

## Social Development – Requirement and Consequence of the Evolution of Society

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**Abstract:** Society evolves according to the energy and mindset of individuals. The more individuals are open to new things, the faster they produce change. This paper presents the relationship between social development and evolution of society from the perspective of the individual to produce and accept change. Education and assimilation power rush and improve the process of change. Investment and support individuals in positive actions bring benefits to society and the economy.

**Keywords:** society; individual; education; change; economy

**JEL Classification:** I25, I31, O10

### 1. Introduction

Social development is a process that leads to the change of the social structures in order to improve the capacity of one society to reach its objectives. Social development can be shortly described as the process of organizing the human energies and activities at high levels such as to reach better results.

The development emphasizes the use of human potential. Social developments consists of putting people in the core of development (Jacobs, Cleveland, 1999; Patel, Kleinman, 2003). Starting with the 1990's, there has been a higher recognition of the fact that social development is essential for better results, inclusively for the economic sustainable growth. Development is frequently correlated to a relatively similar term, the growth. Like the development, the growth is a form of progress, but the development is a superior type. Growth can be seen as a quantitative extension, while development is a qualitative development, at a higher level. While growth is a development at the same actual level, development is a development at a new unheard level (Kohn, 2009; Spolaore, Wacziarg, 2013). For example, we can see in business the growth as a multiplication of a shop model in tens of franchise activities; development consists of the effective development of the concept of franchise. Development is more like a change to a superior qualitative level, while growth is a quantitative evolution. In the widest meaning, development can be defined as an ascending directional

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movement of society from low level towards high levels of energy, efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, understanding, creativity, happiness and fulfillment (Brach, 2008).

## **2. Social Development – from Individual to Society**

Social development slowly evolves in time. It mostly represents an unknown phenomenon, which happens in an irregular manner, with evolutions and failures. On another side, if the process of social development was discovered and it was used in development policies, strategies and action plans for society, we could eliminate the disorders and meanders of social development and the obstacles that stand in its way and we could accelerate the positive evolution. MSS Research (2007) and Roy Posner (2010), after 30 years of observations, claim that there are 3 stages of social development: social grounding, the initiation- pioneers' role, the acceptance and the assimilation.

### **3.1. The First Stage: Social Grounding**

#### **Energy**

A method through which the society can be evaluated is through its level of energy. A society can develop as long as it has the energy to do so. Yet, it cannot start to develop until it has a surplus of energy. The energy surplus is available only when the society is not completely absorbed by facing the existence problems at the actual level and has an energy surplus to pass at another level. An example in history would be the cultures that developed their agriculture to a point when they were ready to explore the trading opportunities with other state or head for industrialization (Krebs, Clutton–Brock, 1998). New ideas and technologies also represent signs of energy surplus, such as companies and other organizations that develop very fast (the ones in Silicon Valley).

#### **Awareness**

The energy surplus in society initially acts like a development of thinking and discussions about new possibilities, as an incentive for innovation and development and as a growing dissatisfaction regarding the actual situation. The most important thing is that this surplus is expressed through the society awareness about new opportunities and challenges (Sachs et al., 2004).

The speed and credibility of information in the last years has boosted the awareness degree of the possibilities of society. Either we are talking about 60.000 newspapers or Gorbachev's politics of glasnost from the end of the Cold War (for

example, openness to new ideas), the importance of being aware of the possibilities is the moving force that can transform the energy surplus from the society in a new development reality.

### **Aspiration**

The energy surplus provides the fuel for progress and the awareness of the society about the possibilities sets the progress direction. Yet, society must react against this possibilities – it must really desire that these possibilities will emerge. The way an individual who wants to make something must have aspirations when possibilities and opportunities emerge, the same way the society has to have aspirations to take advantage of the possibilities and opportunities to develop when it has the chance.

The aspiration of passing to a superior level can be damaged by a series of factors or supported by others. For example, societies that feel superior or fulfilled are less capable of desiring to pass to the next level. Also, societies could not desire to evolve as they think that it is over their means and abilities. If superiority or inadequacy prevent the aspirations of one society, other social attitudes can boost the aspiration. Social pressure from the others or from the outside can be a strong incentive for aspiration. A classic example is the farmer that will dig a fountain only after he had seen the other had already done it. Another example is represented by a country that is mandated to change due to another country's influence, like the case of the Americans reaction, who have noticed in the 1980's that the Japanese started developing in the major industrial fields (Genicot & Ray, 2009). The energy surplus, the awareness of opportunities and the desire to evolve are the preceding conditions that ground the society for new development initiatives. Though it is not really a linear process and these factors fluctuate, they represent the needed conditions for social development grounding.

### **3.2. The Second Stage: the Initiation – Pioneer's Role**

Though society can be ready to evolve to a superior development level, there must be an agent that would start the action. This is the role of pioneers. They are people that are willing to give up the actual status and try something new. Through their aware action, they express an issue of aspiration the society is only partially aware of.

The pioneer is not usually a radical person, an outlaw, but rather he shares his aspirations, knowledge and values. Either it is about two young men who founded Apple Computer in a garage, setting the scene for a new level of technology, or about a farmer that dares to accept a loan in order to search for water in the countryside of India when others fear of the fact of being the first one, the pioneer

is the one that is off the records, but inside, not outside the social environment, setting a new trend or revealing a new possibility (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2011).

Then, society must positively react against the pioneer's initiative. In case he is too advanced compared to the society, the society will frequently react in a negative manner or would act immaterially. On other side, if the pioneer's initiative has the same trend with the society aspirations and grounding, he inspires others to the same initiative or to new ones. The pioneer's initiative are spreading through the whole society, releasing a development movement. For example, if other farmers in the countryside of India accept the credits to search for water, the village and the community start developing. When other hackers saw the first personal computers of Apple Computers displayed at the Homebrew Computers Club, they were inspired to produce, thus developing new related technologies or even new ones.

### **3.3. The Third Stage: Acceptance and Assimilation**

In the end, the pioneer's initiatives must be completely accepted and organized by the society as a whole.

#### **Acceptance through new organizing forms**

Acceptance starts when the pioneer's initiative is included in new organizing or already existing structures in the society. The society usually organizes its life through laws, regulation, systems or series of accepted practices. The interesting fact is that the pioneer's initiative, which creates the spark of development, in fact leads to the emergence of a series of new, more complex organizations, meant to support it and who make pressures to the existing organizations in order to improve their functioning such as to satisfy the needs of the new phase (Dilworth-Annderson, 2008).

#### **Lack of organization**

There are frequent cases when the pioneer's initiative is not supported by new organizational structures, causing the failure of development. When the Eastern European countries started the transition from the planned economy to the market economy, they lacked a very wide range of structures and practices needed for the efficient functioning of a market system. Especially Russia has suffered from this reason. In its case, not only that there have been no new organizing structures that would have eased the transition, but many of the existing ones, essential to a stable transition towards the free market system have disappeared, thus creating an arid environment for the implementation of a market economy (Ranis & Stewart, 2010).

### Education

A universally recognized form of organizing for the evolution of society is education. When society is truly interested in supporting development, it starts to provide formal education in fields that are related to the initiative. For example, we can see the huge volume of formal education and training during the last years in the field of personal computing and internet (OECD, 2013).

### Institutionalization

In a subsequent stage, society accepts and assimilates new actions to an extent that no longer needs the support of specialized organizations, of politics or laws that would promote them. The activity becomes part of the normal functioning of society, so it becomes a way of life. It grows up from organizing to institutionalizing (Dilworth-Anderson, 2008).

### The cultural transmission by the family

In a higher stage of evolution of a new social activity, the family has an active role in its propagation. Once a new activity has been accepted as being desired by large groups of population, families assume a higher and higher role in providing knowledge, abilities and activity supporting attitude for the next generation. When an activity has reached the point where the family has a very active role in its transmission, the activity becomes part of the society culture (Bisin, Verdier, 2005).

**Table 1. The 3 stages of social development**

<i>First stage: social grounding</i>	<i>Second stage: Initiation – the pioneers' role</i>	<i>The third stage: Acceptance and assimilation</i>
Energy surplus at the actual level Awareness of possibilities The aspiration to evolve	Pioneer's initiative Acceptance of society Initiative taken over by the others	New organizing forms Institutionalization ( for example, education) Cultural transmission by the family

It is true that economic growth, through the growth of the total welfare of one nation, improves the potential of reducing development and of solving other social problems. But history gives a series of examples in which economic growth has not been followed by similar human development problems. In exchange, growth was made at the cost of high inequality, higher degree of unemployment, weaken democracy, the loss of cultural identity or excessive consumption of natural resources needful to future generations. As links between the economic growth and social and environmental problems are better understood, experts, including economists, tend to agree that this kind of growth is unavoidable unsustainable, namely it cannot continue the same way during a long period of time. First of all, when the environment and human/social loses resulting from the economy growth

prove to be higher than the economic benefits (additional incomes gained by most people), the total result for the individuals' welfare becomes negative. Thus, this economic growth is hard to support from the political perspective (Kohn, 2009). Second, economic growth itself unavoidable depends on the environmental and social/human conditions. In order to be sustainable, growth must be based on a certain quantity of resources and services provided by nature, such as pollution absorption and resources renewal. Moreover, economic growth should be constantly fueled by the results of human development, such as highly qualified workers, capable of technological and managerial innovations, as well as opportunities for their efficient use: more and better work places, better conditions for new business to develop and a higher democracy at all decision making levels (Spolaore & Wacziarg, 2013).

## **5. Conclusions**

Missing a valid theory, social development highly remains a study and experimental process, with a high rate of failure and a very unequal progress. Negative consequences of the transition strategies in most of Eastern European countries, the stopped progress in many African and Asian countries, the growth of the income gap between the more and the less developed societies, environment pollution, crime and violence reflect the fact that humankind strongly follows a process without the whole knowledge needed to efficiently manage and rule. The emergence of a solid theoretical framework of social development would provide the knowledge needed to approach these imperfections. I would also finally lead to a deeper and more practical discovery – the infinite creative potentials of humanity.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

This work was cofinanced from the European Social Fund through Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, project number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/142115 “Performance and excellence in doctoral and postdoctoral research in Romanian economics science domain”.

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