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DEVELOPMENT OF WHAT AND FOR WHOM?

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### Abstract

This is a reflection about the current use of the term development in the speeches of international, governmental and scientific academic agencies that deal with social and health indicators. It considers the importance of understanding the Theories of Development in the historical movement and for the understanding of reality, mainly in the Conjuncture Analysis method. Attention is draw to the ideological content of the term **development** and of Development Theories carrying within themselves projects of different and often antagonistic societies. It also presents the main aspects of Development Theories. It concludes by considering that the fact that health investigations aim, ultimately, at intervening in reality, it is imperative that the authors explain the Theory of Development that supports them when they associate their results with the level of **development** of the countries.

**Descriptors:** Development; Development theory; Social and health indicators.

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| <p><b>¿DESARROLLO DE QUÉ Y PARA QUIÉN?</b><br/><b>Resumen:</b> Se trata de una reflexión sobre el uso actual del término desarrollo en los discursos de organismos académicos</p> | <p><b>DESENVOLVIMENTO DE QUÊ E PARA QUEM?</b><br/><b>Resumo:</b> Trata-se de reflexão acerca do uso corrente do termo <b>desenvolvimento</b> nos discursos de agências internacionais, governamentais e acadêmico-científicos quando</p> |
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| <p>internacionales, gubernamentales y científicos que se ocupan de indicadores sociales y de salud. Considera la importancia de la comprensión de las Teorías del Desarrollo en el movimiento histórico y para la comprensión de la realidad, principalmente en el método del Análisis de Coyuntura. Se llama la atención sobre el contenido ideológico del término <b>desarrollo</b> y de las Teorías del Desarrollo que llevan en sí mismas proyectos de sociedades diferentes ya menudos antagónicos. También presenta los principales aspectos de las Teorías del Desarrollo. Concluye considerando que el hecho de que las investigaciones en salud apunten, en última instancia, a intervenir en la realidad, es imperativo que los autores expliquen la Teoría del Desarrollo que las sustenta cuando asocian sus resultados con el nivel de <b>desarrollo</b> de los países.<br/><b>Descriptor:</b> Desarrollo; Teoría del desarrollo; Indicadores sociales y de salud.</p> | <p>tratam de indicadores sociais e de saúde. Considera-se a importância da compreensão das Teorias do Desenvolvimento no movimento histórico para a compreensão da realidade, principalmente no método de Análise de Conjuntura. Chama-se a atenção para o conteúdo ideológico do termo <b>desenvolvimento</b> e de as Teorias de Desenvolvimento carregarem, em si, projetos de sociedades diferentes e, muitas vezes, antagônicos. Apresenta as principais vertentes da Teorias do Desenvolvimento. Concluindo, considera que o fato de as investigações em saúde visarem, em última instância, a intervenção na realidade, torna-se imprescindível que os autores explicitem a Teoria de Desenvolvimento que os respalda quando associam os seus resultados ao nível de <b>desenvolvimento</b> dos países.<br/><b>Descritores:</b> Desenvolvimento; Teoria do desenvolvimento; Indicadores sociais e de saúde.</p> |
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## INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we seek to contribute to the reflection on the importance of understanding and explaining the Development Theory that underpins the discourses of national and international agencies, as well as academic-scientific discourses that relate the levels of social and health indicators to the **development** of nations.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Understanding the importance of the conjuncture analysis (CA) method to unveil the historical process that shapes the present, the concept of **development** is one of the central ones for understanding the hegemonic discourse present in the practices and investigations of population health levels.

Considering that scientific research is ultimately aimed at transforming reality, the conjuncture analysis method meets this objective. According to Casillas,<sup>4</sup>

Analyzing reality means being concerned with transforming it or intervening in it. And conjuncture analysis (CA) is an analysis of the present and as such presents us with a whole series of problems for its construction. This type of analysis means developing a type of historical-political knowledge.<sup>4(47)</sup>

In discussions and analyses of public health issues, there is a recurrent establishment of a causal link between social and health indicators and the level of **development** of countries, associating it with access to goods and services, understanding that the difficulty or lack of such access corroborates the promotion and increase of morbidity and mortality rates. This association occurs when dividing countries into two blocks: **developed** and **developing**, and when comparing their indicators. In the case of countries today classified as **developing** by some, **underdeveloped** and still **dependent** by others, it can be seen that the discourses tend to fail to make explicit the Development Theory that supports them, which can also contribute to the understanding of the use of the expression **developing** as a euphemism for the term **backward**.

In this sense, the conception of reality is interspersed with ideological content, ideology that is also part of the reality that we want to understand in order to change. This ideological content is constituted in a historical process, hence the importance of the discussion intended in this work.

Based on Casillas'<sup>4</sup> understanding of historical-political knowledge, it is understood that research, scientific analysis and speeches by national and international agencies are praxis and affect multiple fields of social life: political, economic, social and even cultural. This means that there is a political-ideological content in the presentation and explanations of the results of studies and analyses carried out.

Considering that it is essential to understand development theories, given the current use of the term **development** in studies that relate it to social and health indicators, the aim of this paper is to present a brief overview of three perspectives: the Development Theory of the immediate post-war period; Celso Furtado's Theory of Underdevelopment; and the critique developed from the thinking of Karl Marx.

## **WHERE DOES THE IDEA OF DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES COME FROM AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO UNDERSTAND DEVELOPMENT THEORIES IN PUBLIC HEALTH ANALYSIS?**

There are different theories about the **development** of nations, as well as different ways of classifying countries according to their model of technological, economic, social and human development. One way is by technological development, which involves the manufacture of industrialized products, their marketing and consumption. This understanding also gives rise to the

classification of countries as **central** and **peripheral**. The countries understood to occupy the periphery would exist orbiting around those understood to be located in the center, in a kind of dependence of the former on the latter, and this perspective is the basis of Dependency Theory.

The other way of dealing with the **development** of societies is to classify them by their geopolitical expansion, based on the relationship of economic domination and subordination of one towards the other. In this view, there are imperialist countries and those subordinate to them, whose domination is mainly due to the geopolitical power play, according to Martins.<sup>5</sup>

## MODERNIZATION THEORY

Development theories originated in the context of the Second World War (1939-1945), whose analyses focused on the economy, with a view to rebuilding the countries destroyed by the war and their economic stability. At the time, leaders of the main capitalist nations sought to establish a global commitment to these goals. The United Nations Organization - UN, the World Bank and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development - IBRD, for example, were created in this context and for these purposes.<sup>6</sup>

The World Bank and the IBRD (which is part of the former) can be seen as the economic arm of this proposal. Created in 1944 and 1945, respectively, with headquarters in the United States of America, they act as mediators between the financing countries and those seeking loans to promote their own **development**. The UN, on the other hand, could be understood as the ideological arm. It was created in 1945 to promote peace on the globe and an alliance of cooperation between countries. Also in that context, in 1947, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GTT) began to be established, with the aim of regulating trade relations between countries. The GTT gave rise to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the 1990's.

The main financial institutions that were active and had the objectives of promoting peace, enabling the reconstruction of countries and guaranteeing economic stability, were created from the deliberations of the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, which took place in the USA. This conference was promoted by the main capitalist powers of the time, led by the USA, and was organized with the justification of harmonizing and revitalizing nations with a view to world peace. It was a major economic agreement, with the participation of forty-four countries, including Brazil. At the conference, renowned economists representing two major powers debated: John Maynard

Keynes (Great Britain) and Harry Dexter White (USA). The idea of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was also born at this conference and was officially created in 1945.<sup>7,8</sup>

The World Bank and the WTO were products of the agreements reached at the Bretton Woods Conference. These agreements are still reflected in countries' economies today. There, space was opened up for Milton Friedman's monetary policy, for the advance and solidification of worldwide financial institutions, for liberal ideas and for globalization. At that time, capitalism was established as the predominant socio-economic system in the new world order.<sup>7,8</sup>

The World Bank is made up of five interconnected financial institutions, the IBRD being the first to be created. The World Bank Group is made up of the following institutions: IBRD; International Development Association (IDA); International Finance Corporation (IFC); Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Each of these institutions specializes in an area of development. When people talk about the World Bank, they tend to refer to the IBRD and the IDA.

Since the IMF's origins, the US was its main creditor and the Fund demanded austerity measures from the countries to which it provided loans, inducing privatizations and reductions in spending on public policies to ensure that they could repay their debts to it. This tended to benefit the US and the capitalist system itself. On the other hand, the gold-dollar convertibility for commercial transactions, guaranteed at that Conference, benefited the US to such an extent that, in the 1970's, they managed to uncouple the US currency from the value of gold and still maintain their hegemony.<sup>7,8</sup>

It can thus be seen that countries classified as **developed** and those classified as **underdeveloped** or **developing** are part of the same movement, so that for the former to exist, it is necessary for the latter to exist. It can also be seen that the Breton Woods Agreement, by presenting itself as a means of harmony between countries, of reducing conflicts and curbing the imperialist desires of State leaders, at the same time created the conditions for a new type of imperialism, where domination could do without the entry of armies into other lands. From that moment on, domination would be more subtle.

According to Barreto,<sup>8</sup> the system of rules established at the Bretton Woods Conference aimed to regulate the international economy and rebuild capitalism. According to the author,<sup>8</sup>

This liberal system, which prioritized the market and the free flow of trade and capital, was the basis for the greatest growth cycle in the history of capitalism.

With its currency ruling the world and supremacy in the industrial, technological and military sectors, one country was the big winner: the United States.<sup>8(1)</sup>

The level of **development** began to be related to the degree of capitalist expansion, to the economic development of nations, guaranteed through economic relations between countries, which did not occur equally. In the first bloc of countries, a kind of pact was established between capital and labor, whose relationship was more level and where the waves of industrial revolutions originated. In the countries of the other bloc, authoritarian and dictatorial governments, allied to the interests of the first bloc, ensured the unevenness of this relationship, benefiting capital. If in the first bloc the balance between capital and labor also ensured social development, in the countries of the other bloc social development would wait for the **cake to grow** so that the slices could be redirected to the needs of the population. The prevailing idea was economic development, in stages, driven by industrialization, from a modernizing perspective, based on the ideology of progress.

The main reference for this theory is the economist Walt Whitman Rostow. According to Rostow's theory of development in stages, Brazil is classified as a **developing** country and is understood to be in the second stage. In other words, it is leaving the traditional economy model of rudimentary, subsistence-oriented production, without the production of surpluses, and moving on to the next stage. In this perspective, where Brazil fits in, there is a transition to the third stage of the **development** process (the uprooting stage). In stage two, the transition stage, there is greater specialization of work, as well as a process of technological modernization, knowledge production, changes in values and social and political changes. These changes would contribute to increased productivity and economic growth, generating surpluses.<sup>6</sup>

Today the world has changed, with the US sharing the lead with the bloc that forms the European Union. Brazil, China and India are now seen as **developing** countries and are part of the group of 20 countries considered to be the most **developed**, the G20, together holding 90% of the world's Gross Domestic Product - GDP, which is all the goods and services produced in a year.

The fact that Brazil is part of the G20 creates an explanatory contradiction when, in order to justify its social and health indicators, it is attributed to the fact that it is still a **developing** country. This contradiction, however, confirms that the production of wealth alone does not guarantee better living conditions for the population, nor even equity in the distribution of and access to goods and services.

## CELSE FURTADO'S THEORY OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Celso Furtado, a Brazilian economist who was born in the backlands of Paraíba in 1920 and died in 2004, had a respectable body of work in which he discussed Brazilian economic policy and development theory. Celso Furtado was a member of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) and took part in the governments of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961) and João Goulart (1961-1964). In 1964, his political rights were revoked for ten years, during the period of the military governments (1964-1985). In 1979, he returned to Brazil with the amnesty process and “in 1984, he was part of the Commission of Notables that drew up an Action Plan for the future government of Tancredo Neves”.<sup>6(30)</sup>

ECLAC developed a political economy theory on **development** that differed from the hegemonic one, which argued that there were mutual benefits between countries that had trade relations. The ECLAC group developed an original theory that explained **development** and **underdevelopment** as interdependent, and also introduced the concept of **center** and **periphery** in its analysis of economic geopolitics. In 1940, Raúl Prebisch, director of ECLAC, introduced this new conception of development theory when analyzing the issue in Latin America. When talking about the process of interdependence between **development** and **underdevelopment**, he classified the countries into **central** and **peripheral**, and Prebisch argued that trade relations between the countries of the first bloc and those of the second were unequal in the nature of what each produced and traded. According to him, while the former trade in industrialized products, the latter trade in agricultural and mineral products (known as *commodities*) which, although indispensable in the production of the former, are sold at a much lower price, which in itself causes an imbalance in the balance of trade in the export-import process. For the ECLAC group, the industrialization process would determine the **development** process.<sup>6</sup>

Furtado made a strong contribution to ECLAC's thinking, being one of the expressions in the formulation of the Theory of Underdevelopment and in the reflections on the **dependent** way in which **peripheral** countries inserted themselves into international trade. Furtado gives centrality to the dimension of power in his explanations of the structural reproduction of **underdevelopment** which, for him, is inherent in the capitalist structure and results from the historical process.<sup>6(33)</sup>

## MARXIST CRITIQUE OF DEVELOPMENT THEORY

By presenting two theories of development, we have shown that there is no single way of defining **development**, nor who it is aimed at, nor how it is achieved. The two theories presented here, however, start from economic development, although in different ways: one through the creation of surpluses and the other through technological development. These two theories also differ in the way they explain the existence of more **developed** and less **developed** countries, using different ways of naming them: developed vs. developing; developed vs. underdeveloped; central vs. peripheral. Although there are differences, both are centered on the needs of capital.

Another way of conceiving **development** brings the human being to the center of the analysis, more precisely, it gives centrality to human needs. In this sense, we think of the development of human beings and their creative potential. Thus, another way of thinking about **development** would be to adopt categories of analysis such as **work, alienation and surplus value** as the basis of capitalist accumulation.<sup>9</sup>

Capitalism is based on the exploitation of labor which, in order to be effective, creates a mass of reserve workers, ensuring that the active workforce is cheaper. This process of workers being left out of the labor market - which occurs to the extent that capitalism can do without many people through the social, technical and international division of labor - is increasingly intensified by scientific and technological advances, given the possibility of human labor being replaced by machines, such as robotics, for example.

For Marx,<sup>10</sup> capital does not originate in the buying and selling of goods, but in the process of their production. In this sense, the transformation of money into capital, *i.e.* into more value, does not occur in the circulation of goods, but before. Capital, and of course the increase in capital, is generated in the circuit of extraction of surplus value, from its manufacture to its circulation. In other words, it is born in the process of buying and consuming productive force during the performance of work.

In this sense, surplus value can only occur when commodities that produce value are bought, and these commodities are human labor power and the means of production. Thus, capital is formed and reproduced to the extent that value in the form of money buys commodities capable of producing value greater than their own costs.

Commodities do not become commensurable through money. On the contrary, it is because all commodities, as values, are objectified human labor and are thus in themselves commensurable

with each other, that they can jointly measure their values in the same specific commodity and thus convert it into their joint measure of value, that is, into money. Money, as a measure of value, is the necessary form of manifestation of the immanent measure of value of commodities: labor time.<sup>10(231)</sup>

This means that the productive force (human labor and the means of production) in activity produces the value it pays for itself, produces value above its price and also produces surplus value, that is, more value, which Marx<sup>10</sup> calls surplus value. This production of more value, of surplus value, takes place in the quantity of goods that are produced during the workers' working day. Thus, the capitalist does not guarantee his wealth on the market, but in the production process. And the cycle of capital reproduction is uninterrupted: money invested in means of production and labor power that generate value far beyond that invested in the production of commodities that, on the market, are transformed into money, which returns to the production process producing a much higher value. This cycle goes on endlessly, increasing the investor's capital but maintaining the value paid to the worker. Wealth is not redistributed, it remains concentrated.<sup>10</sup>

The productive process, in this logic, does not guarantee the human needs of the working masses, nor does it guarantee human development, understood as the power and possibilities directed towards the creative process. The productive process is geared towards economic development and the expansion of capital. From this perspective of capitalist expansion and accumulation, human development is subordinated to the capacity to consume goods and services, which in turn is subordinated to the value obtained through the sale of labor power.

In this process, the worker is stripped of his human condition, transformed into a means of producing value, an instrument of capital. The worker is objectified when he sells his labor power, which also becomes a commodity to be consumed in the production process. At this point, the worker undergoes a process of alienation: he sells his labor power as if it were alien to him, as if, in order to consume it, the productive process didn't have to consume the worker himself. By selling his productive force, the worker no longer decides what will be produced, nor for what or for whom the product of his labor will be used. The worker only produces, so that at the end of a collective labor process, he no longer recognizes the role he has played, let alone understands the value of his work in the process of capitalist reproduction. Everything becomes alienated to the worker, who no longer applies his labor power to creating something he needs. His goal now turns to what will be returned to him after a period of days worked. What the worker understands as the

product of his labor is value in the form of wages. Alienated labor is therefore a condition for the production of surplus value.<sup>10</sup>

The **theory of development** directed towards the human beings opposes the logic of capitalist accumulation, aiming for the productive process to be centered on human needs, not the needs of capital. Capitalist accumulation and the satisfaction of human needs do not fit into the same **theory of development**, nor into the same project for society. In this sense, when reflecting on the relationship between social and health indicators and local or national **development**, the question remains: which Development Theory are we talking about?

Still in the field of Marxist analysis are those authors who developed the Marxist Theory of Dependency - TMD, formulated by Brazilians Ruy Mauro Marini, Vânia Bambirra and Theotônio dos Santos, and endorsed by German André Gunder Frank.<sup>11</sup> This is a reading of **development** that relates Karl Marx's theory of value to the Marxist Theory of Imperialism, with Lenin among the thinkers who formulated it.<sup>12</sup>

In general terms, for André Gunder Frank,<sup>13</sup> capitalist development on the one hand generates **underdevelopment** on the other to the extent that a few countries appropriate the economic surplus of many others. The author<sup>13</sup> understands that capitalism is organized internationally in a metropolitan center with peripheral satellites. The latter are expropriated throughout history by those who make up the metropolitan center, in a continuous process. **Underdevelopment** is therefore considered to be inherent in the structure of the capitalist system.<sup>13</sup>

The TMD is therefore based on the understanding that there is a relationship of subordination between the peripheral countries and the central ones, relationships that are understood as imperialist. According to Luce,<sup>12</sup>

[...] TMD offers some of the most consistent explanations for issues such as: the fact that the majority of people living in slums are concentrated in places like Latin America; or the fact that a country like Brazil is one of the ten largest economies in terms of GDP, but has social indicators between the seventieth and eightieth positions on the United Nations Human Development Index; or the historical tendency of countries like Latin America to structurally record longer working hours and lower wage levels compared to the dominant economies, configuring a regime of brutal super-exploitation.<sup>12(9)</sup>

Continuing the Marxist analysis of the development of capitalism and the relationship of inequality established between the bloc of countries that lead technological and scientific advances and determine the leaps in industrial processes (the so-called industrial revolutions) and the bloc

of countries whose economies revolve around the former, is the Theory of Imperialism, developed by Lenin.<sup>14</sup>

From the perspective of the Theory of Imperialism, considered to be an advanced stage of capitalism, the war between countries seeking to expand their domains is not fought by tanks, but by international economic policy, whose instruments include multinational companies, control of the global market and the subtle forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism that are established. This theory is based on the fact that, in the historical process, technical and technological advances have not guaranteed quality of life for all of humanity.

This is how Plínio Arruda<sup>14</sup> explains the imperialist phase of capitalism:

For the peoples who form part of the periphery of the world capitalist system, the new times have become particularly gloomy. The windows of opportunity that would have been opened up by participation in the global order have turned out to be real traps. Economic liberalization policies have dismantled the internal decision-making centers, leaving the region at the mercy of international capital. The promises that the waves of technological innovation and the internationalization of capital would allow for an acceleration of growth and the socialization of new production methods and consumer goods were not fulfilled. The unequal diffusion of technical progress has accentuated the asymmetries in the international division of labour and exacerbated the predatory characteristics of capital, revitalizing forms of super-exploitation of labour and depredation of the environment that were thought to have been overcome. Subjected to the ferocity of global competition and the despotism of the imperialist powers, the societies on the periphery of the capitalist system have become prey to a process of neo-colonial reversal that calls into question their very survival as a national state capable of minimally controlling the vagaries of capital. It's not that the state has been weakened. When it comes to defending and promoting the interests of big business, state power is stronger than ever. What has been definitively compromised is the public nature of the state, its action in the interests that, in some way, meet the needs of the population as a whole. For this reason, on the periphery of the world economy, national society's lack of control over capitalist development has been brought to a head.<sup>14(9,10)</sup>

Marxist theories of development question those that defend capitalist accumulation. In the understanding of Marxist Theories of Development, the definition must be centered on human development, which occurs through human emancipation and creative freedom. From this perspective, human development does not come about through the process of industrialization within the capitalist social and economic model, and it is necessary to break away from its structural framework in order to overcome all the problems that result from the process of exploitation.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have seen that there are different and divergent **theories of development**. Some focus on the economy and industrialization, thus understanding the degree of **development** of nations. From this perspective, it is understood that it is the capacity to produce, market and consume industrialized products and generate surpluses that guarantees **development**, corroborating greater access for the population to goods and services, thus improving social and health indicators. The differences between economists who follow this line are few and lie in the role of the state, its relationship with the market and the perception of who are the main actors in the **development** process: the state or entrepreneurs.<sup>9</sup>

Other theories of development, those based on Marxist criticism, on the other hand, understand that **underdevelopment** is structural, inherent to the capitalist system, a product of the historical process of expropriation by those countries classified as **developed**. Still based on this approach, in the imperialist phase of capitalism, the world lives with the paradox of the potential of technological and scientific advances, the possibility of guaranteeing better living conditions for humanity and, at the same time, the concentration of misery, disease and high rates of death from preventable causes in various parts of the planet, which are increasing due to rising levels of unemployment, underemployment, precarious work, new forms of employment relationships, including those analogous to slavery, and also the expulsion of masses of workers to other countries, driven by hunger, war, *etc.*

This process is understood as being determined by capitalism's desire for global expansion, which is due to the unequal relations between countries in the international market, the international division of labor and the fact that technical and technological advances are determined by the needs of capitalist expansion, even though they cause a deterioration in the living conditions of a large part of the world's population, even though they contribute to the premature death of children, adolescents, men and women, including those in the pregnancy-puerperal period.

Considering the different perspectives and projects for society inherent in the different **theories** of development, the term **development** itself is not neutral; it is impregnated with the ideological content intrinsic to the Theory of Development to which its understanding is related. In this sense, development theory needs to be made explicit in the speeches of national and international agencies and researchers, as well as in academic and scientific texts, because the

proposals put forward for intervention in the reality they address come from the root of the **development** they defend.

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