

Development Economics

Slides 7

Debraj Ray, NYU

A Core Framework

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where K_a is archaic capital (or land), K_m is modern capital (or machinery).

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- **Special Cobb-Douglas form:**

$$Y_a = AK_a^\alpha L_a^{1-\alpha} \text{ and } Y_m = MK_m^\mu L_m^{1-\mu},$$

where A and M measure archaic and modern TFP.

Prices and Work Subsistence

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■ Work Subsistence:

- Reservation wage, basic needs
- Call this z ; then $w_a \geq z$ and $w_m \geq z$.
- Different from [survival subsistence](#), which we normalize to 0.

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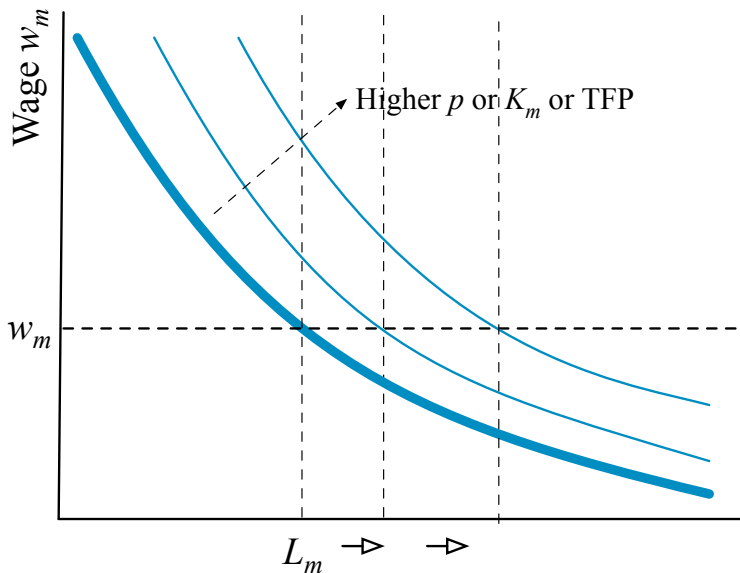
$$pY_m - w_m L_m = pM K_m^\mu L_m^{1-\mu} - w_m L_m.$$

- First order condition: $p(1 - \mu)M K_m^\mu L_m^{-\mu} = w_m$, or

$$L_m = \left[\frac{p(1 - \mu)M}{w_m} \right]^{1/\mu} K_m.$$

- This gives us the labor demand curve.

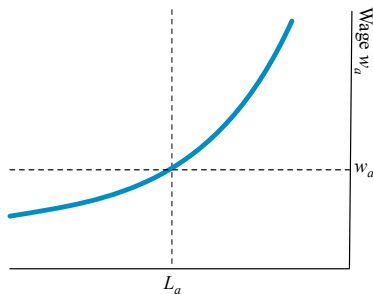
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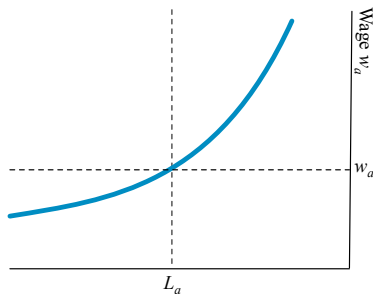
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- Family farm variation: output sharing; then

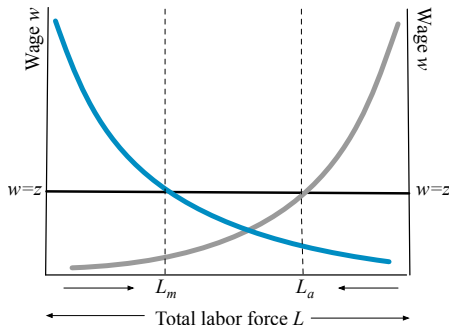
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Lewis: Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor

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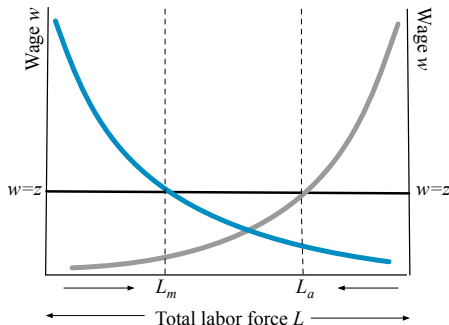
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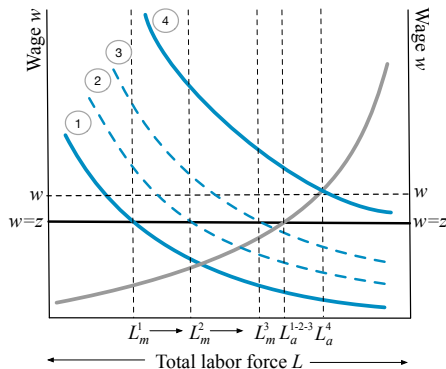
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- L large enough so that labor demand cannot absorb that pool, with wages driven down to work subsistence.

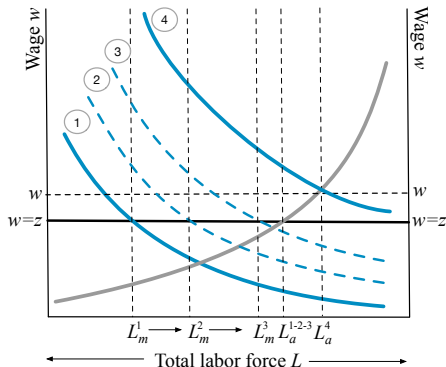
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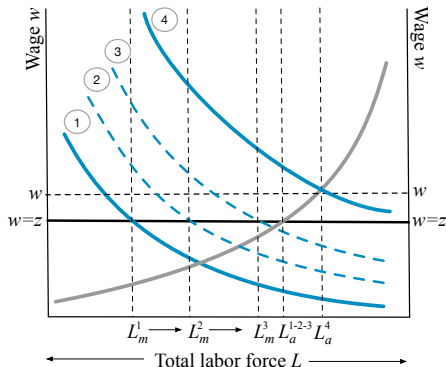
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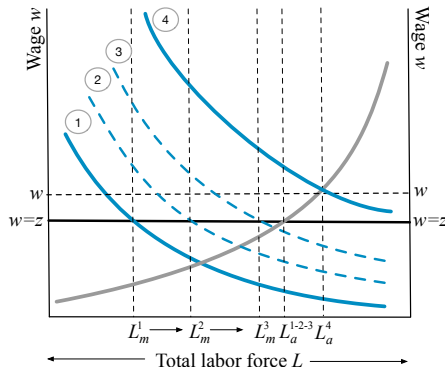
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■ Employment $L_a = L_a^{1-2-3}$:
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■ Later comes a “turning point”:

w_a starts to climb

See a point such as L_a^4 .



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- For instance, the **re-investment of manufacturing profits**:

$$\text{Profits} = \max_{L_m} [pF(K_m, L_m) - wL_m] = BK_m,$$

where B depends on parameters (p, w, F) . So:

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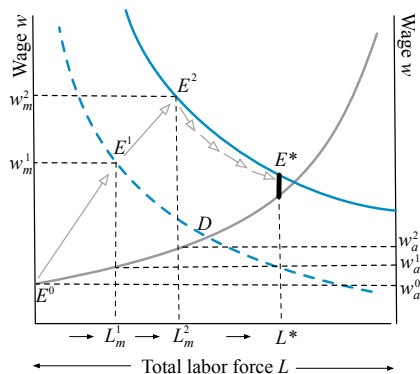
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where B depends on parameters (p, w, F) . So:

$$K_m(t+1) = (1 - \delta)K_m(t) + s \text{ Profits} = (1 - \delta)K_m(t) + sBK_m(t)$$

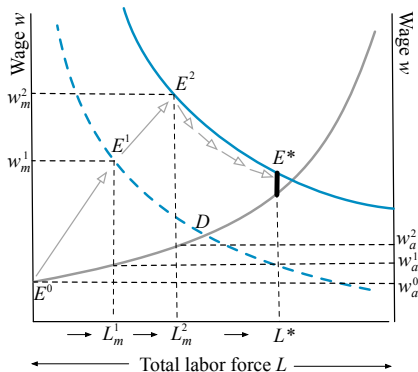
Kuznets: Uneven and Compensatory Changes

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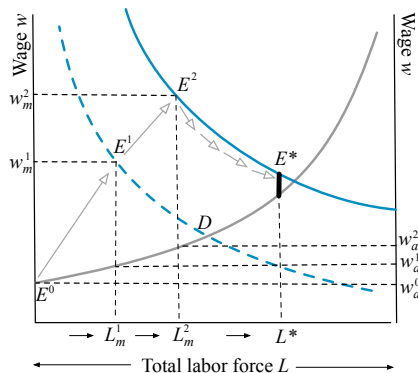
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- Rising, then falling inequality over each Kuznets cycle.

- **Possibly many such cycles:** something Kuznets did not emphasize.



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- Those basics must be domestically produced.
- The **Kalecki-Rao constraint**:

$$Y_a = z(L_a + L_m), \text{ or equivalently, } L_m = \frac{1}{z} [Y_a - zL_a]$$

- But L_a and L_m determined by market forces.
- How do those choices line up with the Kalecki-Rao constraint?

Kalecki-Rao: The Basic Needs Constraint

■ Here's how we understand an equilibrium:

1. Start with any wage w . (Lewis, not Kuznets, so $w_a = w_m = w$.)
2. Get L_a and Y_a from the labor demand curve in a -sector:

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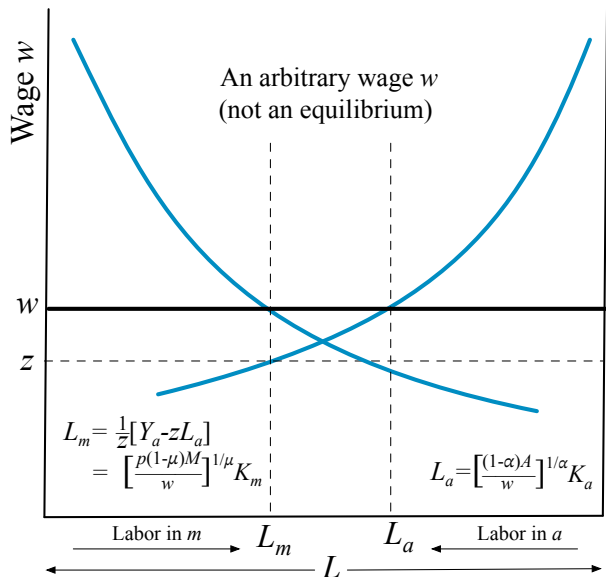
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4. But need to reconcile this with profit maximization in m -sector, which yields:

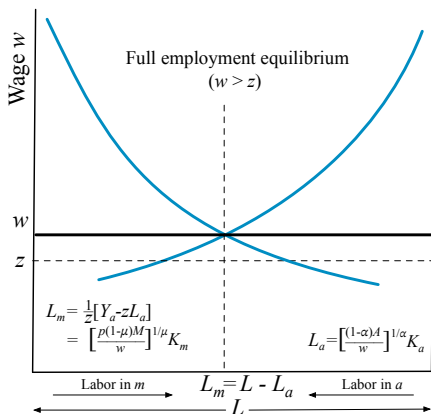
$$\underbrace{\frac{1}{z} [Y_a - zL_a]}_{\text{Kalecki-Rao}} = L_m = \underbrace{\left[\frac{p(1 - \mu)M}{w} \right]^{1/\mu} K_m}_{\text{profit max}}.$$

■ p moves to align K-R with profit-maximization.

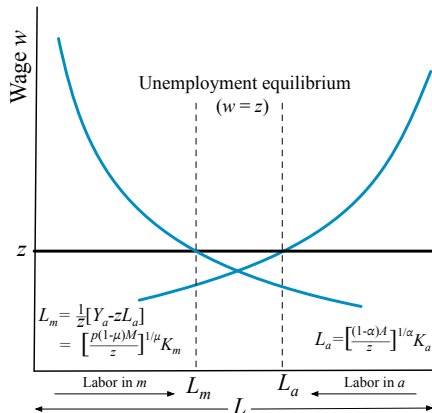
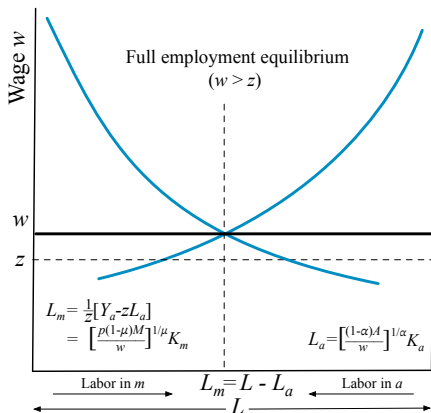
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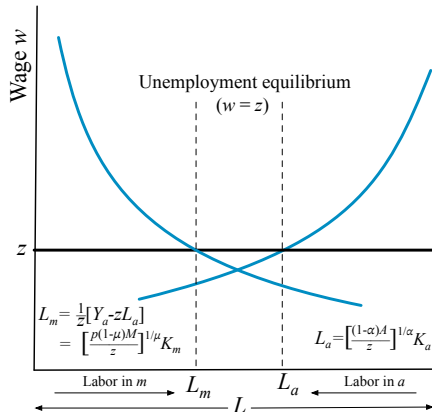
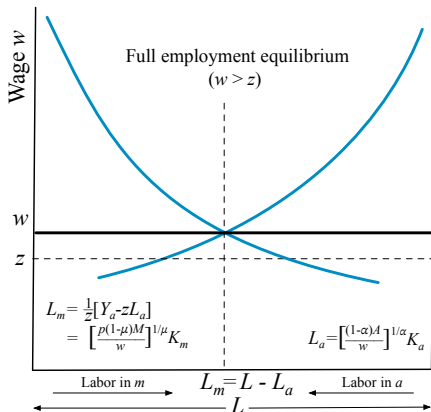
Kalecki-Rao: Two Possible Equilibrium Varieties



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■ Picture on previous slide is not an equilibrium (why?)

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- $K_a \uparrow$ (or agrarian TFP $\uparrow$) does what K_m (or manufacturing TFP) cannot do on its own: it raises L_m and contributes to structural transformation.

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- **Bottom line:** m -sector accumulation alone $\Rightarrow$ jobless modernization.
 - Investing in the a -sector — the sector we are trying to transform away from — creates employment in manufacturing.

Jobless Modernization

- GDP and employment growth, some developing countries. An et al. (2017).

Country	Yearly, 1991–2000		Yearly, 2001–2015	
	GDP	EMP	GDP	EMP
Egypt	4.27	1.47	4.33	2.31
India	5.73	0.60	7.09	0.61
Indonesia	4.84	1.96	5.41	1.73
Kenya	2.09	2.20	4.38	2.00
Morocco	4.78	5.11	4.46	1.04
Nicaragua	3.17	5.61	3.66	3.19
Pakistan	4.48	1.99	4.29	2.84
Philippines	2.75	2.51	5.11	2.46
Tanzania	4.15	2.55	6.41	3.34
Vietnam	7.40	2.20	6.54	2.33

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 - But **employment growth has been far weaker**
 - especially in formal manufacturing jobs.
- Employment in agriculture 63.5% (1991), down to 41.4% (2019).
 - A fall of 22 pp over nearly three decades, ok but nowhere close to great
 - This fall actually reversed over 2020–2023 (partly due to the Covid shock).

Policies and Politics

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- The politics of this can become very nasty indeed.
 - Industry develops a vested interest in *taxing* agriculture.

Agrarian Taxation

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■ Farmers wouldn't:

they are the ones who are taxed!

though profit-maxing large farmers welcome lower rural wages ...

■ Politically highly polarized issue, both in capitalist and in mixed economies.

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 - **Longer-run repercussions via the basic needs constraint.**
- Tension between a **short-term view** of agriculture as a sector to be squeezed for *current* surplus and a **long-term view** of agriculture as a sector to be invested in.
 - So in practice, **agrarian taxation has been approached with caution.**
 - Besides, farmers form a large voter base and antagonizing them isn't pleasant.
 - Agricultural income typically hard to measure, making it harder to tax.

Agrarian Surplus in the Soviet Union and China

■ Of the Soviet Union of the 1920s, **Maurice Dobb** (1966) wrote:

“The rate at which agricultural production could expand and afford a growing supply of raw materials for industry **and foodstuffs for industrial workers** appeared as the crucial question in economic discussion in the second half of the decade: an issue upon which all other hopes and possibilities rested.”

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- Agricultural investment did happen:
 - e.g. tractor imports for state farms.
 - marketed surplus of foodgrain very low
 - With land reform of 1917, peasants were also eating more.

Agrarian Surplus in the Soviet Union and China

- “What was to be done to make up the lost ground? It was necessary first of all to strike hard at the *kulaks* (rich peasants) and the speculators ... Hence the second relapse into emergency measures, administrative arbitrariness, violation of revolutionary laws, raids on peasant houses, illegal searches, and so forth, which affected the political conditions of the country and created a menace to the *smytchka* between the workers and the peasants.” (Dobb quotes Stalin)
- This was a two-edged sword: grain was wanted, but short-run gains in food collection were met only with longer-run resistance.
- Ethnic tensions: see the account of food procurement and Ukrainian famine mortality over 1932–33 by Markevich, Naumenko and Qian (2024).
- The Ukrainian tragedy was part of a historic decision to embark on state collectivization of agriculture.

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 - Farmer incentives could be minimal (as they were in the Soviet Union).
- To circumvent this, the government set up **moving regional targets**:
 - based on verified audited reports of *past* regional production.
 - These targets would have to be met: the peasants could keep the rest.
 - Yes, incentives are high, but with a sudden dip in agrarian output, widespread starvation could be a real possibility.
- Meng, Qian and Yared (2014) trace **China's Great Famine** (1959–1961) in part to this policy.

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 - Around 45m died, even though production stayed above subsistence needs.
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- Smoking gun for use of past production to set procurement targets. Why?
- Say a region historically produces x , so **set target is $x - z$** (z =subsistence).
- If actual output is y , keep $y - x + z$. If $y = \beta x$, then keep

$$(\beta - 1)x + z$$

- If $\beta < 1$, this number **declines with higher x** !

Agrarian Surplus in the Soviet Union and China

- **China's Great Famine** (1959–1961):
 - Around 45m died, even though production stayed above subsistence needs.
 - Reminiscent of Amartya Sen's 1981 account of the Great Bengal Famine in 1943.
- Mortality rates **higher** where historical food production per capita was higher!
- Smoking gun for use of past production to set procurement targets. Why?
- Say a region historically produces x , so **set target is $x - z$** (z =subsistence).
- If actual output is y , keep $y - x + z$. If $y = \beta x$, then keep

$$(\beta - 1)x + z$$

- If $\beta < 1$, this number **declines with higher x** !

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- That is why the **typical price support program has two parts:**
 - (a) procurement prices at which the government stands ready to buy
 - (b) a consumer subsidy: procured food is released at or below market prices.
- The **subsidy comes out of the government budget**, spreading the cost widely.

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- Water, electricity, fertilizer, agricultural machinery ...

Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria ...

both direct input distribution and voucher-based systems (e.g., for fertilizer)

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■ Less transparent options include an overvalued exchange rate:

- Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania
- Export prices kept artificially low (in domestic currency).
- Discourages or even reverses food exports.
- Sometimes (e.g., after a liberalization episode) ad hoc export controls:

Indian controls on onions, sugar, and wheat after 1991.