

Development

Jaclyn Hawtin

Arizona State University

In general political development is the process by which social institutions, and the values and attitudes of the people evolve over time to form a political system within a society. It is also viewed as a hybrid between economic and social theory. Development is something that incrementally changes, and many times is a means to countering revolutions. Systems in general will always attempt to maintain stability, and the political system in this case is no exception. Development is the process by which this political 'system' is attempting to maintain some sort of stability which is its objective. Human societal evolution has gone through three general modes of development; agricultural development, industrial development, and post-industrial development which is the paradigm in which we currently exist within. Many of the institutions that we once understood have begun to become deconstructed in this era of post-industrial development and questions have begun to arise as to what politics and governance, education, family, and religion are supposed to mean. What makes political development different today is that social institutions are evolving on an exponential scale never before experienced by man.

Polanyi constructed a theory in which he described the tendency for societies to be pro-market vs. pro-state driven and how over time they tended to yoyo back and forth between these paradigms. In his analysis he observes that these trends generally tend to occur over a period of one hundred years. This is another example of the mechanism of the political 'system' attempting to stabilize itself through the ebb and flow of different types of control over the society. But what we observe today is that the rate of this cycle is increasing exponentially which will ultimately result in individuals having the opportunity see both sides of the pendulum within their lifetimes, and maybe more than once. This experiential difference in

the personal lives of the people living within these societies may result in a very different world view than what we have experienced within the past. As we are living in the age of globalization, every country on the planet is somehow economically and financially connected to one another and is going through this same evolutionary experience together. Development of the future will look very different from what we have observed in the past as so many of the variables that it was once constructed on are changing before our very eyes. What has been done historically has not seemed to work for humanity in terms of balance and life satisfaction for the majority of people, as we move into this paradigm of a more globalized and connected world we will begin to see things more clearly from a globalized 'world 'perspective, not as individual nations, and may approach a more stable equilibrium in the way that we develop and manage our species (Stewart, 2010).

Development originated out of development economics in the 1940's. The intention there was to understand why poverty and underdevelopment was occurring in the third world. Both economics and development economics sprung from the classical *political economy* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Adam Smith, one of the most influential contributors to economic theory in general and is remembered as the Father of modern Capitalism. His idea was that if you don't regulate a market, it will naturally regulate itself, and this will provide for the most success and satisfaction for all. This philosophy is attracting a lot of criticism as of late. Many followed Smith in the construction of economic theory, but it was Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber that brought most social implications into the mix branching out from traditional economic theory. Durkheim incorporated social phenomena into his study, in his analysis he chose to view these phenomena as objects so as to make it easier. He also

decided to focus on social consequences instead of growth which was traditional in economic theory. The most interesting thing about his research that is most applicable today is that he predicted “the division of labor would eventually come to replace religion as the most important social force of cohesion, but that the separation and specialization of labor functions and other swift social changes would also cause widespread anomie (pg.26, Martinussen).” We are experiencing this ‘anomie’ today with many of our social institutions breaking down, especially that of religion, many people tend to feel lost , scared and without direction in life.

Karl Marx is recognized as one of the founding fathers of modern social science. He worked in development economics and the sociological and political realm. He was a big picture kind of guy and chose to focus on economic, political, social, and ideological interactions as well as institutional analyses. He held the belief that social change is directly impacted by economic influences. Weber recognized capitalism as a valuable tool for society but also pointed out that unless government was regulated truly democratically that it would be an ‘evil’ for society. He also contributed the idea of *scientific value relativism*, which basically states that researchers do not have ability to conduct value-free research and should be aware of this principle in their investigations (pg.19-28, Martinussen).

Development today, is a process that is not experienced equally within nations around the world as a whole. In Andre Gunder Frank’s, *The Development of Underdevelopment* he talks about how most development theories don’t account for the historical perspective on the structure and development of the capitalist system. A view commonly held by the public is that underdeveloped countries are existing in a state similar to the starting point of where the developed Western countries were before their evolution into the modern capitalistic system.

This idea leads one to assume that as long as the underdeveloped countries buy into the Western way of life they will eventually evolve to have what Western society does today. Frank does not hold this view as he claims that underdeveloped countries are not existing in a state parallel to that of the Western countries at their origination point, but that they are experiencing something different, which will not enable them to evolve to the point that Western societies exist within today. "The now developed countries were never *underdeveloped*, though they may have been *undeveloped* (pg. 76, Frank)." He also noted that many hold the view that the underdevelopment of countries today is the result of the combination of its own economic, political, social and social characteristics internal to that country alone. But if analyzed from a nation to nation relational perspective one will find that underdevelopment is the result of historical relations namely economic between the now under-developed, and developed Western countries. Looking back in history one will see that the underdeveloped regions of the world including, Latin America, Africa, and some of the middle East have a long record of colonialism present within their territories. Frank also observed that underdeveloped countries historically experienced most economic growth and success when the ties with their more dominant imperialistic neighbors had weakened. So establishing close economic ties with modern industrialized nations may actually be accomplishing exactly the opposite of what the underdeveloped country is intending. Another interesting insight that was presented by Frank discussed countries that have had the longest historical ties to the 'metropolis(es)' in the past. These countries are generally more underdeveloped than their neighbors (pg.76-84, Frank).

More recently development has begun to take on a humanitarian perspective. With the release of the *Human Development Report* by Mahbub ul Haq people and governments have

begun to think about variables other than economic factors that influence the lives of populations around the world. What Mahbub did for the world was to take the perspective of basing all value of progress off of the Gross Nation Product (GNP) and instead shift it into something that accounted for variables other than economic, although this is included among many (Sen, pg. 17-23, 2011). Charles Kenny did a statistical analysis on human development indicators and found in his results that quality of life seems to be improving overall when considering a number of these variables in his analysis. The interesting thing that he observed was that income did not converge in his analysis, although the general quality of life indicators did, which suggests that income does not dominate the variables included in the human development report. This is good news, and as time moves on and more research is done we can begin to work on the indicators that don't cost money as those would be the easier ones to tackle (pg. 1-19, Kenny, 2005).

Modernization developed in response to political theorists of the past inability to process social change. In the 1950's these political theorists were observing change all around the world and the theory of modernization was developed as a means to incorporate those observations into political theory. The biggest difference between a modern and traditional society is the control modern man has over his natural and social environment which provides for an influx of scientific and technological innovation and discovery. Traditional man is more passive in nature and does not attempt to change his environment, whereas modern man believes and desires that he can change his environment for a specific purpose. Samuel Huntington outlines the nine characteristics to modernization in that it is a revolutionary, complex, systemic, global, lengthy, phased, homogenizing, irreversible and progressive process.

The theory of modernization has led those in Western societies to believe that modernization is best for all people around the world. Developed nations have been using this idea of modernization to pave the way for other societies to adapt to this world perspective without considering as to whether or not it is what these people want, or even if it is really what is best from them. Both modernization and dependency theory are key theoretical families of development (pg. 56-58, Huntington).

One key characteristic of development is dependency theory. The premise of this theory is that we live in a world where there are two contrasting poles, the wealthy imperialistic countries surrounded by poorer countries referred to as the 'periphery' or 'satellite' countries. These satellite countries provide the means for the wealthy countries to maintain growth and power. Modern capitalist countries exploit the weaker peripheral countries through a form of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is a type of colonialism by which modern day Western Capitalistic countries maintain colonial control over peripheral countries by establishing international economic agreements. The key agents that promote dependency are: "foreign capital such as multinational corporations based in core nations, elites within nations of the periphery, and national governments (pg.71, Roberts & Hite)." It is obvious that these groups would benefit the most out the process of neo-colonialism as they control the flow of money and resources out of these regions. The multinational corporations have established themselves in multiple countries and have been able to divide production process in different locations so as to provide them with the highest profit and the least risk. They are able to funnel money in strategic ways, avoid higher taxes, and prevent unions from forming through this division of labor and production. The most formidable variable of their existence is

that because they work on a global scale there are no international laws put in place to govern them. The elites that live in the peripheral nations are schmoozed by dominant Western capitalist governments and multi-national corporations into making decisions that benefit them on a personal basis, and generally don't make decisions for the overall good of the people. We have seen time and time again that when a leader does come into power and attempt to limit the integration of Western economic affairs into their associated country a coup will generally emerge, and thirty years later we will find that it was implemented by the CIA or some lateral type of organization(pg.71, Roberts & Hite).

It was three scholars who worked for the United Nations Economic Commission (ECLA) in Chile that originally constructed dependency theory, but Gunder Frank was the first person to bring these ideas to the Western world in translating them in into English. It is interesting that this school of thought was constructed by scholars living within one of the peripheral countries, as only they would have had the insight through their personal life experiences to describe this perspective. There are two schools of development theory, one in which Frank subscribes to, that the only way to prevent unhealthy dependency from occurring between Western imperialistic countries and peripheral countries is to do away with capitalism completely. The other school envisions that a degree of positive development can be accomplished in the peripheral countries while still participating within a capitalistic system; this is termed 'associated' and 'dependent' development (pg. 72, Roberts & Hite).

The Modern World System by Immanuel Wallerstein presents the idea of the world system. Within it he sites four postulates:

1. There is 1 single underlying set of processes in the world system, to which all economies are subject.
2. This worldwide system is a hierarchy consisting of 3 situations, or zones: the core, semi-periphery, and periphery.
3. The process by which wealth is extracted from the periphery are similar to those described by the dependency theorists: unequal exchange, active or subtle repression, and the control of marketing and the high value ends of the commodity chains.
4. World systems theory proposes in addition to cycles, capitalism has some crucial secular trends. These include broadening the areas of the world participating in capitalist exchange, and the deepening which goes on by attaching price to everything (commodification), making everyone a wage-worker (proletarianization), mechanization, and the polarization of social classes (pg.73-74, Roberts & Hite).

This view fits well within other dependency theories. The variables discussed here and by most dependency theorists include an internationally connected economy, an international class system, exploitive practices used in the extraction of resources and exchange of services by higher ranking classes with lower ranking classes, and a focus on the corruption and greed of capitalism.

As development theory continues to evolve more literature from the third world perspective will begin to emerge. The world that we live in does seem to be getting smaller in the context of interconnection, but also bigger from the perspective of complexity. But the complexity issue should not be a deterrent as our continued technological prowess is sure to elicit a solution for processing information at a level we require to grasp the big system perspective that can be a guide for making better decisions for the future. A major leap forward in development has been made recently in the development of the *Human Development Report*, and it seems that as all things are evolving at this exponential pace, so will our ability to create solutions to the problems that we see arising in so many countries around the world. But one thing is for sure, if we are to create a world in which human beings live

fulfilling lives we must begin to adapt and change the way that we govern the people from individual nation state perspectives and on into the international arena. If true humanitarian development initiatives are to succeed we must all become united with each other as one. World politics is a system, and it is violently seeking to reach its equilibrium point right now, we need to let go of the traditional legacies of the past and form new innovative social, economic and political policies that promote more equality and freedom around the world. The capitalistic mantra will need to slowly fade into the backdrop of history as a painful but necessary lesson that we had to learn on our journey into this new age of the empowered individual and the actualization of international freedom and liberty.

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