
UNIT 4 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Structure

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you studied the various aspects of human development. In this unit we concentrate on political development. Political development is traditionally defined as moving towards a more liberal democratic system based on free and fair elections, and the protection of citizens' civil rights. The path to such development is often hard to define because each state has its own history, and, therefore, its own methods for moving towards this goal. Many western scholars recommend that states establish institutions to promote democracy, hold elections, and adopt a multiparty system. However, the success of a states attempt at implementing these recommendations varies from one state to another.

Political development enhances the state's capacity to mobilize and allocate resources, to process policy inputs into implementable outputs. Until recently most policy planners and economists ignored the relationships between state formation and economic development. Whereas political and economic developments are closely interconnected, it is well understood that civil strife, political uncertainties, and turmoil hamper development activities. The contemporary notion of good governance also dwells on efficient, effective, and corruption free public administration. These are some of the most basic requirements that every nation has to ensure for their existence and continuance as a state, and for political, economic, social, and cultural development. A politically sound state can only have faster all round development and protection of the interest of its citizens. Therefore, political development and political evolution is the key to a successful and strong state which, ultimately, promotes development.

After studying this unit, the reader will be able to establish the relationship between political stability and development

- elaborate on the evolution of democracy and concept of new nation state
- analyze various indicators of political participation and stability
- explain development and diffusion of democratic institutions
- explain the role of political will in decision making process

4.2 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When the global economy collapsed in 1929, the older, established democracies rode out the crisis by instituting subsidies and unemployment relief programs, but in nations with shallower democratic roots, the global slump kicked out the underpinnings of liberal democracy and destroyed its credibility. As the voters turned toward parties with more radical agendas, the number of democracies in the world plummeted as quickly as the economic indicators. For a time it was uncertain whether nations like Germany would swing hard left, or, hard right, but when it came down to choosing sides, the right wing offered the most and made fewer demands. They promised full employment, consumer gratification and a golden age of national unity of purpose—just like the Communists—but without denouncing God, homeland and private property. The corporate and military elites supported the Nazis, as did a plurality of the voters, so in 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

For a while, the Western democracies themselves had difficulty deciding whether the hard right or left was the greater danger to civilization. Then, in 1936, the Spanish right wing rose against the democratically elected leftist government, and Fascism lost most of its respectability worldwide. Across Asia and North Africa, in the old heartlands of civilizations, there were hints that the old era of imperialism might be coming to an end. In 1932 and 1936, the British set the ancient nations of Iraq and Egypt free, while they also arranged a larger measure of self government for India in 1935 after a mass protest campaign orchestrated by Mohandas Gandhi. With the 1931 Statute of Westminster, the UK reorganized the Empire into a newer Commonwealth which granted independence to the dominions. The Americans, meanwhile, set up an autonomous Commonwealth of the Philippines with the passage of the Tydings-McDuffe Act in 1934.

The Second World War changed the political map of the world; it began wiping nations off the earth by the bucketful. Between 1937 and 1942, 18 nations were ploughed under by the relentless bulldozer of war. Ten nations (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, Greece) were swallowed up by the Germans in just three years. One country (Albania) was annexed by the Italians, and 3 (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) disappeared into the Soviet Union. In addition, 4 theoretically neutral countries (Iceland, Iraq, Egypt, Persia) were occupied by the Anglo-American alliance in order to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands. All in all, 25% of the world's nations disappeared for the duration of the war.

Although the end of the war restored most of the conquered nations, many had their political structures wrecked. In Eastern Europe, the nations which had been (liberated? conquered? trampled?) by the Soviet Union tried to set up multiparty democracies, but Soviet-sponsored Communist parties quickly gained the upper hand and put an end to that. In China, the Communists and Nationalists resumed the civil war which had been interrupted by the Japanese, while left and right also fought a civil war over who would inherit Greece. In East Asia, a couple of colonies (French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies) seized the moment and tried to prevent their former masters from reclaiming control after the Japanese surrendered.

Even in those colonies which had escaped Japanese occupation, the imperialist hold had been weakened by the war. Losses in lives and wealth made it more difficult for the motherlands to keep their colonies under control. Also, because the winners of the Second World War had fought to preserve freedom worldwide, they were now obliged to grant freedom to their own vassals. By 1950, nineteen (more or less new nations had emerged, and colonialism was almost dead—at least in Asia.

The defeat of the Nazis and the allied occupation of the aggressor nations almost eradicated Fascism worldwide. Germany was split into four zones where each ally could cultivate a new regime in its own image, and by 1949, the western Allies had managed to implant a stable, peaceful and tolerant democracy on the world's most dangerous people. Japan was given a democratic constitution which renounced war and denied the divinity of the emperor. Italy's new government was a model of democratic indecisiveness which changed leaders as often as most people change socks. Only in Iberia and Latin America did a sort of quasi-fascism linger under the likes of Salazar (Portugal), Franco (Spain) and Peron (Argentina), but even here, wartime American pressure had pushed the majority of South American nations to renounce Fascist leanings.

The Dumping of Africa went almost as quickly as the Scramble for Africa of the 1880s. On New Year's Eve, 1955, there were only 5 independent nations in the whole continent; ten years later, there were 38. In most cases, the colonial powers had spent the early 1950s denying that they would ever release their colonies, so they had never bothered to educate a native civil service or middle class, and often forbade natives to travel abroad to seek education on their own. In the Belgian Congo, for example, there was not a single African doctor, lawyer or engineer as late as 1955. Then, suddenly, there were dozens of brand new nations being cut loose with only the slightest preparations—a generic constitution, a hasty election, a red-green-and-yellow flag and a ceremonial salute—before being sent on their way.

In many of these new countries, the local nationalist organization that had been urging the Europeans to quit won the first elections easily—and then postponed the next elections indefinitely. In countries with no local nationalist organization, the army usually took control from whichever poor unfortunate the Europeans had left in chain. Worldwide, the 1960s saw the birth of 45 new nations, and by the decade's end, all the colonial powers had set free any dependency which was big enough to take care of itself. Only Portugal clung to the old ways, but they paid the price with escalating colonial wars in any territory big enough to support rebel strongholds.

In domestic politics (and therefore invisible on the map), the 1960s were dominated by the coming of age of the generation which had been born after the Second World War. Because the birth rate had soared in the late 1940's following a major plummet during the previous bad times, this was probably the largest and most cohesive single generation of the century. The world's biggest country saw the biggest manifestation as the Cultural Revolution shook China. Here the Communist leadership used the young, idealistic Red Guards to break the power of the entrenched bureaucracy — and then used the Army to break the Red Guards. In Czechoslovakia, an idealistic move towards a less repressive regime provoked a Soviet invasion. In the United States, the youth movement focused its energies

opposing American involvement in the Vietnamese Civil War, while in France, student rebellion almost brought down the government.

Multiparty democracy hit rock bottom in the 1970s. Whether you measure this decline in absolute numbers (a net loss of 12 visible countries, 1962-72) or percentages (29% fewer), the trend is unmistakable. As a percentage of independent countries, democracies reached their lowest point of the late 20th Century, weighing in at only 30% in 1977. In terms of total population, the post-colonial low of 19% was reached during the period 1975-1977, when Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency and suspended civil rights in India to avoid being jailed for corruption. What was happening to all these countries? Many were falling to military coups. Of the ten traditional countries of South America, there had been only two military regimes (and eight democracies) in 1962; however, every five years saw the fall of two democracies.

In Africa, meanwhile, it had become obvious that the new nations were not going to follow the parliamentary model recommended by their former colonial owners. The lucky ones achieved some semblance of stability under slightly corrupt single-party states, while the unlucky ones lurched from coup to coup under a brutal succession of generals, colonels and sergeant-majors. Throughout the African continent, a net total of eight nations shifted from civilian to military rule between 1967 and 1977. Case by case, each of these authoritarian regimes rose to power based on local circumstances, but overall, the trend towards oppression was boosted by the corrupting influence of the Cold War (Fig. 1). Both East and West preferred strong, stable regimes allied to their side and sworn to oppose the other, rather than unstable democracies which might roll left or right without warning. And even if the Western democracies occasionally had moral qualms about arming thugs, they knew that the Soviets didn't, so any nation ostracized by the West stood a good chance of becoming a Soviet ally by default. Therefore, each side had a strong incentive for the superpowers to blindly support their cronies, no questions asked.

The crisis of democracy even touched the United States, normally among the most stable of the world's republics. The failure of the American intervention in Vietnam had polarized national politics, and when the Nixon Administration was caught trying to stifle domestic opposition with a web of illegal activities, the President was forced to resign—an unprecedented event in US history. The trends were not uniformly bleak, however. The Mediterranean rim of Europe—long a stronghold of authoritarianism—finally rejoined the civilized world when Spain, Portugal and Greece all held their first free elections in quite awhile. Another anomaly on the map of West Europe disappeared in 1972 when Switzerland became the last European nation to give women the vote. The liberalization of Portugal led to the hasty withdraws from the world's last overseas empire, followed quickly by exploding civil wars in the successor states.

The final year of the decade hinted at the beginning of a change as many of the century's most brutal tyrants were overthrown. In 1979, invading neighbors were driving Pol Pot of Cambodia and Idi Amin of Uganda out of power, while French intervention drove Bokassa out of the Central African Empire. Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea was removed and executed by his nephew. Both the Pahlevi dynasty of Iran and the Somoza dynasty of Nicaragua were overthrown by domestic uprisings, and the beleaguered apartheid regime of Rhodesia accepted

the inevitability of Zimbabwe. Although the successor regimes were sometimes only slight improvements (if that), the future was looking a bit brighter. The 1980s, however, were a decade of growing freedom in the Third World. In South America, the number of military governments drastically dropped off—from 7 in 1982 to 2 five years later. Along the Pacific Rim of Asia, the pendulum was also swinging back toward democracy as local economies boomed. Meanwhile, pragmatic, reformist regimes had come to power in the Soviet Union and China and were gradually dismantling the Communist state. Then, in the final few months of the decade, the avalanche hit, and the Communists surrendered power throughout Eastern Europe (Fig. 2).

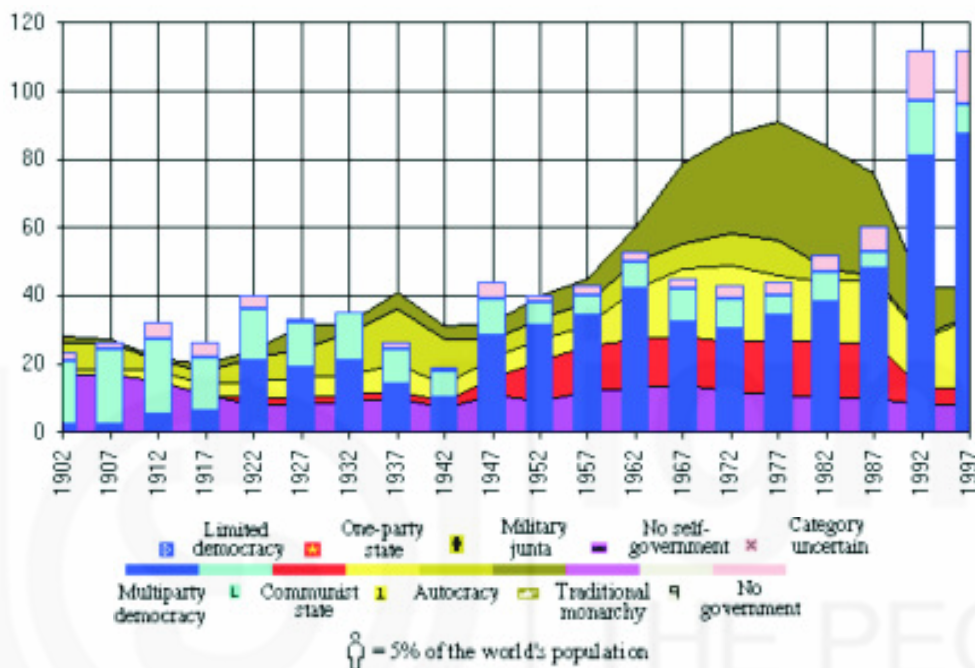


Fig.4.1: Changing of Regimes and forms of Independent Governments

Source: According to Matthew Whites, 1999 Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century (online)

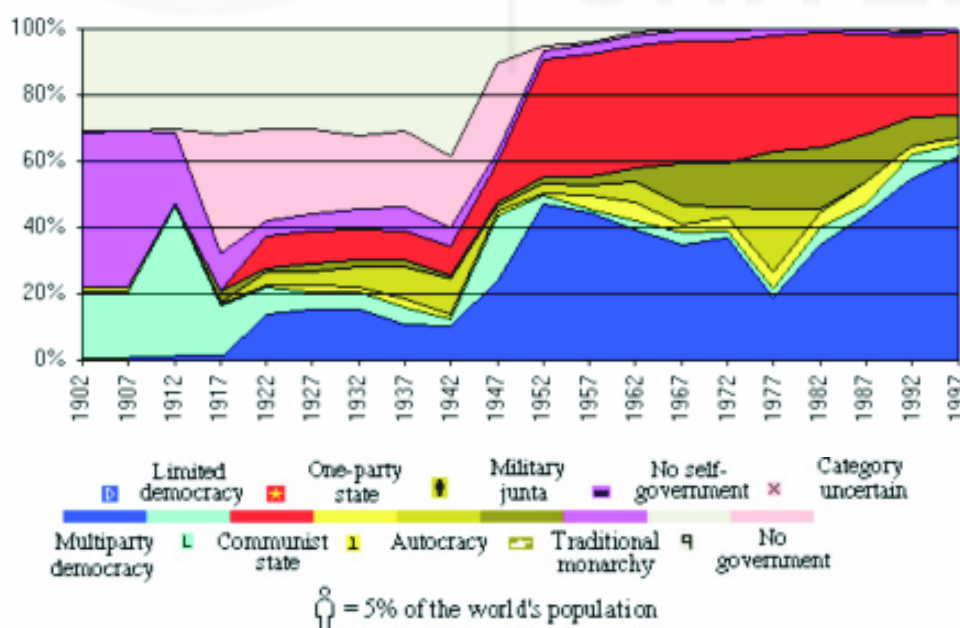


Fig. 4.2: The percentage of the world's population under various political systems

Source: According to Matthew Whites, 1999 Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century (online)

The crisis and collapse of the Soviet Union brought forth two great surges of democracy, the first in the fall of 1989 when the Communists surrendered their monopoly of power in the satellite nations, and the second in the summer of 1991 when the constituent republics of the Soviet Union seceded. There was also a parallel surge of nationhood as four former Communist unions—the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia and Yugoslavia—shattered into 24 ethnic nations. All across the globe, the various petty tyrants who had stayed in power by playing one side against the other in the Cold War were swept away. The pro-Soviet among them were cast adrift, friendless and alone, while the pro-Western soon realized that their former sponsors didn't need anti-Communist thugs anymore. Throughout the Third World, strongmen agreed to relinquish their power. They released opposition leaders from jail, scheduled elections and pilfered national treasuries to set up retirement accounts in off-shore banks.

The end result was a world that has changed unrecognizably from the world twenty years earlier. In the early 1970s, democracies were scattered in a few small clusters on the edges of the great land masses. By the late 1990s, four continents (Europe, Australia and the Americas) were almost entirely democratic. Africa had gone from almost entirely oppressive to only about half, and even if some of the new “democracies” didn't quite have the hang of it and occasionally continued to harass the opposition, reward cronies and fudge the ballot counts, at least the jails were emptied of dissidents and the press was allowed to complain more vocally about government abuses. There is no single effect that the end of the Cold War had on hot war worldwide. In Africa, several long smoldering civil wars fizzled out as Soviet-sponsored governments and Western-sponsored guerrillas decided it was time to talk. But this trend toward peace in one part of the world was balanced by new conflicts elsewhere. In the former Communist lands of Eurasia, ethnic hatreds which had been kept under control by Russian hegemony now found an opportunity to flare up.

Having read the contribution of political development in various spheres and the historical analysis of political development at the international level, now try and answer the following questions in *Check Your Progress 1*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) How political development and political evolution promotes development?

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2) What were the final results of the end of cold war?

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4.3 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ADVENT OF DEMOCRACY

The Evolution of Democracy

The ancient Greeks were the first to use democracy as a form of government. Under Pericles, male citizens in Athens participated in the daily running of government. This form of direct democracy excluded all non-citizens, such as women and slaves. In ancient Rome, a government where officials were chosen from among eligible citizens was established. A republic, as this form of democratic government is known, is not a direct democracy. It is called a representative democracy, since only a few chosen officials represent the citizens as a whole. As a form of government, democracy was rare in Europe, between the second and thirteenth centuries. In 1215, the nobility in England forced King John to sign the *Magna Carta*, or, the Great Charter, which recognized their rights as land owners, citizens of England, and subjects of the king. After that, it was not until the late 1600s that democratic ideals began to resurface in Europe, when some English and French philosophers began promoting democratic government, in place of the absolute monarchies under which they lived.

In England, the English Bill of Rights was passed by Parliament after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Power was transferred from the Catholic king, James II, to his son-in-law and daughter, William and Mary, both of whom were Protestants. The Bill of Rights ensured the supremacy of Parliament over the monarchy in England. England was not yet a true democracy, but it was taking steps toward becoming one. As English subjects, the colonies in America had the benefit of knowing a democratic form of government. In 1776, the American colonies declared their independence from England based on many real and perceived wrongs that they had suffered. The original revolutionaries wrote a declaration outlining their grievances, and claimed the right to self rule, or sovereignty. The Declaration of Independence included many Enlightenment ideas: the right to life, liberty and property, religious toleration, freedom of speech, and the separation of powers.

Growth of Democracy

The success of the American Revolution and its guiding principles inspired the French Revolution in 1789, and the Latin American Revolutions of the 1790s and early 1800s. Proof that foreign rule and slave chains could be thrown off was extremely encouraging to the mixed-blood inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, and Latin America. In the 1830s and 1840s, a series of democratic revolutions occurred throughout Europe. Most of them were harshly put down. After World War II, most of northern, western and southern Europe, America, Japan, South America and the parts of the former British Empire, practiced some form of democracy.

Today, democracy is one of the most widely practiced political systems in the world. Democracy has been defined as an institutional arrangement, ought to ensure the following conditions

- Freedom to form and join organizations
- Freedom of Expression

- Right to vote
- Eligibility for public office; Right of political leaders to compete for support (Rights of political leaders to compete for votes)
- Alternative sources of information
- Free and fair elections
- Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preferences.

When these conditions are met, the elected government is judged to be responsive to citizens’ preferences, and political freedom is considered as an indicator for modern democracy.

Democratic Change Cycle

Samuel P. Huntington is a well known thinker on the subject of democracy. He puts the democratization of the late 1980s in a larger perspective by pointing out that waves of democratization have occurred in the past. He also identified reverse waves, in which, countries that had been democratic for a while reverted to authoritarian forms of government - sometimes, indeed, to re-democratize at a later time. He further concludes that, “A twentieth-century political system is democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote”. Huntington’s definition and description of the three waves of modern democratization is classified under “democratized”, “authoritarian” and “Non democratic phases of previously democratic countries” is presented in tabular form (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Three Waves of Huntington’s classification of Democracy

Countries in Category A	Number of Countries in Category	1st Wave 1828-1926 (long wave)	1st Reverse 1922-42	2nd Wave 1942-62	2nd Reverse 1958-1962	3rd Wave 1974-	3rd Reverse? (to 1991)
Australia; Canada; Finland Iceland; Ireland; New Zealand; Sweden; Switzerland; U.K.; U.S.	10	Democratized in the first wave & have remained democratic since	Democratic	Democratic	Democratic	Democratic	Democratic
Category B Chile	1	Democratized	Democratic	Democratic	Reverted to Authoritarianism	Democratized	Democratic
Category C Austria; Belgium Colombia; Denmark France; W. Germany Italy; Japan; Netherlands Norway	10	Democratized	Reverted to Authoritarianism	Democratized	Democratic	Democratic	Democratic
Category D Argentina; Uruguay Czechoslovakia Greece; Hungary	5	Democratized	Reverted to Authoritarianism	Democratized	Reverted to Authoritarianism	Democratized	Democratic

Category E East Germany Poland;Portugal Spain	4	Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism	Authoritarian	Authoritarian	Democratized	Democratic
Category F Estonia;Latvia Lithuania	3	Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism				
Category G Botswana; Gambia Israel; Jamaica; Malaysia Malta; Sri Lanka Trinidad & Tobago Venezuela	9			Democratized in the second wave & have remained democratic since	Democratic	Democratic	Democratic
Category H Bolivia; Brazil; Ecuador India; South Korea Pakistan; Peru Philippines; Turkey	9			Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism	Democratized	Democratic
Category I Nigeria	1			Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism	Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism
Category J Burma; Fiji ; Ghana Guyana; Indonesia Lebanon	6			Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism	Authoritarian	Authoritarian
Category K Bulgaria; El Salvador Guatemala; Haiti Honduras; Mongolia Namibia; Nicaragua Panama; Romania Senegal	11					Democratized	Democratic
Category L Sudan; Suriname	2				Reverted to Authori- tarianism	Democratized	Reverted to Authori- tarianism
Democratic Countries		33 (max.)	11 (min.)	51 (max.)	29 (min.)	62 (max.)	59 (min.)
Net Change		+33	-22	+40	-22	+33	-3
Total Countries	71						

Source: Samuel P. Huntington, 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*, London.

In this section, you have read about the growth of democracy and democratic change cycles. Now, you are required to attempt the exercises given in *Check Your Progress 2*.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) Where and how did democracy evolve first in the world?

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2) How does democracy helps in projecting people’s requirement/demand before the government?

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4.4 ATTRIBUTES OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

After learning about political systems and democracy, now, in this section, you will learn about various attributes of political development.

Political Freedom

The concepts of political freedom and democracy are closely related to each other. In terms of content and philosophy, both address the issue of people’s participation in electing their representative government and governance. They are so intertwined that they are considered two sides of the same coin, and are frequently debated. Voter preferences for current consumption over long term investment make democracies ill equipped to undertake the kind of policies necessary for sustained economic growth. These narrow definitions of political freedom and democracy enable us to identify empirical cases of democracies and non democracies.

Political Stability

There exists a strong relationship between a country’s development strategy and its political system. Authoritarianism or democracy has an unfailing influence on the pace of development and justice. Political institutions always dominate the fate of nations in many ways, and the strategy of economic development pursued by a country is the outcome of its political system, which, in turn also determines its success or failure. The rate of economic growth and the level of economic and social development represent the well being and prosperity of an economy and political stability indicates the well-being of its political institutions. When one looks at the economy and politics of a country, there arise a number of questions, for example, what is the role of political institutions in economic growth and development; which kind of political institutions democracy or dictatorship help or hinder economic growth and its trickledown effect? Is there a trade off between economic, political and civil liberties, and economic growth? What is the role of income distribution, poverty alleviation, and other social welfare provisions in determining economic performance?

There is a strong relationship between economic growth, capital accumulation, and democracy on one hand, and between political instability and income inequality on the other. Let us, now, find answers to the question with regard to the linkages between the well being of an economy and its political set up. These answers emerge from the experience of different countries, and take the form of distinct hypotheses as given below

- democracy retards economic growth (India's experience up to the eighties)
- democracy helps to achieve high rates of economic growth
- authoritarian regimes lead to faster economic growth (East Asian experience)
- dictatorial regimes lead to poor economic growth (African and Latin American experience).

All this leads to the conclusion that, whether it is a democracy or a dictatorial regime, what matters is its political stability. The degree of political stability cannot be measured directly. It depends on a number of factors such as, political upheavals; riots, strikes and lockouts; crime and (political) assassinations; coups and change of power; infighting amongst political parties; scams, including rent-seeking and directly unproductive profit seeking activities; lack of people's faith in the government; poverty and income disparities. One may use these indices to work out the degree of political stability in different countries and regions over different periods. This would lead to a number of interesting hypotheses establishing a link between the indices of political stability and economic growth. For example, during the periods of political unrest, or coups, or change of power, or even intense infighting within the ruling party, the rate of growth has been seen to slow down, and, even become negative, essentially through lower savings and investment rates, and, also through a lack of vision in the part of the bureaucracy. It is now understood that the magnitude of these activities and political instability reinforce and strengthen each other to quite a great extent, with the result that, taken together, they work against the growth process. They require being neutralized, weakened, and counter-acted.

Decentralization

Another important attribute of political development is decentralization. Decentralization can be usefully understood as a political process whereby administrative authority, public resources, and responsibilities are transferred from central government agencies to lower level organs of government or to non governmental bodies, such as community-based organizations (CBOs), 'third party' non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or, private sector actors. Decentralization is quite often also called departmentalization because it is nothing but the policy of delegating decision-making authority down to the lower levels in an organization that is relatively away from a central authority. A decentralized organization shows fewer tiers in the organizational structure, wider span of control, and a bottom-to-top flow of decision making, and flow of ideas. In a centralized organization, the decisions are made by top executives or on the basis of pre-set policies. These decisions or policies are then enforced through several tiers of the organization after gradually broadening the span of control, until it reaches the bottom tier. In a more decentralized organization, the top executives delegate much of their decision making authority to lower tiers of the organizational structure.

Political Decentralization

Political decentralization aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision making. It is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government, but it can also support democratization by giving citizens, or their representatives, more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies. Advocates of political decentralization assume

that decisions made with greater participation will be better informed and more relevant to diverse interests in society than those made only by national political authorities. The concept implies that the selection of representatives from local electoral constituency allows citizens to know their political representatives better, and allows elected officials to know, better, the needs and desires of their constituents. Political decentralization often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, creation of local political units, and the encouragement of effective public interest groups.

Political Values

In a liberal, democratic democracy, politics cannot long proceed or survive simply by inertia; instead it must be constantly fed by people who are engaged in the political process, and who share some of the basic values necessary for such a democracy to thrive. None of these values depend in any way upon religion or theism; this means that they are necessarily ‘Godless’ — that politics exists independently of people’s religions and Gods.

Rule of Law

Perhaps nothing is as fundamental as the rule of law, liberal democracy simply cannot exist unless everyone, from the lowest citizen to the highest official, is equally subject to the same laws. As soon as some people or groups are exempted from neutral, generally applicable laws, they are essentially placed outside the political process and made superior to the rest of us. In the end, the law means nothing unless it is fairly and equally applied to all.

Political Harmony

In music, harmony requires multiple voices singing parts of the same piece; in politics, then, harmony requires the presence of multiple perspectives that all are moving towards the same general goal. Valuing political harmony means opposing efforts to reduce dialog to a single perspective, as well as efforts to tear the group apart into wildly different directions.

Compromise

Politics is the ‘art of the possible’, which means that it is a pragmatic effort to find the best possible means for achieving particular goals. In a diverse, pluralistic community, this means that politics cannot exist without compromise: people and groups will generally get some of what they want, but almost never all of what they want because there will always be groups with different desires. Those who categorically oppose compromise, thus, oppose the political process of democracy.

Liberty and Autonomy

Democracy, which is ‘government by the people’, cannot exist unless people are free, and, moreover, have the freedom to govern themselves. If sovereign power ultimately rests with the people, it can only be because the people are free to be sovereign over themselves, and to explore the various options available for structuring their common government. Otherwise, it’s just another dictatorship masked as a democracy.

Secularism

Often derided by those who don't understand or believe in it, secularism is a critical component of liberal democracy. Secularism is the political principle or philosophy that some sphere of knowledge, values, institutions, and action must exist that is independent of religious authority. If there is no such secular sphere, then everything is under ecclesiastical control and this undermines the possibility for liberty and autonomy.

Dispersed Power and Authority

The more power that is concentrated into fewer hands, the greater the threat to people's liberty and autonomy. This is true even when power is in the hands of those of good will, which is why we must guard against a disproportionate concentration of power in government, in religious entities, and in private groups like corporations. Liberal democracy is best preserved by ensuring that social and political power is distributed as widely as possible, even if unevenly.

Openness and Honesty

If democracy is going to work, then the people must be well informed about what their government is doing in their name. This means, therefore, that the ability of the government to keep secrets from the people must be sharply limited. If the government is given too much latitude to keep secrets, then it's impossible for the people to make informed, educated decisions, and this means that those in power can retain power without appropriate consent from the governed.

Equality and Justice

Two closely connected political values are equality and justice. A liberal democracy requires equality, because otherwise only a privileged portion of the population ends up being truly sovereign. A liberal democracy requires justice because that is the basis for an equitable application of the law. An unjust society is one where the rule of law, morality, and equality are all violated. Neither equality nor justice requires any gods or religions to defend them.

Politics without Religion

This simply means that all those values have nothing to do with any religious belief, and can be referred to as 'Godless'. This simply means that they are not founded upon the alleged will of any Gods, and do not depend upon a belief in any god for their validity. This would mean that liberal, representative democracy must itself be Godless and irreligious in some basic way. It doesn't mean that all individuals or organizations within a liberal democracy are also Godless, but it does mean that the system which creates a context for their political and social activity is Godless. Some religious believers might look askance at this, but they should not. After all, the only other choice is for some particular form of some particular religion, as mediated by a few self-proclaimed religious authorities, is singled out to define that context. This, however, is inconsistent with a liberal democracy where religion can have no impact on one's political status.

Political Leadership and Economic Development

Political leadership is a complex process by which persons in power influence their followers, civil society, and wider public to accomplish societal goals. Political leaders are necessary for initiating as well as for hastening the process

of change in any society. It may be social, and, or economic change, constitutional change, or political change. In all these processes of change, political leadership plays an important role. Political leaders carry out the process of change by applying their leadership attributes like politically relevant beliefs, socially adored values, generally approved character, wide knowledge and wisdom acquired through learning and experience. Political leaders are supposed to understand the hopes and aspirations of the people and identify the goals of the society.

They may formulate a vision of the country’s future. They acquire or develop the capacity to mobilise the people to achieve the common societal goal. Further, the political leaders are expected to have certain attributes in order to be effective as leaders. They should have an unimpeachable commitment to the cause or societal goal which they decide to fight for, or achieve. They should be prepared to render selfless service to the people at large. They should have the quality of inspiring their followers and even the common people. They should have patience and perseverance in pursuing the society’s goals, maturity and wisdom for taking sound and timely decisions, and exhibit strength of character by setting example and mental toughness to face criticism when found wrong. These are all ideal textbook attributes. It is difficult to find all of them, even in an ideal leader.

Now that you have gone through the various attributes of political development, answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress 3*.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) Write a short note on political stability.

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2) What do you understand by decentralization?

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4.5 RELATIONSHIP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section we will study the relationship of political development with the economic and social development. This relationship is reflected very well in the context of South Asian countries, where the impact of political development is clearly visible in the economic and social development spheres.

Economic Development

Economic development has, historically, been defined as economic growth based on gross domestic product growth, increased international trade, industrialization, and integration into regional and global economies. Along these lines, the Washington Consensus has, played a large role in prescribing policies for economic development in developing countries. One of the most widely accepted themes in social sciences is that the emergence and the stability of democracies are associated in a certain way with economic development. Among the reasons offered for the empirical connection between economic development and political participation, a common idea is that the process of economic development leads to clusters of social change that will drastically alter social structure, organizational, and political culture of a nation — and that these are associated with new forms of political behaviour.

Social Development and Civil Society

The strength of civil society is thought to be important in several ways, including encouraging greater civility in public life, increasing the accountability of governments to their people, and, as a force for democratization. The concept of civil society is overused, overrated, and analytically insubstantial. That is, civil society is a concept that cannot itself be observed, directly or indirectly, in its entirety. In this respect, it is like many key concepts in the social sciences, including the 'state', 'democracy', 'power' and, as we have suggested, 'development'.

There is general agreement in the literature that civil society is an area of social life bounded on one side by the state and on the other by families and kinship networks. Scholars who write about civil society differ immensely about what they wish to include within the concept, and what they wish to exclude. As Fierlbeck (1998) has demonstrated, some authors emphasize associational life, and others formal organizations. Some authors wish to exclude organizations that participate in the economy or the market, while others would include at least some such bodies. No author appears to have developed a usable operational definition of civil society, and it seems unlikely that any operational definition can be developed that would incorporate more than a very narrow sub-set of the activities generally considered to be part of civil society.

In fact, it appears that any sensible and potentially operational definition of the distinction between state and civil society would need to focus not on groups or individuals, but on activities. A person who is a state employee may function as a member of civil society in some of his or her activities. An individual who is employed by a non profit, public interest NGO may function as part of the state

apparatus if the NGO has signed a contract to implement certain government policies or programmes. An organization may similarly function as an organ of civil society in some of its activities, and as an agent of the state in others. Indeed, there may be situations in which a single set of organizational activities would best be seen as constituting parts of both civil society and the state. If, for instance, a women's organization is contracted by the state to help to educate rural women about elections and their right to vote, we would seem to have a situation in which the goals of both civil society and the state are being advanced simultaneously.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt the evolution of democracy as a political institution and most widely practiced political systems in the world. You have also seen the historical perspective of political development in the last seven decades. The various attributes of political development covering political freedom, political stability, decentralization and political decentralization, political values, rule of law, political harmony, compromise, liberty and autonomy, secularism, equality and justice, politics without religion, and political leadership and economic development. You have also read about the relationship of political development with the economic and social development, which is reflected very well in the context of South Asian countries, where the impact of political development is clearly visible in the economic and social development spheres.

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4.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - POSSIBLE ANSWER

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) How political development and political evolution promotes development?

Answer. Until recently most policy planners and economists ignored the relationships between state formation and economic development. Whereas political and economic developments are closely interconnected, it is well understood that civil strife, political uncertainties, and turmoil hamper development activities. The contemporary notion of good governance also dwells on efficient, effective, and corruption free public administration. These are some of the most basic requirements that every nation has to ensure for their existence and continuance as a state, and for political, economic, social, and cultural development. A politically sound state can only have faster all round development and protection of the interest of its citizens. Therefore, political development and political evolution is the key to a successful and strong state which, ultimately, promotes development.

- 2) What were the final results of the end of cold war?

Answer. By the late 1990s, four continents (Europe, Australia and the Americas) were almost entirely democratic. Africa had gone from almost entirely oppressive to only about half, and even if some of the new “democracies” didn’t quite have the hang of it and occasionally continued to harass the opposition, reward cronies and fudge the ballot counts, at least the jails were emptied of dissidents and the press was allowed to complain more vocally about government abuses. There is no single effect that the end of the Cold War had on hot war worldwide. In Africa, several long smouldering civil wars fizzled out as Soviet-sponsored governments and Western-sponsored guerrillas decided it was time to talk. But this trend toward peace in one part of the world was balanced by new conflicts elsewhere. In the former Communist lands of Eurasia, ethnic hatreds which had been kept under control by Russian hegemony now found an opportunity to flare up.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Where and how did democracy evolve first in the world?

Answer. The Ancient Greeks were the first to use democracy as a form of government. Under Pericles, male citizens in Athens participated in the daily running of government. In ancient Rome, a government where officials were chosen from among eligible citizens was established. This form of democratic government is called representative democracy, since only a few chosen officials represent the citizens as a whole. As a form of government, democracy was rare in Europe between second and thirteenth centuries. It was not until the late 1600s that democratic ideals began to resurface in Europe, when some English and French philosophers began promoting democratic government in place of the absolute monarchies under which they lived.

- 2) How does democracy help in projecting people's requirements/demand before the government?

Answer. Democracy, as an institutional arrangement, ought to ensure the following conditions: freedom to form and join organizations; freedom of expression; right to vote; eligibility for public office; right of political leaders to compete for support (rights of political leaders to compete for votes); alternative sources of information; free and fair elections; institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preferences. When these conditions are met, the elected government is judged to be responsive to citizens' preferences.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Write a short note on political stability.

Answer. There exists a strong relationship between a country's development strategy and its political system. Authoritarianism or democracy has an unfailing influence on the pace of development and justice. Political institutions always dominate the fate of nations in many ways. The strategy of economic development pursued by a country is the outcome of its political system, which, in turn also determines its success or failure. The rate of economic growth and the level of economic and social development represent the well-being and prosperity of an economy and political stability indicates the well-being of its political institutions.

- 2) What do you understand by decentralization?

Answer. Decentralisation can be usefully understood as a political process whereby administrative authority, public resources and responsibilities are transferred from central government agencies to lower-level organs of government or to non-governmental bodies, such as community based organisations (CBOs), third party non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or private sector actors. Decentralization, also called departmentalization is the policy of delegating decision-making authority down to the lower levels in an organization, relatively away from and lower in a central authority. A decentralized organization shows fewer tiers in the organizational structure, wider span of control, and a bottom-to-top flow of decision-making and flow of ideas. In a decentralized organization, the top executives delegate much of their decision-making authority to lower tiers of the organizational structure. As a correlation, the organization is likely to run on less rigid policies and wider spans of control among each officer of the organization.