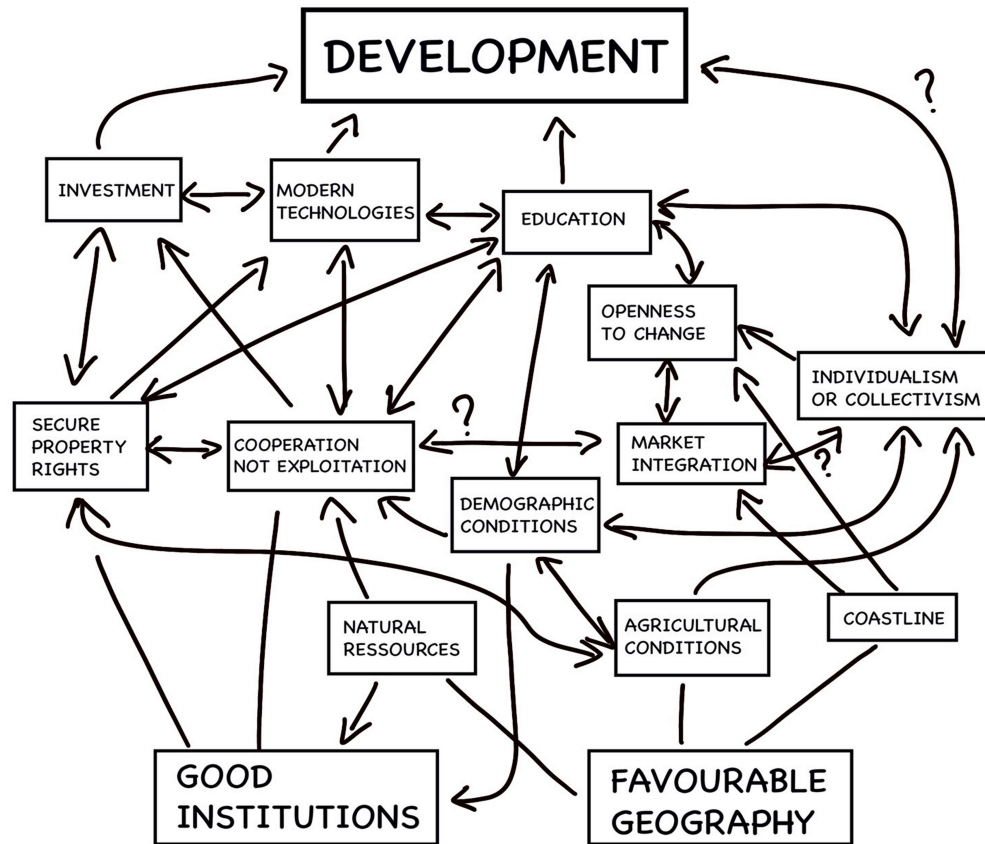


TOPICS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY



Economic and social history is **relevant** for economists, managers, and policy-makers for **three reasons**:

- 1) past events are a **repository of experiences** in decision-making and their results at the level of firms, countries and on a global scale. This specialization investigates what can and cannot be learned from the past.
- 2) studying history helps us to understand how **the past conditions the present** and how we may address this long-run influence in decisions and policies.
- 3) **history is a “laboratory”** which allows us to test (the limits of) modern theories.

Practical information:

- 10 ECTS in 1 course (4h/week)
- offered every semester
- 10 slots per year
- starting winter 2020/21

The scheme illustrates **theories of economic development**, i.e., the question why in some countries people lived in “ease, happiness, and comparative leisure”, while in others people constantly experienced “anxiety about providing the means of subsistence”. **Early economists** (the quote is from Malthus, the first English professor in economics) **thought modern development impossible**. Since then, growth economists have shown that development depends on **investment, technologies and education**. But where do these come from? Some argue that the **accountability of political authorities** is behind investment, education and technological progress, while others favour **geography as ultimate cause** of (under)development. We explore such arguments through history, i.e., **different experiences in time and space**. We study which factors really mattered and how they interacted in **specific contexts**, and under which circumstances they favour or hinder development. We might not solve the ultimate puzzle, but **train our understanding** of development and of the **theoretical and empirical approaches** researchers have taken to advance the search.