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Transnational Government: A Faster Path to Developing Underdeveloped Nations

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
	This article introduces the concept of transnational government as a potential solution for underdeveloped states to develop themselves and overcome issues such as systemic corruption, maladministration, and dysfunctionality. The introduction defines the central problem and discusses the main idea. Subsequently, theories of development and the problems of accommodating them into the underdeveloped states will be reviewed. The article then presents a non-political inspirational model as a foundation for the discussion. This is followed by an examination of the proposed model's theoretical underpinnings and its implementation. Finally, the article addresses the significant challenges and obstacles associated with the proposed model.

Introduction

Like many other ambiguous sociopolitical concepts, there is no universally accepted definition for the term "underdeveloped state". Thus, states/societies may differ from each other in underdevelopment criteria and so all may not fit into the context of the present article. Hence, I refrain from labelling any specific country as "underdeveloped," as the characteristics of underdevelopment can vary in dimension, scale, and degree. In general, this text defines underdevelopment as a condition in which countries endure persistent political and economic instability, undermining their legitimacy and authority. Factors such as corruption, weak institutions, human rights violations, and brain drain contribute to a vulnerability to coups and subversions, further exacerbating underdevelopment in these states.

The article argues that leaders and politicians in underdeveloped states have been largely unsuccessful in fostering development due to various factors. These include imperialistic policies, traditional and sociocultural barriers, corruption, maladministration, disunity among elites, and prioritising other interests [personal, familial, tribal, ethnic, organisational, and ideological] over national interests. Development theories may be unsuitable for such local contexts due to the complex social structures of these countries; ingrained cultural beliefs, practices, and resistance to change often hinder the successful implementation of development strategies.

The present article is of the opinion that, since underdeveloped states require a challenging and tiresome long route to reach the level of development witnessed in today's developed states, they should explore a shorter and different route for development. Drawing inspiration from a non-political field - football coaching - the article suggests that just as proper training can lead a weak

football team to victory, a similar approach could be applied to "governance" in underdeveloped states. The concept is in the same manner that a foreign football coach takes over a weak team from another country and prepares it for competition or victory; underdeveloped states should employ qualified foreign administrators to execute policies and focus on developmental plans aimed at improving the living standards of their citizens. This article, however, recognises the theoretical and practical challenges that an underdeveloped state may face in implementing this model, yet it does not rule out the possibility of transnational government.

Development: Theories and Their Setbacks

There are some major theories for development which have failed to adequately address the challenges faced by underdeveloped states. These theories, along with their limitations, are briefly discussed below.

Modernisation

It believes that economic wealth, which accompanies industrialisation, results in a growing middle class that begins to participate more in politics and make demands on government. The resulting changes in mass political behaviour make the emergence and survival of democratic governments more likely (Sokhey, 2011, p. 82). Modernisation leads to progressivism, which believes that advancements in science, technology, economic development and social organisation are vital to the improvement of the human condition (Harold, 2003, p. 157). However, modernisation has its own setbacks. Huntington (1968), for example, has challenged the modernisation process, stating that "economic development and the rapid social changes accompanying it are as likely to result in the political decay of societies as in their development. Instability is most likely to occur in the early stages of modernisation" (Fukuyama, 2006, p. xiii). Besides, since most underdeveloped societies are religious or traditional, they hardly welcome modernisation because, as it is believed, the values and social institutions that result from modernisation can be in conflict with religious or traditional values. In modernisation, knowledge, ideas, and beliefs cannot be considered absolute. Thus, a parochial society may not tolerate the presence of inclusive institutions or any belief which can lead to the emergence of democratic institutions. Most of the underdeveloped states are either conservative or reactionary. These states do not welcome new changes because new changes may bring about new institutions. In some cases, traditional rulers or governing elites may appear as pro-development figures, but when it comes to practice, they become reluctant, mainly because modernisation can undermine the centuries-old traditions and the traditional elites' hold of power.

System-Building

Huntington argues that political institutionalisation is the key to stability. He notes that the first issue for the Third World societies is the formation of national identity. The second priority is system building. Since there is widespread corruption in Third World societies, a system is required to manage the problems. The third is political participation. Political participation before the formation of an institutionalised state causes chaos (1968). Yet, this theory cannot be put into practice simply in every underdeveloped society. Some states have not been successful in the formation of their national identity. In other states, the first phase [national identity formation] has not led to the second phase [system-building]. Or, for that matter, "system building" has not been founded effectively in many underdeveloped states. Due to tribal, ethnic, or religious prejudices, some states have been unable to cultivate a strong sense of nationalism among their citizens. Corruption is another major problem that has been instrumental in keeping the fragility of the systems intact. When elites attempt to build a system, they may not prioritise "inclusiveness", as doing so could lead to instability or harm their own interests. To build a system, governing elites usually need absolute power. But, in many cases, absolutism does not lead to the third phase

[political participation]. Hossein Bashirieh, an Iranian intellectual, is of the opinion that "Absolute power is not only based on personal power relations, but also such power building leads to the emergence of power-seeking gangs and groups around decision-making centres or powerful personalities. Such gangs usually support the interests of their members. Thus, instead of institutional participation/competition, a network of personal relationships would be established which personalises political life and makes politics informal" (2008, p. 105). The gist of the issue is that this process may not always lead to system-building.

Dependency

Although radical dependency theorists such as A. G Frank, J Cockcroft, and D Johnson, emphasise that the limitations imposed by the global powers have caused fundamental distortions that have continued to thwart development in unstable states (1966 & 1972), moderate theorists, such as F H Cardoso has considered some level of development to be possible within this system (Munro, 2018). They believe that dependency has not always been against development. Still, religious figures in the Islamic states or societies disagree with the idea of dependency, especially when it comes to dependency on Western powers. For instance, both Iran under the Islamic Republic and Afghanistan under Taliban control have rejected Western developmental models, such as capitalism and liberalism, due to their opposition to Western influence and perceived cultural or ideological threats. Religious and political elites in these states believe that Islam has its own pattern of governance and development and that Western ideologies do not fit into Islamic societies.

Globalisation

It emerges from the global mechanisms of greater integration with emphasis on the sphere of economic transactions. This perspective, in a way, is similar to the modernisation approach. However, a key characteristic of globalisation is its focus on cultural aspects and their communications worldwide. In cultural communication, one of the most important factors is the increasing flexibility of technology to connect people around the world (Kaplan, 1993). However, globalisation may present unique challenges and threats to underdeveloped societies. In this regard, Benjamin Barber believes that globalisation generates conflict between forces of global integration and those of tribal, national, or religious identity. It generates cultural tensions and challenges due to the rapid spread of globalised Western culture (1995). In underdeveloped states, globalisation poses a threat to both state sovereignty and local culture. The driving forces of globalisation, including increased economic interconnectedness and cultural exchanges, have the potential to erode political authority and destabilise traditional values and practices. Consequently, traditional or religious leaders may oppose integration into the global economy or the adoption of international cultural standards, perceiving these changes as harmful to their nation's identity and independence. As global technology primarily caters to non-traditional factors, such as modernism, postmodernism and liberalism, it can disrupt the status quo and create cultural and political challenges for underdeveloped states.

World Systems Theory

It argues about three types of states: the core, the periphery, and the semi-periphery. The belief is that periphery countries can enjoy minimal benefits. Such hierarchy practically would lead to unequal relations among the states where wealth is taken from semi-periphery or periphery states to the core states. Under this system, the developed states exploit the poor states for labour and raw materials, which strengthens the dominance of developed states (Wallerstein, I. M, 2004). As a result, less affluent states are likely to remain reliant on developed nations. Such dependency often hampers the underdeveloped states' capacity to close the developmental gap with more advanced

nations. This complex web of challenges can perpetuate a cycle of dependency and underdevelopment, as these hurdles obstruct the growth and advancement necessary for attaining economic and political parity with developed countries.

Good Politics

In their book *Why Nations Fail* (2012), D Acemoglu and J Robinson explain the concept of good politics. They argue that a nation's prosperity and success is primarily determined by the quality of its institutions, including political, economic, and cultural. While acknowledging the importance of other elements, such as culture, geography, and economics, the authors contend that these are not the primary determinants of development. In essence, good politics is vital for development. They identify two types of institutions: inclusive and extractive. Extractive institutions, which concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few, can cause stagnation and decline. In contrast, inclusive institutions that promote innovation, investment, talent, and accountability are crucial for long-term success. Acemoglu and Robinson emphasise that establishing and maintaining inclusive institutions requires a robust political system (good politics) capable of representing diverse interests without being dominated by any single group or elite. While this theory is well-articulated, its implementation seems to be highly complex. The statesmen in underdeveloped states may face practical challenges when attempting to transition to inclusive institutions. The primary obstacle is the need to prioritise national interests over competing non-national interests, which is often a significant and deeply-rooted problem in such states. Consequently, implementing this theory becomes complex and time-consuming, rendering it difficult to achieve within a short period.

To sum up, the applicability of different development theories varies across underdeveloped societies. For example, modernisation theory might be effective in one society but fail to achieve the desired results in another. Additionally, economic development does not always lead to political development in all cases. In some societies, the development of political systems may not inherently lead to political pluralism. The success of system building and the emergence of pluralistic politics depend largely on various factors unique to each state and society. These factors include historical events, the nature of the institutions, the type of turning points, critical situations, and the outcome of the interactions that eventuate in a given society.

Inspirational Model

An alternative approach to development for underdeveloped states is inspired by a non-political model - football coaching. Numerous examples demonstrate the significant impact of seasoned head coaches in reshaping and leading weaker football teams to success. One such example is the Iranian national football team, which witnessed considerable improvements under the guidance of Carlos Manuel Queiroz, a Portuguese football coach. Queiroz's leadership and strategic guidance played a pivotal role in revitalising the team's performance, demonstrating the transformative power of effective leadership in elevating a struggling team's potential. Carlos Queiroz's coaching career has seen him manage several national teams, including Portugal, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Colombia, and Iran. Under his leadership, South Africa (2002), Portugal (2010), and Iran (2014 and 2018) successfully qualified for the FIFA World Cup. Queiroz is the only head coach in Iranian football history to have led the national team to two consecutive World Cups. Under his leadership, the Iranian national football team reached a historic milestone by maintaining the top spot in the Asian team rankings for 17 consecutive months. Additionally, Queiroz holds the distinction of being the longest-serving head coach in Iran's football history; his tenure spanned nearly eight years (2011-2019). In September 2022, the Football Federation's Board of Directors reappointed Queiroz as the head coach of Iran's national football team, leading the squad to the Qatar World Cup (2022). This marks Queiroz's third tenure as Iran's head coach for the World

Cup. Although Queiroz's coaching methods were not flawless and his management faced criticisms, his overall success with Iran's football team raises an interesting question: *If effective management in sports can elevate a weak team, why not apply a similar model to an underdeveloped state's administration*?!

Drawing inspiration from the success of Carlos Queiroz in leading Iran's national football team, it is argued that underdeveloped states should consider hiring a team of highly skilled foreign administrators to address their domestic challenges. By harnessing the expertise and strategic insights of such professionals, these nations can usher transformative impact and, thereby, foster development. This approach could potentially bring innovative ideas, expertise, and global perspectives to address complex governance challenges and accelerate development. Such highly qualified teams should devise and implement policies to improve the living standards of underdeveloped societies, concentrating on developmental projects encompassing cultural, economic, and political domains.

Though this analogy might appear unusual at first glance, it might be worth considering when examining underdeveloped societies in regions of Africa and Asia, where corruption, stagnation, and economic challenges continue to hinder progress. The development theories have often fallen short of fostering meaningful change in these states. Therefore, exploring alternative models, such as "transnational government", may uncover solutions to persistent issues. However, I acknowledge that implementing this model may involve significant challenges, which will be addressed in the concluding sections. But, before delving into these concerns, we must establish a theoretical basis for our proposed approach.

Theoretical Ground: A New Fictional Reality

All social, economic, and political realities, such as tradition, money, nationalism, and capitalism, are human constructs born from intellectual thought. Throughout history, these constructs have had both positive and negative implications for humankind, from fostering peace and prosperity to contributing to war and misery. It is undeniable that these fictional realities stem from the social dialectic of "thesis," "antithesis," and "synthesis" within societies, which continuously shapes and reshapes our world. Throughout history, intellectuals, politicians, and leaders have played crucial roles in shaping and refining societal constructs that greatly influence our lives. In light of the profound impact of these fictional realities, it becomes essential to consider the creation of a new fictional reality using the same processes of construction, indoctrination, cultivation, and experimentation that were used to establish previous societal paradigms. Let's take an example of the way Christianity is constructed. We can observe the development and spread of Christianity, which followed similar mechanisms to become a dominant force in shaping culture and values. In his book, History of Political Philosophy, Bahaoddin Pazargaad writes:

"In ancient Greece, during the peak of the city-state of Athens, Athenians were deeply invested in the city-state institution. Due to their preoccupation with city-state affairs, they saw no need to focus on other institutions like religion. However, when the city-state system crumbled, Athenians felt a sense of disorientation. People couldn't find another institution to replace the city-state system, so they turned to religion. The idea of a celestial city with perfect laws, called the City of God, captivated the people's imagination, ultimately leading to the birth of a new religion. Philosophies that emerged after Aristotle began to lean toward religious themes, further increasing people's interest in religion and paving the way for the rise of Christianity" (2003, p. 208, 253).

So, as a new fictional reality, under this system, political power derived its authority from religion, and as history narrates, "Kings required new concepts to lend legitimacy to their actions; thus politics merged with religion because there was no more powerful and persuasive sanction for

kingship than that of divine will" (Rodee et al, 1983, p. 22). However, centuries later, modern nationalism was constructed. This made national consciousness a reality which replaced the divine right theory. Today, the divine right theory has largely lost its relevance in politics. Any sociopolitical reality that arose during a specific period was, in fact, a reaction to the prevailing unfavourable conditions of that time.

This historical example suggests that if we aim to establish a new fictional reality to support the "transnational government" model, underdeveloped societies must wait for their own critical turning points to manifest. However, the issue is that it may take centuries for an underdeveloped nation to experience sudden, significant leaps. Moreover, we cannot be certain if such critical leaps will ultimately lead a backward nation toward the path of development. A critical situation does not always lead to development in a given society. This article argues that the concept of "transnational government" should not be shaped by the dialectic process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Instead, it should be constructed proactively before its due time. Therefore, politicians and leaders with strong popular support should be encouraged to endorse and popularise the notion of transnational government. This new reality should embody ideological characteristics, including a list of specific goals and a focus on the masses, for example.

Hypothetical Model: Implementation

In a way, transnationalism at the nongovernmental level is already practised around the world; multinational corporations in various fields can be taken as an example. Moreover, a review of history reveals that some different examples have existed in the past. In the Roman Empire, for instance, capable foreigners were occasionally granted citizenship and assigned military or administrative roles (Maxfield, 1979). Similarly, the Byzantine Empire had several foreign-born emperors and court officials (Herrin, 2007). The Ottoman Empire also employed foreigners in key government positions, such as grand viziers and military commanders (Maurits, 2018). The same was true with the British Empire, where foreign citizens were often given high-ranking roles in administration and military (Dimitriadis, 2015).

However, while considering the aforementioned examples, four points should be noted. First, although foreign experts were often employed in various government or military roles, they were rarely appointed to the highest leadership positions, which were typically held by citizens of those empires. Second, despite a tradition of employing foreign citizens in high-ranking positions, these empires lacked comprehensive mechanisms to regulate the responsibilities and actions of foreign administrators, enabling the kings' interests to override the interests of the general public. Third, foreign expert appointments were usually made without public input, resulting in a lack of efforts to construct a theoretical foundation and, at times, causing tensions and conflicts within the empire. Fourth, the role of foreign experts may have contributed to the functioning of the empire, and managing day-to-day affairs was prioritised over the question of development. Consequently, a "transnational authority" involving the entire government [at the state level] has not been implemented. In contrast, our proposed model appoints foreign experts as heads of state to prioritise and promote development in underdeveloped societies. By doing so, it emphasises the importance of building a theoretical framework to address potential challenges effectively.

Whatsoever, once the "transnational government" established its legitimacy, its first task should be to construct a system that transcends parochial or ideological barriers. The experience of underdeveloped states demonstrates that government organisations in these societies often face issues of dysfunction and maladministration, presenting challenges to effective governance; the native [ruling] elites have been unable to create systems effectively. The second objective of a transnational government is to foster internal cohesion among the intellectual and instrumental (executive, political, economic) elites (Sariolghalam, 2011). Since establishing such cohesion is

challenging and complex, a transnational government must utilise all available resources and means to facilitate it. Once this process is accomplished, the focus should shift to the administration of the state. The transnational government --- by the treaty that it had already signed with the representatives of an underdeveloped society --- should proceed in the direction of development without jeopardising the sovereignty of the state in question. Full authority and discretion should be granted to the 'transnational government,' free from any traditional, religious, ideological or national constraints. This does not mean eliminating traditional values, religious practices, or local and national cultures but rather ensuring that these sociocultural institutions do not impede or interfere with the development process. In the event of failures or shortcomings, the 'transnational government' must be held accountable. The actions and performance of the transnational government should be thoroughly monitored and evaluated by independent international organisations that operate under the United Nations; these organisations should not be subject to another country's authority. The presence of these international organisations, equipped with adequate discretionary and executive powers, could ensure the successful implementation of this hypothesis. If executed effectively, this approach may relatively establish more efficient systems in underdeveloped states, approximately similar to those found in Western countries. Western nations first established efficient systems and then cultivated inclusive ideas and institutions. In the Western states, "non-native" individuals were officially recognised as citizens, granted equal rights to participate in society, and given opportunities to assume leadership roles. In the United States and Britain, for example, "non-native" citizens play important roles in politics. This indicates that if a country has a stable political system, its leadership's ancestral background may not be a significant concern. In fact, the stability of the political system is more important than the background of its leaders. However, attaining such experiences, like those in Western systems, is complex and requires considerable time and effort. The present article posits that underdeveloped nations could achieve rapid development by adopting the "transnational model." Within this framework, the envisioned transnational government's political culture would progressively shape and enhance the local elites' political culture. This transformative influence would foster an environment conducive to growth and advancement, helping these countries accelerate their journey toward sustainable development.

Transnational Government: Challenges

Many constructed realities, particularly sociopolitical ones, have encountered significant challenges during their development. However, over time, they established themselves and evolved into recognised realities. Thus, every fictional reality has encountered challenges at first. So, it sounds naive if we presume that one can craft a political reality overnight and replace it with a former one without considering society's reactions or interactions. Thus, the process of laying the theoretical foundations for "transnational government" will likely be contested and challenged by various groups, including leaders, heads of states, politicians, nationalists, religious fundamentalists and even liberals, who collectively represent significant portions of today's societies. There appear to be five major impediments to constructing a transnational government in an underdeveloped state: Nationalism, Ethno-Nationalism, Islamism, Time Factor, and the world's Anarchic System.

First, while nationalism has played an important role in the development of many states, it has failed to effectively accommodate itself into underdeveloped societies. This is largely due to the prevalence of parochial interests, such as tribal, ethnic, religious, and ideological affiliations, which often supersede national interests in these contexts. Nevertheless, with the rise of modern nationalism and contemporary political systems, hiring foreign figures as heads of state is highly uncommon. Even in an underdeveloped society, national sovereignty and identity are represented by heads of state, and thus, most modern constitutions and legal frameworks stipulate that only natural-born citizens can hold these positions. Hence, nationalist sentiments can be easily manipulated to create waves of nationalistic movements against a "transnational system of

governance" by appealing to the patriotic emotions of the masses. Second, in many underdeveloped societies, ethno-nationalism is perceived as a significant threat. This is because ethno-nationalism generates divisions within society and hinders successful integration by promoting ideologies that foster prejudice. The ethno-nationalistic ideologies can result in social unrest, ultimately undermining the integrity of the society or state. Third, Islamism presents another challenge, particularly in Muslim societies where political Islam is dominant. As a matter of fact, certain characteristics inherent in Islamic beliefs, such as fatalism and divine determinism (which are not exclusive to Islam), have been emphasised more than Islam's progressive aspects. This can be recognised as one of the factors hindering development in many Muslim societies. However, in a society where Islam is rigorously politicised, toying with the religious sentiments of the people may flare up public outrage. Religious fanatics, hardliners, and some Muslim scholars insist on Islam's own form of governance. Fourth, the time factor also plays a crucial role. Generally, every idea is a product of its time, and it is challenging to implement a social or political theory before its appropriate time. This principle might also apply to our model. The fifth obstacle is the anarchic nature of the global system. The impact of this anarchy cannot be disregarded, as underdeveloped states may not receive genuine support from ostensibly independent international organisations within such a framework.

Conclusions

This final section aims to demonstrate that despite the challenges our model faces, these obstacles can be managed. Among the aforementioned barriers, "nationalism" poses the most significant challenge to our model. The threats posed by ethno-nationalism can be minimised by those socio-economic and political strategies that can foster the integration of diverse ethnic groups within a society's political framework. Even if ethno-nationalism results in the fragmentation of a nation, the transnational government model retains its applicability and can be employed in the newly formed states. This ensures that the model remains relevant across diverse [underdeveloped] societies and political contexts. Islamism appears less formidable. Currently, there are countries where Islam is the predominant religion, but its influence on governance is limited; in these societies, Islam primarily functions as a social force rather than a political one. The time factor also seems less significant than nationalism. Western states, for instance, already benefit from the leadership of "non-native" individuals. This Western example can, at the very least, mentally prepare the elites of the underdeveloped nations to consider such a model (transnational government). Alternatively, for that matter, the anarchic nature of the global system is not absolute anarchy, as law and order are maintained to a significant extent. However, implementing our governance model requires addressing challenges, especially nationalism, through establishing prerequisites and theoretical foundations. Without deliberate planning and laying the groundwork for the idea of a "transnational government," these challenges will undoubtedly persist.

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Journal of Politics and Development

Volume 15 ■ Number 1 ■ Winter 2025