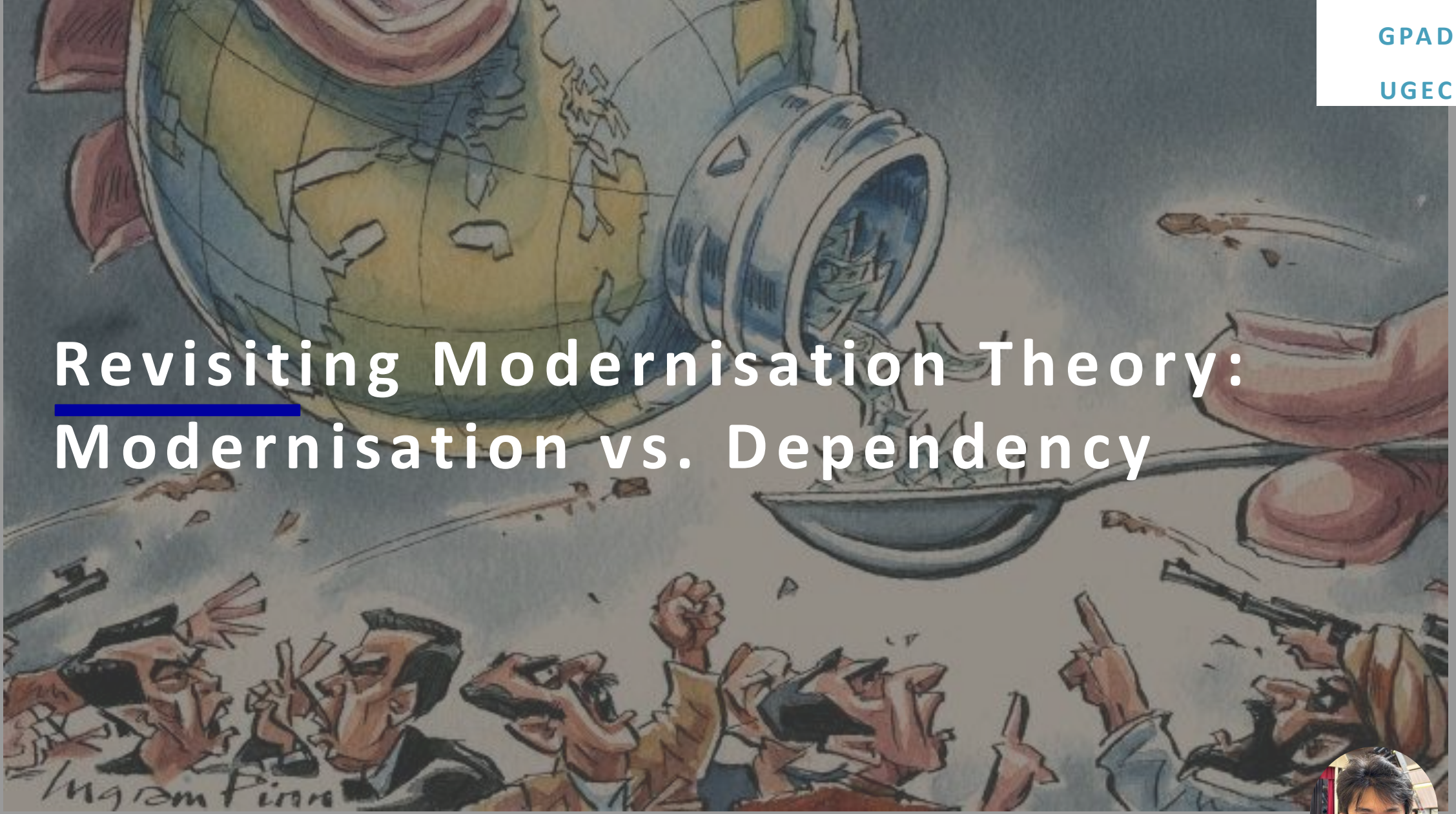


Revisiting Modernisation Theory: Modernisation vs. Dependency



<https://www.ft.com/content/c6f6714a-8747-11e3-9c5c-00144feab7de>



Keir Li

Why Revisit?

Old Theories, New World: How to Understand?

1960s ●=====➡ 2025s

New Concepts of Globalisation

- Globalisation 1.0 (State)
- Globalisation 2.0 (Companies)
- Globalisation 3.0 (Individuals)
- Deglobalisation

(Friedman, 2005)

New Concepts of Modernisation

- Modernisation = Westernisation?
- Multi-development Paths
- ESG, Sustainable Development

Technological Revolution

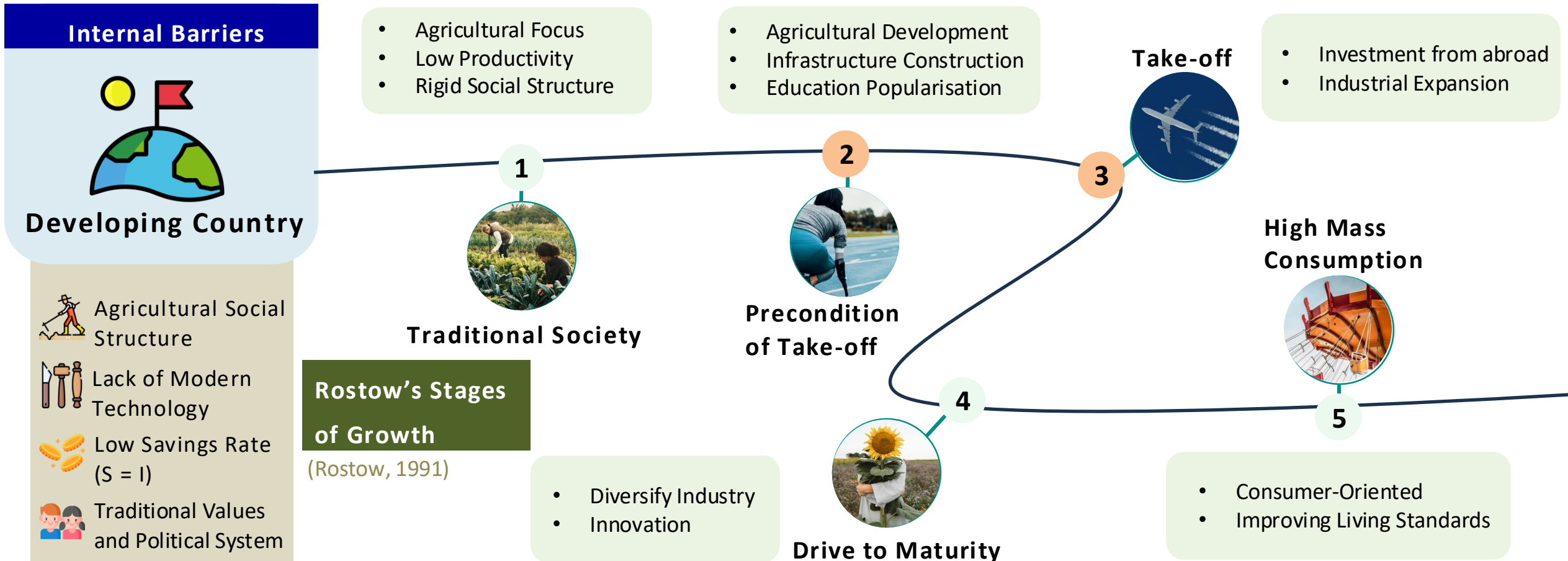
- Modernisation Accelerator
- Skipping Traditional Stage
- Digital Divide
- New Kinds of Control

Rise of Emerging Economies

- BRICS
- Shift in Global Economic Power

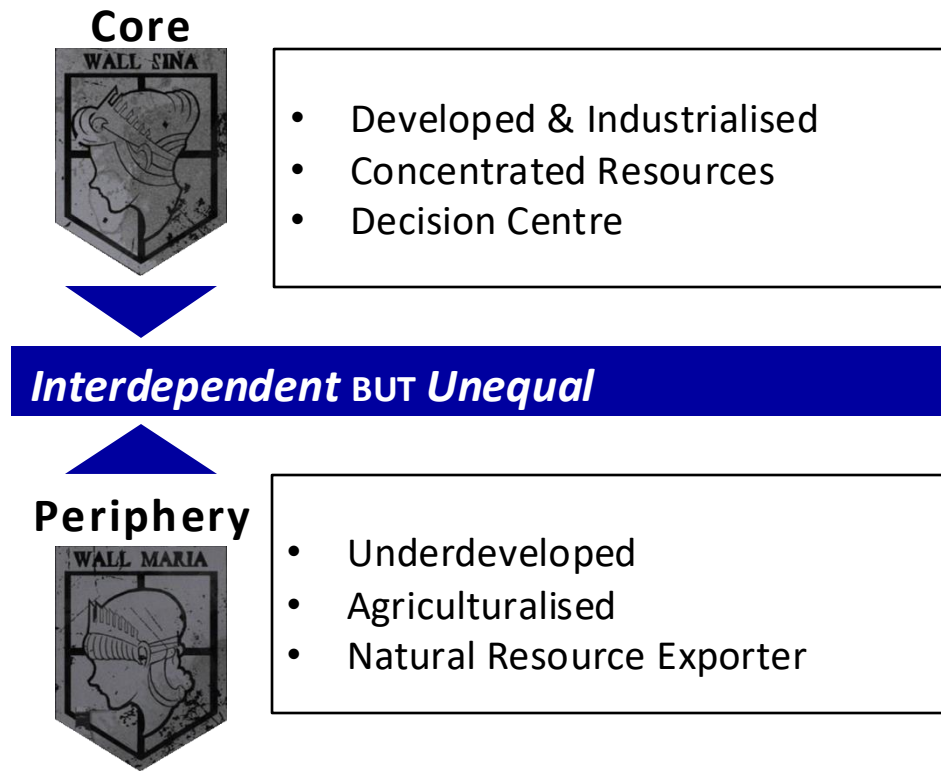


Modernisation Theory: The Linear Path to Progress



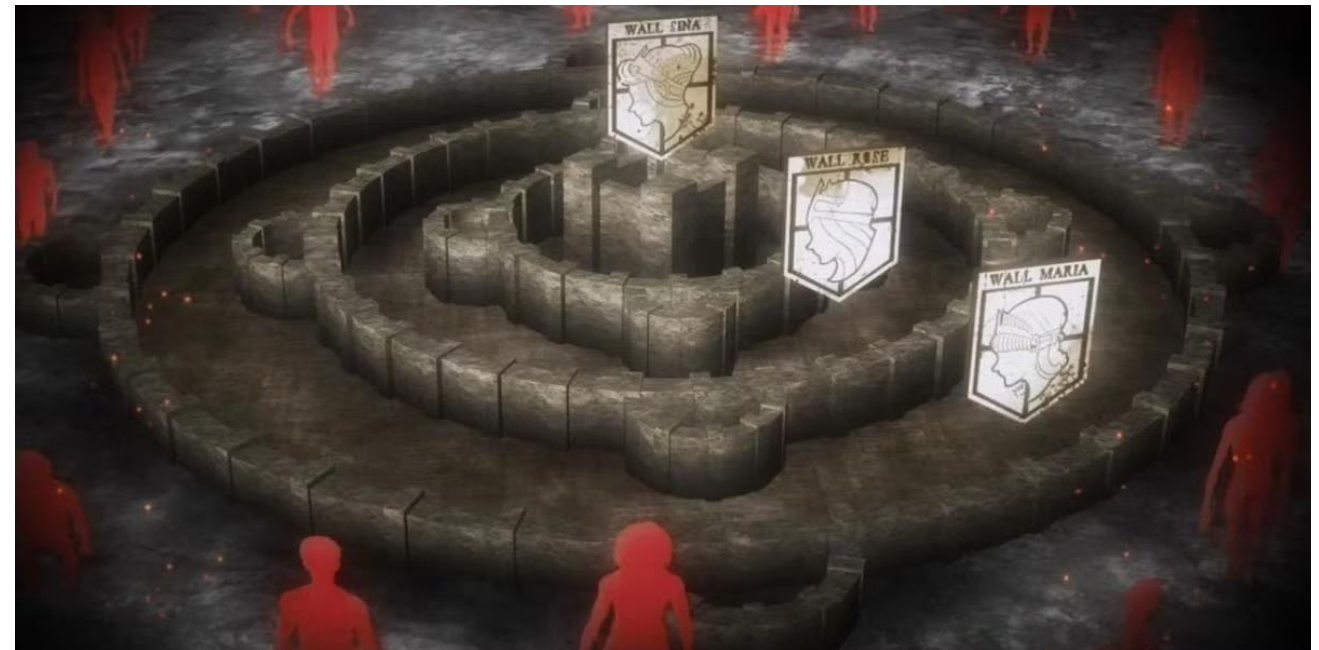
Western Blueprint: Follow the blueprint + Accept external assistance → Modernisation.

Dependency Theory: The Exploitative System



(Frank, 1971)

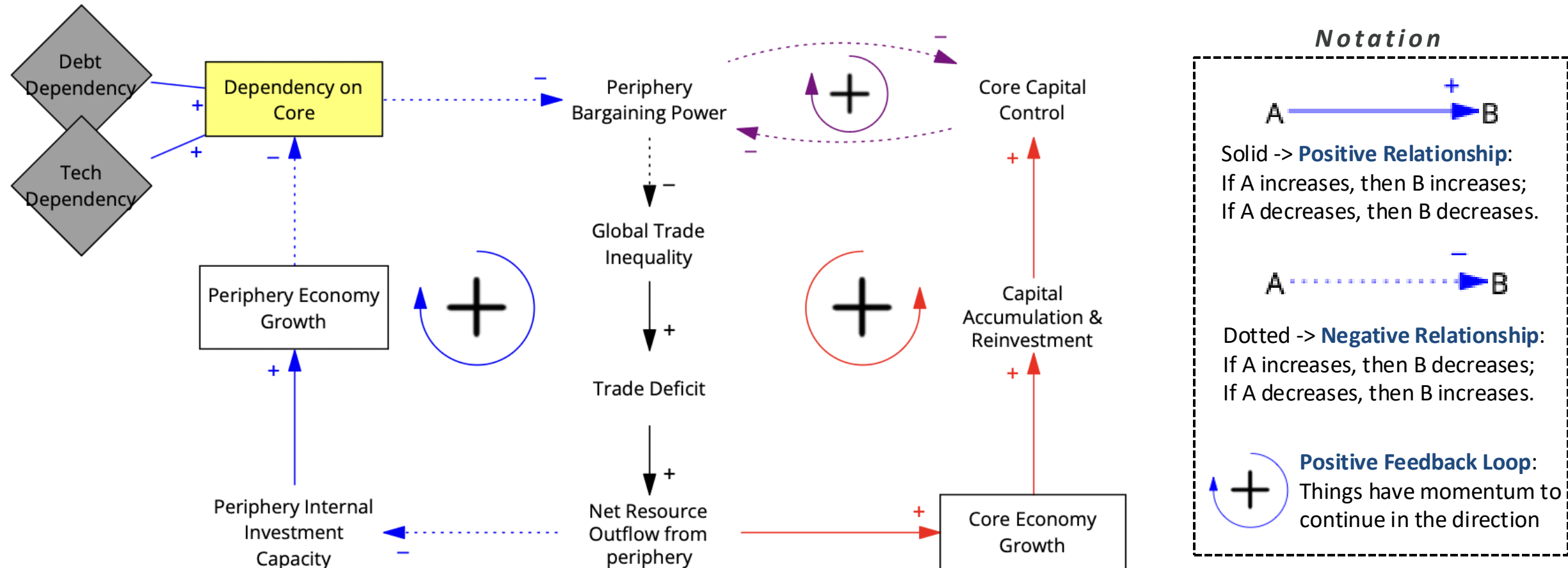
Attack on Titan 進撃の巨人



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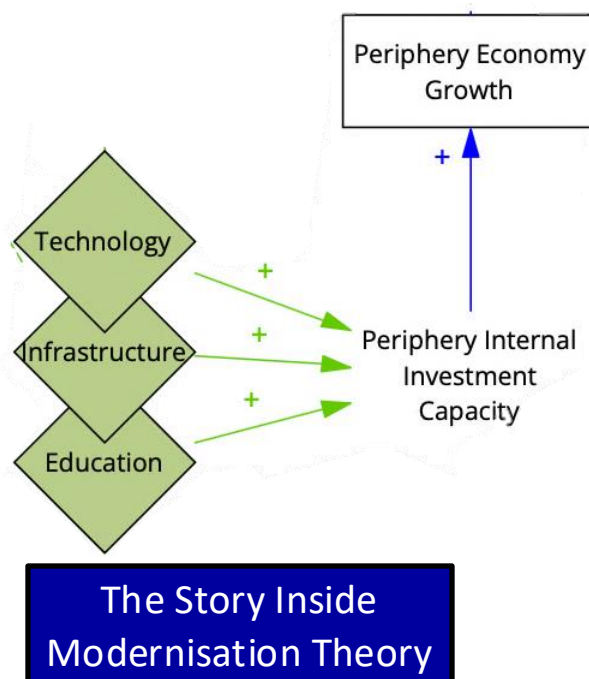
graph LR
    A[External Barriers] --- B[Core vs. Periphery]
    B --- C[Unequal World System]
    C --- D[External Structural Exploitation]
  
```

External Barriers — Core vs. Periphery — Unequal World System — External Structural Exploitation

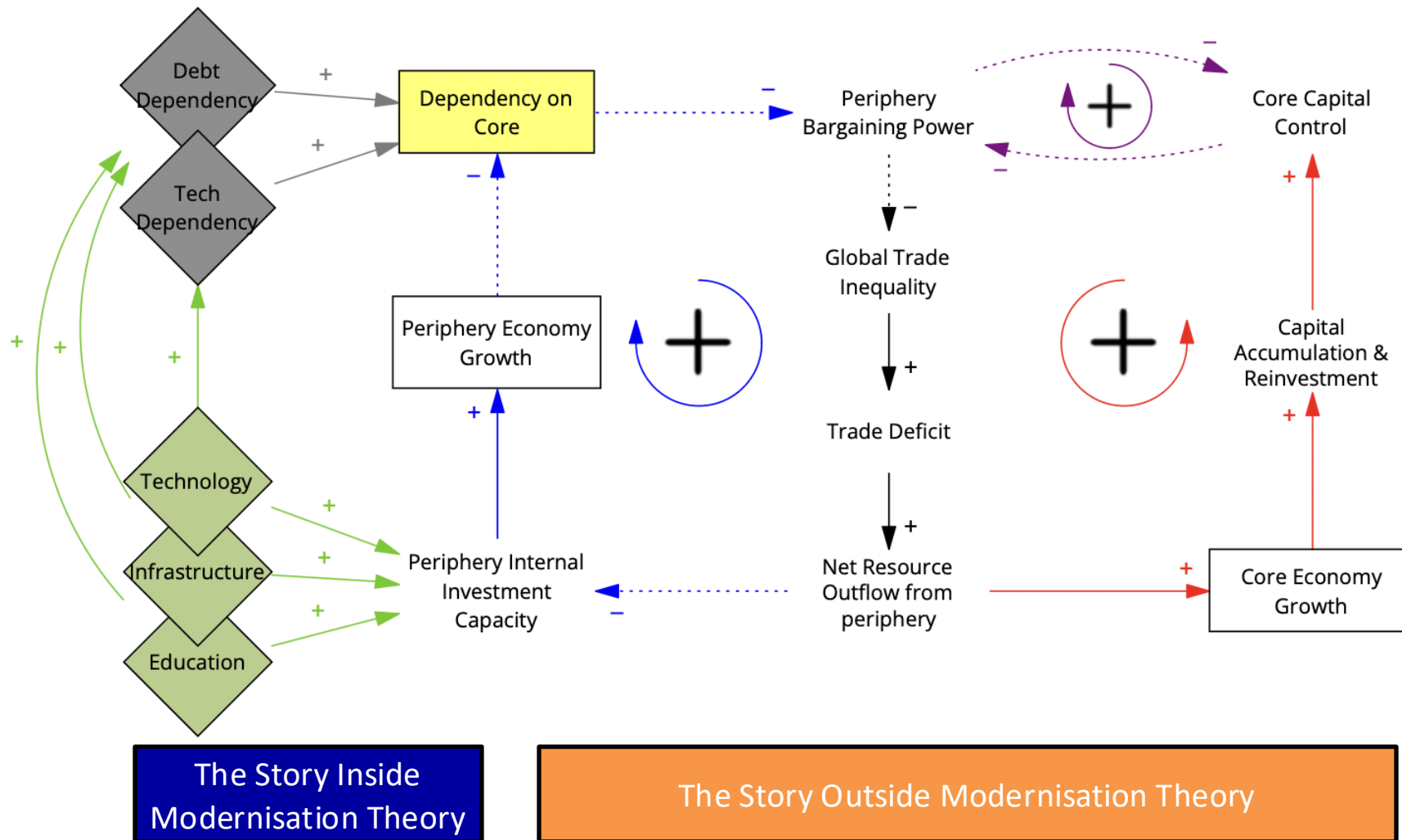


The underdevelopment of the **Periphery** is caused by **external exploitation** by the Core within an **unequal global system**.

The Dilemma: To Be Or Not To Be, That Is The Question



The Dilemma: To Be Or Not To Be, That Is The Question



1
Cost of Modernisation

2
Vicious Cycle of Structural Exploitation

3
Autonomy vs. Development



Break

Sweet Point: The Art of Balance

Strategic Objective

Maximise national interest via balancing development and independence

Rationale

0%

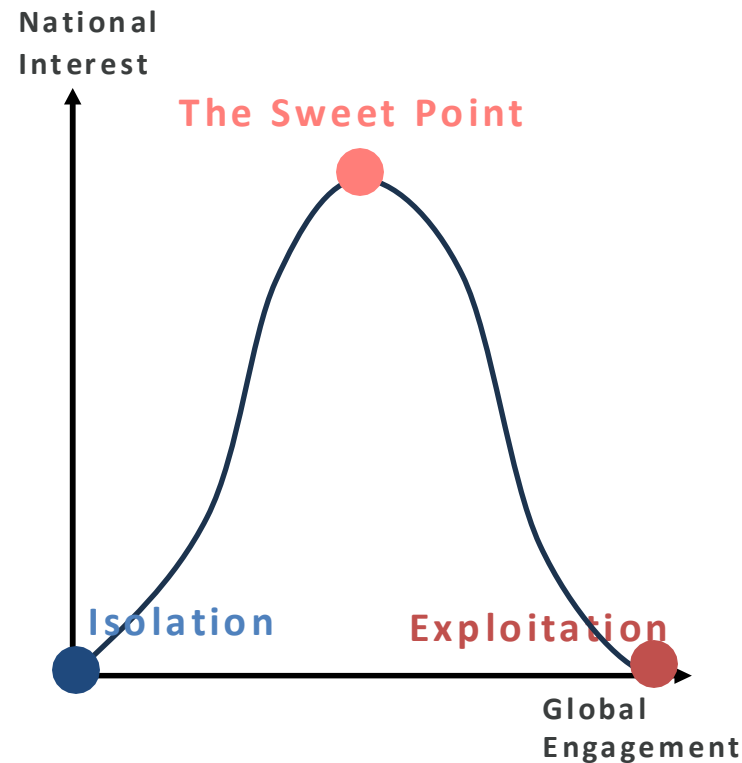
Global Engagement is the worst, causing isolation.

100%

Global Engagement is also the worst, being exploited.

Logically, there exists some **x%** that brings optimal national interest.

My Hypothesis Model for Periphery



Solutions

Strategic & Selective Engagement

Prioritise Local Autonomy & Values

Dynamic Balance

Meiji Japan: A Masterpiece of Balanced Development

The Meiji Restoration Era, 1868-1889



- Urgent External Threat
- Strong National Unity
- Learning Aptitude

Solutions Applied

(Diamond, 2019)

1 Strategic & Selective Engagement

- Copying vs. Learning
- Selective Learning
- Iwakura Mission

2 Prioritise Local Autonomy & Values

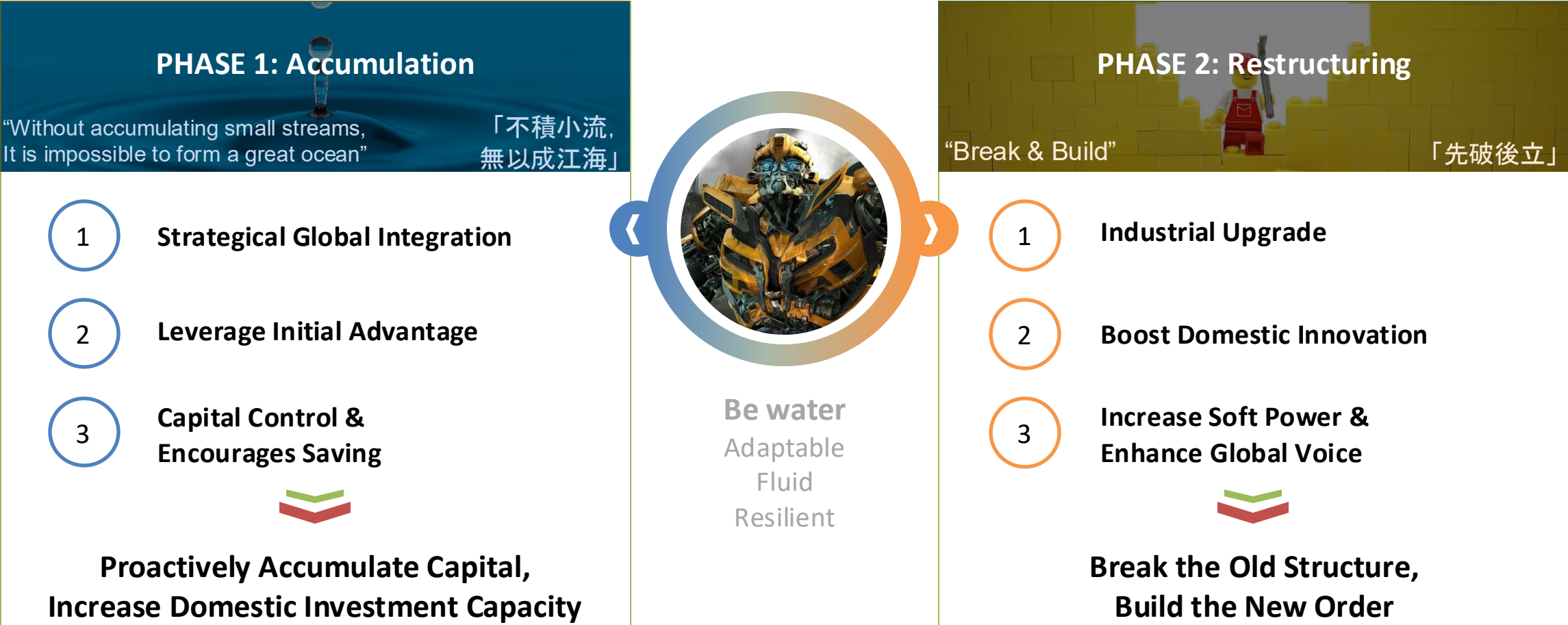
- Wakonyosai (Japanese Spirit, Western Learning)
- Emperor System
- National Identity

3 Dynamic Balance

- Controlled Opening: Open Portal
- Government-initiated Industrialisation

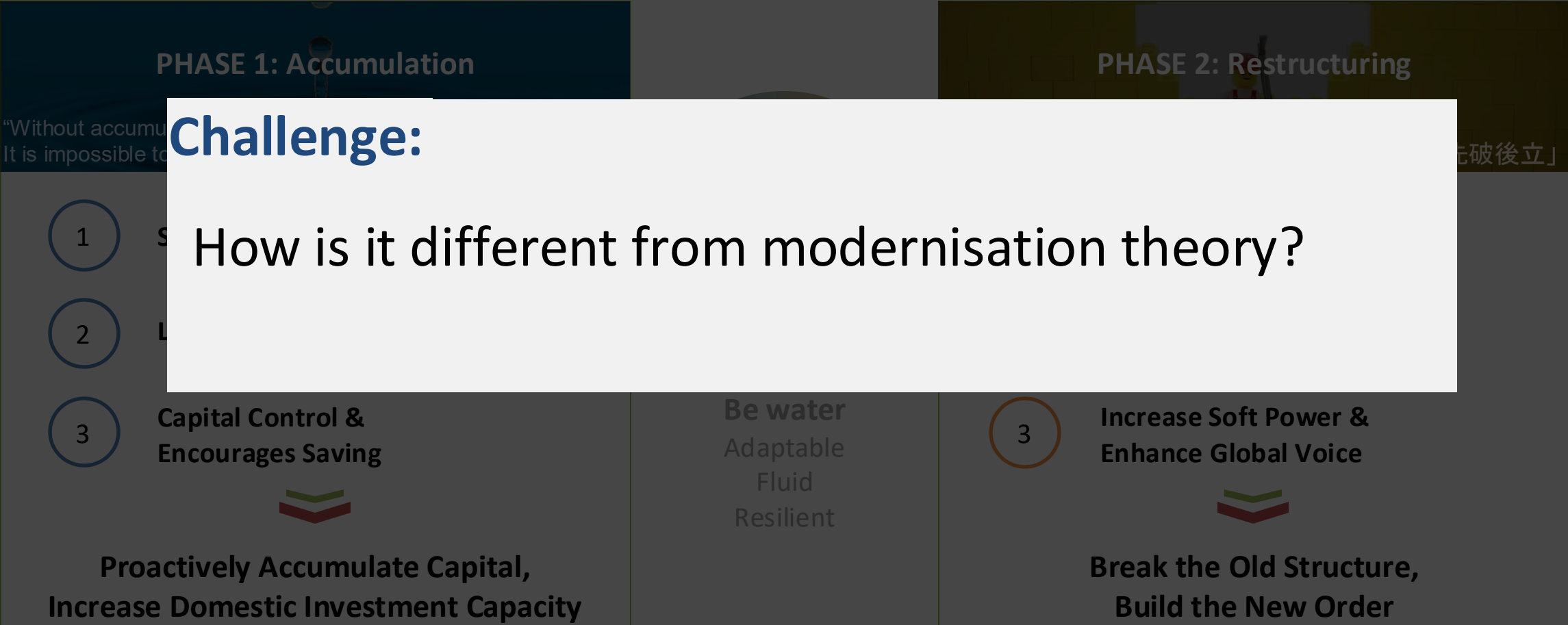
Two-Phase Restructure: Be Water

Strategic Objective	Structural Transformation to Overcome Dependency
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Two-Phase Restructure: Be Water

Strategic Objective	Structural Transformation to Overcome Dependency
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China: The New Superpower

Accumulation
PAST



Reform and
Opening up



Factory
of the
World



Control
Capital
Outflow



Restructuring
FUTURE



Industrial
Upgrade



Domestic
Innovation



De-
Westernisation

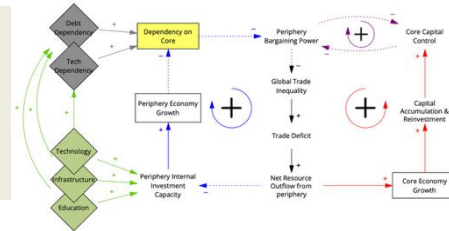


Revisiting Modernisation Theory

Modernisation vs. Dependency

1

The Core Dilemma:
Development vs. Independence



Sweet Point Strategy:
Japan Model

2

3

Two-Phase Restructure:
China Model



Development = Internal Efforts * the Wisdom to address the External Unequal Global System

Revisiting Modernisation Theory

Modernisation vs. Dependency

Discussion Questions

1. If you were the leader of a developing country, what strategies would you use to help the country modernise?
2. Is it possible to have a universal solution for a developing country to modernise? Can other countries copy the model we have discussed before?

China Model

*Development = Internal Efforts * the Wisdom to address the External Unequal Global System*

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