natural and temporary manifestation of a market failure arising from the dynamics of structural changes in labour markets” (Fox 2013: 5). Therefore, this goal provides a sound basis for development strategies based on modernization theory. In addition to that, it provides adequate guidelines for institutional reforms (targets 11.a and 11.b) and international cooperation, supporting least developed countries through financial and technical assistance (target 11.c). Once again, these objectives for increased institutionalization and international cooperation following Western models comport with the fundamental assumptions of modernization theory. In consequence, all targets can be considered both relevant and attainable from that perspective.

Their associated indicators are complementary in terms of their relevance and their scope. They allow for an objective comparison of different countries over a certain period of time, allowing for an evaluation of the modernization process. It is important however that some terms will be further defined, under universal standards, such as “inadequate housing” (indicator 11.1.1), “convenient access to public transport” (indicator 11.2.1) and a “direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management” (indicator 11.3.1).

As mentioned above, goal 11 has close links to the other infrastructure-related goals 8, 9 and 12. In addition to this, certain targets have clear linkages to other goals, such as goal 1 (in the case of targets 11.1 and 11.5), environment-related goals 13, 14 and 15 (in the case of targets 11.6 and 11.7), as well as the more overarching goals 10, 16 and 17 (in the case of targets 11.a, 11.b and 11.c). All in all, goal 11 with its associated targets and indicators is supported by modernization theory in all aspects examined above.

4.11.2.2. Dependency theory

Similar to modernization theory, scholars of dependency theory have not discussed the matter of sustainable cities and communities specifically. Nevertheless, conclusions can be drawn from other related matters, as explained above. The target analysis from a dependency theory perspective reveals a similar pattern to that of other goals, endorsing most targets in their substance, while remaining critical of both their attainability and their evaluability in the form of the associated indicators.

Out of the ten targets associated with goal 11, there is only one that can be considered not relevant or even harmful to international development. Target 11.c seeks to increase financial and technical assistance for developing countries, which is opposed by dependency theory due to the reasons that were mentioned in the assessment of goal 10. In terms of attainability, seven of the ten targets are perceived somewhat critically, while the other three do not seem to be attainable at all. This applies to those targets that seek to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services” (target 11.1), “provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all” (target 11.2) and “provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces (target 11.7). Whereas modernization theory endorses such universal concepts, they seem unrealistic for developing countries from a dependency theory perspective.

Previous remarks that selected indicators cannot assess international dependency structures also apply in the case of this goal. The only exception despite the irrelevance of its related target is indicator 11.c.1, which evaluates “financial support to the least developed countries”. All other indicators can be considered valuable in general, but incomprehensive in their scope. Even though these indicators allow for an international comparison of progress on substantial matters, they do not address aspects that dependency theory perceives as root causes for underdevelopment of the peripheric countries, namely their economic and political dependence on developed core countries. The assessed data of such indicators hence requires additional research to be put into a broader picture, which considers such aspects and is capable of a comprehensive assessment of development-inducing conditions.

In conclusion, the general idea of goal 11 is considered positive by dependency theory. Having said this, several targets associated with this goal do not seem to be achievable nor evaluable under the prevailing economic and political systems and with the strategies and tools that are outlined in the 2030 Agenda. The target analysis of goal 11 is hence similar to that of most other goals.

4.11.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

In comparison with the agenda's other goals, goal 11 is perceived comparatively positively by postdevelopment theory. Similarly to dependency theory, it does not explicitly refer to cities and human settlements, although conclusions can be drawn from other aspects. This is not to say that cities are a Western or capitalist concept, which would certainly be an exaggerated viewpoint. Instead, this goal should be understood in the scope of human settlements and communities in general.

Out of the ten targets associated with goal 11, three are endorsed by postdevelopment theory. These aspirations of these targets can be acknowledged as objective improvements to people's lives and valuable contributions to sustainable development. They include "access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services" (target 11.1), "access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems" (target 11.2) and "efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage" (target 11.4). All of them are formulated in a flexible way that allows for adaptation to local particularities. Four other targets however bear the hallmarks of hegemonic ideology, as they call for urbanization (target 11.3), development and regional planning (target 11.a) and international cooperation (targets 11.b and 11.c). While the latter three targets are considered attainable, this is also the case for the first two, which have been mentioned above. They are a rare example of targets that are perceived as both relevant and attainable by postdevelopment theory.

The assessment of the associated indicators comes to a different conclusion though, as they are predominantly considered useless for the goal's evaluation. While some of them are not applicable and relevant to all people worldwide, such as the "proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport" (indicator 11.2.1), others refer to concepts induced by hegemonic countries and ideologies, such as the "number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies" (indicator 11.b.1) and the "proportion of financial support to the least developed countries" (indicator 11.c.1).

In conclusion, postdevelopment theory is comparatively optimistic about the attainability of several targets, although this applies mostly to those which it is opposed to. In addition to that, the indicators do not provide a reasonable foundation for an evaluation of the goal, as they are not construable for different circumstances and dominated by Western ideology.

4.12. Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

4.12.1. Overview

The twelfth goal's objective is to “ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”. As the global share of the middle class is going to increase significantly throughout the next two decades, “it will increase demand for already constrained natural resources” (United Nations 2018c). The United Nations thus advocate for a shift in consumption and production patterns to increase resource use efficiency and use resources sustainably.

Goal 12 and its associated targets aim to “implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns”, “achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources”, “halve per capita global food waste”, “achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes”, “reduce waste generation”, “promote public procurement practices that are sustainable”, “support developing countries”, “develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism” and “rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies”.

Based on target 12.5, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of F (“reversal”) to goal 12, which means that “current trends have to be completely reversed to have any chance of being reached by 2030” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that significant challenges to reaching the goal remain in most countries of the world, while even major challenges remain in most OECD countries (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.12.2. Target analysis

Goal 12	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
12.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.12 – Results of the target analysis for goal 12

4.12.2.1. Modernization theory

Responsible consumption and production patterns are sound objectives from a modernization theory perspective. Despite not addressing this aspect explicitly, conclusions can be drawn from the theory's basic assumptions combined with the concept of sustainable development. According to Rostow's Stages of Economic Growth model, high mass consumption is the final stage of the development process (ReviseSociology 2015), hence consumption and production as such play a key role for development according to modernization theory. In consideration of the sustainable development concept, striving for responsibility and sustainability in such patterns is a reasonable objective.

All eleven targets can be considered both relevant and attainable by modernization theory. As for example, target 12.1 calls for worldwide implementation of the "10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns" on a global scale, "with developed countries taking the lead". The targets set clear objectives both in substantial terms, such as reducing food waste (target 12.3) and reducing waste generation (target 12.5), as well as related policies and strategies, such as scientific and technological support for developing countries (target 12.a), developing monitoring tools (target 12.b) and rationalizing inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies (target 12.c). Even though developed countries have a weak performance on some of these targets, many of them have undertaken significant action in recent years on such matters. Their leading role is hence still a key for the achievement of goal 12.

The associated indicators are a sound selection from a modernization theory perspective, yet not comprehensive for all targets: Form example, target 12.5 seeks to reduce waste generation "through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse", while its associated indicator 12.5.1 is limited to the recycling rate. Target 12.b on the other hand seeks to develop monitoring tools, while its associated indicator 12.b.1 merely assess their number and not their impact. As a result, the selected set of indicators are reasonable although not exhaustive. Those indicators that have been selected would allow for an objective evaluation among countries and over a certain period of time, which makes them useful for assessing the development stages of different countries at different times.

In conclusion, the targets and indicators associated with goal 12 are highly compatible with the combined concepts of modernization theory and sustainable development. As mentioned above, links can be drawn from this goal's production focus to other goals that are infrastructure-related, particularly goals 8, 9 and 11, as well as from its consumption focus to environment-related goals, particularly goals 13, 14 and 15.

4.12.2.2. Dependency theory

As distinguished from modernization theory, dependency theory does not perceive high mass consumption as the ultimate stage of the development process that all developing countries will eventually achieve. In contrast, it assumes that high mass consumption in developed countries can only take place at the cost of developing countries. While developed countries promote responsible and sustainable patterns of consumption and production patterns within their own border, they benefit from far less sustainable practices in peripheric countries. The only way for these countries to overcome such harmful dependencies would be to dissociate themselves from the international economic system and implement independent strategies.

The goal's associated targets however do not indicate a certain strategy of how to achieve this goal. Instead, they compose a list of aspects of sustainable consumptions and production patterns of which dependency theory is affirmative. It is opposed to two of the eleven targets, which aim to “implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (...) with developed countries taking the lead” (target 12.1) and to “encourage official development assistance and financial flows” (target 12.b), as they intend to increase international dependencies rather than diminish them. However, since core countries benefit from these structures and have no interest in changing them, dependency theory is sceptical about the attainability of these ten targets. They can only be achieved if countries in the periphery manage to dissociate themselves economically from those in the core.

In terms of the indicators, the dependency theory perspective is quite divided. It supports the indicators associated with six different targets, remaining sceptical of those indicators that are associated with targets 12.2, 12.3, 12.5, 12.b and 12.c, which do not provide a tool to assess different countries in comparison. In addition to that, as is the case for other goals, these indicators do not allow for an assessment of international dependency structures, which are understood as root causes for underdevelopment by dependency theory. Instead, it would be important to evaluate international production chains and the international division of labour to measure progress on sustainable consumption and production matters and to implement relevant strategies to attain these objectives.

In conclusion, the goal touches on relevant aspects of international development, but, once again, fails to address the actual root causes of underdevelopment in this regard. Prevailing consumption and production patterns thus remain insufficient for developing countries, their environment and their population. Instead of diminishing international dependencies though, as suggested by dependency theory, this goal rather foresees an increase of these structures.

4.12.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

An important aspect of sustainability, responsible consumption and production is considered a reasonable alternative to mass production and consumption by postdevelopment theory. Stefan Andreasson criticizes that development in the perspective of modernization and dependency theories ignores the fact that indefinite progress and economic growth is impeded by resource scarcity and environmental degradation, imposing limits on economic growth, technical innovation and mass consumption (Andreasson 2007: 5–7). In the scope of several alternative concepts, including the Latin American concept of *tecnológica social*, “downscaling production and consumption is seen as the path to achieving long-term environmental and social balance without risking well-being” (Pozzebon/Fontenelle 2018: 1751).

Despite this positive attitude towards the goal’s general aspiration, the target analysis reveals that postdevelopment theory is not equally affirmative of its associated targets and indicators. It is even opposed to four targets, including target 12.1 which seeks to “implement the 10-Year Framework on Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (...) with developed countries taking the lead”, and target 12.a, which aims to “support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity”. Both targets advocate for a leading role of “developed” countries, although the SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 found that these are the countries that are the furthest from achieving goal 12 (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30). In terms of attainability, postdevelopment theory is particularly sceptical about two targets: Targets 12.8 and 12.c are barely compatible with capitalist ideology and therefore not in the interest of the hegemonic society.

In terms of the indicators, postdevelopment theory considers the vast majority as useless for a reasonable evaluation of responsible consumption and production. The only exception is indicator 12.3.1, which relates to global food waste in quite vague terms. All other indicators are framed in capitalist or Western concepts and imply a corresponding development concept. Whereas the goal in general is supported by postdevelopment theory, its specifications are perceived critically and are often opposed altogether. It seems that the targets and indicators want to maintain the leading role of “developed” countries, implying that they are the most advanced in that matter. This assumption contradicts the findings of the SDG Index and Dashboards Report and basic premises of postdevelopment theory. In conclusion, the goal fails to address the right aspects and strategies on the way to responsible consumption and production. It also does not encompass alternative strategies that could be beneficial, nor does it recognize the good performance of several “developing” countries in this field.

4.13. Goal 13: Climate Action

4.13.1. Overview

The thirteenth goal's objective is to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts". While the issue of climate change was included in the Millennium Development Goals, it has become a key issue in international politics in recent years. Most importantly, the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed in April 2016 by all UN member states, envisioning a limitation of the global average temperature's increase to well below two degrees above pre-industrial levels. Even though the SDGs were developed before the Paris Agreement, it is included indirectly in the agenda. The work of UNFCCC is specifically mentioned in the list of targets. In addition to international strategies mitigating the effects of climate change, this goal also faces the consequences of increasing global temperatures. Above all, this includes strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, which are projected to increase significantly.

Goal 13 and its associated targets aim to "strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters", "integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning", "improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change", "implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change" and "promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning".

Based on target 13.2, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of F ("reversal") to goal 13, which means that "current trends have to be completely reversed to have any chance of being reached by 2030" (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by a few African, Asian and Central American countries, while major challenges remain in most Asian and OECD countries (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.13.2. Target analysis

Goal 13	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
13.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.13 – Results of the target analysis for goal 13

4.13.2.1. Modernization theory

Climate action is a rather new aspect of international development and was not yet on the agenda when modernization theory emerged in the 1950s. In recent years, scholars have examined how climate change relates to the basic assumptions of modernization theory. They concluded that “climate change is a worldwide concern but the effect is more intense in the Third World because of the state of development and technological advancement. Hence, catching up with the First World will always be a serious challenge in the midst of climate change” (Mugambiwa/Tirivangasi 2017: 352). It is therefore the responsibility of all countries to engage in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

It is notable that the 2015 General Assembly resolution which encompassed the SDGs stated that “the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change” (United Nations General Assembly 2015: 22). The agenda hence acknowledges the relevance of subsequent international treaties, such as the Paris Agreement, yet it does not encompass specific targets for climate change mitigation as such. As a result, the 2030 Agenda remains focused on the development-related aspects.

Regarding goal 13 itself, modernization theory is affirmative of all five targets, which focus both on mitigation and adaptation measures. They also include a commitment of developed countries to support developing countries in financial terms (target 13.a) and technological terms (target 13.b). With these measures, it seems likely that the goal of taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts can be achieved.

Even though modernization theory is affirmative about the indicators as well, some of them envision national strategies that might potentially contradict the principle of universality, namely indicators 13.1.2 and 13.2.1. In the first case, national strategies should be adopted in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, hence an overarching international framework is still in place. In the latter case, such national adaptation plans should also follow common guidelines and principles to ensure their effectiveness.

In addition to climate and environment, climate change also has a potential impact other, if not all goals. For example, “climate change can also be considered a barrier to ‘catching up’ with the First World in agricultural technology and eradication of hunger and malnutrition as well as achieving SDG 2” (Mugambiwa/Tirivangasi 2017: 352). In conclusion, modernization theory perceives climate action is an important aspect of sustainable development and is hence affirmative of goal 13 and its associated targets and indicators.

4.13.2.2. Dependency theory

As mentioned above, developing countries are much more affected by climate change due to their lower development and technological advancement (Mugambiwa/Tirivangasi 2017: 352), even though climate change is mostly caused by economic activities of industrialized and developed countries. These circumstances mirror many aspects of development that are beneficial to developed countries at the cost of developing countries.

With only five associated targets, goal 13 is among the least elaborated of the entire agenda. It is hence worthwhile not to focus on the median of the target analysis, but to look closer at the separate results for each target. Dependency theory is quite divided on the assessment of this goal, as can be seen in the table above. It endorses the first three targets, but remains sceptical of their attainability, particularly in developing countries. These three targets aim to “strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters” (target 13.1), to “integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning” (target 13.2) and to “improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity” (target 13.3). The following two targets are opposed by dependency theory, which nevertheless perceives them as attainable. Both endorse international partnerships and development cooperation, in financial terms (target 13.a) as well as in technological terms (target 13b). These targets cannot be supported as they intend to increase cooperation among countries and thus international dependencies between core and peripheric countries.

Associated with target 13.1, indicators 13.1.2 and 13.1.3 assess the implementation of national strategies, but only in legislative terms. In contrast to most other goals, this is the only target whose associated indicators are perceived sceptically by dependency theory. It endorses the indicators associated with the other four targets, since they actually provide a basis to assess international dependencies and inequalities. In addition to that, the nature of climate change as a global phenomenon facilitates an evaluation of the goal as a whole.

In conclusion, dependency theory is affirmative of the goal’s general aspirations, but opposes its approach to international cooperation. International cooperation is however the goal’s only aspect that seems attainable, while dependency theory remains critical of the other targets’ implementation, particularly target 13.1. In contrast to most other goals though, the associated indicators are a sound selection and will allow for a more or less comprehensive evaluation of the goal.

4.13.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

In contrast to the classical perception of development as economic growth and modernization, postdevelopment theory considers environmental protection as a key aspect of sustainable development. This applies as well to a broad range of alternative concepts, like the Bhutanese *Gross National Happiness* and the South American *buen vivir*. Climate change mitigation and adaptation can hence be understood as an important aspect, yet the target analysis comes to a different result. This contradiction is explained by Ariel Salleh as follows: “Goal 13 (...) relies on standard capitalist measures of mitigation, adaptation, finance, tech transfer, and capacity building. But this kind of environmental management means the manipulation of often ad hoc indicators by national bureaucracies and requires billions in capital outlay for technology innovation, loans, and purchase” (Salleh 2016: 954). In conclusion, whereas postdevelopment theory is affirmative of this goal, its specifications are not compatible with the theory’s basic assumptions. In addition to that, five targets are not enough to grasp the issue’s entire scope.

The only target that is supported by postdevelopment theory is target 13.1, which aims to “strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters”. This target can be seen as the only non-ideological one, as the other two numerical targets refer to “national policies, strategies and planning” (target 13.2) and “education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity” (target 13.3). Whereas postdevelopment theory is often opposed to such political and educational objectives, this is only in part the case with climate change as a non-ideological issue. Instead, the two remaining targets rejected more strongly, as they both refer to development cooperation and the leading role of “developed” countries. Despite this heterogeneous perception of the targets, postdevelopment theory is highly optimistic about their attainability, which applies to all five targets in equal measure.

In terms of the indicators, only those associated with target 13.3 can be considered useful to a limited extent, due to similar reasons why the target altogether falls in this category. All other targets are too specific and thus not adaptable to all contexts or involve certain ideological features that are opposed by postdevelopment theory. Both alternative concepts that were mentioned above however should fit into the overall framework of goal 13 if they consider climate change mitigation and adaptation as part of their environmental policies.

In conclusion, climate action is an indispensable aspect of sustainable development and one of the most important goals of the 2030 Agenda. Its specifications are nevertheless opposed in part by postdevelopment theory, as they are based on capitalist ideology and Western concepts of education, environmental protection, politics and development cooperation.

4.14. Goal 14: Life Below Water

4.14.1. Overview

The fourteenth goal's objective is to “conserve and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. It is not all new to the United Nations development agenda, as some aspects were included in target 7b of the Millennium Development Goals. The associated indicators included the “proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits”, the “proportion of total water resources used”, the “proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected” and the “proportion of species threatened with extinction”.

Goal 14 and its associated targets aim to “prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution”, “protect marine and coastal ecosystems”, “minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification”, “regulate harvesting and end overfishing”, “conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas”, “prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies”, “increase the economic benefits (...) from the sustainable use of marine resources”, “increase scientific knowledge”, “provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets” and “enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans (...) by implementing international law”.

Based on target 14.2, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of F (“reversal”) to goal 14, which means that “current trends have to be completely reversed to have any chance of being reached by 2030” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved only by Tuvalu, while nearly all countries still face major challenges. The report includes data for coastal states only (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.14.2. Target analysis

Goal 14	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
14.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.14 – Results of the target analysis for goal 14

4.14.2.1. Modernization theory

Whereas modernization theory itself does not consider environmental protection an essential aspect of international development, ecological modernization theory argues that environment-friendly policies have a positive impact on the economy. Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue that modernization theory as such would thus consider the protection of oceans, seas and marine resources as a priority of development politics. In case of doubt, economic growth is considered more relevant for economic development and modernization. As a result, goals 14 and 15 are among the least relevant according to modernization theory.

Modernization theory is somewhat sceptical about targets that seek to “effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing” (target 14.4), “provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets” (target 14.b) and “enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law” (target 14.c). Although modernization theory is not against the sustainable use of oceans as such, these targets can only be supported if they do not obstruct economic activities and growth. The other targets are compatible with that provision and potentially relevant for economic growth, hence their assessment is rather positive.

Regardless of these restrictions, modernization theory considers all targets to be attainable. In line with the perspective of ecological modernization, conservation and sustainable usage of water resources can be beneficial for industrial development and modernization. Countries on the modernization track would thus be willing to protect such resources where it does not harm their economic efforts. This applies likewise to developing and developed countries.

Modernization theory is supportive of all selected indicators that allow for an objective and fact-based evaluation of the agenda. Indicator 14.b.1 is a certain exception to this, as it leaves room for the interpretation of “progress by countries in the degree of application of a (...) framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries”, as it does not elaborate on the definition of progress nor on the nature of such a framework.

In conclusion, modernization theory does not consider goal 14 as a priority. Nevertheless, it is affirmative of its targets and positive towards its achievement. As an environment-related goal, goal 14 has linkages with goals 13 and 15. In addition to that, its associated targets and indicators recognize relations to clean water (goal 6), employment and economy (goals 8 and 9), reduced inequalities among countries (goal 10) and international cooperation (goal 17).

4.14.2.2. Dependency theory

Like modernization theory, dependency theory does not consider environmental protection as an important aspect of international development. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the protection is relevant for several other factors, such as nutrition, health and employment. The conservation and sustainable usage of the oceans, seas and marine resources is therefore at least indirectly relevant for development. Whereas dependency theory mostly agrees with modernization theory in that regard, it is much more sceptical about this goal's attainability and the indicators that were selected for its evaluation.

According to dependency theory, unsustainable exploitation of marine resources is caused by economic interests of developed countries at the cost of peripheral developing countries. It would hence be advisable for these countries to dissociate from developed countries in order to protect their marine resources. Dependency theory thus advocates eight targets, which aim at the implementation of such protection measures. However, the remaining targets partially call for increased international dependencies, as they advocate to “enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries” (target 14.a) and “enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law” (target 14.c). Neither of these two contradicts the basic policy implications of dependency theory, yet the danger of increased dependency is enough to be sceptical.

In terms of attainability, dependency theory is more pessimistic than modernization theory, particularly of three targets: target 14.6 aiming to “prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing”, target 16.7 aiming to “increase the economic benefits to small island developing states and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources”, and target 14.b aiming to “provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”. These three targets require developed countries to renounce parts of their hegemony and structural power. Since these countries are determined to keep these privileges, they are not interested in the achievement of these targets and therefore hinder the development process of peripheral countries in that regard.

Two of the associated indicators are considered useful for an evaluation of goal 14: Indicators 14.6.1 and 14.c.1 assess “the degree of implementation of international instruments” as well as the “number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing (...) instruments that implement international law”, hence indicating the grade of a country's embeddedness in international policies. All other indicators are relevant to some extent, but do not permit an assessment of international dependencies.

4.14.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

As already mentioned, postdevelopment theory is very affirmative of goals that are related to environmental protection, including this goal. Although its overall assessment reveals several aspects of which the theory is not supportive, these results are among the most positive of all goals. The most important reasons for several targets' rejection are the same as in the case of goal 13, namely universal strategies, omission of alternative development concepts and prevailing dominance of capitalist and Western ideology. These aspects apply to several targets and indicators that are associated with goal 14, albeit not all of them. In conclusion, the target analysis provides a very mixed result, which should not distract from the principle that environmental protection is a priority of postdevelopment theory.

As a result, it is affirmative of those targets that specify the goal's aspirations in detail and opposes those targets that lay out the strategy of how the goal is intended to be achieved. The former targets are those that aim to "reduce marine pollution" (target 14.1), "sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems" (target 14.2), "regulate and end overfishing" (target 14.4) and "conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas" (target 14.5). All of them aspire to objective improvements that are exempt from ideological coining. This is however not the case for those targets that are disapproved of by postdevelopment theory, which seek to "prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies" (target 14.6), "increase the economic benefits" (target 14.7), "increase scientific knowledge" (target 14.a) and "enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law" (target 14.c). While the first group is considered entirely attainable, this also applies in part to the second group, resulting in an optimistic perspective on the goal's attainability.

The assessment of the indicators comes to a similar conclusion as that of their respective goals, with no major changes. The first five targets are equipped with indicators that are considered as relevant to some extent, whereas the remaining targets are useless for evaluation.

In conclusion, an assessment from a postdevelopment theory divides the goal into two parts: It considers the first five targets mostly relevant, attainable and equipped with relevant indicators for the goal's evaluation. The last five targets, which refer more to the related development strategies, are considered inappropriate, attainable to a certain extent and equipped with indicators that cannot provide useful data on the goal's progress. A more reasonable version of this goal would thus replace those last five indicators so that they become less universal, open for alternative development concepts and disregard the domination of capitalist and Western ideology.

4.15. Goal 15: Life on Land

4.15.1. Overview

The fifteenth goal's objective is to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. It is not all new to the United Nations development agenda, as some aspects were included in target 7b of the Millennium Development Goals.

Goal 15 and its associated targets aim to “ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems”, “promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests”, “combat desertification”, “ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems”, “reduce the degradation of natural habitats”, “promote fair and equitable sharing (...) of genetic resources”, “end poaching and trafficking of protected species”, “reduce the impact of invasive alien species”, “integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning” and “mobilize and significantly increase financial resources”.

Based on target 15.2, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of B (“reform”) to goal 15, which means that “the world is on course to get more than halfway towards, thereby making considerable progress towards the target by 2030” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by Bulgaria, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, while significant challenges remain in most countries and some even face major challenges (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.15.2. Target analysis

Goal 15	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
15.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.15 – Results of the target analysis for goal 15

4.15.2.1. Modernization theory

Goal 15 is closely linked to the previous goal, as they both seek to conserve and sustainably use ecosystems, below water and on land. The general disposition of modernization theory is hence the same, arguing that modernization theory is affirmative of environmental protection if it does not obstruct economic growth and modernization. In consideration of the targets associated with these two goals, this seems to be much more the case on land than below water. As a result, modernization theory considers most targets associated with goal 15 only relevant to some extent, making it one of the agenda's least relevant goals.

Out of the nine numerical targets associated with goal 15, four are endorsed by modernization theory, namely those aiming to “combat desertification” (target 15.3), “promote fair and equitable sharing (...) of genetic resources” (target 15.6), “end poaching and trafficking of protected species” (target 15.7) and “integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts” (target 15.9). Many other targets would affect the economy's growth potential; hence a compromise would be required in such cases. The commitment to “halt deforestation” (target 15.2) for example potentially hinders the ability of forested countries to expand industrial activities when there are no free development areas left.

As in the case of other goals, those targets that intend to mobilize and increase financial resources (targets 15.a and 15.b) and enhance international cooperation (target 15.c) are fully supported by modernization theory. In combination with the other targets, this results in a tendentially positive perception of the goal's associated targets, although several objections remain.

In terms of the goal's attainability however, modernization theory has no objections due to the same reasons that were already mentioned in the previous chapter on goal 14. The same goes for the associated indicators, which are precise and allow for an objective evaluation, except for indicator 15.2.1. This indicator intends to measure “progress towards sustainable forest management”, which is too vague to be considered objective.

In conclusion, both goals 14 and 15 are relevant from a modernization theory perspective, even though they are not considered a priority for development. Their relevance and necessity rely primarily on compatibility with economic growth and modernization which are more important than environmental protection. In any cases where these two aspects go hand in hand, they are however both considered important contributors to the development and modernization process.

4.15.2.2. Dependency theory

As in the cases of the previous two environment-related goals 13 and 14, dependency theory acknowledges the relevance of goal 15 and its associated targets, yet it remains sceptical of their attainability and evaluability with the indicators that were selected. The target analysis of this goal shows very similar results to that of goal 14, as the same arguments apply.

Dependency theory is supportive of the nine numerical targets, which formulate reasonable objectives for the protection of terrestrial ecosystems. The remaining three targets propose to mobilize resources (targets 15.a and 15.b) and “enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species” (target 15.c), hence potentially increasing the prevailing imbalanced structures at the international level. However, none of these targets seeks to increase economic or political dependencies, therefore they are not fundamentally opposed by dependency theory.

However, in terms of the targets’ availability, the analysis reveals a different pattern: Both targets 15.2 and 15.3, advocating to “halt deforestation” as well as to “combat desertification”, are considered unrealistic by dependency theory. Both targets would require drastic environmental action at the cost of the global economy, which seems very unlikely in the scope of prevailing international economic structures. According to a dependency theory perspective, only one target is likely to be achieved: Target 15.9 seeks to “integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning”, which is certainly possible at the conceptual level. The achievement of the nine remaining targets is uncertain, as it depends on many external factors and will likely differ a lot among countries.

With support of five of the fourteen indicators, goal 15 is among the most easily evaluable according to a dependency theory perspective. These indicators, namely 15.7.1, 15.8.1, 15.a.1, 15.b.1 and 15.c.1, are not limited to a statistical assessment of the situation inside a given country but examine structures between different countries. Nevertheless, as already mentioned, such an assessment will be subject to interpretation of such structures and their assessment, which is fundamentally different among the three development theories examined.

In conclusion, dependency theory does not consider the environment-related goals 13, 14 and 15 as a priority for international development, yet it recognizes their relevance. In contrast to modernization theory though, it is rather sceptical about their attainability in a global context and their evaluability, due to similar reasons as apply to other goals.

4.15.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

As another environment-related goal, the assessment of goal 15 from a postdevelopment theory perspective is similar to that of the two previous goals. The same pattern that has been identified for goal 14 is visible in this case: The first half of its associated targets containing further details of the goal's aspiration are considered both relevant and attainable, which is not the case for the latter half, which particularizes a strategy of how the goal can be achieved that is a universal approach predominantly shaped by capitalist and Western ideology. Alternative concepts in regard to the protection of terrestrial ecosystems and forests are numerous and include those that have already been mentioned in regard to goal 13.

Six targets are considered as highly relevant, which include “conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems” (target 15.1), “sustainable management of all types of forests” (target 15.2), “combat desertification” (target 15.3), “conservation of mountain ecosystems” (target 15.4), “reduce degradation of natural habitats” (target 15.5) and “fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources” (target 15.6). These targets are a reasonable specification of the overall goal that is compatible with postdevelopment theory's basic assumptions. As already mentioned, this does not apply to the second half of the targets, particularly the last three, which seek to “mobilize and significantly increase financial resources (...) to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems” (target 15.a), “mobilize significant resources from all sources” (target 15.b) and “enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species (target 15.c). In addition to that, postdevelopment theory is optimistic in terms of the targets' attainability, in particular of the first, which has been described above.

Whereas the indicators' assessment follows the general pattern of the targets' assessment, it is not as clear as in the case of goal 14. Postdevelopment theory considers the indicators of four goals as useful and relevant; three of them are in the first half. On the other hand, five targets are associated with indicators that are opposed by the theory; four of them are in the second half. Most of them refer to national legislation, development strategies and official development assistance, hence drafting a prescribed universal path of “development”.

All in all, the analysis of the three environment-related goals 13, 14 and 15 provides a unified pattern. Whereas the goals themselves are considered as highly relevant by postdevelopment theory, this does not necessarily apply to their associated targets and indicators. Their assessment is highly dependent on their scope. Postdevelopment theory is affirmative of unbiased targets and indicators, whereas it opposes those foreseeing a certain development strategy.

4.16. Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

4.16.1. Overview

The sixteenth goal's objective is to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. It is new to the United Nations development agenda, although the its relevance for efficient policy-making and enforcing the agenda is undeniable.

Goal 16 and its associated targets aim to “reduce all forms of violence and related death rates”, “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking (...) violence and torture of children”, “promote the rule of law”, “reduce illicit financial and arms flows”, “reduce corruption and bribery”, “develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions”, “ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making”, “strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance”, “provide legal identity for all”, “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms” and “strengthen relevant national institutions (...) to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime”.

Based on target 16.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of C (“revolution”) to goal 16, which means that “progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond one third (...) of the way there” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by Andorra and Iceland, while major challenges remain in African, American and Asian countries (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.16.2. Target analysis

Goal 16	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
16.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.16 – Results of the target analysis for goal 16

4.16.2.1. Modernization theory

Peace, justice and strong institutions have been customary aspects of modernization theory and development theory altogether, hence goal 16 can be seen as one of the most important among the Sustainable Development Goals. An analysis of the goal's twelve targets and their associated indicators reveal a Western, hence modernization theory conception of these three aspects. Ulrich Menzel claims it is the dogma of modernization theory that industrialization, social change and democratization depend on each other, and that the whole world will eventually become Westernized (Menzel 2018: 202).

In line with these general observations, modernization theory considers the targets associated with goal 16 as both relevant and attainable. Many of them include aspects that are generally perceived as standards of a modern society, such as rule of law (target 16.3) and freedom of information (target 16.10). An exception to this is target 16.8, which aims to “broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance”. Even though this objective is achievable, it might harm the exemplary function of developed countries and obstruct the development process. For that reason, it would be advisable not to strengthen the role of developing countries before they have achieved a certain stage of the development process themselves.

With a total of twenty-three associated indicators, goal 16 is specified in much more detail than most of the other Sustainable Development Goals. Most of them are formulated in an objective way that does not leave any room for interpretation or manipulation. In some cases, the selection of indicators is still insufficient to cover a target's entire range. Target 16.a for instance aspires to “strengthen relevant national institutions (...) to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime”, although its associated indicator only refers to human rights institutions. By this example it is evident that indicators are potentially more political or controversial than the target itself, and that an evaluation of the agenda will ultimately depend on the selection of relevant indicators. Although there might be not enough indicators in this case, those indicators that were selected are certainly relevant.

In the view of modernization theory, the institutional aspects covered by this goal are fundamental to development in general, which is considered “something that only comes through governmental action, (and) the lack of ‘development’ by definition is the result of government neglect” (Protopsaltis 2017: 1743). As explained above, the 2030 Agenda relies on sound and stable framework conditions. Both goals 16 and 17 are thus not only relevant from a modernization theory perspective, but essential for the agenda as a whole.

4.16.2.2. Dependency theory

As opposed to modernization theory, dependency theory recognizes the dominance of developed countries as a threat to peace and rule of law in developing countries. While it considers the aspiration of goal 16 as equally important, its achievement within prevailing power structures seems rather unlikely. In fact, according to dependency theory, it is “a group of institutional processes that contribute to underdevelopment” (Chase-Dunn 2015). Strong institutions can thus be harmful for international development if they are embedded in international power structures. Nevertheless, the effectivity of institutions in general is an important aspect of development. As mentioned in previous chapters, this goal is important for providing a solid foundation for many other goals and hence the development process altogether.

In this framework, dependency theory is supportive of eleven targets that are associated with goal 16. This applies in particular to target 16.8, which seeks to “broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance” and is seen critical by modernization theory. While the objective target 16.a in general can be considered reasonable, its reference to international cooperation is seen critically by dependency theory. All in all, goal 16 and its associated targets are a sound aspiration for the development process.

Despite this support of dependency theory for the goal, it is pessimistic about its attainability. The establishment of strong institutions in developing countries is rather difficult, as their elites collaborate with foreign countries to exploit the poor class (Wiemeyer 1987: 256). The preservation of weak institutions and exploitation is in the interest of developed countries, and thus difficult to overcome. Only three of the twelve targets are potentially achievable, namely targets 16.9, 16.a and 16.b. The achievement of all other targets would require fundamental structural changes and a reduction of international dependencies.

The indicators’ assessment of modernization theory is shared by dependency theory, although it views international dependencies as an additional factor that should be taken into account. As a result, all the indicators are only relevant to some extent, as none of them takes this factor into consideration. Even target 16.a, which is the only target in referring to international cooperation, is not associated with an indicator that evaluates such links. Indicator 16.a.1 refers to the Paris Principles as a blueprint for “independent national human rights institutions”, but its focus on human rights is insufficient for a comprehensive evaluation.

In conclusion, goal 16 and its associated targets are an important element and foundation of the international development process. Dependency theory is very supportive of the goal, despite remaining doubts about its attainability and evaluability of the indicators.

4.16.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

Both goals 16 and 17 are considered overarching goals at the 2030 Agenda's foundation. They are intended to form a strong institutional basis that is required for the achievement of all other goals. This constellation leads to a very sceptical attitude of postdevelopment theory towards these two goals, as it likely bears the danger of a negative ideological character. While this applies to goal 17 to a greater extent, the theory's assessment of goal 16 and its associated targets is more balanced, even though this is not the case for the indicators.

Postdevelopment theory considers six of the twelve targets relevant, as their objectives cannot be fully associated with Western or capitalist ideology. The aspiration of these targets is to "reduce all forms of violence" (target 16.1), "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children" (target 16.2), "promote the rule of law" (target 16.3), "reduce illicit financial and arms flows" (target 16.4), "reduce corruption and bribery" (target 16.5) and "strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance" (target 16.8). Apart from the latter one, these targets reflect certain forms of crime that are usually harmful for human lives. Some ideologies might have a different opinion on them in certain constellations, but in general these targets can be endorsed. However, this does not apply to the last four targets, which are based on Western concepts like "legal identity" (target 16.9), "public access to information" and "fundamental freedoms" (target 16.10), "international cooperation" and capacity building (target 16.a) as well as "non-discriminatory laws" (target 16.b). Regardless of their attainability, postdevelopment theory perceives all targets as potentially relevant with the single exception of target 16.8.

Four of the positively assessed targets are associated with relevant indicators, which assess the rates of different types of crime (targets 16.1 and 16.2), treatment of detainees (target 16.3) and the role of developing countries in international organizations (target 16.8). All remaining indicators are not suitable for an evaluation of the goal, as they assess targets financially or envision institutions based on Western models. Even though the overall assessment of the indicators is negative by tendency, it is remarkable that four targets are actually associated with relevant indicators.

In conclusion, postdevelopment theory is not opposed to goal 16 altogether. However, it is evident from the target analysis that it is more supportive of peace and justice than strong institutions in the understanding of goal 16. In comparison with the following goal, it is assessed as much more positive in regard to the targets' and indicators' relevance.

4.17. Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

4.17.1. Overview

The seventeenth goal's objective is to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”. Goal 17 and its associated targets aim to “achieve the target (...) for official development assistance”, “assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability”, “implement investment promotion regimes for least-developed countries”, “enhance (...) international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation”, “enhance international support for (...) capacity-building” and “promote a universal (...) and equitable multilateral trading system”, among other aspirations.

Based on target 17.1, the ODI's SDG Scoreboard 2030 assigns a rating of C (“revolution”) to goal 17, which means that “progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only got us beyond one third (...) of the way there” (ODI 2015: 18–21). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018 reveals that the goal has been achieved by a few countries and most challenges remain in East Asia, Europe and North America (Sachs et al. 2018: 18–30).

4.17.2. Target analysis

Goal 17	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
17.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.12	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.13	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.14	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.15	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.16	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.17	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.18	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.19	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 4.17 – Results of the target analysis for goal 17

4.17.2.1. Modernization theory

According to modernization theory, international cooperation and assistance for developing countries is a major requirement for development, stating that “the ‘pre-conditions for take-off’ stage must be engaged, meaning Western aid is the first step towards development” (Dhlamini 2013: 2). A global partnership, as envisioned by goal 17, is hence an essential aspect of sustainable development. Based on modernization theory, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank proposed the “Washington Consensus”. This set of guidelines calls upon developing countries to implement free trade regulations (Prochnow 2016: 1).

Modernization theory is affirmative of eighteen targets both in terms of their relevance and their attainability. Most targets encourage developed countries to assist developing countries in terms of finance (targets 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5), technology (targets 17.6, 17.7 and 17.8), capacity-building (target 17.9), trade (targets 17.10, 17.11, 17.12) and policy-making (targets 17.14 and 17.15), thus they are in line with the policy implications by modernization theory as described above. Only target 17.15 can be perceived critically, as it emphasizes the principle of non-intervention in another country’s internal policies. As modernization theory advocates universal concepts and solutions based on the role-model of developed countries, their implementation can be obstructed by domestic policies foreseeing alternative ways of development. This target is not only an obstacle for international development, it also seems unrealistic in the scope of a globalised economic system.

In terms of the indicators, the same observations that have been made in the case of goal 16 also apply to goal 17. Most of them are formulated precisely and are based on measures that reflect a modernization theory approach. Many targets are formulated at a broad extent yet are associated with only one indicator. In addition to this, some indicators are quite vague, such as indicator 17.13.1 which foresees a “Macroeconomic Dashboard” without elaborating on its specifications. Even though nearly all indicators are relevant for an evaluation of the goal, their selection is still far from comprehensive.

As already mentioned, modernization theory considers both goals 16 and 17 as essential for the entire 2030 Agenda, as it relies on sound and stable framework conditions. Partnerships, in particular between developed countries and developing countries, are a key factor in the achievement of all other goals. Many of them have a dedicated target that calls for increased financial aid and development cooperation, as advocated for by modernization theory. It can thus be concluded that strengthening partnerships in all forms, both as referred to by goal 17 and entailed in other goals, is highly relevant from a modernization theory perspective.

4.17.2.2. Dependency theory

In contrast to modernization theory, dependency theory considers increased international cooperation and close ties between developed countries and developing countries as a threat to international development. While dependency theory is supportive of the agenda's other 16 goals, it is hence critical towards goal 17. Instead of strengthening partnerships, it suggests that developing countries should diminish their relationships with developed countries, since these are to their own population's disadvantage. It claims that income disparities remain as the elites in developing countries collaborate with foreign powers, namely developed countries, to exploit the poor class (Wiemeyer 1987: 256). In conclusion, "the main solution offered by the dependency theory is de-linking (...) which is a dramatic break from Western capitalism which is exploitive, leaving the political power and resources in the hands of the working class" (Dhlamini 2013: 3). This contradicts many of the targets associated with goal 17.

The results of the target analysis show a mixed pattern in terms of relevance and attainability. Out of the nineteen targets, two are considered relevant. These two are target 17.15, which calls to "respect each country's policy space and leadership", and target 17.17, which seeks to "promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships". On the other hand, eight targets (17.1, 17.2, 17.5, 17.6, 17.10, 17.12, 17.13 and 17.16) are considered harmful for international development. These targets advocate for increased international cooperation and financial support by developed countries, including "the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance" (target 17.2) and to "promote a universal (...) multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization" (target 17.10). Those economic and financial targets are viewed especially critically by dependency theory.

Likewise, dependency theory has a divided view on the goal's attainability. Six associated targets are considered attainable (17.3, 17.5, 17.13, 17.14, 17.16 and 17.17), which relate to financial investment, policy coherence and multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development. On the other hand, five targets are considered unattainable (17.8, 17.9, 17.10, 17.12 and 17.15), as they would mostly be to the disadvantage of developed countries.

All in all, there is no consistent pattern of dependency theory's perception of goal 17. However, in terms of its associated indicators, it is very optimistic about their usefulness, as most of them allow for an evaluation of international cooperation and dependency structures. Apart from indicators 17.6.2 and 17.8.1, this applies to all of them, including those that are associated with goals which are perceived critically by dependency theory. In conclusion, although it is the most criticized goal of the agenda, its evaluation might be very revelatory.

4.17.2.3. Postdevelopment theory

Partnerships are an aspect that is a red rag for postdevelopment theory even more than it is for dependency theory, as it bears not only the danger of increased economic dependence on, but also ideological influence from hegemonic countries. The specifications of goal 17 in the form of its associated targets and indicators prove that this is the case for the Sustainable Development Goals, which is why postdevelopment theory is so opposed to it. It is of the view that a political strategy which aims at improving living conditions beyond colonial rule should encompass alternative concepts like global justice, solidarity, hospitality and political liberation (Bendix 2016: 3), which are not reflected in this goal.

The goal is associated with nineteen targets, yet only one of them is considered relevant: Target 17.15 seeks to “respect each country’s policy space and leadership”, which provides flexibility for the implementation of alternative concepts, as mentioned above. This does not apply to the other targets, many of which encompass financial or institutional objectives that interfere with the right to self-determination regarding development policies.

The targets’ attainability is perceived considerably more optimistic than their relevance, albeit still critically. Postdevelopment theory considers four targets attainable, namely targets 17.2 and 17.3, which aim to mobilize financial resources for developing countries, as well as targets 17.8 and 17.9, which seek to enhance capacity building and “measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product”. On the other hand, two targets are considered as unattainable, which aspire to “adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least development countries” (target 17.5) and “respect each country’s policy and space and leadership” (target 17.15), as mentioned above. Both would weaken the financial or ideological influence of hegemonic countries; hence these countries should not be interested in their implementation.

Despite the vast number of indicators, there is not much to elaborate on, as they are dismissed by postdevelopment theory without exception. Their focus on economic, technological and trade-related aspects contradicts the ideas of a sound partnership that were mentioned above. In conclusion, these aspects make goal 17 the second most opposed goal after goal 9. Not only is it not relevant in the agenda’s framework, but also harmful for non-hegemonic countries that are threatened in their self-determination and in their ability to implement alternative development concepts. As this goal is considered overarching within the 2030 Agenda, this point underlines the general observation that implicit assumptions of the Sustainable Development are not compatible with those of postdevelopment theory.

5. Analytical findings

5.1. Overview

Summarizing the results of the target analysis that were discussed above, table 5.1 provides an analytical comparison of all goals from the viewpoint of the three development theories. It illustrates very different assessments of the agenda, which can be summarized as follows:

- Modernization theory is very supportive of the goals, as it endorses 16 of them. They are all considered both attainable and associated with relevant indicators.
- Dependency theory is also very supportive of the goal, as it endorses 16 of them as well. It is however more sceptical of both their attainability and their associated indicators.
- Postdevelopment theory is sceptical of both the relevance and attainability of the goals. Most of their associated indicators are strongly opposed by it.

A more detailed summary reveals a few distinctive observations: Even though modernization theory and dependency theory are supportive of 16 goals, modernization theory is affirmative of considerably more targets in total. This is the case because dependency theory opposes all targets that refer to international cooperation, which are spread across the agenda. In terms of attainability, both dependency theory and postdevelopment theory are sceptical. Nevertheless, the postdevelopment theory is more optimistic with regard to most goals.

Median Goals	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Overall	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Table 5.1 – Median of the target analysis for all goals

Targets	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
n=169	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
	153	165	160	120	26	55	49	50	35
	13	3	7	20	86	113	45	107	31
	3	1	2	29	57	1	75	12	103

Table 5.2 – Distribution of all targets by assessment category

In addition to an assessment summary from the perspective of the three theories, noteworthy conclusions can also be drawn from a comparison within the three categories of the target analysis. The distribution of all targets as shown in table 5.2 provides a complete overview of the assessment. While clear tendencies can be observed in the case of modernization theory, the other two theories are quite divided in some cases within a given category.

In terms of the targets' relevance (R), both modernization theory and development theory are very affirmative of the agenda altogether, as sixteen goals are supported by each of them. The exceptions to this pattern are goal 15 in the case of modernization theory and goal 17 in the case of dependency theory. In contrast to this broad acceptance, postdevelopment theory is not as supportive. It only considers goals 1, 3 and 6 as relevant, whereas it is opposed to goals 8, 9 and 17. The majority however is perceived with quite some scepticism.

In terms of the targets' attainability (A), modernization theory is optimistic in relation to all seventeen goals. This is not the case for dependency theory and postdevelopment theory though, which are both sceptical of the attainability of most goals. Dependency theory views one goal as attainable (goal 7) and two goals as unattainable (goals 10 and 16), whereas postdevelopment theory views four goals as attainable (goals 7, 13, 14 and 15) and none as unattainable. Dependency theory is thus even more sceptical of the agenda's potential achievement than postdevelopment theory.

In terms of the associated indicators (I), significantly diverging assessments can be observed. Modernization theory is supportive of most indicators, as well as the set of selected indicators for each goal. Dependency theory criticizes the lack of dependence assessment in the scope of the indicators, hence it has some reservations as to their usefulness. Postdevelopment theory criticizes the indicators' ideological character and is opposed to most of them, even though they are supported in the case of goals 3 and 6.

From the overview of the result's analysis, it can be concluded that modernization theory and dependency theory are very affirmative of the agenda, even though the latter has some reservations in regard to its attainability and associated indicators. Postdevelopment theory is critical about many aspects and tends to oppose the agenda altogether.

5.2. Modernization theory

An assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals by modernization theory concludes that the agenda is highly compatible with the theory's basic assumptions. It is remarkable that the oldest of the selected development theories is supportive of the agenda to such an extent. This conclusion was shared by Panayotis M. Protosaltis, who made the following observation: "Using the old tools for the achievement of new goals may be due to a lack of imagination or may indicate a reluctance of the UN – or the developed donor countries – to abandon the modernization paradigm. The re-introduction of economic development in the Agenda 2030 may point to the second explanation." (Protosaltis 2017: 1746).

As a prevailing paradigm of development policy in the last decades, modernization theory is far from an innovative or new concept. Constructed within this framework, the Sustainable Development Goals reproduce established discourses and interpretations of development. The agenda hence does not fulfil its self-conception of "transforming our world". It rather summarizes and restructures a list of concepts that have dominated development politics for a long time already and have not changed substantially since the emergence of development as a concept after World War II.

5.2.1. Relevance

According to the target analysis, modernization theory acknowledges a high relevance of 16 goals, with goal 14 as the only exception. Out of the agenda's 169 targets, there are only three targets that can be considered irrelevant (10.6, 16.8 and 17.15), thirteen that are relevant to some extent and a vast number of 153 that are fully supported by modernization theory, which is significantly more than the number of targets endorsed by the other two theories.

Most of the goals and targets resemble the basic assumptions and concepts of modernization theory. Several goals are classic aspects of development in a modernization theory reading as it has been established for a long time, such as poverty eradication (goal 1), ending hunger (goal 2), good health and well-being (goal 3) or quality education (goal 4). The associated targets mostly address endogenic factors that can be enhanced by international cooperation and development assistance. Like modernization theory, many of the targets envision aspects like industrialization, economic growth, technological development and modernization following the example of Western countries as the aim of the development process. The targets are therefore not only compatible with modernization theory, but it is evident that they were conceptualized under the impression of the modernization paradigm.

5.2.2. Attainability

Even more than the targets' relevance, modernization theory is confident about their attainability. Three targets are considered attainable to some extent, and target 17.15 is the only one that is rated as unattainable. The remaining 165 targets however are attainable provided that developing countries follow the development concept of the industrialized countries, as argued by modernization theory scholars like Walt W. Rostow. With its overall optimistic view on international development, its perception of the agenda's overall attainability resembles the ambitious aspirations that are incorporated in the Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to that, modernization theory endorses such universal concepts and guidelines for international development like the Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, it is not only supportive of the agenda in terms of its content, but of the concept of a universal development agenda altogether. Following this universal approach, it also advocates for a universal implementation strategy. In general, modernization theory is very optimistic of development and modernization under these conditions, which explains why it perceives so many targets as attainable and why most of the relevant targets are perceived as such.

5.2.3. Indicators

Similar to the relevance of the targets, modernization theory is also supportive of the vast majority of associated indicators. Despite numerous gaps in their scope and remaining issues regarding their measurability, those indicators that have been selected are an important basis for an evaluation of the agenda. Since most goals have a broad range of associated targets, the range of indicators covers a broad spectrum of relevant factors for the development process. The range of indicators within a given target however is expandable.

Many indicators can be understood as specifications of their respective targets, as they provide further details on how this target is intended to be achieved. Many indicators foresee a universal and prescribed path of development following the example of capitalist industrialized countries, as envisioned by modernization theory. A high number of quantitative indicators allows for a fact-based and objective comparison of countries, as well as the development process of a certain country over time, based on established capitalist and Western measures, such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

5.3. Dependency theory

An assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals by dependency theory concludes that the agenda encompasses many aspects that are considered important for international development, yet its attainment is unlikely based on the theory's basic assumptions. Even though it is equally supportive of the agenda's aspiration as modernization theory, it provides a very pessimistic perspective on the potential of development in the framework of prevailing international dependencies: "From the dependency perspective, development was always a doomed project, condemned to fail as long as the economic bonds that tie the poorer countries to the richer countries remained secured" (Nhema/Zinyama 2016: 60).

The 2030 Agenda fails to address the criticism of dependency theory, as it does not allow developing countries to conceptualize their own development and dissociate themselves from the international capitalist economies and the influence of developed countries. Since such policies and strategies would be disadvantageous for developed countries and threaten their position in the global core, it is unlikely that these powerful nations would allow developing countries to follow such a path. Consequently, the Sustainable Development Goals are yet another tool for developed countries to assert their economic and political position of power.

5.3.1. Relevance

According to the target analysis, dependency theory has fundamentally different perspectives on the numerical and the alphabetical targets. While the first go into further detail on different aspects of the respective goal, the latter envisage strategies of international and development cooperation to achieve the goal. Dependency theory does not have a fundamentally different perspective on the numerical goals than modernization theory, even though a small number of targets are assessed differently. The most important difference is dependency theory's understanding of a sound strategy to achieve these targets, which is partially outlined in the alphabetical targets. They are coined by the modernization paradigm to enhance international cooperation, which fundamentally contradicts the policy implications of dependency theory. Consequently, the only goal whose targets are not supported by a majority is goal 17.

Whereas the 2030 Agenda's general approach is endorsed by dependency theory, it opposes the implied strategy and incompatibility with alternative and individual solutions. In order to enhance the agenda's relevance, it should aspire to diminish international dependencies, both in economic and political terms, and encourage every country to develop its own development strategy in line with more flexible international guidelines.

5.3.2. Attainability

In spite of its general support for the agenda, dependency theory is rather sceptical of its attainability. Most of the goals are assessed as unlikely to be achieved, with goal 7 as the only goal whose attainability is not questioned. The target analysis shows that a goal's attainability decreases the more it threatens the economic and political dominance of developed countries over developing countries. Their interest in preserving structures of international dependence remain the greatest obstacle to the development process in peripheric countries. As this is not reflected in the goals and targets, it has been argued that "power relations are the big elephant in the room of the Agenda 2030" (Esquivel 2016: 11–12).

Even though the agenda's aspirations to increase international cooperation are considered attainable, it cannot be concluded that development is going to be achieved in that regard. As dependency theory opposes such strategies and suggests developing countries diminish their international dependencies instead, the respective targets that are considered attainable are rather harmful for their development. As a result, although these targets are likely to be achieved, the development process would be damaged, while economic dependencies at the cost of peripheric countries would be reinforced.

5.3.3. Indicators

Most indicators are considered somewhat relevant from a dependency theory perspective, as they allow for a reasonable evaluation of their respective targets. This evaluation however can be perceived as quite superficial, as the vast majority of indicators fails to address the root causes of underdevelopment, namely economic and political dependencies. There are only a few counterexamples like indicator 10.6.1, which assesses the "proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations".

Despite general criticism of the indicators, the target analysis shows that dependency theory supports a high number of them, particularly those that are associated with the alphabetic targets. Their actual intention is an evaluation of international partnerships and development cooperation, which are both opposed by dependency theory. These indicators nevertheless provide a data basis to evaluate international dependencies, and therefore have the potential to provide useful conclusions subject to interpretation of the collected data.

5.4. Postdevelopment theory

An assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals by postdevelopment theory concludes that the agenda is based on a theoretical framework that controverts postdevelopment theory in many aspects. Above all, the agenda neglects the role of ideology and hegemony, echoing the same notion as dependency theory that “power relations are the big elephant in the room of Agenda 2030” (Esquivel 2016: 11–12). Postdevelopment theory furthermore criticizes that like the Millennium Development Goals, this agenda is based on an outdated perception of development that merely proposes to transfer experiences and perceptions from the global northwest to the rest of the world (Debiel 2018: 6).

In addition to the mostly negative perception of the Sustainable Development Goals, it has been argued that postdevelopment scholars criticize the concept of sustainable development (Blicking 2016: 23). This is coherent with its rejection of universal development concepts and the term “development” altogether. Consequently, it would not question several goals and targets, but also decline the necessity of such a universal development concept.

5.4.1. Relevance

According to the target analysis, postdevelopment theory is far from generally opposed to all targets. It is usually supportive of targets that provide further specifications of a goal’s aspiration, which can be considered as objective improvements regardless of any ideological implications. The total number of 49 supported targets is remarkably high in consideration of its opposition to the concept of development altogether, yet much lower in comparison to the other two theories. It is still opposed to 75 targets, adding up to a negative tendency.

Whereas postdevelopment theory endorses those substantive targets to some extent, this is not the case for targets that propose a specific policy or strategy for sustainable development. Many of them only work in a capitalist framework, making them incompatible with different concepts or strategies that do not reflect this ideology. A comparison of the different goals shows that postdevelopment theory is more affirmative of a goal’s associated targets if it has fewer ideological implications. It considers three goals as relevant that fall into this category: Goal 1 (No Poverty), goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), which seek to implement improvements to people’s lives that can be considered positive regardless of ideological connotations. In contrast, postdevelopment theory opposes goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

5.4.2. Attainability

Postdevelopment theory is quite sceptical about the agenda's attainability, although a slight affirmative tendency can be observed. However, this does not indicate any affirmation of the targets that are considered attainable. Out of the 49 targets that are assessed as relevant, only 16 are also perceived as attainable. Most of them are worded in a way that is flexible enough for the consideration of alternative development concepts. Most of the other attainable targets are based on capitalist ideology and could be asserted by hegemonic countries.

A postdevelopment theory assessment of the agenda's attainability is rather difficult because its focus lies on criticism of ideological structures and the development concept's legitimacy. Although it has some clear implications on the attainability of different aspects and strategies, such an assessment is not its intention in the first place as it criticizes those development strategies that have been in place for a long time already. In conjunction with its diversity, postdevelopment theory is not entirely suitable for a clear assessment in this regard.

5.4.3. Indicators

Many indicators are fundamentally opposed by postdevelopment theory because they reflect a capitalist understanding of development. Whereas many targets are already disregarded for that reason, some others are invalidated because their associated indicators point towards such an ideological orientation. These indicators often refer to concepts that are fundamentally disapproved of by postdevelopment theory, such as GDP, financial flows, foreign aid and official development assistance, or conceptions of society that clearly derive from Western countries. The overall assessment provides a clear result, as the indicators of 103 targets are considered useless for a sound evaluation of the agenda.

In addition to that, an evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals can be questioned altogether. Postdevelopment theory proposes alternative and individual concepts, which are not comparable among different countries or under universal terms. As the indicators were mostly influenced by hegemonic societies, the latter were able to form the indicators in a way that would portray them as high-developed. Postdevelopment theory rejects the classification of countries and societies in different stages of development altogether, thus an evaluation of the agenda and a review of the development process does not really make sense.

6. Conclusion

In the context of this master's thesis, an assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals has been conducted from the perspective of three development theories, which were chosen based on their different perception of the causes for underdevelopment and how these can be overcome. These three theories provided a comprehensive perspective on the agenda and its associated targets, which allows for an evaluation of its theoretical background.

The assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals demonstrated a profound influence of modernization theory on its associated targets and indicators. A vast majority is considered relevant and attainable from this perspective, although it is the oldest development theory in this assessment. Although its prominence over the last decades has been severely criticized, including by dependency and postdevelopment theories, its continued prevalence as the dominant development paradigm applies as well to the 2030 Agenda. Consequently, this agenda merely reiterates a list of concepts that have dominated development politics for a long time.

Dependency theory considers the agenda as equally relevant as modernization theory, but it is much more sceptical of its attainability. It believes that many targets can only be achieved if developed countries voluntarily reduce their economic and financial power, which contradicts the theory's basic assumptions. With its focus on power structures, dependency theory draws attention to an important factor that is insufficiently reflected in the agenda. In contrast to the numerous references to enhanced international cooperation and foreign aid, dependency theory suggests diminishing international relations and hence dependencies as development strategy. As a result, it disapproves of the agenda's strategical implications and considers several targets as unattainable under these framework conditions.

The most critical perception of the Sustainable Development Goals is that of postdevelopment theory. This is not surprising insofar as this theory usually opposes universal development concepts altogether and advocates for alternative concepts that are based on local singularities. It draws attention to the ideological framework of the 2030 Agenda, which is characterized by capitalism and Western concepts of development to a great extent. Whereas alternative concepts are not mentioned explicitly in the agenda, postdevelopment theory is affirmative of openly formulated targets that are flexible for such concepts. Even though it sees benefit in some goals and targets, its overall assessment earmarks the Sustainable Development Goals as a Western concept that has been imposed on the world by hegemonic societies. These are the actual beneficiaries of this agenda, instead of the so-called "developing countries".

The selection of associated indicators was criticized for different reasons by all three theories. In addition to the negligence of economic, financial, ideological and political hegemony, many indicators do not cover the entire scope of their respective targets. It is therefore necessary to reconsider the set of indicators before the agenda's evaluation in 2030. Even though this might change the theoretical assessment and implication of the evaluation, a more comprehensive set of indicators is in the interest of all mentioned development theories.

All in all, an assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals is highly dependent on the theoretical perspective. In defiance of its background in modernization theory, the legitimate criticism by dependency and postdevelopment theories should have been taken into account for the conception of the 2030 Agenda. This might not have been the case as their consideration would have threatened the position of developed hegemonic countries in economic, financial, ideological and political terms. As the Sustainable Development Goals are one-sided in their theoretical alignment, alternative development concepts have a right to exist and will likely do so in the future. If the United Nations want to conceptualize a more widespread agenda in the future, they should take the perspectives of different development theories into account. This would provide a foundation of a comprehensive approach that can actually "transform our world".

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of SDG targets and indicators

The ensuing list contains the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (Source: United Nations Statistics Division 2017).

Goal 1: No Poverty

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age 1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services 1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure
1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population 1.5.2 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) 1.5.3 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 1.5.4 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies
1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	1.a.1 Proportion of domestically generated resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes 1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection) 1.a.3 Sum of total grants and non-debt-creating inflows directly allocated to poverty reduction programmes as a proportion of GDP
1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions	1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups

Goal 2: Zero Hunger

2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment 2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)
2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age 2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height $>+2$ or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	2.3.1 Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size 2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status
2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture
2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed	2.5.1 Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities 2.5.2 Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not at risk or at unknown level of risk of extinction
2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries	2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures 2.a.2 Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agriculture sector
2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round	2.b.1 Agricultural export subsidies
2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	2.c.1 Indicator of food price anomalies

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	3.2.1 Under-5 mortality rate 3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations 3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population 3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population 3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population 3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease 3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders 3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol
3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10–14 years; aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population) 3.8.2 Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income
3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination	3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution 3.9.2 Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services) 3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning
3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	3.a.1 Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older
3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	3.b.1 Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme 3.b.2 Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors 3.b.3 Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis

3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States	3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution
3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks	3.d.1 International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness

Goal 4: Quality Education

4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex 4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development	4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment
4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)
4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States	4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country
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Goal 5: Gender Equality

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions
5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care 5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure 5.a.2 Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
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6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2.1 Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency over time 6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources
6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	6.5.1 Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0–100) 6.5.2 Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation
6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time
6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	6.a.1 Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan
6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity 7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix	7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption
7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP
7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology	7.a.1 International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production, including in hybrid systems
7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support	7.b.1 Investments in energy efficiency as a proportion of GDP and the amount of foreign direct investment in financial transfer for infrastructure and technology to sustainable development services

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries	8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita
8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex
8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead	8.4.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP 8.4.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status 8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status
8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate 8.9.2 Proportion of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs
8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all	8.10.1 (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults 8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider
8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries	8.a.1 Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements
8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization	8.b.1 Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road 9.1.2 Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport
9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries	9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita 9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment
9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets	9.3.1 Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added 9.3.2 Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit
9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities	9.4.1 CO ₂ emission per unit of value added
9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending	9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP 9.5.2 Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants
9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States	9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure
9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities	9.b.1 Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added
9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020	9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average	10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population
10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality	10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers
10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations	10.5.1 Financial Soundness Indicators
10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions	10.6.1 Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of yearly income earned in country of destination 10.7.2 Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies
10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements	10.a.1 Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff
10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes	10.b.1 Total resource flows for development, by recipient and donor countries and type of flow (e.g. official development assistance, foreign direct investment and other flows)
10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent	10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	11.3.1 Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate 11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	11.4.1 Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed and World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship)

11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	11.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population 11.5.2 Direct economic loss in relation to global GDP, damage to critical infrastructure and number of disruptions to basic services, attributed to disasters
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities 11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities 11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months
11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	11.a.1 Proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city
11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies
11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials	11.c.1 Proportion of financial support to the least developed countries that is allocated to the construction and retrofitting of sustainable, resilient and resource-efficient buildings utilizing local materials

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

12.1 Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries	12.1.1 Number of countries with sustainable consumption and production (SCP) national action plans or SCP mainstreamed as a priority or a target into national policies
12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP 12.2.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP
12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	12.3.1 Global food loss index
12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement 12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse	12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled

12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and trans-national companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans
12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	12.8.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment
12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production	12.a.1 Amount of support to developing countries on research and development for sustainable consumption and production and environmentally sound technologies
12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	12.b.1 Number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools
12.c Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities	12.c.1 Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels

Goal 13: Climate Action

13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population 13.1.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	13.2.1 Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	13.3.1 Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula 13.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions
13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and	13.a.1 Mobilized amount of United States dollars per year between 2020 and 2025 accountable towards the \$100 billion commitment

transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible	
13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

Goal 14: Life Below Water

14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density
14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches
14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations
14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics	14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels
14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas
14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation ³	14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism	14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries
14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries	14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology

14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets	14.b.1 Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries
14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of "The future we want"	14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources

Goal 15: Life on Land

15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area 15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type
15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management
15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world	15.3.1 Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area
15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development	15.4.1 Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity 15.4.2 Mountain Green Cover Index
15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species	15.5.1 Red List Index
15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed	15.6.1 Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits
15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products	15.7.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked
15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species	15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species
15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	15.9.1 Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020
15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems	15.a.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems
15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation	15.b.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems

15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities	15.c.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked
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Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age 16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause 16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months 16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month 16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation 16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms 16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population
16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars) 16.4.2 Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months 16.5.2 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar) 16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions 16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	16.8.1 Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	16.10.1 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months 16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles
16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection	17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source 17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes
17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries	17.2.1 Net official development assistance, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee donors' gross national income (GNI)
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	17.3.1 Foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance and South-South cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget 17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP
17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress	17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services
17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	17.5.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	17.6.1 Number of science and/or technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, by type of cooperation 17.6.2 Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed
17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	17.7.1 Total amount of approved funding for developing countries to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies

17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet
17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular co-operation	17.9.1 Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries
17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda	17.10.1 Worldwide weighted tariff-average
17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020	17.11.1 Developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports
17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	17.12.1 Average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States
17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence	17.13.1 Macroeconomic Dashboard
17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development	17.14.1 Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development
17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development	17.15.1 Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation
17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries	17.16.1 Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals
17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships	17.17.1 Amount of United States dollars committed to (a) public-private partnerships and (b) civil society partnerships
17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics 17.18.2 Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics 17.18.3 Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding
17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries	17.19.1 Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries 17.19.2 Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration

Appendix 2: Results of the target analysis

1-5	Modernisation theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
1.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.d	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
4.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

5–10	Modernisation theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
5.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
7.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

11–15	Modernisation theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
11.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15.c	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

16–17	Modernisation theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
Targets	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
16.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16.b	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.12	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.13	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.14	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.15	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.16	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.17	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.18	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17.19	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Median	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Targets	Modernization theory			Dependency theory			Postdevelopment theory		
n=169	R	A	I	R	A	I	R	A	I
●	153	165	160	120	26	55	49	50	35
●	13	3	7	20	86	113	45	107	31
●	3	1	2	29	57	1	75	12	103

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