

# Theoretical and Ideological Framing: Relative Change Theory and Its Application to Humanitarianism in Education Development

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This paper proposes relative change theory as an alternative to the common theories used in examining education sector development in the developing regions of the world. The theory specifically seeks to explain the persisting limited impact of development aid efforts. It departs from the Marxist informed dependency and world-systems approach in that intent to empower by the agencies is presumed. However, relative change theory advances the notion that ultimately, the overriding consideration for self-interest defines the outcome of interventions in any humanitarian effort. It differs from prospect theory in that relative change theory is concerned with the effort to empower others and where benefits accrue to a third party and are intended to alleviate their perceived suffering while not substantially altering the degree of utility of the aggregate assets for those underwriting the premiums that is development aid.

*Keywords:* development aid, relative change theory, humanitarianism, international education, human capital theory, dependency theory, world systems theory, functionalism

## Introduction

International efforts in education sector development in resource-poor economies are usually undertaken within a humanitarian framework. HCT (human capital theory), itself rooted in a techno-functionalist perspective, informs much of this effort. Because of the perceived linkage between education and economic empowerment, power relations at work in the distribution of education resources cannot be ignored. Dependency theory considers the deliberate and often subtle attempts by wealthy Western states to exploit underdeveloped nations. World-system theory, on the other hand, assumes a potential for internally driven development even though external forces may define the extent of growth. The relative change theory proposes a relationship in which the initiative to advance change originates with those in the powerful position, while the degree of growth is defined in relative terms. However, a separation of the economic and socio-political dimensions of social interaction allows for economic ideological bearing to mediate the influence of humanitarianism in education sector development. The result is a limited impact by humanitarian efforts in education development.

## Evolution of Ideologies and Persisting Influences

The discourse herein acknowledges an evolutionary pattern in the scholarship on ideological influence in

education, particularly in the field of comparative education. This has been made possible by expansion in inclusionary social space over time-accommodating other world views as the advocates of such ideological positions gain empowerment over their social and political space. Likewise, change in social context precedes the ideological articulation of the lived experience of those impacted by the change. As such, while ideology will underpin the framing of the economic or socio-political experience of a people, the discourse on the outcome of their lived experience will be framed ideologically from the perspective of their experience.

Evidently, the Western European men were the primary beneficiaries of the freedoms accorded by the modern nation-state bureaucratic economic and socio-political machinery up to the time Western women demanded suffrage. As early as the 1700s, French feminists were organizing to press for equality of the male and female in political and social life (Gullickson, 1989, p. 593). Even then, attaining suffrage for women in the Western world was a nation-by-nation and state-by-state incremental achievement. In the US, for example, 13 of the Western states were the early adopters of extending suffrage to women, even before Congress voted to extend voting rights to women in 1919 (McCammon & Campbell, 2001, p. 55). Labour rights and improved quality of life for the predominantly white populations in the US dominated the political discourse in the 1930s in response to the marginal conditions that characterised the economic depression after the WWI (World War One). By the 1940s, the civil rights movement had expanded to include the rights of African America people, a people also likely to be exploited labour, who also had become vocal in articulating for their own rights as a minority group in the US (Goluboff, 2001). The right to vote irrespective of race, colour and previous conditions of servitude extended full voting rights to African Americans in 1965 (US Congress, 1965).

The 1940s also saw a move to allow political freedoms and granting of nationhood for the non-Westerners living in the colonies previously claimed by European nations. The extension of social and political space did not necessarily imply a concurrent extension of equal economic empowerment opportunities to the non-Western populations and nation states that were previously disenfranchised. The same cannot be said of the conditions for the poor and economically marginal populations in the Western region of the world. The New Deal extended opportunities for improved quality of life for many in the US providing relief from the ravages of the depression era that started in 1933 rapidly lowered unemployment rate. The US government engaged in systematic provision of “large-scale provision of direct relief, work relief, public works projects and farm subsidy programs” to mitigate the widespread unemployment and economic hardships caused by the great depression as well as implementation of programs, such as “unemployment insurance, social security and the minimum wage” (Fishback, Horrace, & Kantor, 2006, pp. 180-181) to provide a safety-net from adverse economic condition thereafter. The welfare programs in the US were to be expanded and diversified through the 1940s and into the 1970s. Similarly, Western Europe put in place various safety-nets to cushion the citizenry from adverse economic conditions along the lines of what the US implemented in the decades that followed the 1930s.

Earlier ideological theorizing focussed on examining social-political experience of a people as defined by economic conditions of European. Irrespective of the socio-political and economic system adopted by the European nations, no separation was made between the social and the economic spheres of the life of the populations. While the Soviet Union examined the economic marginalization of the masses through the lens of Marxism, the Western European nations focussed on economic liberalism as the model of capitalism accommodating government intervention. These ideologically informed theories of social and economic development influenced the nature of political economies in Europe through to the 1960s. By the 1970s, other

ideologies were advanced to explain conditions for women and populations outside of Europe. It is in this period that we see the advancement of feminist Marxism, neo-Marxist and dependency theory that incorporated both the social and political context in defining the economic conditions of Western women and economic and national development outcome in the former colonies in Latin America and Africa. Interestingly, it is also in the 1970s that the neo-liberal ideology that originates from the Austrian School begins to gain ground in the area of development economics.

What separates the neo-liberal theoretical paradigm from the other theories of the time is the clear separation of economics from social and political domains of the lives of the people. Further, neo-liberalism articulated “a minimalist role of government in the economy” (Devine, n.d., p. 2) and promoting individual choice also restricted their brand of liberalism to the financial and economic affairs of both the state and the individual. Western governments, led by the US and Britain, embraced and strongly promoted neo-liberal economic policies as a global dominant paradigm, overshadowing all other ideologies, from the 1980s (Peters, n.d.). In practice, however, the neo-liberal economic policy implementation patterns significantly differed when the developed nation states and the rest of what is considered the developing regions of the world are compared. The member states of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation for Development) and the Asian economies that were rapidly industrializing pursued an export- and growth- oriented investment strategy, in which public expenditure that contributes to enhanced productivity and social services were rationalized, primarily taking advantage of their competitive position (Carnoy, 1995). On the other hand, the less competitive economies of Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia that were characterised by a lack of a dynamic export-oriented private sector, and inefficient public sector were forced to adopt policies that mandated cuts in public expenditure to social services and government divestiture from public sector enterprise. Aid to the public sector in the marginal economies was contingent on their implementation of the proscribed structural adjustment policies. Carnoy (1995, p. 654) noted that,

.... When applied, the policies reflecting this view did indeed increase economic inequality and poverty, without necessarily improving the chances of sustainable development. They also usually meant less emphasis on the role of the public sector in economic growth and cuts in public expenditure on public services, including education—precisely at a time when the shift to a world information economy called for increased public investment in education and for more rational, and probably extensive, public intervention and mobilization of resources.

Since the inception of the Bretton Woods institutions in the early 1940s, economic interests have prevailed over social and political interests considerations in the international development arena. In fact, it was not until the 1990 that human welfare concerns begun to permeate the development debate (Uvin, 2007). Even then, neo-liberalism as an ideological standpoint and the advancement of neo-liberal economic policies continue to be the focal point of global development discourse. This raises the question of whether any humanitarian-driven development programming is measured relative to the extent to which it supports economic interests within the neo-liberal paradigm. It is in this context that the relative-change theory is advanced.

### **Relativity in International Education**

The history of colonialism offers many examples of missionary humanitarian and colonial administration education support efforts for the colony. Discussing the educational work of British missionaries on the Codrington estates in Barbados, Frank Klingberg (1938, p. 451) noted that the missionary was often the middle man of the cultures of the modern world. However, as this work shows, the humanitarian efforts of the Jesuit's

movement functioned through a relationship of unequal partners. The education enterprise was but one component of a self-sustaining economic entity (the Codrington estates) that relied on slave labour for its sustainability. Even though missionaries hoped to advance the spread of education for slaves and Indians, the white population on the island contested the idea of educating and proselytizing to the slave; educating the enslaved was regarded as a threat to its privileged position in the plantation economy. Paraphrasing communication by both Arthur Holt (1729) and William Johnson (1737), Klingberg (1938, p. 461) noted that the settler community would not consent to propagation of Christianity, as they feared that the education component accompanying the proselytization effort would arm the slaves with the power to question their condition.

In the West Indies, the planters opposed the education of the slaves, believing that it would lead them to rebel. Blouet (1990, pp. 626-627) observed that whereas missionaries supported educating the enslaved people, planters resented this intervention on the grounds that it was fundamentally destabilizing. In short, they feared that education would foment revolt amongst slaves, effectively putting an end to their privileged lifestyles.

As facilitators of the colonial enterprise, the colonial administration often accommodated the interests of the settler and landlord communities in the colonies in the event that any conflict pitted the settlers against the natives. Even after the WWI, the British home office contemplated a long-term colonial rule, rather than meeting any altruistic obligation to prepare native populations in the British colonies for eventual self-rule (Whitehead, 1981, p. 74).

The underlying desire to retain the colonial relationship and postpone self-governance continued to inform colonial education policy in the newer lands. The administration of education sector policy governing native education in Africa, for example, was informed by the lessons learned from the colonial experience in India. In their governance of the colony of India, the British had pursued direct rule, in which an alien administrative and political structure was imposed on the natives. They had also offered a better quality Western-style academic education for natives in India. So, when educated native Indian populations began to agitate for independence in the 1940s, colonial officials placed blame on the inclusive nature of colonial education policy and practice that had hitherto been pursued in the colony (Whitehead, 1981, p. 74).

A closer examination of the history of education in the colonies and protectorates of Africa and elsewhere in the colonial empire revealed concerns related to extending education to colonized people. In his address on *Education Under Indirect Rule in Africa to the Africa Circle*, Professor Murray (1935, p. 227) explained that he understood the concept of “indirect rule”, pioneered by Lord Lugard who was Governor-General of Nigeria from 1912 to 1918, to mean “a situation in which black and white are associated, in which the white is on top, but where the institutions of the black are not abolished but incorporated as far as may be into the alien system of government”. Though he seemed to acknowledge criticism that the policy of “indirect rule” prevented equal opportunity among the races (Murray, 1935, p. 228), he nonetheless suggested that for the time being the native population did not need an education beyond the basics in reading, writing and religion for sometime to come.

To his credit, Murray (1935, p. 234) had a vision of education that enabling the emancipation of the colony would in turn allow them to take charge of their own affairs. Commenting on the situation in South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), where the white population was also a settler community in permanence and the native would always be considered an inferior being, Murray (1935, p. 234) lamented that areas of the tropics inhabited by homogenous African populations did not have a different experience under white rule: Africans still received an education that assumed that they were incapable “of an independent political future in

the modern world”.

The humanitarian concerns of missionary groups were muted by their interest in ensuring that missionary work and their missions were self-sustaining. The focus on proselytizing and economic independence drove their education agenda to the detriment of the colonized. The degree and extent of education that was made available to parishioners and congregations was limited to that which maintained the missionary's relative position of power as a purveyor of Western culture and values. In the end, the British government's empire building and aspirations for global power, pursued via the colonial administration, overpowered any altruistic agenda it had with the colonies and protectorates. Without a doubt, the colonial service administration, in synch with the settler community and planter-landlords in the colonies, was interested in self-preservation, even as it sought to extend education opportunities on humanitarian grounds.

In the 20th century, several institutions came into existence to represent development agencies through which nation states could seek an aid for social and economic development, dominant among them are such multilateral institutions as the UN (United Nations) organizations and the Bretton Woods Institutions. Regional multilateral institutions, such as the European Union, as well as the bilateral development agencies that represent foreign policy arms of developed nations functioning as agents of development cooperation in interactions with developing economies. Though these institutions may not be comparable to self-interest seeking settler communities in the colonies, they have assumed a role similar to the colonial administrations that enabled the agenda of the European colonial empire building. Nevertheless, the global development multilateral agencies that include the UN and Bretton Woods Institutions should not be unequivocally regarded as passive promoters of the interests of those in privileged positions. Resnik (2006, p. 178), for example, asserted that international organizations should be seen as “agents, not merely as receivers or transmitters of a preconceived educational model”. Resnik (2006) examined the role of international organizations in advancing the world education culture within the context of actor-network theory, which supports the active role of international organizations in their engagement.

Mundy (1999, p. 28) argued that realist and neo-Marxist perspectives regarded international organizations “as strategic instruments of inter-state economic and geo-political power”. She cited the works of numerous authors who provided a more detailed account of a critical, constructivist, liberal, realist and Marxist accounts of international relations. Her preference for the critical and constructivist approaches, though somewhat aligned with the realist and Marxist perspective, allows for visualizing these institutions “as arenas within which states and other social forces construct shared institutions and ideologies, an ‘imagined’ world order, through processes of negotiation, diffusion and (occasionally) contestations” (Mundy, 1999, p. 28). Mundy's (1999, pp. 28-42) examination of the working of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) illustrated that while officials at the institution influenced public policy in developing countries, the degree of influence was sometimes limited. The more important question concerns whose voice is most represented by the agencies in question when the professionals make the call. When colonialism gave way to independence and the world became clearly demarcated into the three blocs (namely East, West and the third world), then UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld responded to Soviet accusations of bias in arbitration over the political crisis in the Congo by saying:

It is not the Soviet Union or indeed any other big Powers which need the UN for their protection. It is all the others. In this sense, the Organization is first of all their Organization and I deeply believe in the wisdom with which they will be able to use it and guide it. I shall remain in my post during the term of office as a servant of the Organization in the interest

of all those other nations as long as they wish me to do so. (UN General Assembly, 1960, p. 332)

The end of the World War II ushered in a new era in international development cooperation and humanitarianism. The UN, an alliance of victorious World War II powers, including the USA, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, France and the Republic of China were transformed by a charter into an organization that would act to prevent future wars and resolve conflicts. Article 1 of the UN charter, signed on June 26, 1945 in San Francisco (UN, 2008) stated that the purposes of the institution were the following:

(1) To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to breach of the peace;

(2) To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

(3) To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion;

(4) To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

The Bretton Woods Institutions came into existence primarily to offer a financing framework for guaranteeing development financing and monetary stability globally. As at their establishment, the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and IMF (International Monetary Fund) were specifically charged facilitating post-war reconstruction of Europe, and with the responsibility of regulating monetary and financial order, having been established in 1944 as the war raged on, and in preparation for the rebuilding of the international economic system. Both the UN institutions, particularly UNESCO and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), and the Bretton Woods Institutions (specifically the World Bank Group) have been instrumental in guiding global-level multilateral humanitarian agencies in education sector development. Established on November 16, 1945, UNESCO serves to create a dialogue amongst partners, thus, enabling development to flourish. The role of UNESCO (2008, p. 2) was spelled out as one in which it entrusted with creating "conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values".

The most visible role of UNESCO has been its intervention in the education sector. In its publicity document, UNESCO (2008, p. 5) spelled out this role as one in which the institutions sought to mobilize "political will and coordinate efforts of all stakeholders in education including development partners, governments, NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and civil society". The itemized list of UNESCO's efforts to this end largely concerns building capacity and logistical operations. UNESCO sets the agenda and influences policy direction in the education sector.

For its part, the World Bank lends money for the implementation of prescribed education sector interventions, thus, influencing education sector reform policy from an economic policy standpoint. The increasing importance of the World Bank in defining education sector policy was ushered in by the geopolitical economic neo-conservative wave of the early 1980s that is closely identified with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Both of them believed in the prudence of small government and trickle down economic growth within a free market policy environment. The US and Britain withdrew from UNESCO, putting their weight behind the World Bank, where they had more influence on directing the global financial institution towards the

promotion of neo-liberal and neo-conservative values (Mundy, 1998). To date, this authority is effectuated through conditions imposed on accessing loan guarantees and other fiscal support for economic sector reforms. For example, in the 1980s, the World Bank and IMF imposed conditional requirements that developing countries divested from public services, including education and health, which led to the introduction of user fee in the provision of these services.

Although the proclaimed intent of these agencies is to facilitate development, the outcome of the education development efforts, particularly in resource-poor economies, still raises many questions. In agreement with the observation that the poor economies have limited control over the development agenda of humanitarian agencies, Lewin (2008, p. 8) noted that in developing global education agenda, national systems with limited capacity had been heavily skewed towards EFA (education for all) Goals and MDG (Millennium Development Goals) related activities. Lewin's (2008) assertions correspond with those of Samoff (2004; 1999) in his analysis of aid relationships, in which he noted that the funding and technical assistance agencies continued to dictate what the interventions will be and the process by which the intervention will be carried out. As education sector development is a policy formulation and implementation venture, an analysis of the relationship between process and outcome as well as that between motive and action is in order (Raab, 1994, p. 3). Indeed, more important questions should be directed at the position and interest of nation states that comprise the donor entities in the humanitarian efforts.

In explaining the importance of "policy sociology" as a field of study, Raab (1994) noted that besides attempting to map out the rules and methods for framing the subject, it may also help "explain historical and cultural continuities or changes, and address the relationship between structure and agency" (p. 3). While not concerned with rationalizing a field of study, the intent herein is to explain the relationship between aid structure and the humanitarian agency as applied in education sector development. Raab (1994), quoting Barrett and Fudge (1981) and Hill (1981), reaffirmed the central role of structure and agency and the prerequisite of understanding the distribution and exercise of power in defining outcomes in the link between education policy and implementation. Though their work explored within-nation state dynamics, it nevertheless informed current analysis of cross-national examination of education sector policy and practice, as they pertain to the humanitarian agency.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Many poor economies have not achieved universal access to primary education, and most are projected to miss the millennium development goal target of universal access by 2015. It has been demonstrated that for countries like Kenya (Mukudi, 2004; Sifuna, 2005), the realization of universal access will remain an illusion in spite of intervention by humanitarian agencies. Turrent and Oketch (2009, p. 357) observed that while there was commitment from the international community to aid poor countries in achieving universal access to primary education, it was the most fragile economies that often got neglected when it came to accessing donor support. Rose (2005, p. 385) concurred with this observation in her analysis of donor commitment to the realization of the goal of EFA within the FTI (Fast Track Initiative). Admittedly, the fragile states are not likely not to meet donor conditionality for accessing support.

Humanitarianism embodies the intent to effect change that better the condition of the recipient, and yet the third world economies that are recipients of these benevolent gestures have still not achieved education sector development levels commensurate with growth levels in the industrialized Western nations. Since much

of the aid support originates from Western nations, why is the investment in education not matched by significant growth and development in the sector? As it will be shown in the following section, various theoretical perspectives have been used to explain the prevailing and past conditions in education development. The proposed relative change theory departs from previous theories in accounting for favourable intent to change the context as originating with those in a position of influence. It differs from prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p. 263) that is principally concerned with the issue of individual choice under risk where the option that is acceptable offers a higher degree of utility of the aggregated assets compared to the alternative choice. Relative change theory is concerned with the effort to empower others where benefits accrue to a third party, accessing tools that would alleviate their perceived suffering while not substantially altering the degree of utility of the aggregate assets for those underwriting the premiums. However, the actors and agency operate in a development environment in which the socio-political and economic dimensions of the lives of populations in need are treated as independent of each other. The ultimate outcome is explained by the dominant ideological orientation informing policy and practice. It was hypothesized herein that the dominance of economic interests driven by neo-liberal economic policies overshadows any altruistic intervention in the social and political spheres of the lives of those in vulnerable position.

Theories of social reproduction have been used to explain the legitimization of inequalities within nations and amongst well-defined social groups. Inequalities in the American school system have been explored by several authors (Conforti, 1992; Kozol, 1992; Lareau, 2003), each showing that schools reproduce the structure of social classes. In all the cases, what emerges is that race and socio-economic status invariably play an important role in determining how much education one receives. Inequality in the distribution of education resources is built in to the very organization of the American school system, perpetuating the social positions occupied by the different population groups.

The legitimation of inequality is embodied in the view that functionalism is a value-free perspective and that schools are inherently fair and neutral ground. The successful functioning of society is predicated upon the responsibility of all members to contribute in whatever capacity they are able to the sustainability of the whole. This view gives rise to a technical functional approach to both education sector and manpower planning that is characteristic of many centralized system and what informs curriculum diversification in the more decentralized economies. Whatever the governance style, technical-functionalists subscribe to the notion that education systems are essential to the production and accumulation of technical skills and social values—what Hartley (2003, p. 443) summarized as skills, demeanour, disposition and value-orientation for a modern economy and society.

The functionalist perspective has been faulted for its failure to account for the inequalities that are inherent in its application. Indeed, the neo-Marxist school of thought challenged the so-called fairness of the functionalist perspective by arguing that unequal power relationships were inherent to the functional theory and that the ultimate beneficiary of a “functional school system” was, in fact, the hegemonic elite within a capitalist economy (Hartley, 2003, p. 444).

HCT is mostly identified with the 20th century economic growth investment resource input modelling, the earliest prominent advocate of which was Adam Smith. Smith (1776/1952) wrote about the importance of human resources in the 19th century Britain. Smith’s (1776/1952) articulation in the *Wealth of Nations* of the economic benefits of human capital as a part of a nation’s cumulative wealth highlights the different forms of human capital and the degree to which they add value to the eventual aggregated wealth claimed by a nation



state (Sweetland, 1996). Notably, Smith sought to extend the understanding of human capital beyond direct input into productivity to include those benefits derived from access to an enhanced human capital base. The central argument in HCT is that both “individuals and society derive economic benefits from investments in people” (Sweetland, 1996, p. 341). HCT, like technical functionalist theory, acknowledges labour differentiation but goes further to subject the levels of skills and knowledge accessed to economic benefit analysis at both national and household levels.

Techno-functionalist and human capital theoretical perspectives were and continue to inform development planning in all nation states’ irrespective of their politico-economic orientation. Economic analysis rationalizing investment in education continues to inform education sector planning and humanitarian agency decision-making about investment in education. Indeed, the belief in both functionalist school systems and human capital accumulation drove public spending and humanitarian efforts in education sector development in the developing world from the 1960s.

A limitation of the HCT is that it assumes a value-free meritocratic social environment devoid of human interference. A few pertinent questions include the following: Why does not everyone have access to the same level and quality of capacity building opportunities? Why is it that individuals with the same level of skill and knowledge do not access the same benefits or rewards in the labour market? Why do some countries face graduate unemployment even though they evidence low participation rates at higher levels of the school system? What explains the continued limitations to access and participation in the third world economies in spite of a global recognition of the importance of education to economic growth?

In their Marxian critique of HCT, Bowles and Gintis (1975, p. 75) made the observation that HCT excluded the relevance of class and class conflict to explication of labour market phenomena. In effect, HCT privileges the economic dimension of social relationships while failing to consider their socio-political dimensions. In spite of a global commitment to advancing human rights, the public institutions of Western nations are under no obligation to offer the same level of protection and access to public resource to nationals of the third world countries. Is it, however, possible that the agency of developed state in defining development outcome in other poor economies assumes a privileged position for its nationals? An examination of the intersection of an ideology grounded in the economic dimension of social interaction and humanitarian efforts would be helpful to understand how outcomes of interventions in the education sector are shaped. The focus of this argument is that in separating the economic dimension and the socio-political dimensions of human interaction at the global level, humanitarian interventions negatively define the outcome of education investments. The relative change perspective puts the failure to realize the humanitarian intent that results from this dichotomous approach to development agency at the forefront of its position.

By its very nature, humanitarianism is an acknowledgement of the failure of national social, political and economic systems to offer securities to the populace. However, the involvement of developed countries in defining a development growth path for former colonies and much of the developing world raises questions about power relations in development partnership. This point is pursued by proponents of the dependency theory. Dependency theory focuses its argument on the economic dimension of social relationships, seeking to explain the reason why poor countries have failed to register economic growth in spite of the involvement of more developed countries (Kapoor, 2002). Notably, dependency theory emerged as a response to what were perceived as the follies of the liberal free trade theories applied to Latin America in the 1950s. Its proponents contended that very little actual control can be exercised by the leadership and populace from within the

dependent economies with their bid for empowerment, including economic empowerment (McGowan & Smith, 1978, pp. 179-180). In his analysis of dependency theory, Chilcote (1974, p. 4) observed that dependency theory acknowledged that an interdependence of two distinct economies exists to the extent that the dependent nation develops as a reflection of the expansion of dominant nations or underdevelops as a consequence of their subjective relationship. His analysis offers a more complex and intricate explanation of the premises for dependency theory. While the prevailing view sees dependency as a condition external to the nation state, Chilcote's (1974) review considered works that also focused on internal conditions of domination and dependency. In concluding, Chilcote (1974) summarized the premises of dependency theory as one providing three basic assumptions that underpinned the exploration of development and underdevelopment within the dependency framework. Chilcote (1974, p. 21) noted that besides offering a framework for explaining underdevelopment and development, dependency theory offered a foundation for analysis of class struggle and strategies to promote class struggle in the interest of resolving societal contradictions and problems.

Like dependency theory, world-system theory is grounded in economic relations across nation states. Unlike dependency theory, world-system theory presupposes the potential of non-Western countries to initiate economic growth interventions independent of external input. World-system analysis assumes a single global economic order in which nation states participate in a global competitive enterprise seeking to achieve developed status. Western countries comprise the core nations, while non-Western nation states fall into either semi-peripheral or peripheral categories. While there is a presumption that non-Western nations can move upward and achieve social mobility within the system, the hierarchical nature of the world-system structure makes it difficult for real change in power relations to occur. There is, however, an assumed eminent authority of the capitalist world economy, which defines the economic relationships in the world-system (Wallerstein, 1974).

McGowan and Smith (1978, p. 180) described the current world-system as characterized by gross inequalities in industrial capacity and state power and in which a Western core undoubtedly controls major portions of the economic, political and cultural life of the third world. In the same vein, Portes and Kincaid (1989, p. 482) warned that political and administrative units of non-Western nation states, as the multicultural entities within the world-system, had a very limited role to play in a hierarchically ordered world-system that was sustained through marginalization. While there is an assumption that a nation state can move up or down within the world-system, the attainment of core nation status by non-Western nation states is without a doubt limited by those already occupying the core category (Arno, 1980). Both dependency and world-system analysis connote an exploitative relationship of sorts, in which those privileged by the relationship have no intention of empowering those whose elevation would, thus, threaten their positions.

The proposed relative change theory explores an outcome defined by the intersection between accommodating both the socio-political context of social interaction in development aid as well as its economic context. Humanitarian acts are a remedial gesture, particularly when they originate with those historically positioned as the oppressors. Humanitarianism implies an interest in exerting a positive change in the condition of those previously marginalized. Relative change theory examines the contradictions and complexities that emerge when the oppressor becomes a change agent facilitating humanitarianism.

From a relative change theory perspective, a deliberate attempt to allow for change under humanitarian agency is assessed relative to the conditions existing and the lived experience of the change agents. Interventions into the economic and socio-political dimensions of the social interaction for those targeted by the

interventions are separated in treatment and yet the outcome of humanitarian efforts is a holistic measure. In essence, the economic interests of the change agency hinder the realization of significant progress from humanitarian development efforts.

### **Education Development and Humanitarianism**

Humanitarian intervention in education sector is predicated on the notion that improvement in human capital capacity is imperative for development. In spite of the humanitarian efforts that have been put in place to develop human resource capacity in the third world, no significant difference has been made in change to the quality of life for the majority of the people in the much of the regions falling in this category. Universal access to basic education remains unattainable (Mukudi, 2004; Sifuna, 2005); secondary education remains out of reach for many; and post-secondary education is highly restricted in much of the third world. More important, the assumed linkage between education and economic development that informs HCT and technical functional perspective remains elusive, with interventions yielding at most marginal impact to change the pre-existing conditions.

A review of the works on development education shows that many of the humanitarian effort in education sector development have been structured without consideration for context over the years. Warning of an approach that fails to consider the geo-location and socio-political and economic context of the intervention target nation states, Arnove (1980, p. 50) noted that it was misleading to delve into an analysis of education within context of closed and national systems without due consideration for the position of the country within the international system. He further went on to note that the geo-political context of international relationships based on inequities explained what skills were developed in whom and who benefits from highly skilled talent. This argument is well-supported within the world-system analysis framework. If one were to assume that humanitarian agency is rooted in an interest in advancement of the recipients of aid, then the decision to offer second-tier education intervention programs to populations in the developing regions may be interpreted as one informed by economic rationale. Further, the move to apply private market forces to what should be an empowering tool disenfranchises the vulnerable and most of those not plugged into the capitalist markets, as it has been witnessed where user-fee policies are in place at secondary and tertiary education levels.

Focusing on the importance of the economic conditions existing in country supporting the success of donor supported health and education interventions, Clemens and Moss (2005, p. 2) observed that:

The effectiveness of aid is at times also undermined by the way donors operate. Most importantly, the weak link between spending and services exists also because health and education do not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a broader economic environment.

When markets are to be opened in developing countries, services that are deemed to be on demand are privatized. This strategy is rational in the economic sphere, but fails to support desired outcome for humanitarian interventions, particularly as it affects the education and health well-being of those in vulnerable economic position.

It would be futile to undertake restructuring in a social setting without consideration for the economic context. This is the argument advanced within the relative change theory perspective. Lewin's (2008) analysis of the decades of educational planning in developing countries provides a framework for understanding the idea of relative change consideration in education sector in developing countries. Lewin (2008, p. 5) observed that:

Through the 1970s and 1980s, educational planning in most developing countries was grounded on the core set of propositions about the relationships among knowledge, skills, productivity, growth and economic development that are known as HCT... The relationships were often different across countries and in different sectors. Labor markets in some developing countries sometimes seem so far from satisfying the assumptions on which HCT was based that some argued it had limited utility.

An examination of the nature of interventions that have been put in place and the dynamics in the relationship among the humanitarian agencies, the political and administrative agencies in the developing countries provide an insight into comprehending consideration of the relative change theory in the interventions. Most of the education sector development agenda is set by the international multilateral agencies in which the developing countries have limited input. Developing countries serve to rubber stamp such priorities in signing onto the proclamations and adopting the objectives and goals as sector development priorities at national level, even when the outcome may not match local planning priority initiative.

Over the years, UNESCO has sponsored international planning sessions for education sector development. UNESCO was there to sponsor a series of education sector planning for former colonies of Africa, as they began the journey towards political independence. Attendees at a 1960 Conference of Ministers of Education held in Addis Ababa (UNESCO/ECA (Economic Commission for Africa), 1961, p. 10) acknowledged that economic development was highly dependent on higher level skills and that it was:

... of the highest priority to ensure that an adequate proportion of the population receives secondary, postsecondary and university education; this should be put before the goal of universal primary education (projected for 1980), if for financial reasons, these two are not yet compatible. (p. 10)

It also became apparent at the same meeting that the African governments would run deficits in their education budget for the next five years and beyond, even with the modest goals set for expanding access to public education. The budget deficit was projected to grow, signalling a continuation of the problem of reliance on external resources to support the education sector (UNESCO/ECA, 1961, p. 14). The priority given to post-primary education was abandoned by the 1970s, as it became clear that there was limited capacity within the new economies to absorb the products of the school system. These events also coincided with a shift in policy orientation at the World Bank in which it became the norm to rationalize public investment in education within the emerging HCT movements in the donor community. It was the norm for user fees to be charged for education at post-primary levels as the world financial institutions argued that benefits at this level accrue to the private individuals, an advantage that could be leveraged through free markets. The shift in education support priority by humanitarian agencies was not acceptable to all the recipient countries. On this note, Lewin (2008, p. 6) commented that:

*The Jomtien World Conference on EFA (1990) did confirm a shift of emphasis, at least amongst development partners, away from support for higher level skill development... towards the prioritization of basic education as a vector for development that could be externally supported... this shift... was not met with enthusiasm by at least some governments of poor countries. (p. 6)*

At the 1990 Jomtien Conference, while the cosponsors-including the UNESCO, World Bank, UNICEF and UNDP (United Nations development Program), were focused on basic education and EFA, developing countries explicitly lobbied to guarantee the integrity of post-primary and higher education tiers in the interest of facilitating development (Banya & Elu, 2001, p. 24). Due to budgetary constraints and limited capacity

within the poor economies, adoption of the principles of the education sector development agenda of the humanitarian agencies becomes a necessity in order that they access financial support for other development programs. Rose (2005, p. 385), for example, concluded that Uganda had no real choice but to agree to participate in the FTI (Fast Tract Initiative) as one third of its recurrent government funding on education was aid-dependent.

Another area of concern is the programs within post-primary tiers of the education system that tend to be supported by the humanitarian agencies. From the very beginning, the focus of international agencies was to help develop capacity within the agricultural sector that formed the backbone of the post-colonial economies. It is not surprising that as donors moved to support primary education, they also shifted within sector support for higher education towards agriculture- and vocational- oriented programs. The shift to supporting primary education and a concurrent reduction in funding to university education was rationalized on egalitarian grounds, with the donors arguing that university systems in the developing economies of Africa, Asia and Latin America perpetuated social inequalities and contributed to neo-colonial structures (Banya & Etu, 2001, p. 24). The Aid agencies argued that higher education access magnified socio-economic inequalities and exacerbated elitism since only a few people had access to higher education. The consequence was that in spite of the proclaimed importance of higher education contributing to national development, access through humanitarian intervention in the developing countries was limited. Banya and Etu (2001, p. 24) noted that:

Governments in developing countries were pressured for many years by the World Bank and other aid agencies to cut spending on higher education and reallocate their meager resources to primary education and secondary schools. At the same time, donors shifted their giving to meet the Bank's view. (p. 24)

As the development agenda shifted to inclusion of women in global affairs, humanitarian agencies began implementing intervention programs that were said to focus on empowering women. Within education, literacy skills and vocational-oriented non-formal education become flagship programs. The impetus for the new focus on women was the feminist movement in the Western nations, extending the movement and effort in support of gains and benefits of empowerment to women globally. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 1975 the international women's year and a decade that followed to be dedicated to women issues and concerns (UN, 1975a; Fonjong, 2001, p. 223). UN General Assembly Resolution 3505 (XXX) (UN, 1975b) recognized that the role of women in the development process must be made an integral part of the establishment of the new international economic order, setting the stage for gender empowerment interventions in the third world countries that were nevertheless conceptualized in terms of national economic benefits.

The non-formal education for women in developing countries has largely been undertaken by non-governmental agencies, with the most support coming from tax payers in Western nations. Gains have been made in improving access to education at the primary level, improving knowledge and information that impact practice in the areas of nutrition and health. In some countries, advances have been made in gender representation in the leadership positions. These efforts, however, have failed to empower rural women who constitute the majority of women in many of the developing countries. The same benefits elude the urban poor women, whose plight is sometimes much more critical than that of rural women. Commenting on the development efforts integrating women in national development, Fonjong (2001, p. 223) noted that the efforts may be encouraging, but they did not seem to affect the rural and poor women.

The beneficiaries of the literacy programs have themselves not been passive recipients, often questioning

the value of the interventions. There was skepticism over the perceived value of literacy intervention programs amongst rural Nepalese women (Robinson-Pant, 2000, pp. 350-353). The women of rural Kilome in Kenya whose women's groups were targets of donor funded literacy and micro-finance projects also expressed by Kiluva-Ndunda (2000) that they would rather have the development agencies invest in formal schooling for their daughters.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Modernization is defined by improved quality of life indicators that include access to mass education, urbanization, industrialization, bureaucratization and rapid communication and transportation (Inkeles & Smith, 1976). Humanitarian agency in modernization was supposed to reflect in social change that was both transformational in impact and progressive in effect (Tipps, 1973, pp. 199-226). For a majority of developing countries, modernization remains elusive even as we contemplate 45 years of modern era development effort.

The empowerment function of education is proportionate to the amount and type or mix of education one receives. While there has been humanitarian efforts to access education to the masses in developing countries, the type and amount of education offered has not yielded significant empowerment, economic or otherwise, for a majority of the people. The nature of the economic structures in the developing countries attests to their vulnerability in a global economic system. The expected synergy in which education contributes to development and development enhances the capacity to support education systems has neither materialized nor is it going to be realized in the foreseeable future.

The relevance of globalization theory to the analysis of humanitarian efforts in education development lies in its attendant neo-liberal and neo-conservative paradigms. The classical liberal economic worldview recognized the importance of government intervention for social policy. In particular, goods and services, such as education and utilities that are acknowledged to be essential for the public good were to be provided by government (Cornes & Sandler, 2003).

The neo-liberal economic account seeks to take away much of the elements of government responsibility in crafting social policy and instead rely on the market to deliver both economic and the "marketized" social services. The challenge for the third world economies is in the fact that national borders that define government policy intervention spheres have been overrun by globalization, exposing those that are weak to the vagaries of market competition. Commenting on the pervasiveness of the influence of globalization as played out in the developing economies as well as in the third world economies, Yang (2003, p. 275) noted that:

Governments of the world's richest and most powerful nations appear to be prisoners of a policy that no longer allows for any change of course. Global competition is increasingly being used as a rationale for government options. The politicians in charge often have no choice but to cut spending in areas where no powerful interest groups prevent it. Among such areas are cultural facilities, schools and universities.

The economic consideration that takes precedence over the social and political empowerment efforts in relative change considerations accounts for much of the failures of the education interventions. It explains the reason why the agencies are willing to invest in basic and not higher education. It explains the reason why they are willing to invest in vocational education and not in either academic, information or technology education. It explains the reason why the women's empowerment movement has not made significant investment in post-secondary and higher education for the masses or rural and urban poor children. It takes away from free market principles and commoditization of education.

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