

## Definition

Social Darwinism, **biological advantage creating economic advantage:** a discredited social theory stating that the political and economic advantages in a developed society are derived from the biological advantages of its collective membership

## Theory

**Social Darwinism**, term coined in the late 19th century to describe the idea that humans, like animals and plants, compete in a struggle for existence in which **natural selection** results in “survival of the fittest.” Social Darwinists base their beliefs on theories of evolution developed by British naturalist Charles Darwin. Social Darwinists typically deny that they advocate a “law of the jungle.” But most propose arguments that justify imbalances of power between individuals, races, and nations because they consider some people more fit to survive than others. The term ***Social Darwinist*** is applied loosely to anyone who interprets human society primarily in terms of biology, struggle, competition, or natural law. Many people believe that the concept of social Darwinism explains the philosophical rationalization behind racism, **imperialism**, and capitalism.