

Robert H. Bates, *The Development Dilemma: Security, Prosperity, & A Return to History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. xxi + 188 pages. Paperback, \$27.95.

In *The Development Dilemma*, Robert Bates tries to answer a fundamental question, that is how politics, and especially those atop the political hierarchy, affect the process and consequences of development. Using comparative historical evidence from early modern England and France, the author successfully explains how different political terrains affected top politicians' choices. Bates then applies the lessons from these earlier examples to the processes and consequences of development in modern Kenya and Zambia.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In chapter one, Bates argues that development is not a purely economic matter and many factors such as biological, environmental, cultural, political and religious issues can all affect development. He also argues that using comparative historical analysis can help us better understand the subject. Third, he uncovers a powerful tension between prosperity and security: both may be necessary for development, but efforts to achieve the one can threaten the emergence of the other.

Bates then elaborates on his argument about these fundamental tensions in chapter two. Using historical evidence from both England and France, he demonstrates how these two countries tried to reconcile prosperity with security by transferring their political institutions from the hands of families and placing them under the control of a central power. Through his analysis, it is clear that economy and politics cannot be separated, and economic development often relies upon political transformation.

In chapter three, Bates first demonstrates that France and England exhibited contrasting political terrains. On the one hand, England had been a unified country. On the other hand, France was more divergent because its territory had been settled by people possessing different cultures. Then, he points out that in order to survive politically, leaders in these two countries adopted

different policies regarding public finance, including taxes and public debt, land use, price control of agricultural products, and urban development which led to more rapid economic prosperity in England than France.

The key issue of chapter four is how political terrains were forged in the developing world. Using historical accounts and descriptive statistics, Bates demonstrates that the developing world was forged by the West and emerged from its empires in the mid-twentieth century. He also points out that developing countries share some common features that were inscribed upon them by the colonial power, including migration, high levels of cultural diversity, ethnic polarization, and regional inequality.

In Chapter five, Bates provides extensive descriptions about two specific state entities: Zambia and Kenya. First, he explores the influence of European states on those two countries before their independence, with a special focus on migration. He then discusses regional inequalities and the transformation of power from families to central authorities. Finally, he analyzes the political dynamics facing their different political terrains.

Chapter 6 is the most interesting chapter because Bates provides a very detailed and interesting description about the political behaviors of Kenneth Launda of Zambia and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, who served as the first presidents of their respective nations. Not only does Bates describe how they catered to their core constituencies, but also how they used different instruments to expand their political bases. In addition, Bates also describes how the game of politics changed in these two nations, especially regarding alterations to the office of the presidency.

The concluding chapter is rather short. Other than reiterating his basic arguments that political terrain affects how leaders choose different policies, like balancing prosperity and

security, Bates acknowledges that his study has benefited from other disciplines including political science, history, economics, and geography.

The book makes a great contribution to the literature of development in several ways. First, it demonstrates again that development is not a simple economic matter, and politics plays a very important role. Second, it proves that the path and consequences of development can be, at least partially, explained by the micro-behavior of political leaders. Third, comparative and historical analysis is extremely useful in analyzing development. Last, but not least, to better understand development scholars must rely on research from multiple disciplines.

There are still questions that remain unanswered. First, do top political leaders have other choices facing certain political terrains? If so, how much can they choose? If not, then is the fate of that particular country pre-determined? Second, to what extent does internal politics alone impact the process and consequence of development? Internal politics do not exist in vacuum, especially for developing countries that not only inherited imperial legacy, but also remain under the continuous influence by their former “masters.”

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