

The Neo-Marxian Schools

("Radical Political Economy")



During the inter-war period, not much work on [Marxian economics](#) was done. The practical political and economic problems of the inter-war period, the rise of Fascism, the "Red Scare" in America (and elsewhere), the widening of Marxian theory to sociology and philosophy, the Soviet-directed redefinition of what Marxism was, ensured that not too much theoretical work. In fact, by the 1940s, most people (particularly in the United States and Great Britain) had already forgotten that [Marx](#) himself had been an economist at all!

In the 1940s, several English-language works by prominent economists began to emerge which took Karl Marx seriously as an economist -- notably, by Maurice H. [Dobb](#) (1937, 1946), Joan [Robinson](#) (1942) and Paul [Sweezy](#) (1942). This was followed up by two other influential works by Paul [Baran](#) (1957) and Ernst [Mandel](#) (1962), that finally began putting Marxian economics on the economics map.

The works of Sweezy and Robinson are particularly notable for having resurrected Marx's theory of value -- thus leading to the re-emergence of the old "transformation problem" that had bedeviled the old [Marxians](#). Joan [Robinson](#) (1942) was unimpressed and argued that that Marxian economics should do without the labour theory of value -- a proposition that Oskar [Lange](#) (1935) had earlier recommended.

Sweezy disagreed -- and several prominent economists, such as Ronald [Meek](#) (1956), Francis Seton (1957), Nubuo [Okishio](#) (1963), Andras [Bródy](#) (1970), Paul A. [Samuelson](#) (1971), Michio [Morishima](#) (1973), William J. [Baumol](#) (1974), Domenico [Nutti](#) (1977) Anwar [Shaikh](#), Gerard Duménil (1980), Duncan [Foley](#) (1986) and many others have attempted to grapple with the formal and logical foundations of Marx's theory of value. However, the appearance of Piero [Sraffa](#)'s (1960) work on the [Classical Ricardian System](#) has led some (e.g. Ian Steedman,

1977) to suggest that the Marxian labor theory of value can be subsumed in the more general "[Neo-Ricardian](#)" theory.

Sweezy's 1942 book also set out the [Bauer](#) model of the breakdown of capitalism, which was subsequently corrected in the formal treatments of Evsey [Domar](#) (1948), Josef [Steindl](#) (1952) and Nicholas [Georgescu-Roegen](#) (1960). [Fel'dman](#)'s work on two-sector growth models was resurrected by Alexander [Erlich](#) (1953) and Evsey [Domar](#) (1957) and were later taken up with gusto everywhere.

The work of the Americans Paul [Baran](#) (1957) and, later, Baran and [Sweezy](#) (1966) was particularly tailored to the post-war boom in the Western capitalist economies, which seemed to invalidate the "chronic depression" which the [older Marxists](#) had anticipated. Marx's law of diminishing rate of profit did not seem to be working. What Baran and Sweezy proposed was that in situations of *monopoly capitalism* there is no such tendency as prices are based on "mark-up". Consequently, the *source* of crises is in the tendency for a rise in surplus. Under monopoly capitalism, there is a need for an external source of demand and profitable outlets for investment. This makes monopoly capitalism *more* aggressively outwardly looking than competitive capitalism. It is on this basis that Baran and Sweezy develop their distinct theory of imperialism and center-periphery dependency which accounts for the state of [economic underdevelopment](#) in the world today.

In France, Ernest [Mandel](#) (1962) sought to embed the source of crises not in the rise of surplus but in the law of diminishing profit rate over Kondratiev long waves. Profit rates, he claims, determine the rate of accumulation, and the rate of accumulation generates the waves.

The line which Baran, Sweezy and Mandel initiated is sometimes called "[Neo-Marxist](#)" school or simply "Radical Political Economy", which broke open a tidal wave of work in the 1960s and 1970s. The main channels were the *New Left Review*, the *Monthly Review Press*, and later on, the *Review of Radical Political Economy*.

There have been numerous "offshoot" Neo-Marxist schools which have taken on many of the themes and conclusions of the Marxian school, although they should not be considered rigorous applications of [classical Marxian](#) theory. We note only the related "Dependency School" of [development](#) associated with Raul [Prébisch](#) and Andre Gunder [Frank](#), the "World Systems" school associated with Immanuel Wallerstein and the work on radical political economy of David M. Gordon, Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis and others. A separate (and unrelated) school is the "[Analytical Marxian](#)" school, normally associated with the work of John E. Roemer and John Elster, which attempts to reduce some of the Marxian propositions to conventional, methodological individualism (i.e. with utility-maximizing rational agents, etc.).

There have also been post-war developments in Marxian economics in other countries which, although highly influential, have not yet broached the English-language market. [Japanese Marxism](#), for instance, has long been a source for traditional work -- indeed, the Marxian school was almost the "orthodoxy" in Japanese academia for a while. Besides Michio [Morishima](#) and Shigeto [Tsuru](#), the work of Kozo [Uno](#), Nubuo [Okishio](#) and Makoto [Itoh](#) are particularly notable. The work of the [French Regulation School](#) (Robert [Boyer](#), Michel [Aglietta](#), Alain

[Lipietz](#), etc.) is a bit more eclectic in its foundation, closer to the [Post Keynesians](#) in its approach.

Immediate Predecessors

- Adolph [Lowe](#) and the [Kiel School](#)
- Oskar [Lange](#), 1904-1965.
- Viktor [Novozhilov](#), Leonid [Kantorovich](#) and the [Soviet Planning Economists](#)
- Karl [Polanyi](#), 1886-1964.
- Joan [Robinson](#), 1903-1983.
- Michal [Kalecki](#), 1899-1970.
- Henry Douglas [Dickinson](#), 1899-1968.

Modern Marxian Economics

- Maurice H. [Dobb](#), 1900-1976.
- Paul M. [Sweezy](#), 1910-
- Ronald L. [Meek](#), 1917-1978.
- Francis Seton, 1920-
- Piero [Sraffa](#) and the [Neo-Ricardian School](#).
- Andras Bródy, 1924-
 - "A Simplified Growth Model", 1966, *QJE*
 - *Proportions, Prices and Planning: A mathematical restatement of labor theory of value*, 1970.
 - *Applications of Input-Output Analysis*, with A.P. Carter, 1970
 - *Contributions to Input-Output Analysis*, with A.P. Carter, 1970
 - *Input-Output Techniques*, with A.P. Carter, 1972
 - *Slowdown: Global economic maladies*, 1985
 - "Observations Concerning the Growth Cycle", in Vellupilai, editor, *Nonlinear and Multisector Macrodynamics*
 - "On Measuring Growth", 1992, *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*
 - "Money-Flow Computations", with W. [Leontief](#), 1993, *Econ Systems Research*
- Charles Bettelheim, 1913-

- Donald J. Harris
- Anwar [Shaikh](#), 1945-
- Duncan K. [Foley](#), 1942-
- Domenico M. [Nuti](#), 1937-
- Suzanne de Brunhoff, 1929-
- Henri Denis
- [Gérard Dumenil](#)
- G. Dostaler
- Thomas Bottomore
- Alfredo Medio

Neo-Marxism/Radical Political Economy

- Paul A. [Baran](#), 1910-1964.
- Paul M. [Sweezy](#), 1910-
- Ernest [Mandel](#), 1923-1995
- Josef [Steindl](#), 1912-1993.
- Harry Magdoff
- Samir [Amin](#), 1931-
- Andre Gunder [Frank](#), 1929-
- Immanuel Wallerstein
- Arghiri Emmanuel
- Giovanni Arrighi
- Henry Braverman
- Samuel Bowles, 1939-

- Herbert Gintis,
- David M. [Gordon](#), 1944-1996.
- Martin [Bronfenbrenner](#), 1914-
- Thomas Weisskopf
- David Levine
- Michael Piore
- David Laibman
- Ra~~¶~~l [Prebisch](#), 1901-1985.
- Celso [Furtado](#), 1920-

Analytical Marxism

- Leif [Johansen](#), 1930-
- John Roemer
- John Elster
- Steven Marglin

Japanese Marxism

- Shigeto Tsuru, 1912- [\(1\)](#)
 - "Economic Fluctuations in Japan, 1868-1893", 1941, *REStat*
 - "On Reproduction Schemes", 1942, in Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*
 - "Keynes versus Marx: the methodology of aggregates", 1954, in Kurihara, *Post-Keynesian Economics*
 - *Essays on Japanese Economy*, 1958
 - *Has Capitalism Changed?*, 1959.
 - "The Effects of Technology on Productivity", 1965, in Robinson, editor, *Problem in Economic Development*
 - *Essays on Economic Development*, 1968.
 - *Towards a New Political Economy*, 1976.
 - *Institutional Economics Revisited*, 1993
 - *Japan's Capitalism: Creative defeat and beyond*, 1993
- Kozo Uno
 - *Principles of Political Economy: theory of a purely capitalist society*, 1964

- **Nubuo Okishio**
 - "Conditions for Convergence and the Problem of Working", 1950, *Kindai Keizai Riron Kenkyu* (in Japanese)
 - "The Instability of Steady Advance", 1954, *Econ Studies Quarterly* (in Japanese)
 - "Technical Change and the Rate of Profit", 1961, *Kobe Univ Econ Review*
 - "A Mathematical Note on Marxian Theory", 1963, *WWA*
 - "Notes on Technical Progress and Capitalist Society", 1977, *Cambridge JE*
- **Shinzaburo Koshimura**
 - *Theory of Capital Reproduction and Accumulation*, 1975
- **Makoto Itoh**
 - *Value and Crisis*, 1980
 - *The Basic Theory of Capitalism*, 1988

The French Regulation School

- **Michel Aglietta**
 - *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: the US Experience*, 1976
 - *La violence et la monnaie*, with A. Orlean, 1982.
- **Robert Boyer**
 - *Accumulation, Inflation Crises*, with J. Misral, 1978
 - *La théorie de régulation: une analyse critique*, 1986
 - "Les theories de regulation: Paris, Barcelone, New-York", 1989, *Revue de Synthèse*
 - "Le transformation de conventions salariales entre theorie et histoire", with A. Orlean, 1991, *Revue économique*
- **Alain Lipietz**
 - "The So-Called Transformation Problem Revisited", 1982, *JET*
 - *Le monde enchanté*, 1983
 - *Mirages et miracles*, 1985.

Resources on Neo-Marxian Economics

- [Monthly Review Press](#)
- [New Left Review](#)
- [EconoMarx](#), including [Actuel Marx](#) and a [Bibliography of Modern Marxian Works](#)

[Home](#)

[Alphabetical Index](#)

[Schools of Thought](#)

[Essays and Surveys](#)

[Web Links](#)

[References](#)

[Contact](#)

[Frames](#)

<http://homepage.newschool.edu/het/schools/neomarx.htm>