

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A LONG AND WINDING ROAD. HISTORY, REGULATIONS AND CASE LAW ¹

DESARROLLO HUMANO: UN LARGO Y SINUOSO CAMINO. HISTORIA, NORMAS Y JURISPRUDENCIA

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ABSTRACT: the rise and evolution of the idea of human development was not an easy way to go. It took decades to shape the concept. Contributions of philosophers, lawyers, economists and international organizations were key to this job. Its recognition as a fundamental right began to take place particularly by the mid-1980s due to UN's Declaration on the Right to Development. From then on, human development is present in almost every UN document, mainly in UNDP's Annual Reports. Besides, several nations have included the right to development in their constitutions. Thus, human development has been acquiring a technical and normative content which must be studied not only from the global perspective of human rights, but from the one of the obligations of the States, as well.

KEY WORDS: Human development - Historical evolve - Progress - Underdevelopment - Economic development - Human development sceptics

RESUMEN: El surgimiento y la evolución de la idea del desarrollo humano no ha sido un camino fácil. Tomó décadas dar forma al concepto. Las contribuciones de filósofos, juristas, economistas y organizaciones internacionales han sido clave en esta tarea. Su reconocimiento como un derecho fundamental comenzó a tener lugar particularmente a mediados de la década de 1980, debido a la Declaración de la ONU sobre el Derecho al Desarrollo. A partir de entonces, el desarrollo humano está presente en casi todos los documentos de la ONU, principalmente en los informes anuales del PNUD. Además, varias naciones han incluido el derecho al desarrollo en sus Constituciones. De allí que el desarrollo humano ha adquirido un contenido técnico y normativo que debe ser estudiado no sólo desde la perspectiva global de los derechos humanos, sino también desde las obligaciones de los Estados.

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PALABRAS CLAVES: Desarrollo Humano – Evolución histórica – Progreso – Subdesarrollo - Desarrollo económico – Escépticos del desarrollo humano



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FOREWORD

Far from what it may seem, the rise and evolution of the idea of human development was not an easy way to go. It took decades to shape the concept. Contributions of philosophers, lawyers, economists and international organizations were key to this job.

Its recognition as a fundamental right began to take place particularly by the mid-1980s due to UN's Declaration on the Right to Development. From then on, human development is present in almost every UN document, mainly in UNDP's Annual Reports.

Besides, several nations have included the right to development in their constitutions.

Thus, human development has been acquiring a technical and normative content which must be studied not only from the global perspective of human rights, but from the one of the obligations of the States, as well.

The aim of these chapters is to review the origin, evolution, regulation and case law regarding human development as a human right.

Quite many countries have expressly undertaken the responsibility to provide for human development. Nevertheless, according UN, to the present day millions of human beings still suffer evitable illnesses, extreme poverty, substandard housing conditions, malnutrition or undernourishment, illiteracy, child mortality, insecurity, etc.

If it is correct –as the following pages state– that there is a fundamental right to human development, these facts must be reversed. We are all responsible for making it happen.

Concepts and regulations have already been set. They must be taken into practice.

From this perspective, the following chapters intend to supply the means to know this right and its scope, to realize the national and international responsibilities that have been assumed, as well as the role that both governing and governed must play in its fulfilment.

I chose to borrow Paul McCartney's title², because when analysing the history and regulation on human development it seems difficult to understand why this fundamental right is still so far away from concretion in so many corners of the World.

A lot has been done and achieved, and yet it is evident that we have a long way to go; and it does not seem to be an easy one. It has proved to be a difficult path to cover: there are no shortcuts, no smooth routes, no highways.

It is a long and winding road (thank you, Paul!).

² "The long and winding road" is a song included in The Beatles' album "Let it be" (Apple, 1970). It was written by Paul McCartney and credited to Lennon-McCartney.

PART A: Defining key concepts

I. Introduction.

Even if it is not easy to establish when it was that different thinkers began to use the ideas of *progress*, *development*, and *human development* in their works, most authors agree on three main guidelines:

- i) The idea of *progress*, as we understand it nowadays, finds its roots in the western world. That does not mean that people elsewhere did not have a notion of improvement, evolution or progress, but that the formulation or enunciation of that concept in itself, in the sense we use it today, happened in that part of the Globe.
- ii) The idea of *development* arose quite later, and the idea of *human development*, still later on.
- iii) UN has played a key role during the most recent stages of the formulation of the ideas of development and human development, role that has led to the implementation of international standards and regulations³.

The aim of this Part A is to deal with the origins, evolution and contents that the ideas of progress, development and human development have had over time.

Nevertheless, this purpose does not pursue neither to exhaust nor to deepen the ideas of each author, as that would far exceed both my basic knowledge and the goal of this publication.

It is just an outline to understand the evolution that non juridical sciences have gone through on regarding these ideas.

II. The first ideas referred to progress.

Establishing the origin of the idea of progress is a job that is intimately linked to the meaning that each author gives to that concept. Thus, different opinions set the birth of the idea at different times.

NISBET and EDELSTEIN argue that that genesis can be found back in Ancient Greek writers (NISBET, 1979; EDELSTEIN, 1967).

BURY claims that it was ST. AUGUSTINE the first one to introduce a technical meaning of progress (BURY, 1920).

³ Nisbet, R. "The Idea of Progress" in Liggió, L. (ed.) "Literature of Liberty. A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought", Vol. II, N° 1, January/March 1979, pp. 7/37, Institute for Human Studies, Fairfax, EE.UU.; Edelstein, L. "The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity", John Hopkins Press, 1967; Bury, J. "The Idea of Progress. An inquiry into its origin and growth", Macmillan and Co. Limited, St. Martin's Street, London, 1920; Cowen, M.P. y Shenton, R. W. "Doctrines of Development" Routledge, New York, 1996. Rist, G. "The History of Development. From Western Origins to Global Faith", 3rd. edition, Zed Books, London, 2008.

Another thesis held by COWEN and SHENTON (1996) and by RIST (2008) states that this concept began to settle down during a far later stage, due to the writings of French thinkers from the XVI century onwards. RIST adds that the idea of development emerged after World War II.

a) Progress in Greece and Rome.

Those who affirm that the idea of progress was not ignored in Ancient Greece note that HESIOD had already expressed in his *Works and Days* the conviction that mankind was able to transform reality in order to improve its situation, and thus be able to return to the *golden age* during which nothing altered moral virtue and universal happiness. In that way they argue that it was HESIOD who first laid out the concept of progress (NISBET, 1979; EDELSTEIN, 1967; DODDS, 1973; TEGGART, 1947).

These authors claim that what HESIOD started was followed by a long line of classic thinkers such as XENOPHANES who in the VI century B.C. pointed out that at the beginning gods had not revealed everything to men but that they had found, by their own means and over time, those things that were better for them.

PROTAGORAS is added to the list, as he expressed his conviction that the history of mankind is the story of its fights to break free from original ignorance, fear, sterility and inculture and, in that way, it is the story of a gradual ascent to better living conditions, as a result of the improvement of knowledge.

PLATO is also mentioned. In his writings, especially in *Dialogues* and *The Politian* (257a-311c), this philosopher outlined a picture of the advances of mankind since its dark beginnings to the most sublime peaks of thought, as well as in the Third Book of *The Laws* in which he presented an even more detailed scheme of progress since the state of nature to higher levels of culture, economy and politics (676a-702e).

According to NISBET, ARISTOTLE too delineated a progressive line of human history, which began with mankind in familiar relationships and evolved into towns and confederations, to finally reach the political State (NISBET, 1979, pp. 11/12).

Nevertheless, COWEN and SHENTON argue that even if it is true that evidences of gradual growth of human civilization could not have been unfamiliar to the sharp eye of the Greeks, who must have admitted some notion of relative progress, the ancient legend of the *golden age* was generally accepted and, thus, so was the idea that as from then mankind was living in a period of inevitable degeneration and decay. That, together with the cyclic historical theory, prevented a clear idea of progress to emerge (COWEN and SHENTON, 1996, p. viii; BURY, 1920, pp. 7/13).

As for Roman thinkers, LUCRETIVUS' *De Rerum Natura* written in I century B.C. might be the most important description of human progress –in the sense of a systematic and developed knowledge– that can be found among classic authors. SENECA must be mentioned, too. In his *Natural Questions* and *Moral Letters* she introduced ideas, observations and experiments in which the idea of progress can be clearly perceived.

b) SAINT AUGUSTINE.

According to BURY (1920, pp. 14 ff.), ST. AUGUSTINE was the first author who emphatically insisted on an ecumenical idea, on the concept of a history of mankind and, therefore, was the first one who introduced a technical idea of progress. The fact of incorporating God's action in history allowed him to break the Greek idea of cycles and to think about a lineal development of human events that had to tend to an ultimate end.

A clear illustration of such a statement is the title of chapter 17 of Book XII of *The City of God*: "What defence is made by sound faith regarding God's unchangeable counsel and will, against the reasonings of those who hold that the works of god are eternally repeated in revolving cycles that restore all things as they were"⁴, or that of chapter 20 of the same Book: "Of the impiety of those who assert that the souls which enjoy true and perfect blessedness, must yet again and again in these periodic revolutions return to labour and misery".

It was him who also raised the idea of a division of historical time in stages, even when it is not simple to identify them all through his work⁵.

NISBET claims that AUGUSTINE'S contribution to these ideas was the most important during that period because it allowed to think of a progress of mankind and of a final moment

⁴ In that chapter the author says: "...they say it must be that the same things are always repeated, and that as they pass, so they are destined always to return, whether amidst all these changes the world remains the same —the world which has always been, and yet was created,— or that the world in these revolutions is perpetually dying out and being renewed; otherwise, if we point to a time when the works of God were begun, it would be believed that He considered His past eternal leisure to be inert and indolent, and therefore condemned and altered it as displeasing to Himself. Now if God is supposed to have been indeed always making temporal things, but different from one another, and one after the other, so, that He thus came at last to make man, whom He had never made before, then it may seem that He made man not with knowledge (for they suppose no knowledge can comprehend the infinite succession of creatures), but at the dictate of the hour, as it struck him at the moment, with a sudden and accidental change of mind. On the other hand, say they, if those cycles be admitted, and if we suppose that the same temporal things are repeated, while the world either remains identical through all these rotations, or else dies away and is renewed, then there is ascribed to God neither the slothful ease of a past eternity, nor a rash and unforeseen creation. And if the same things be not thus repeated in cycles, then they cannot by any science or prescience be comprehended in their endless diversity. Even though reason could not refute, faith would smile at these argumentations, with which the godless endeavour to turn our simple piety from the right way, that we may walk with them in a circle. But by the help of the Lord our God, even reason, and that readily enough, shatters these revolving circles which conjecture frames. For that which specially leads these men astray to refer their own circles to the straight path of truth, is, that they measure by their own human, changeable, and narrow intellect the divine mind, which is absolutely unchangeable, infinitely capacious, and without succession of thought, counting all things without number".

⁵ For example, towards the end of *The City of God*, the Bishop of Hippo states: "This Sabbath shall appear still more clearly if we count the ages as days, in accordance with the periods of time defined in Scripture, for that period will be found to be the seventh. The first age, as the first day, extends from Adam to the deluge; the second from the deluge to Abraham, equalling the first, not in length of time, but in the number of generations, there being ten in each. From Abraham to the advent of Christ there are, as the evangelist Matthew calculates, three periods, in each of which are fourteen generations, one period from Abraham to David, a second from David to the captivity, a third from the captivity to the birth of Christ in the flesh. There are thus five ages in all. The sixth is now passing, and cannot be measured by any number of generations ..." (XXII:30).

on Earth –utopian but unavoidable– as well as of a vision of a future stage of beatitude (NISBET, 1979, pp. 13/14)⁶.

III. The Middle Ages.

After ST. AUGUSTINE the idea of progress would only consolidate as from the XVI century because during the Middle Ages thinkers and writers mainly focused their works on the existing concepts of Ancient Greece and Rome, and on the Bishop of Hippo's work and, thus, added few new ideas on the topic.

In medieval literature, together with the verbs that connote growth or advance (*crescere, progredi*), the nouns *profectio* and *profectus* can be found as generally referring to individual development, to the progress that someone or something achieves from imperfection to perfection. Nevertheless, although these words were more used than *progressio*, they were still infrequent (HERRERA, 2014, pp. 230/242).

However, it was precisely during that period of time that three clergymen wrote works that would have an important influence on subsequent thinking on this matter.

By mid of the XII century JOAQUIN DE FIORE –a monk from Calabria– declared that history of mankind was a process of spiritual development that should be considered as an ascension along three phases or stages: that of the Father, that of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit, through which human beings would gradually free from their animal physical desires and would get to know contemplative serenity and spiritual happiness. In DE FIORE's idea each stage repeated in a way events that had occurred in the previous one and overcame them and, therefore, the future became predictable, which implied that the end of the world could be foretold (REEVES, 1977).

The English Franciscan friar ROGER BACON came slightly later. His main aim was to attain a full reform in higher education and to introduce a broad and scientific programme of secular studies within the universities. At the request of Pope Clement IV he wrote *Opus Maius*, an actual treaty on sciences (grammar, logics, maths, physics and philosophy) (BIDGES, 2010). His linkage with the idea of progress was due to his belief that the world could be known through the empiric method, a technique that would allow men to advance both in arts and sciences (BURY, 1920, pp. 24/29).

Likewise, THOMAS AQUINAS must be mentioned in this group: he was conscious that historicity was an essential dimension of men and thus he recognised that mankind could not reach its fulfilment unless it underwent a progressive movement through time. In his work it is clear that the knowledge of the truth was the result of a gradual and progressive process that depended on the history of ideas (HERRERA, 2014, pp. 230/242).

⁶ St. Augustine says: "The education of the human race, represented by the people of God, has advanced, like that of an individual, through certain epochs, or, as it were, ages, so that it might gradually rise from earthly to heavenly things, and from the visible to the invisible" (X:14).

And he adds: "suffice is to say that the seventh shall be our Sabbath, which shall be brought to a close, not by an evening, but by the Lord's day, as an eighth and eternal day, consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the eternal repose not only of the spirit, but also of the body. There we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise. This is what shall be in the end without end. For what other end do we propose to ourselves than to attain to the kingdom of which there is no end?" (XXII:30).

IV. Reconsidering the advances of knowledge and of the idea of progress.

It was JOHN OF SALISBURY who attributed BERNARD DE CHARTRES the famous statement *Nanos gigantum humeris insidentes* (“We are dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants”), assertion recorded by the XII century that expressed the general conviction of that time: thinkers of the Middle Ages could only see beyond what their classical predecessors had seen just because they were raised over their gigantic intellectual stature (TAYLOR, 1919, vol 2, p. 159; MC GARRY, 2009).

Within that context, writers from the Renaissance were also unable to get rid of the classical model and, although human interest gradually turned towards an anthropocentrism, that pre-existing conviction led them back to Greco-Roman sources.

The change only overcame as of the ends of the XVI century when in Europe, more specifically in France and in England, authors openly began to discuss about the possibilities of the advance of human knowledge. From then on what had been unthinkable began to be thought of as reasonable: intellectual landscape changed and the ideology of progress became a dominant position (RIST, 2008, pp. 35/37).

Without any claim to covering this issue exhaustively, I will review some authors’ opinions on the topic.

a) JEAN BODIN.

In France, JEAN BODIN’s work led the way: he argued that a certain regularity in a gradual ascent of knowledge and society could be observed throughout history⁷. He took up several ideas from his preceding medieval clergymen and suggested a division of history in three periods, each of which bore the stamp of three different racial groups (South-eastern, Mediterranean and Northern people); he avoided fatalism and asserted that history depended mostly on human will; he rejected the theory of degeneration and claimed that his era was fully equal and even somehow better than classical Antiquity, especially when it came to arts and sciences; and he proposed the idea of considering the world from a caring perspective, as he suggested that all races and peoples, with their peculiar aptitudes and qualities, contributed to the benefit of mankind as a whole.

b) FRANCIS BACON.

As BURY says, in England it was BACON (who is considered one of the fathers of empiricism) the one who outlined a final agenda for a great renewal of knowledge (BURY, 1920, pp. 50/63). He was more aware than most of his fellow contemporaries of the need to break with the past and to establish a new departing point, based on the conviction that experimentation was the key to discovering the secrets of nature. Even though several of his claims had been anticipated by the end of XVI century, BACON insisted more explicitly on them and formulated them in a precise way; he clarified and explained many of the progressive

⁷ JEAN BODIN was born in France in 1530 and died in 1596. Among his works we must mention *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (translated into English by REYNOLDS, *Method for the easy comprehension of history*) and *Les six livres de la République*.

ideas that had inspired the scientific thinking of the last period of the previous century and by 1623 wrote *The New Atlantis*, a utopian text in which he described his view about the future of human discoveries and knowledge (SPEDDING, ELLIS & HEATH, 1859).

c) DESCARTES.

He was firmly determined to break with scholastic arguments and used the mathematical method in an attempt to end with the syllogism used during the Middle Ages. The mechanical theory of the world, typical of Cartesianism, led him to an unavoidable conclusion: doctrine of Providence should be excluded. From BURY'S point of view it was this exclusion that allowed the replacement of Providence as an active and determining force of history, by Progress, that would begin to play that role onwards (BURY, 1920, p. 65).

As from his *Discourse on Method*, DESCARTES put forward two main axioms that led to the strengthening and further development of the theory of progress: on one hand, the supremacy of reason and, on the other, the invariability of the laws of Nature. On top of both of them he added the strict use of the analytic method that, according to him, was applicable to physical knowledge as well as to the study of history.

He insisted on the need to break with the past and to build a new system that would not use hints of the classical authors; he hoped that knowledge could progress on the grounds of his own method and discoveries. The first title for his *Discourse on Method; of rightly conducting one's reason and on seeking truth in sciences* had been *The Plan of a Universal Science to raise our nature to its higher degree of perfection* (FOWLER, 1998, p. 61).

As BURY claims, within that context the justification of an independent attitude towards Antiquity was turning to be quite common (BURY, 1920, p. 67).

d) Academies and Societies.

One of the consequences of the dissemination of the ideas of thinkers as BODIN, BACON and DESCARTES was the importance that the study of arts and sciences reached from this new perspective and the subsequent introduction of scientific communities that began to appear with the aim that their members would be able to interact and cooperate in order to enable the growth and spreading of knowledge.

In 1635 *L'Académie Française* was founded to maintain standards of literary taste and to establish the literary language; in 1660, the Royal Society in London –its definitive official name as from 1663 has been Royal Society for Improving Natural Knowledge–. It adopted the motto *Nullius in verba*, taken to mean “take nobody's word for it”, which shows the conviction of the need of empirical evidence against the previous argument of authority.

After that, *L'Académie Royale des Sciences* was established in 1666, during King Louis XIV reign, to provide assistance to the French government in defining policies with regard to scientific and technical research⁸.

⁸ Among its founding members were DESCARTES and PASCAL. It was the first scientific institution to adopt the metric system.

The horizon of human knowledge kept on broadening. The idea of progress of sciences and arts was, by then, something evident.

e) Ancients and Moderns.

Within that context and mainly in France, a peculiar discussion took place between *the ancients* and *the moderns*. It was an intellectual dispute that went on between 1687 and 1694, and between 1713 and 1715, which ended with the victory of the latter, *the moderns*, who thought it was certainly possible for human knowledge to progress, as well as, consequently, sciences and arts⁹.

The main question that triggered such a debate was whether it was possible to consider thinkers of that time intellectually similar to their classical predecessors or if, on the contrary, they were to be taken as inferior authors.

Moderns held that knowledge –mainly referring to literature– improved along time and experience, and that perfection should not be necessarily associated to classical antiquity¹⁰. DE FONTENELLE (1657-1757) must be mentioned among them. He was a fervent advocate of the idea of progress in arts and sciences and he argued that each era had the advantage of not having to rediscover what had already been achieved in previous stages. According to him, future generations were always superior to previous ones, as progress was a natural and a necessary effect of the constitution of human mind¹¹.

PERRAULT, who was his contemporary, held the same point. He claimed that new thinkers had the possibility to add to what they had received from their predecessors, their own advances. Nevertheless, unlike DE FONTELLE, he thought that human nature is immutable; that it produced as important thinkers in one period as it did in the other, and that great men belonging to an era were as relevant as great men belonging to another one; but he added that their works were unequal and that, given the same favourable conditions, the ones produced later would be the best, because both arts and sciences depended on the accumulation of human knowledge which necessarily increased along time¹².

f) Pre-revolutionary ideas.

Once this *querelle* was over, authors like TURGOT continued developing the idea of progress with the aim to expand it to other areas beyond hard sciences and art. In his famous speech at *La Sorbonne*, titled *Tableau philosophique des progrès succesifs de l'esprit humain* (1750), the

⁹ This *Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns* took place precisely during Louis XIV's reign, period during which France went through advances in different areas, something that helped the monarch be known as the *Sun King*.

This *quarrel* that took place in France had its impact in other countries as well, where the same or similar debate was reproduced. Such the case of England, Germany and Italy.

¹⁰ The *Quarrel between the Ancient and the Moderns* has been studied in different opportunities. See, esp. RIGAULT's *Histoire de la querelle des anciens et des modernes* (1856). For its impact in England, see JONES' *Ancients and moderns. A study of the rise of the scientific movement in the seventeenth century* (1961).

¹¹ DE FONTENELLE, *Poésies pastorales avec un traité sur la nature de l'éplogue et une digression sur les anciens et les modernes*.

¹² PERRAULT, *Parallele des anciens et des modernes, en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences*.

meaning of progress broadly included different aspects of culture: habits, uses and customs, institutions, rules and regulations, economy, etc.

Thus, with the expansion of rationalism, a new concept naturally arose: intellectual progress could and should expand to a general progress of mankind. And that idea gradually gained prominence, so by the middle of the XVIII century it began to be closely linked to the theories related to the political and economic handling of the State.

By 1758, HELVETIUS claimed in *De l'esprit* that mankind could reach perfection through laws and institutions¹³.

On the other hand, DE SAINT-PIERRE spoke about *general progress of man* and wrote about the perfection of society through peace among nations. He represented the transition between the first stages of Cartesianism, busy with purely intellectual dilemmas, and the last thinkers of the XVIII century, who began to focus on social problems. He strongly believed in social unending progress¹⁴.

Meanwhile the Encyclopedist movement spread the idea of *general progress* and the concept fell into the hands of some economists who closely linked it to the achievement of happiness.

A group of French economists known as *physiocrats* (QUESNAY¹⁵, MIRABEAU¹⁶, MERCER DE LA RIVIÈRE¹⁷, among others) held, in that sense, that an economic theory was somehow equivalent to a theory on human society. They assumed that the aim of society should be the achievement of happiness for its members; thus, that should be the sole aim of government. According to them, the highest possible level of happiness on Earth was to obtain a large amount of goods and a corresponding level of freedom, to be able to enjoy them. Personal property appeared, then, as a necessary condition for a full enjoyment of the fruits of man's work.

These thinkers were no idealists; they believed in a future progress of society towards a state of happiness through the increase of opulence, which, in turn, depended on better standards of justice and liberty. And they insisted on the importance of the enlargement and spreading of human knowledge, both of them, crucial conditions for economic growth (BURY, 1920, pp. 172/176).

But France was not the only country to advance in this item. Economists, jurists and other scholars from European societies began to analyse the phenomenon of progress and to study it from their own areas.

In the United Kingdom, the effects of the Industrial Revolution triggered different social and economic theories that redefined in that country a number of ideas, among them, that of progress.

Amid that revolution, ADAM SMITH, from Scotland, published *The wealth of nations* in 1776, a work that, according to many, proved to be the first systematic text on economy, but whose background theme was the natural progress of mankind. NISBET notes that what turned out to

¹³HELVETIUS, *De l'esprit*, <https://archive.org/details/delesprit03helvgoog>

¹⁴DE SAINT-PIERRE, *Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe*, <https://archive.org/details/projetpourrendr00saingoo>

¹⁵FRANÇOIS QUESNAY was born in France in 1664 and died in 1774.

¹⁶HONORÉ GABRIEL RIQUETTI, Earl of Mirabeau, was born in France in 1749 and died in 1791.

¹⁷ Pierre-Paul Lemercier de la Rivière was born in France in 1719 and died in 1801.

be fundamental in this book was SMITH's statement that there was a natural order in the progress of nations and that the reason why British and European economies as a whole were threatened to stagnate, was that regulations and costumes had interfered in the processes of the natural progress of wealth, work, abilities, rent and benefits. He adds that SMITH's *invisible hand* aimed both at the mechanic of progress through time as well as at the stability of the economic system (NISBET, 1979, p. 20).

In Germany, KANT published a book in 1784¹⁸ in which he claimed that history of mankind could be considered as the realization of a hidden plan of nature to carry out a political constitution both internally and externally perfect, as the sole stage in which every aptitude implanted in humanity could be fully developed (NISBET, 1979, p. 20).

Besides these thinkers, many other authors spread the idea of progress not only linked to hard sciences and art, but to other areas as well. Among them, the works of WILLIAM GODWIN, ROBERT OWEN and ADAM FERGUSON in England must be mentioned here.

In France, DE CONDORCET developed his theory of the ten stages of history and he tried to show the subsequent changes of society, the influence each stage had on the following ones and the advance of human race towards truth or happiness. He insisted on the inextricable connection between intellectual progress and freedom, virtue and the respect for human rights, as well as the effect of science on the destruction of prejudices. According to him, the study of history should allow to determine its direction in the future and, thus, be able to accelerate the *rate of progress*¹⁹.

In Spain, the dissemination of the ideas linked to the notion of progress arrived together with the Spanish Illustration, especially during the reigns of Fernando VI and Carlos III, although some of its representatives came to be known even before, such as UZTÁRIZ²⁰. It was during those reigns that FEIJÓO²¹, MAYANS²², RODRÍGUEZ DE CAMPOMANES²³, CABARRÚS²⁴ and JOVELLANOS²⁵, among others, promoted in their writings the ideas related to the advance of mankind in its different expressions.

That was how in different regions of Europe, by the ends of the XVIII century the ideas of liberty, property, justice and order came to be closely associated to the concept of progress.

¹⁸ KANT, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*.

¹⁹ DE CONDORCET, *Sketch for a historical picture of the progress of the human mind*.

²⁰ UZTÁRIZ, *Theórica y práctica de comercio y de marina en diferentes discursos*,

http://alfama.sim.ucm.es/dioscorides/consulta_libro.asp?ref=B18968363&idioma=0

²¹ FEIJÓO, *Teatro crítico universal*

<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/teatro-critico-universal--0/html/>

²² Among MAYANS' writings, see: *Epistolarum libri sex*

<https://books.google.com.ar/books?id=HYJYAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
and *Orador Cristiano*:

<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/el-orador-christiano-ideado-en-tres-dialogos--0/>

²³ RODRÍGUEZ DE CAMPOMANES was Carlos III's Minister of Finance, member of the Royal Academy of History. Among his works, see *Tratado de la regalia de amortización*.

<https://archive.org/details/tratadodelaregal00campuoft>

²⁴ CABARRÚS was outstanding mainly in the world of finances and engineering. He conceived the first national bank in Spain, the Banco de San Carlos, and encouraged the construction of the channel Isabel II.

²⁵ JOVELLANOS' economic ideas are mainly introduced in his *Informe sobre la ley agraria*

http://www.espacioebook.com/ilustracion/jovellanos/Jovellanos_InformesobreLaLeyAgraria.pdf

So in the prelude of the French Revolution of 1789, that idea had achieved a dimension that would have been unconceivable by the beginnings of the XVII century, when that theory began to be elaborated²⁶.

V. Progress after the French Revolution. Progress and development

The study of the causes and effects of the French Revolution go far beyond the aim of this work, but I cannot leave out one point: even if the revolution achieved its main target, which was to overthrow absolutism, truth is that the failure in accomplishing the other goals brought along certain discredit of the *theory of progress*.

That is why at the beginning of the XIX century some thinkers dedicated their efforts to relaunch the concept, sometimes guided by the Christian doctrine; such the case of DE CHATEAUBRIAND²⁷.

However, those who pushed more strongly for the idea of progress to regain its impulse were the authors dedicated to the study of the organization of society.

Until the French Revolution the idea of progress had been an optimistic one: It had encouraged revolutionaries and reformists; but it had lacked of specific rules, something that had turned out to be rather complicated, because without rules, it could not mark the path to follow. That is why the new challenge was to find in a systematic way the meaning and rules of progress of society, such as it had been done with hard sciences and art.

As COWEN and SHENTON note, that attempt of systematization had as a main object: to channel the social disorder that reigned in Europe by the beginning of the XIX century (COWEN & SHENTON, 1996, p. 57).

That social disorder was not only a result of the French Revolution, but an effect of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, as well. The implementation of SMITH's economic theory, among other causes, determined the concentration of wealth and power in hands of a few capitalist industrials, the exploitation of workers, rural exodus, uncontrolled growth of cities, overcrowding, etc.; problems, all of them, which tried to solved from philosophical and ideological fields.

Even if –as it was said at the very beginning of this work– it is not possible to establish when exactly different authors began using the idea of *development* instead of the one of *progress*, it can be argued that by this period of time many European thinkers who were working on this systematization, were already using that concept in their projects.

a) DE SAINT-SIMON.

He lived between 1760 and 1825; he followed the ideas of DE CONDORCET and tried to push them even further. DE CONDORCET had claimed that history was valuable because it

²⁶ Nevertheless, not every author saw progress as something necessarily positive. Among the sceptics of progress of this period, we can mention, for example, ROUSSEAU, MALTHUS and SCHOPENHAUER, group that would be enlarged by the XIX century with the incorporation of BURCKHARDT, NIETZSCHE, SPENGLER, INGE, TOCQUEVILLE, WEBER and SOREL.

²⁷ DE CHATEAUBRIAND, *Le génie du christianisme*. Also see *Essai historique, politique et moral, sur les révolutions anciennes et modernes, considérées dans leur rapports avec la Révolution Française*.

provided data that made it possible to predict future events; but as his method was not entirely scientific, that kind of previsions were almost impossible.

To be able to predict the future of a specific society it was necessary to find the law that ruled its historical movement, and that was what DE SAINT-SIMON tried to figure out.

In his works he argued that that law was the one that follows: historical times of organization and construction, and those of critical periods and revolutions succeed each other alternately. That was why, according to him, as revolutionary times were over in France, a period of social construction and evolution should come, in which thinkers should play the role of main organizers²⁸.

DE SAINT-SIMON stated that the aim of development was the happiness of society. And as the working class was the most numerous one, the first step towards that goal should be to improve its general conditions, something that should be taken into account by every government as a top priority.

As BURY says (BURY, 1920, pp. 278/285), DE SAINT-SIMON's answer to that problem was socialism. Development became, thus, the development of the working class.

b) COMTE.

COMTE too dedicated his works to establish the laws that govern development. According to him, the essence of human progress is always of an intellectual nature. Hence, he argued that human mentality had evolved through history in three stages: theological, metaphysical and positive or scientific; he added that since all physical disciplines had already reached the scientific stage, it was time to create a true science of society which he first called *social physic*, and then *sociology*. His great objective was to demonstrate the basic rules of human behaviour within society and to include different topics closely linked to economy and politics.

According to him, sociology should be divided into two main fields: *social statics*, in order to study social relationships; and *social dynamics*, that should focus, mainly, on the principles that rule human progress.

He was a fervent supporter of the need to develop and he claimed that no true order could be neither established nor maintained if it was not fully compatible with progress, and that no true progress could be reached if it did not tend to the consolidation of order. Progress, from his point of view, was the *development of order* (COWEN & SHENTON, 1996, p. 7).

In his *Système de Politique Positive* (or *Traité de Sociologie*) he described in detail the utopia that would exist on Earth once men could find the way to set free from all beliefs, uses and regulations.

c) Development during the second half of XIX century.

Once the concept of development was introduced in the literature of the time, different authors dedicated their works to try to define what exactly should be understood by *development*. This gave way to a series of theories in natural as well as in social sciences.

²⁸Among other works, see: DE SAINT-SIMON *Mémoire sur la science de l'homme; Catéchisme politique des industriels* and *Vues sur la propriété et la législation*.
<https://archive.org/details/oeuvresdesaints00rodgoog>

It was the time of thinkers like PROUDHON, NEWMAN, MILL, MARX, SPENCER and DARWIN, among many others.

Some of them used the ideas of progress, development and even evolution as interchangeable concepts. Others, on the contrary, tried to distinguish among them²⁹.

While this happened in the world of thought, material and technological changes were also becoming evident. The ideas of progress and development could be clearly seen and touched in both the London Exposition of 1851³⁰, and the Chicago Exposition of 1893, events that aroused the interest of millions of people³¹.

The economic science world also made significant contributions that showed vital for the formulation of the idea of development. At the beginning of XX century SCHUMPETER popularized the concept of *creative destruction* as a means of describing the transformation process that comes with innovations. In 1912 he conceived a cyclic and irregular conception of economic growth (SCHUMPETER, 2004).

VI. Parentheses and reconsideration of development. The World Wars

By the end of XVII century PERRAULT had already pointed out that long-term wars often lead people to neglect their studies and to focus on more imperious needs, such as self-preservation; so after a period of several advances, other of decay and ignorance could overcome.

More than two centuries later history would confirm his theory. The two World Wars of the XX century implied a complete change in the political, economic and social sketch and, thus, in the scientific one as well.

Decolonization processes must be added to this list: they caused a deep reconsideration of the idea of development. As from the last third of the XIX century different European countries had begun a new colonialist expansion over territories located in other continents,

²⁹PROUDHON (France 1809-1865) was one of the fathers of anarchism; he described the idea of development as a road to freedom.

Cardinal NEWMAN's *An essay on the development of Christian doctrine* tried to distinguish the idea of development from that of progress and, thus, to detach his work from the positive line of thought. NEWMAN was born in England in 1801 and died in 1890.

MILL (England, 1806 – France, 1873) depicted his ideas referred to progress in his *Principles of political economy*.

SPENCER (England, 1820-1903) wrote *Social statics, or the conditions essential to human happiness* in 1850. In that work he claimed that the ideas on evolution should be applied to society.

MARX (Germany, 1818-England, 1883) proclaimed a determinist philosophy of history which should give way to the extinction of capitalism and to the birth of socialism. His was a philosophy of history that should lead to inevitable results (among his works, see *Capital* and, together with ENGELS, *The Communist Manifesto*).

In 1859 DARWIN (England 1809-1882) revolutionized the world of science as a whole with his theory on natural evolution (See *On the origin of species by means of natural selection; or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*).

SPENCER, MILL, PROUDHON and MARX used the ideas of *progress* and *development* as synonyms. DARWIN shared this point of view and used indistinctly *progress*, *development* and *evolution*.

³⁰According to the “Edinburgh Review”, the goal of this exposition was to grasp the essence of human progress (NISBET, 1979, p. 28)

³¹Although the Chicago Exposition was held amid one of the worst economic crisis in the USA, it was visited by more than 27.000.000 people (NISBET, 1979, p. 28).

mostly due to the economic and demographic crisis that Europe went through by the '70s of that century, and that led European powers to look for raw materials, cheap labour and new markets beyond the seas.

England, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany were the main characters of this period that would have one of its last chapters by the end of World War I, and the last one, by the end of World War II.

The fall of colonialism in its two stages brought along several consequences, some of them more dramatic than the ones existing before and during the European domination, but it contributed to the reconsideration of the idea of development as well.

Some authors like RIST argue that even though the noun had been previously used, it is only after World War II that we can seriously talk about a *theory of development* or about the *era of development* (RIST, 2008, pp. 47/79).

a) World War I and the League of Nations

At the end of World War I, in 1919 the League of Nations was created with the mission of reorganizing international relationships and maintaining peace. It was the first permanent worldwide political institution created to achieve what diplomacy among countries had failed to attain until then.

As RIST says, as far as the *theory of development* is concerned, the text of the Covenant that gave birth to that League was relevant in view of its articles 22 and 23.

It should be noted that the colonies (above all, the ones from Africa) played a key role in the negotiation of the drafting of the text, mainly because one of the central deliberations after the War focussed on what should be done with the German colonies and with the Ottoman territories³². On the one hand some European powers, such as Britain and France, intended to expand their dominance over the previous German territories; on the other, the United States of America –whose armed support had been an absolute precondition for the Allied victory– had already made clear both its anti-colonial opinion, as well as its support to all kinds of free trade³³.

³² The German colonies were Togoland, Kamerun, Southwest Africa, Tanganyika, Rwanda, German East Africa, Kionga Triangle and German New Guinea, which summed about 2.000.000 km². The Ottoman territories included, besides the current Republic of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine, among others.

³³ A clear illustration of USA's position were the Fourteen Points of President Woodrow Wilson, who held in Congress (on January 8th, 1918) the only possible basis of an enduring peace:

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable government whose title is to be determined.

The agreed solution tried to reach an answer somewhere in between those claims. Articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant made it clear that the colonies and territories that had been dominated by the losing side were "...inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world...". Because of that it "...should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation...". Thus, it was stated that the "...best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League."

At the same time it was added that the "...character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances (...) Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized..."³⁴.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

X. The people of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.

XI. Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

³⁴ The complete texts of both articles read:

ARTICLE 22.

These texts turned out to be particularly relevant because they explicitly introduced for the first time in the international thought the idea that there existed different stages of development and, therefore, differences between developed societies and those that had not yet reached that status.

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.

Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.

There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

In every case of mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

The degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.

A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.

ARTICLE 23.

Subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the Members of the League:

- (a) will endeavour to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women, and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend, and for that purpose will establish and maintain the necessary international organisations;
- (b) undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control;
- (c) will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children, and the traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs;
- (d) will entrust the League with the general supervision of the trade in arms and ammunition with the countries in which the control of this traffic is necessary in the common interest;
- (e) will make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of all Members of the League. In this connection, the special necessities of the regions devastated during the war of 1914-1918 shall be borne in mind;
- (f) will endeavour to take steps in matters of international concern for the prevention and control of disease.

This contrast between development and non-development or underdevelopment would yet undergo several steps, as it will be seen later on.

Even though the League of Nations finally failed in achieving its main goal, the scheme followed regarding the colonies did allow some of their political leaders to begin gaining relevance within the international arena and to raise several items related to the need of development of their territories.

Development had begun acquiring tones tightly linked to liberty³⁵.

b) World War II and the United Nations

RIST states that World War II turned everything upside down.

To be able to set free from Nazism, Europe had to place itself into the hands of USA and the USSR, powers both that had no interest whatsoever in protecting colonial empires. The centre of international politics shifted from Europe to these States.

Although the creation of the United Nations responded to similar reasons to those which had given birth to the League of Nations, the role played by USA would be crucial to stamp new and specific characteristics.

To begin with, the Head Office of the new international organization was no longer in Europe (the League had been settled in Geneva), but in New York.

Among its aims, there were included some that had more specifically to do with development. Article 55, a) of the UN Charter stated: “With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote: a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development” (underlining belongs to the author).

On the other hand, as from 1945, the idea of development was closely linked to the fall of colonialism and the need of sovereignty, because the meaning of national sovereignty could no longer have an actual meaning unless it was bonded to that of development understood as a progress towards social and economic equality which could not be denied to any nation on natural grounds. National sovereignty and development, so defined, came to be as closely related to each other as the principle of equality of rights was to individual freedom (KAY, 1975, pp. 1/2)³⁶.

³⁵In 1937, while addressing the Royal Empire Society in London, the Governor of Nigeria, BOURDILLON, said: “The theory of exploitation is dead (...) and the theory of development has taken its place” (COWEN & SHENTON, 1996, p. 6).

³⁶PALAZZO notes that during the second post-war period a profound decolonization process took place in Asia, Africa and other regions. He recalls that in 1941 the allies signed the Atlantic Charter in which they recognized the right of self-determination of all people as well as their right to choose their form of government, both rights to be included later on in the UN Charter, and which would bring as a consequence the approval, in 1960, of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (PALAZZO, 2008).

Consequently different colonies gained independence; among them, Burma and Philipines in 1946, and India, Pakistan and Ceylon in 1947³⁷.

VII. Development and underdevelopment

Once these independences took place the idea of development was no longer so tightly bonded to that of sovereignty; it began to achieve a new content, instead, now related to economic development.

a) The Marshall Plan

Officially called the European Recovery Plan, it was passed in 1948.

As TAMAMES recalls, during 1946 and 1947 the agro-industrial European production had fallen below levels previous to the war and it was insufficient to cover the needs of an increasing population.

Given the economic context and facing a complex political situation in Greece and Turkey, from where Britain had withdrawn its troops, due to their financial problems, Truman's government, through his Secretary of State, George Marshall, announced at Harvard, on June 5th, 1947, a programme that was designed to rehabilitate the economies of 17 European countries. The Secretary of State made it clear that this rehabilitation programme was extremely necessary and that it should be outlined by the European countries themselves. USA would, in turn, support it firmly (TAMAMES, 1982, pp. 25 and ff.).

The Marshall Plan helped in changing the economic and political face of Western Europe and it reinforced USA's position as number one world power something that, in addition, resulted in a curb on communist influence.

The idea of development was now tied to economic recovery and growth, with North America's backing.

b) Truman's Four Points Speech

On January 20th, 1949 President Truman delivered a speech that would determine the definite birth of the *theory of development* as a tandem to the idea of underdevelopment.

That speech had four points: in the first three the President assured that USA would back the UN, that it would continue helping Europe's reconstruction through the Marshall Plan, and that it would create an organization (it would be the NATO) to counteract the soviet threat.

Point number Four came to be innovative: he held that his country should embark on a "...bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas...".

³⁷Other of the main milestones of the end of colonialism was the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, north-west Vietnam. On November 20th, 1953, French paratroopers occupied Dien Bien Phu with the mission to build an air-ground base to harass the Viet-minh. But on May 7th, 1954, the base was attacked and stormed by General Giap's forces. That fall meant the end of French presence in Indochina (BALBÍN, 1982).

By that time, too, the Cold War between USA and the USSR began, when on March 2nd, 1954 the Soviets did not leave the north of Iran as it had been agreed, but remained there until November, when they finally left due to severe warnings from both USA and Great Britain.

RIST claims that the appearance of the term *underdevelopment* meant the introduction of the idea that something could be done to help a non-developed person or a society, develop; and to adopt the solution internationally. Underdevelopment did not appear as something opposite to development, but as something incomplete, so development acquired a transitive meaning: not only could things develop *per se*, but instead something could and should be done to make it happen.

An acceleration of growth was, therefore, the only logical way of bridging the gap between a developed country and an underdeveloped one. Relations between these two types of countries had become, thus, quantitative.

The tandem development-underdevelopment would keep a distance between different parts of the world, justified by the need of an intervention on the basis that held that a country could not remain unaltered when it faced extreme necessity. This implied a collective international effort based on the growth of production and a better use of natural and human resources.

The key to development was national productive growth so there was no longer need to answer some former questions such as how a society should organize itself, nor who must be the bearer of the means of production, nor what role should the State play.

Thereby, Point Four simply imposed a new standard to weigh development: Gross Domestic Product. This granted USA the first place in the list (RIST, 2008, pp. 70/77).

Within that context UN created a series of special agencies to promote development. On November 16th, 1949, its General Assembly approved the creation of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, made up of voluntary contributions of the member States, whose main aim was to finance the visit of technical experts and the schooling of the inhabitants of the less developed countries³⁸.

Meanwhile, a new expression closely linked to *underdeveloped countries* began to be used: the *Third World*³⁹.

c) Nonaligned countries. The Bandung Conference

It has already been said that as from decolonization leaders from the ex-colonies began to play an important role in the organization of international relationships.

Proof of this is the so-called Bandung Conference, held in that city between April 18th and 24th, 1955, which gave birth to the movement known as the nonaligned countries, or countries belonging to the Third World. The Conference was convened by the referents from India –

³⁸There were other regional institutions with similar goals: on February 25th, 1948, UN's Economic and Social Council created five regional economic commissions whose aim was to help governments investigate an analyse national and regional economic issues. The working areas were Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Middle-East and Latin America.

³⁹In fact, it is said that a French economist, Sauvy, was the one who coined the term, when drawing a parallel with the idea of the "third estate", in order to name those countries that did not belong to any of the blocs of countries involved in the Cold War. He wrote: "Nous parlons volontiers des deux mondes en presence, de leur guerre possible, de leur coexistence, etc., oubliant trop souvent qu'il en existe un troisième, le plus important, et en somme le premier dans la cronologie. C'est ensemble de ceux que l'on appelle, en style Nations Unies, les pays sous-développés" (SAUVY, 1952).

Nehru– and Indonesia –Sukarno–. It was attended by representatives of twenty nine countries from Asia and Africa. Its main goal was to favour economic and cultural cooperation. Nevertheless other points were agreed, such as the need to respect human rights, self-determination of the peoples, the principle of non-discrimination, and the promotion of peace, among other items.

Bandung marked the beginning of collective demands made by these countries in the fields of politics and development. In its final communiqué it can be read that the African-Asian Conference recognized the urgent need to promote the economic development of the region (point I) and, thus, recommended the establishment of a special fund in UN to promote this growth (point 3).

Reading the whole document it becomes quite clear that the idea of development continued to be referred to economic accumulation and growth, based on private investment and international assistance (RIST, 2008, pp. 81/85; HARO TEGGLEN, 1982, p. 133 and ff.).

This being so, within UN different institutions were created: SUNFED (Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development), in 1958; the World Bank began playing a main role and created the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to promote private investment, and founded the International Development Association to grant loans at very low rates for the poorest countries. Besides, regional banks for development were created.

VIII. Economic development and human development

Thus, the '70s were fundamental for the consolidation of the idea of economic development and many of the steps taken by the international society confirmed it.

However, that meaning of progress in an economic sense began to undergo a new stage: it broadened its contents and embraced other notions.

a) UN's "First Development Decade"

In 1961 the president of the United States of America, John F. Kennedy addressed UN's General Assembly. In his speech he launched a proposal for the establishment of a "development decade" in order to narrow the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries, to accelerate modernization processes, and to free humanity from poverty.

A year later, by resolution 1710, UN's General Assembly established the '60s as the "Development Decade. A programme for international economic cooperation" and issued the document "Development decade. Proposals for action". In its introduction Secretary-General U-Thant stated: "At the opening of the United Nations development decade, we are beginning to understand the real aims of development and the nature of the development process. We are learning that development concerns not only man's material needs, but also the improvement of the social conditions of his life and his broad human aspirations. Development is not just economic growth, it is growth plus change"⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ <http://research.un.org/en/docs/dev/1960-1970>

However, UN's specific goal ended up being a purely economic one: to try to reach a minimum annual rate of growth of aggregate national income of 5% at the end of the decade, for each underdeveloped country⁴¹.

In the same order UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) was created in 1964, with the aim to help developing countries to benefit from several commercial, investing and growing opportunities. A year later SUNFED merged with World Bank's Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and on November 22nd, 1965, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was created, under the motto *Serving Progress*.

Nevertheless, by the end of that decade and even with these institutional advances within the international community, most countries belonging to the Third World had not experimented significant signs of development⁴².

b) UN's "Second Development Decade". Basic needs theory

The '70s were a historical moment in which several thinkers especially, once again, economists, introduced a critical view about economic growth taken as the main or exclusive goal of development.

On October 24th, 1970 UN's General Assembly established the "Second Development Decade"⁴³. During that period major conferences on racism, women, law of the sea, water and the environment, among others, expanded the conversation within the UN on development.

Thus, development began being understood in a more comprehensive and global way.

This change, for example, led the president of the World Bank, ROBERT MC NAMARA to include in his annual speech some concepts that would gain force some time later within the theory of development. On September 25th, 1972 he warned the Board of Governors that the increase of the gross income of the developing countries did not necessarily mean that their populations were anyhow better than a decade before. He remarked "We are talking about hundreds of millions of desperately poor people throughout the whole of the developing world. We are talking about 40% of entire populations. Development is simply not reaching them in any decisive degree. Their countries are growing in gross economic terms. But their individual lives are stagnating in human terms", and he added "If the rich nations do not act – through both aid and trade– to diminish the widening imbalance between their own collective wealth and the aggregate poverty of the poor nations, development simply cannot succeed within any acceptable time frame. The community of nations will only become more dangerously fragmented into the privileged and the deprived, the self-satisfied and the frustrated, the complacent and the bitter. It will not be an international atmosphere conducive

⁴¹ "The United Nations development decade. Proposals for action":

[https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1710%20\(XVI\)](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1710%20(XVI))

Also, JOLLY et al. (ed.), 2004, pp. 85/87.

⁴²This situation led, for example, to the Arusha Declaration, adopted by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) on February 6th, 1967. The president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, decided that it was time to tackle the development issue, and he suggested countries should draw on their own forces. Suddenly, the idea of self-confidence entered into the development vocabulary, at least, in that part of the world (RIST, 2008, p. 123).

⁴³ A/RES/2626 (XXV)

to tranquillity. The developed nations, then, must do more to promote at least minimal equity in the distribution of wealth among nations”.

Thus, he urged international institutions to establish growing goals in terms of human basic needs, tackling problems of malnutrition, housing, health, education and employment (MC NAMARA, 1981, p. 228 and ff.).

The international economic situation also helped in this change of approach in the theory of development. The so-called October War in the Middle East, in 1973 led to an embargo imposed by Arab oil producers to punish the West in response to support for Israel in the Yom Kippur war against Egypt. This caused the price of crude to rise from \$3 per barrel to \$12 by 1974. The price of petrol rocketed, making everything more expensive.

This crisis led to the approval by UN of the Declaration for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order⁴⁴ in 1974.

During the same year a new topic increased the vocabulary on development: caring for the environment as a key tool for growth. The Cocoyoc Declaration, adopted in Mexico, identified the social and economic factors that were leading to environmental degradation and promoted the merging of UNCTAD with a programme especially dedicated to environmental caring, the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme).

By then both the contents and the aim of the idea of development had become more complex. It was no longer a question of just reaching economic growth; the idea began to gain anthropocentric aspects as it was trying to satisfy basic needs first, including environmental caring.

In 1975 the so-called Hammarskjöld Report –intentionally titled “What now?”– prepared within UNEP with the occasion of the 7th Special Session of UN General Assembly, pointed out that development was not a simple economic process, but a complex unity that had to emerge within each society, each culture and could not be reduced to an imitation of the so-called developed countries. The report concluded that even though there was not a universal formula for development, whatever its contents, it should tend to satisfy the basic needs of the poorest sectors of the population. And it added that development should take into consideration ecologic restrictions. In its own words: “Only one Earth: the same challenge faces Third World and industrialized countries, poor and rich alike: to discover the roads to another development. Such roads will necessarily be diverse by virtue or different initial conditions, as well as cultural and political preferences, the range of possible futures, and the creativity and inventiveness deployed. All, however, will be based upon the same fundamental values: respect for man, equality, self-reliance, the right to diversity, the promotion of ecologically prudent technologies.

One common concern: the creation of an international environment favourable to the search for another development.

One hope: the establishment of a system of cooperation between states and nations designed to render this task less difficult or, at least designed to eliminate exogenous obstacles...”⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ A/RES/S-6/3201

A year later, another report, this time presented to the Club of Rome by a group of about twenty experts from developing as well as developed countries, firmly emphasized that development, distribution and improved welfare would require a good deal of economic growth as well as the satisfaction of basic needs. Under the title “Reshaping the International Order”, the report detailed the main components of welfare, which were summarised as “a life of dignity and wellbeing for all”. The requirements for this maximum welfare were summed up under the headings: the satisfaction of basic needs of food, shelter, education, recreation, and participatory development. According to the RIO Report, to attain maximum welfare an equitable social order would be needed, and the first priority ought to be given to the eradication of poverty (TINBERGEN -coord.-, DOLMAN -ed.-, VAN ETTINGER -dir.-, 1976).

The basic needs theory was officially adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) during that same year 1976. The Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution, Social Progress and the International Division of Labour took seriously into consideration that by then, in spite of the immense efforts that had been made, both at the national and at the international levels, a significant proportion of mankind continued to eke out an existence in the most abject conditions of material deprivation. More than 700 million people suffered acute poverty and were destitute.

The conclusions of that Conference were presented by the Director-General of the ILO under the title: “Employment, growth and basic needs: A one world problem”. Basic needs were defined as the minimum standard of living which a society should set for the poorest groups of its people. According to this presentation: “The satisfaction of basic needs means meeting the minimum requirements of a family for personal consumption: food, shelter, clothing; it implies access to essential services, such as safe drinking-water, sanitation, transport, health and education; it implies that each person available for and willing to work should have an adequately remunerated job. It should further imply the satisfaction of needs of a more qualitative nature: a healthy, humane and satisfying environment, and popular participation in the making of decisions that affect the lives and livelihood of the people and individual freedoms. The satisfaction of an absolute level of basic needs as so defined should be placed within a broader framework, namely the fulfilment of basic human rights, which are not only ends in themselves but also contribute to the attainment of other goals. The concept of basic needs is of universal applicability (...) Basic needs are therefore in large part a relative concept; but there are also certain minimum levels of personal consumption and access to social services which should be universally regarded as essential to a decent life, and which should therefore be looked upon as minimum targets for raising the living standards of the very poor for the entire international community”.

The document stressed: “The approach which is now proposed to this Conference is that development planning should include, as an explicit goal, the satisfaction of an absolute level of basic needs. This proposal goes somewhat further than the intention, already expressed by many governments, to concentrate development measures more directly on the poorest groups of the population. The definition of a set of basic needs, together constituting a minimum

⁴⁵ Hammar skjöld Foundation, *What now: the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report prepared on the occasion of the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly 1975*, “Development Dialogue”, Special Issue, 1975.

standard of living, would at one and the same time assist in the identification of these groups and provide concrete targets against which to measure progress”⁴⁶.

As can be observed, within the UN and through its different institutions the *theory of development* had gradually become the *theory of basic needs*.

c) At the dawn of the *theory of human development*

The ‘80s: Economic adjustment and development

Meanwhile, various authors born in Bandung block of countries were lecturing on these topics and their voices began to be heard.

By the late ‘70s, AMARTYA SEN –an economist from India who would later be a Nobel Prize laureate– delivered a lecture at Stanford University titled “Equality of what?” in which he questioned different theories on equality and introduced a new series of ideas based on equality on basic capabilities.

SEN considered his proposition as a natural extension of JOHN RAWLS’ ideas on justice but he emphasised that the focus of attention should change. He stated: “It is arguable that what is missing in all this framework is some notion of ‘basic capabilities’: a person being able to do certain basic things (...) Primary goods suffers from fetishist handicap in being concerned with goods, and even though the list of goods is specified in abroad and inclusive way, encompassing rights, liberties, opportunities, income, wealth, and the social basis of self-respect, it still is concerned with good things rather than with what these good things do to human beings. Utility, on the other hand, is concerned with what these things do to human beings, but uses a metric that focusses not on the person’s capabilities but on his mental reaction. There is something still missing in the combined list of primary goods and utilities (...) I believe what is at issue is the interpretation of needs in the form of basic capabilities. This interpretation of needs and interests is often implicit in the demand for equality. This type of equality I shall call ‘basic capability equality’” (SEN, 1979).

Meanwhile, elsewhere authors continued studying development from a basic needs approach, in senses that were becoming similar to SEN’s ideas.

In 1980 a “Programme for Survival” was approved within the Independent Commission on International Development Issues. The report examined the consequence for less developed countries of the changes in international relations and the world economy in those years including trade, financial, and monetary issues as well as the problems of world food supply and energy. It included an analysis of development issues followed by a set of recommendations for the reform and restructuring of the world economic system around the principles of equality, fair balance and mutual benefit. Its uniqueness lied in its central theme of 'mutuality of interest' capable of revitalizing the flagging North-South negotiations⁴⁷.

A year later, the World Bank at the instance of its president, MCNAMARA, created a specific commission to work on that topic. Its final report known as “Basic needs approach” defined it as an attempt to provide opportunities for full physical, mental and social

⁴⁶ http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/1976/76B09_199.pdf

⁴⁷ <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6638.pdf>

development of human personality and for generating the means to attain that goal (STREETEN – BURKI – STEWART, 1981).

Nevertheless, reality collapsed once more due to the 1982 Mexican crisis which spread to other parts of the world, specially, to USA's stock market. Consequently international public policies were redesigned coming closer to economic patterns once again and leaving human focus aside.

It was the period of new theories on structural adjustments which, as a whole, suggested that it was first necessary to cope with the crisis through adjustments in macroeconomics, in order to resume talks about development some time later. These changes were meant to restore equilibrium and harmony in the international system. But to achieve that aim it was necessary for different countries to follow IMF's indications.

RIST argues that monetary disorder meant that economies had to be adjusted (especially those of the debtor countries) and trade balances corrected. The budgetary austerity and market liberalization involved in adjustment policies often meant drastic cuts in public service, in subsidies and in health and education benefits. As he puts it: "Well-being had to be adjusted downwards to the imperatives of the market economy" (RIST, 2008, p. 173).

Simultaneously, and given the circumstances, several authors were dedicating their efforts to broaden development vocabulary once again, by including topics related to women's and children's roles, indiscriminate growth of population, housing problems, human rights, political freedoms, corruption, etc. This led to alternative studies within UN focused on new aspects of poverty and its consequences.

In 1987 UN's Commission on Environment and Development produced a report titled "Our Common Future" where it stressed that poverty was evil in itself and that it was no longer possible to talk about inevitable poverty⁴⁸.

d) The '90s. AMARTYA SEN, MAHBUB UL-HAQ and UNDP

1990 was a landmark in the *theory of development*.

Several economic and political relevant events, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 led to a reconsideration of global phenomena as well as of the ideas of welfare and development.

In 1990 the South Commission, chaired by NYERERE, presented a report called "The Challenge to the South" where it was stressed, once again, that economic growth *per se* was no guarantee for a human centred development. Within this report "development is a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation. It is a movement away from political, economic or social oppression (...) And it is a process of growth, a movement essentially springing from within the society that is developing. Development therefore implies growing self-reliance, both individual and collective. The base for a nation's development must be its own resources, both human and material, fully used to meet its own needs (...) Development is based on self-reliance and is

⁴⁸ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>

self-directed; without these characteristics there can be no genuine development. But a nation is its people. Development has therefore to be an effort of, by and for the people. True development has to be people-centred. It has to be directed at the fulfilment of human potential and the improvement of the social and economic well-being of the people. And it has to be designed to secure what the people themselves perceive to be their social and economic interests...⁴⁹.

In 1990, as well, and in the same vein, UNDP launched its first annual report under the title “Human Development Report”. This implied introducing a new approach for advancing human wellbeing. Human development, or the human development approach, according to its launching, was about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It implied an approach focused on people and their opportunities and choices.

In its background the works of both AMARTYA SEN and MAHBUB UL-HAQ were decisive.

SEN had continued working on the *theory of development*. As it had happened after the French Revolution with the need to determine the meaning and rules for progress, in the early ‘90s something of the sort arose regarding the possibilities of measuring development, not only taking into account economic data, but items that would especially reflect human development. One of SEN’s most important contributions was that he claimed that human development could and should be quantified and measured in order to monitor its evolution over time.

Within UN his ideas were followed by MAHBUB UL-HAQ, who translated SEN’s concepts into achievable policies by introducing the Human Development Reports, as well as the Human Development Index. Thus, in 1990 UNDP presented its first annual report about the *human dimension of development*.

Right from its beginning the report states that amidst the international political events “we are rediscovering the essential truth that people must be at the centre of all development. The purpose of development is to offer people more options. One of their options is access to income –not as an end in itself but as a means to acquiring human wellbeing. But there are other options as well, including long life, knowledge, political freedom, personal security, community participation and guaranteed human rights. People cannot be reduced to a single dimension as economic creatures. What makes them and the study of the development process fascinating is the entire spectrum through which human capabilities are expanded and utilised” (Human Development Report –HDR– 1990, p. iii).

And it added: “The central message of this Human Development Report is that while growth in national production (GDP) is absolutely necessary to meet all essential human objectives, what is important is to study how this growth translates –or fails to translate– into human development in various societies” (HDR 1990, p. iii).

According to the report, “the process of development should at least create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. Human development thus concerns more than the formation of human

⁴⁹ The Report of the South Commission “The challenge to the South”, pp. 10/11.

capabilities, such as improved health or knowledge. It also concerns the use of these capabilities, be it for work, leisure or political and cultural activities. And if the scales of human development fail to balance the formation and use of human capabilities, much human potential will be frustrated. Human freedom is vital for human development. People must be free to exercise their choices in properly functioning markets, and they must have a decisive voice in shaping their political frameworks” (HDR 1990, p. 1).

Regarding the way in which human development was measured, it affirmed: “human development is measured in this Report not by the yardstick of income alone but by a more comprehensive index -called the human development index- reflecting life expectancy, literacy and command over the resources to enjoy a decent standard of living. At this stage, the index is an approximation for capturing the many dimensions of human choices” (HDR, p. 1).

For the first component –longevity– life expectancy at birth was the indicator.

For the second key component literacy figures were considered to be “only a crude reflection of access to education, particularly to the good quality education so necessary for productive life in modern society”.

The third key component of human development –command over resources needed for a decent living–was considered the most difficult to measure simply, because it required data on access to land, credit, income and other resources, but “given the scarce data on many of these variables, we must for the time being make the best use of an income indicator. The most readily available income indicator –per capita income– has wide national coverage” (HDR 1990, p. 12).

The human development index, the report stressed, “ranks countries very differently from the way GNP *per capita* ranks them. The reason is that GNP *per capita* is only one of life's many dimensions, while the human development index captures other dimensions as well. Sri Lanka, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Tanzania and Thailand, among others, do far better on their human development ranking than on their income ranking, showing that they have directed their economic resources more towards some aspects of human progress. But Oman, Gabon, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal and Cameroon, among others, do considerably worse on their human development ranking than on their income ranking, showing that they have yet to translate their income into corresponding levels of human development” (HDR 1990, pp. 15/16).

On a different note, the report recognized some limitations in measuring human development, as, for example, in measuring freedom: “Human development is incomplete without human freedom. Throughout history, people have been willing to sacrifice their lives to gain national and personal liberty (...) The valuation we put on similar human development achievements in different countries will be quite different depending on whether they were accomplished in a democratic or an authoritarian framework (...) While the need for qualitative judgement is clear, there is no simple quantitative measure available yet to capture the many aspects of human freedom. To some extent, however, the human development index (HDI) captures some aspects of human freedom (...) What is needed is considerable empirical work to quantify various indicators of human freedom and to explore further the link between human freedom and human development” (HDR 1990, p. 16).

The main concluding key issues in planning, financing and implementing human development strategies in the 1990s, according to the report, were four: “First, given the derivative but a biding significance of goods and services in expanding human options, countries must broaden the commodity base for national prosperity (...) Second, public action is often necessary to supply social services and make them available to the entire population. This applies particularly to education and health services, including water supply and sanitation (...) Third, human potential will be wasted unless it is developed and used. Economic development should create a suitable environment for the use of human talents (...) Freedom, therefore, is the most vital component of human development strategies. People must be free to actively participate in economic and political life setting developmental priorities, formulating policies' implementing projects and choosing the form of government to influence their cultural environment. Such freedom ensures that social goals do not become mechanical devices in the hands of paternalistic governments. If human development is the outer shell, freedom is its priceless pearl” (HDR 1990, pp. 83/84).

Finally, a special focus was made on urbanization and human development, mainly because of environmental issues. On that point, the report stated: “To reverse urban environmental deterioration in the 1990s, the governments of developing countries must: Improve municipal waste collection coverage and efficiency; adopt environmentally sound municipal waste treatment and disposal practices; coordinate pollution control actions across levels of government and urban subsectors; incorporate environmental planning and management techniques into citywide strategic planning and implementation; facilitate the participation of the private sector in mobilising resources for environmental improvement. Rapid urbanisation is transforming the developing countries, creating ever new problems but also offering ever new opportunities. To solve the growing problems of cities and to unleash the many possibilities for human development is going to depend heavily on better urban management, considerably better” (HDR 1990, p. 95).

Through this 1990 report, the idea of human development technically broadened UN's official language.

In 1992 another decisive addition took place when *sustainable development* became the goal of the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, which produced several official documents, among them: the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Forest Principles and the so-called Agenda 21, a document of 800 pages, known as the *Bible for Sustainable Development*.

Meanwhile, and towards the end of that decade, SEN resumed the elaboration of his theory and published *Development as Freedom* in 1999, insisting mainly on two concepts: freedom and capabilities and the interrelation and interdependence between them.

He stressed the relation between incomes and achievements, between commodities and capabilities, “between our economic wealth and our ability to live as we would like. While there is a connection between opulence and achievements, the linkage may or may not be very strong and may well be extremely contingent on other circumstances. The issue is not the ability to live forever (...) but the capability to live really long and to have a good life while alive rather than a life of misery and unfreedom –things that would be strongly valued and desired by nearly all of us. The gap between the two perspectives (that is between an exclusive

concentration on economic wealth and a broader focus on the lives we can lead) is a major issue in conceptualizing development” (SEN, 1999, pp. 13/14).

According to him, “we generally have excellent reasons for wanting more income or wealth. This is not because income and wealth are desirable for their own sake, but because, typically, they are admirable general-purpose means for having more freedom to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value (...) The ends and means of development require examination a scrutiny for a fuller understanding of the development process; it is simply not adequate to take as our basic objective just the maximization of income or wealth (...) Development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy. Expanding the freedoms that we have reasons to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered, but also allows us to be fuller social persons” (SEN, 1999, pp. 14/15).

That is why the analysis of development presented in that book treated “the freedoms of individuals as the basic building blocks. Attention is thus paid particularly to the expansion of the ‘capabilities’ of persons to lead the kind of lives they value and have reason to value. These capabilities can be enhanced by public policy, but also, on the other side, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public. The two-way relationship is central to the analysis presented here. There are two distinct reasons for the crucial importance of individual freedom in the concept of development, related respectively to evaluation and effectiveness (...) Having greater freedom to do the things one has reason to value is 1) significant in itself for the person’s overall freedom, and 2) important in fostering the person's opportunity to have valuable outcomes. Both are relevant to the evaluation of freedom of the members of the society and thus crucial to the assessment of the society's development” (SEN, 1999, p. 18).

All in all, the author argued that development should be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.

Both Sen’s and Mahbub Ul-Haq’s ideas would have broad projections within UN and in the academic world, even to the present day⁵⁰.

e) The new millennium

At the turn of the millennium 189 UN country members adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, which contained eight development goals that should be reached by 2015. These were: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and to empower women; to reduce child mortality; to improve maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; to ensure environmental sustainability; to promote global partnership for development. According to UN the last one contains all the others and was agreed by all the countries in the world.

⁵⁰MARTHA NUSSBAUM, SABINA ALKYRE, JAY DRYDYK, SÉVERINE DENEULIN, TONY ATKINSON, INGRID ROBEYNS, among many others have continued expanding these authors’ ideas and have been working on different aspects of human development and capabilities, mainly through the Human Development and Capabilities Association (a global community of academics and practitioners that seeks to build an intellectual community around the ideas of human development and the capability approach, with members from more than 70 countries worldwide) whose first president was, precisely, AMARTYA SEN.

In 2015 UN's Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon presented the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report. The report held that the MDGs "helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet. They generated new and innovative partnerships, galvanized public opinion and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals. By putting people and their immediate needs at the forefront, the MDGs reshaped decision-making in developed and developing countries alike". Yet, it added that "inequalities persist and that progress has been uneven. The world's poor remain overwhelmingly concentrated in some parts of the world. In 2011, nearly 60 per cent of the world's one billion extremely poor people lived in just five countries. Too many women continue to die during pregnancy or from childbirth-related complications. Progress tends to bypass women and those who are lowest on the economic ladder or are disadvantaged because of their age, disability or ethnicity. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain pronounced", for that reason it also concluded that despite many successes, the poorest and most vulnerable people are being left behind, and that "looking ahead to the next fifteen years, there is no question that we can deliver on our shared responsibility to put an end to poverty, leave no one behind and create a world of dignity for all" (MDGs Report 2015, p.3).

As the MDGs era came to a conclusion UN's General Assembly adopted, on September 25th, 2015⁵¹, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which included 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that shall be achieved by that year.

The goals are: no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; make cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; responsible consumption and production; take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; care for life below water; care for life on land; promote peace, justice and strong institutions; strengthen the global partnership to achieve the goals.

The goals address the needs of people in both developed and developing countries, emphasizing that no one should be left behind. Broad and ambitious in scope, the Agenda addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental, as well as important aspects related to peace, justice and effective institutions⁵².

IX. Human development sceptics

In spite of the strong and broad support that the *theory of human development* in its PNUD version received worldwide, some authors began to question its effectiveness, mainly due to the figures of global poverty and inequalities which continue affecting large populations in developing countries.

In essence these authors do coincide with the general contents and aims of the theory, but they strongly disbelieve they can be put into practice.

⁵¹ A/RES/71/1.

⁵²<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/12/sustainable-development-goals-kick-off-with-start-of-new-year/>

In that vein both the *théories de la décroissance* and the *post-development theories* have been followed by a good number of thinkers.

a) Théories de la décroissance

As RIST recalls, the English names for these theories have been *degrowth theories* or *downscaling theories* (RIST, 2008, p. 240).

Although NICHOLAS GEORGESCU-ROEGEN is considered as one of the fathers of the *décroissance* due to his book *The entropy law and the economic process*, written in 1971, the *théories de la décroissance* arose in France by the early XXI century.

There are several versions of these kinds of ideas, but all of them essentially focus on economic and environmental arguments. They claim that indefinite economic growth is not only impossible to achieve, but devastating, as well, both respecting social relations and environment. Thus, they propose a reduction in the rates of growth⁵³.

b) Post-development theories

Nevertheless, RIST argues, as among *décroissance* authors there are to be found development sceptics (in UN development version); others seriously concerned with the environment; citizens dissatisfied with high levels of consumption; and libertarians anxious to *beat the system*, as well, the lines of their arguments are quite dissimilar. That is the reason why these thinkers have not found it easy to bring their followers together and have, therefore, lost strength without having been able to embody into academic structures or more complete practices.

On their behalf, the *post-development theories* tend to show that human development thinkers could not achieve a harmonious and equitable coexistence. They criticise the model imposed by the US and Europe, and the still persistent development-North, underdevelopment-South antinomy⁵⁴.

They differ from *décroissance* authors, because they recognize the inevitability of growth, so they no longer focus on trying to avoid it, but on trying to provide it with a different substance.

All in all, they advocate for an informal, plural and locally-based economy, but they haven't been able to agree on a unique line of argument, either.

Among *post-development* authors, ESCOBAR, for example, holds that development should no longer be the main organising principle of social life; MOHARTY, that development should not only be defined by Western values; SHIVA, RAHNEMA and ESTEVA have chosen to revalue vernacular cultures and have insisted on the importance of social movements; and BEBBINGTON has made a call to build a new idea of development that might, at the same time, be alternative and developmental, critical and practicable, focused on sustainability⁵⁵.

⁵³Among others, LATOUCHE 1986, p. 706/708; LATOUCHE 2006; CAMILLE 2005; ARIÈS 2005; TERTRAIS 2006.

⁵⁴Among others, ESCOBAR 1995; ESTEVA 1980; ESTEVA et al. 2014.

⁵⁵ Review based on ESCOBAR 2005, p. 17/31.

X. Progress and development in the social doctrine of the Church

Right from its beginnings Christianity held that the individual has its own sphere of liberty and fundamental rights.

Therefore, the ideas that arose regarding progress and development and their impact on human beings and societies have always attracted the attention of the Church.

Nevertheless, the incorporation of these concepts in official documents arrived with some delay and great caution and it was only from Pope Paul VI onwards that the social doctrine of the Church focused on their meaning, scope and consequences⁵⁶.

a) Caution and concern

The end of the XVIII century was marked by technological, economic, political and social events which led –as it has been said– to the elaboration of the most varied theories regarding the progress of mankind.

The Industrial and the French Revolutions led to the genesis of the first socialist ideas which tried to organize Europe by the beginning of the XIX century and to overcome the Manchesterian liberal scheme. By the second half of that century these theories became stronger together with different scientific advances.

Within this context –which was also marked by a strong laicism, sometimes, even by anti-clericalism– the Church adopted a cautious attitude towards the ideas of progress and development; caution that sometimes led to a direct condemnation of these new theories with a few exceptions, such as the works of DE CHATEAUBRIAND and NEWTON who tried to link progress and development to Christian doctrine.

Pius VII (Pope from 1800 to 1823), Gregory XVI (Pope from 1831 to 1846) and Pius IX (Pope from 1846 to 1878) criticized the new ideas which, according to them, were based on deep mistakes that led to the opposition and persecution of the catholic doctrine⁵⁷.

b) The Industrial Revolution, social issues and the social doctrine of the Church

The negative impacts that the Industrial Revolution had on the poorest social levels made some members of the Church analyse the new situation.

The Bishop of Mainz, WILHELM VON KETTELER, is known as the initiator of the German catholic social movement. He was famous for his preachings on the social issues of the time and had a strong influence on Popes like Leo XIII.

Leo XIII, with his *Rerum Novarum* –“New Things”, subtitled “On capital and labour”– opened the Church to global society (CÁRCEL ORTÍ 2009, p. 17).

⁵⁶ The caution in adopting these ideas did not prevent the Church –especially some of its institutions and congregations– from working to protect the most vulnerable groups, those who had been left behind from the “benefits” of progress. Such the case of the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Augustinians and the Jesuits, as well as that of men like DON ORIONE and DON BOSCO and institutions as *Caritas Internationalis*, whose aim was not only limited to fight hunger and poverty, but also extended to working for the inclusion of the poorest social classes, especially by promoting education.

⁵⁷ See Pius VII’s Apostolic Letter *Post tam diuturnas*; Gregory XVI’s Encyclical *Mirari vos*, subtitled “On modern mistakes”; Pius IX’s *Nosceitis et nobiscum*, *Quanta cura* and the *Syllabus of errors*.

In that document he claimed that “some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class: for the ancient workingmen's guilds were abolished in the last century, and no other protective organization took their place. Public institutions and the laws set aside the ancient religion. Hence, by degrees it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. The mischief has been increased by rapacious usury (...) To this must be added that the hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself”⁵⁸.

Thus, it was added that: “The foremost duty, therefore, of the rulers of the State should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, shall be such as of themselves to realize public well-being and private prosperity. This is the proper scope of wise statesmanship and is the work of the rulers. Now a State chiefly prospers and thrives through moral rule, well-regulated family life, respect for religion and justice, the moderation and fair imposing of public taxes, the progress of the arts and of trade, the abundant yield of the land-through everything, in fact, which makes the citizens better and happier. Hereby, then, it lies in the power of a ruler to benefit every class in the State, and amongst the rest to promote to the utmost the interests of the poor; and this in virtue of his office, and without being open to suspicion of undue interference - since it is the province of the commonwealth to serve the common good. And the more that is done for the benefit of the working classes by the general laws of the country, the less need will there be to seek for special means to relieve them (...) There is another and deeper consideration which must not be lost sight of. As regards the State, the interests of all, whether high or low, are equal. The members of the working classes are citizens by nature and by the same right as the rich; they are real parts, living the life which makes up, through the family, the body of the commonwealth; and it need hardly be said that they are in every city very largely in the majority. It would be irrational to neglect one portion of the citizens and favour another, and therefore the public administration must duly and solicitously provide for the welfare and the comfort of the working classes (...) If we turn not to things external and material, the first thing of all to secure is to save unfortunate working people from the cruelty of men of greed, who use human beings as mere instruments for money-making. It is neither just nor human so to grind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies”⁵⁹.

As from *Rerum Novarum* other documents became important when referring to social issues, such as the Social Code of Malinas (1927), Pius XI's *Quadragesimo anno* (1931), Pius XII's radio messages (1953), John XXIII's *Mater et magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963).

c) Development and human development in the social doctrine of the Church

It was Pope Paul VI who began writing steadily about development first, and human development, later on. He was influenced by thinkers as LEBRET, PERROUX and MARITAIN

⁵⁸ Pt. 3.

⁵⁹ Pts. 32, 33 and 42.

and was convinced that John XXIII's legacy through the Second Vatican Council should be deepened on the subject of development.

In his *Populorum progressio* (1967), subtitled "On the development of peoples", he held right from the beginning that "The progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the Church. This is particularly true in the case of those peoples who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance; of those who are seeking a larger share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are consciously striving for fuller growth"⁶⁰.

The whole document was meant to analyse the many problems that arose worldwide regarding development and the inequalities between those countries and peoples more powerful and those less developed. He advocated for an integral development for men and women, and stressed, following LEBRET's ideas: "The development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man (...) What counts for us is man—each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole"⁶¹. He also pointed out the responsibilities of all men and women regarding the promotion of mankind's supportive development and marked the obstacles to be removed.

One of the best-known quotations of this document is the title of its points 76 and 77: "Development, the new name for peace". According to the Pope, "Extreme disparity between nations in economic, social and educational levels provokes jealousy and discord, often putting peace in jeopardy (...) When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man's spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power (...) Nations are the architects of their own development, and they must bear the burden of this work; but they cannot accomplish it if they live in isolation from others. Regional mutual aid agreements among the poorer nations, broader based programs of support for these nations, major alliances between nations to coordinate these activities—these are the road signs that point the way to national development and world peace"⁶².

Accordingly, he concluded: "Finally, a word to those of you who have heard the cries of needy nations and have come to their aid. We consider you the promoters and apostles of genuine progress and true development. Genuine progress does not consist in wealth sought for personal comfort or for its own sake; rather it consists in an economic order designed for the welfare of the human person (...) We bless you with all our heart, and we call upon all men of good will to join forces with you as a band of brothers. Knowing, as we all do, that development means peace these days, what man would not want to work for it with every ounce of his strength? No one, of course. So we beseech all of you to respond wholeheartedly to Our urgent plea, in the name of the Lord"⁶³.

⁶⁰Pt. 1.

⁶¹ Pt. 14.

⁶² Pts. 76 & 77.

⁶³ Pts. 86 & 87.

Pope John Paul II also addressed the subject of development in his Encyclicals *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus*, as well as Pope Benedict XVI in *Spe Salvi* and *Caritas in Veritate*.

Finally, Pope Francis has dedicated parts of some of his works to this issue⁶⁴. In *Laudato Si'* (2015), subtitled “On care for our common home”, he focused on several items related to development, the importance of sustainability and the need of taking care of the environment.

He claims that the “urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest”⁶⁵. And points to “the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected, the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology, the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress, the value proper to each creature, the human meaning of ecology, the need for forthright and honest debate, the serious responsibility of international and local policy, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle”⁶⁶.

Francis stresses that “inequity affects not only individuals but entire countries; it compels us to consider an ethics of international relations. A true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time (...)The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world (...) The developed countries ought to help pay this debt by significantly limiting their consumption of non-renewable energy and by assisting poorer countries to support policies and programmes of sustainable development. The poorest areas and countries are less capable of adopting new models for reducing environmental impact because they lack the wherewithal to develop the necessary processes and to cover their costs. We must continue to be aware that, regarding climate change, there are *differentiated responsibilities*”⁶⁷.

He adds “It is right to rejoice in these advances and to be excited by the immense possibilities which they continue to open up before us, for science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity (...)How can we not feel gratitude and appreciation for this progress, especially in the fields of medicine, engineering and communications?”⁶⁸. Nevertheless “There is a tendency to believe that every increase in power

⁶⁴ See *Evangelii Gaudium*, pts. 52/60 and pts. 186, 192, 202, 203 &206.

⁶⁵ Pt. 13.

⁶⁶ Pt. 16.

⁶⁷ Pts. 51 & 52.

⁶⁸ Pt. 102.

means an increase of ‘progress’ itself (...)as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such (...) our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience”⁶⁹. “...economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings. Finance overwhelms the real economy. The lessons of the global financial crisis have not been assimilated, and we are learning all too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration (...)the market cannot guarantee integral human development and social inclusion (...)we have a sort of ‘super development’ of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation, while we are all too slow in developing economic institutions and social initiatives which can give the poor regular access to basic resources. We fail to see the deepest roots of our present failures, which have to do with the direction, goals, meaning and social implications of technological and economic growth”⁷⁰.

However, the Pope encourages mankind: “Yet we can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral”⁷¹; “we need to grow in the conviction that a decrease in the pace of production and consumption can at times give rise to another form of progress and development”⁷²; “if in some cases sustainable development were to involve new forms of growth, then in other cases, given the insatiable and irresponsible growth produced over many decades, we need also to think of containing growth by setting some reasonable limits and even retracing our steps before it is too late”⁷³.

And he concludes “For new models of progress to arise, there is a need to change ‘models of global development’; this will entail a responsible reflection on ‘the meaning of the economy and its goals with an eye to correcting its malfunctions and misapplications’(...) Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress”⁷⁴.

⁶⁹ Pt. 105.

⁷⁰ Pt. 109.

⁷¹ Pt. 112.

⁷² Pt. 191.

⁷³ Pt. 193.

⁷⁴ Pt. 194.