Reclaiming the “D” in HRD: A Typology of Development Conceptualizations, Antecedents, and Outcomes

Thomas N. Garavan¹ and David McGuire¹

Abstract
Despite being viewed as a major construct at the heart of human resource development (HRD), considerable complexity, confusion, and ambiguity exists regarding the conceptualization of development. The notion of development has attracted interest from a wide array of fields including HRD, adult education, psychology, management studies, and organization theory. As a result, there is little consistency in how development is understood, conceptualized, or tested. This article examines the current body of knowledge and understanding on development to develop a typology to focus future research and investigations. A typology of development is proposed, and four development types are identified. The article then articulates the underlying theories, primary antecedents, and outcomes associated with each of the four development types. Finally, recommendations and avenues for future research arising from the typology are specified.

Keywords
development, antecedents, typology

Nearly 80 years have passed since Levinson (1920-1994) proposed that the concept of development was associated with aspirations, which he called “the dream,” and the task of development is to define and realize that dream (Levinson, 1986, p. 4). Researchers in the interim have embraced multiple notions of development, and the concept has attracted interest in a wide array of fields—from adult education (Knowles, 1984), management and organization studies (Van De Ven & Poole, 1995), psychology

¹Edinburgh Napier University, UK

Corresponding Author:
David McGuire, Edinburgh Napier Business School, Edinburgh Napier University, 219 Colinton Road, EH141DJ, Edinburgh, UK.
Email: d.mcguire@napier.ac.uk
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(Jung, 1971), and organization theory (Weick & Quinn, 1999). As human resource development (HRD) finds its roots in all of these fields, the concept of development has emerged as a central and important process for enhancing individual potential and effectiveness (Kuchinke, 2014). For example, HRD scholars have utilized the concept to analyze personal development in education (Edmunds & Richardson, 2009) to study development within mentoring relationships (Lankau & Scandura, 2002) to explore notions of development in the context of leadership development (Mabey, 2013) and to understand the processes of development in organizations (Van De Ven & Poole, 1995).

While interest in development has increased over the years, there is considerable ambiguity and disagreement regarding the theoretical nature of the construct (Wilson, 2006). This diversity of research related to the development concept has led to confusion concerning its precise meaning (Kuchinke, 2014). Although theoretical pluralism has been useful in developing alternative approaches and perspectives, it can also be argued that differences in theoretical interpretation have created compartmentalization and isolated lines of research. For some commentators, ambiguity is an important condition of HRD, indicating the vast complexity inherent within the concept (McLean, 1998), whereas for others, ambiguity has resulted in a lack of consistency in theory building and testing as substantive meanings of the construct vary across disciplines (McGuire & Kissack, 2015). Thus, we acknowledge and endorse the multifaceted nature of HRD but warrant that to date, there have been surprisingly few conceptual and/or theoretical contributions that compare different notions of development and how generalizable these concepts are across disciplines and contexts.

In this article, we specify, substantiate, and extend the development construct by proposing a typology that emphasizes two primary dimensions that differentiate various uses of the development concept found in the literature. Specifically, from our review, we identify a structural dimension (independent vs. interdependent) and a process dimension (planned vs. emergent) which when combined yield four fundamental development types. We then explore and evaluate the salient theoretical underpinnings, antecedents, and outcomes associated with each type of development.

Our typology and its application to the extant literature is an attempt to conceptualize and explicate the various conceptualizations of development toward a broader, more holistic understanding of what is a multifaceted construct. Hence, our goal in this article is not to arrive at a singular conceptualization of development but to recognize the complex nature of development and to help researchers and practitioners in situating their discourse and practice of development. Through specifying antecedents and outcomes, the typology seeks to move beyond Lee’s (2001) more metaphorically oriented conceptualization of development and provide evidence for four specific types of development. Philosophically, we adopt a neo-empiricist stance, underpinned by a critical realist ontology and epistemology, locating our typology in the space between post-positivism and constructivism–interpretivism (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2008). For the purposes of our typology, we assume that there is such a thing as development in terms of both a conceptual and organizing frame. As a conceptual frame the concept allows us to make sense of multiple manifestations of...
development. As an organizing frame, we argue that the concept allows us to link phenomena at different levels of analyses into a single concept of development. We begin by outlining the review method utilized to prepare this article. We then review current conceptualizations of development followed by a proposed multifaceted typology of development. Finally, we trace the implications of our typology, raising a number of questions for future research.

Method

Following Callahan (2010), this article examines a broad literature base to draw connections and examine the underpinning foundations of the development concept. It is hoped that through this conceptual article, new insights, questions, and provocative challenges can be posed, helping us to arrive at a more detailed understanding of the development concept and a new typology for development. For this purpose, a broad range of theoretical and empirical articles addressing the concept of development from a scholarly viewpoint was examined. Kuchinke (2014) argued that because the literature on development is extremely diverse, each discipline provides multiple approaches and competing explanations of the development process itself. To this end, we conducted searches for relevant research within the fields of business, management, adult education, human resource management, HRD, psychology, and organization behavior. Seven major databases were consulted which comprised EBSCO, Business Source Premier, Psych Info, Proquest, ABI Inform Global, Emerald, and Google Scholar. As Örtenblad (2010) highlighted, management and HRD terms are frequently packaged in the form of labels consisting of two or more words; hence, we selected the keywords “development,” “adult development,” “team development,” “organization development,” “career development,” and “societal development.” Although each of these keywords relates to distinct concepts, the goal of development is the core underpinning philosophy at the heart of each concept. Of the resulting 156 scholarly works which were published between 1964 (the year of the original definition of HRD by Harbison & Myers, 1964) and 2015, we utilized four criteria to decide to retain or discard literature from our analysis. First, the literature source had to address the construct of development rather than related concepts such as training, learning, or adult education. Following Torraco (2005), relevancy was thus a key factor in the screening of publications. The second criterion for selecting literature was that the source had to examine development at one or more levels of analysis (individual, team/group, organizational, and societal; Garavan, McGuire, & O’Donnell, 2004). Third, the literature had to take the form of refereed scholarly articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals or book chapters from specialist readers and handbooks targeting a specific research audience. Therefore, we excluded literature found in practitioner journals, technical reports, and independent research reports. Finally, we focused on the literature that conceptualized development or conducted significant empirical investigations and reported on antecedents, correlates, and consequences of developmental activity. To analyze and synthesize the literature, the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) was adopted. Marsick and Watkins (1997)
argued that this approach encourages researchers to continuously reflect upon the meaning and significance of data, comparing new information with existing themes and explanations and identifying similarities and differences. It allowed us first to trace the history of the development concept and then through an iterative process to derive the four dimensions of our typology (acquisitive, autonomous, dialogic, and networked). After the four dimensions of the typology had been identified from an analysis of approximately 20% of the scholarly works, the remaining research contributions were analyzed and allocated to one of the four dimensions accordingly.

Historical and Current Conceptualizations of Development

The concept of development has a long history, and early writings primarily emphasized a person-centered conceptualization of development. Aristotle (384 B.C.-322 B.C.), for example, defined personal development as phronesis or practical wisdom which leads to human flourishing or living well (Noel, 1999). In contrast to the Western tradition, Eastern philosophy, in particular Confucius (551 B.C.-479 B.C.), provided an exposition of the nature of personal development in his great learning. He emphasized cultivation of the individual with a focus on the heart, thought, and knowledge (Tseng, 1973). Kuchinke (1999) argued that the concept of person-centered development in contemporary writings and research has its roots in psychology and in particular humanistic psychology. Adler (1870-1937) focused on personal aspirations and an individual’s characteristic approach to facing problems. Jung (1875-1961) proposed the concept of individuation which he defined as an individual’s desire to achieve wholeness and balance of the self (Dirkx, 2006).

The notion of a person-centered approach to development flourished in the early writings on psychology and education. In the psychological context, the writings of Maslow and Rogers are particularly influential. Maslow’s (1970) ubiquitous hierarchy of needs has the notion of a latent developmental sequence as its foundations. He proposed that actualization of the self as the goal of development. Maslow’s ideas have been extended by other theorists to include concepts such as transcendence, cognitive, and moral development. Rogers was another influential humanistic psychologist who has informed our notions of development in the personal, organizational, and educational spheres. He proposed that people have the capacity to choose their own behavior (Rogers, Lyon, & Tausch, 2013) and that the process of development leads to people who are fully functioning. More recent developments within positive psychology have taken on board many of these ideas, particularly the emphasis on the concept of “flourishing” and that development is ultimately about the optimal functioning of individuals, teams, and institutions (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) proposed the notion of “flow” or “absorption” in an activity to the exclusion of everything else.

Within the sphere of education, the person-centered notion of development has a very long tradition. Early education psychologists such as Piaget and Vygotsky argued that individuals have a developmental orientation. Piaget (1953) argued that education has the potential to enrich and provide opportunities for development. Vygotsky (1978) also
argued that education can lead to development. He proposed the concept of “the zone of proximal development” (p. 76), and he opened up the notion that development is a socially constructed rather than an independent process. However, many scholars have considered the zone of proximal development as something which is internal to the individual rather than something which is socially created (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Contemporary notions of development also reinforce the idea that development is an independent process. Chickering and Reisser (1993), for example, proposed that personal development consists of characteristics such as identity, emotions, competence, purpose, and autonomy. However, they also stipulated that development possesses an interdependent character. Clegg and Bradley (2006) argued that notions of development in education have traditionally emphasized issues such as reflection, goal-setting, and developmental planning and have evolved into concepts such as lifelong development, continuing professional development, and continuous professional development. These ideas emphasize a development concept that unfolds in a continuous rather than discontinuous fashion. However, the overriding impression one derives from discussions about the concept of development in the field of education is, to summarize Fry, Davenport, Woodman, and Pee (2002), “ill-defined and often used with multiple meanings” (p. 108). Scholars have, therefore, begun to challenge rational, autonomous notions of development (Merriam & Brockett, 2007) and to propose an alternative narrative of development that emphasizes characteristics such as transformation, embodied, socially constructed, and performative (Sandlin, Wright, & Clark, 2011).

In the organizational theory realm, we find notions of development that are person- and production-centered (Kuchinke, 2014). HRD has embraced both assumptions, and there is an abundance of literature supportive of these notions. The production-centered approach emphasizes economic and competitive issues and envisages the needs of the organization and society as paramount. Concepts such as “team development,” “organizational development,” and “workforce development” propose a notion of development that is purposeful, planned, deliberate, and involves the acquisition of knowledge and skill (Wilson, 2012). Production-centered development concepts emphasize the interdependent nature of development through the formation and growth of organizations, communities, and societies (Kuchinke, 2014).

Our brief review highlights the multidimensional nature of the development concept. Consistent with the arguments proposed by Kuchinke (2014), multiple forms of development exist, and the concept is characterized by considerable complexity. However, we detect a number of theoretical biases in existing conceptualizations. The notion of development as a positive, growth-fulfilling process continues to pervade the literature (Pace, 2000), yet we acknowledge recent critical contributions that question this assumption (Mabey, 2013). The emphasis on progressive change in individuals, organizations, and society is given particular primacy in current conceptualizations (Matusov, DePalma, & Drye, 2007). It is also assumed that development can be achieved or realized through the adoptions of socio-technical systems approaches (Dirkx, Swanson, Watkins, & Cseh, 2002; Jacobs, 1989). Development is assumed to be directional (Rogers, 1951). Scholars have also emphasized normative and practical
assumptions, and these are particularly reflected in the strategic HRD and leadership development literatures (Callahan, Whitener, & Sandlin, 2007; Garavan, Carbery, & Rock, 2012). Increasingly, there is an acknowledgment of different units or levels of development and that the concept of development can be compared across these levels (Garavan et al., 2004). In the next section, we present our typology.

**Multifaceted Typology**

In constructing our typology, we first explain the need for and value of a multifaceted typology of development. We then go on to define development and identify two distinct overarching dimensions that underlie its various conceptualizations in the literature.

The need for a typology arose from the multiple conceptualizations of development within the literature and a perceived latent desire to structure and classify in an ordered fashion the theoretical and empirical outputs of studies examining different aspects of development. A typology of development is, therefore, a useful mechanism in HRD for capturing the antecedents, processes, and outcomes associated with development and enabling more comprehensive theory building and theory testing. As a device, it is valuable in framing discourse on development, and it is hoped that the typology will help guide researchers in future empirical studies. The typology also identifies sets of developmental relationships and more effectively matches generalizations to specific development constructs. Furthermore, it is hoped that the typology will reduce the level of confusion and ambiguity surrounding the development concept currently characterizing the literature and will permit a more lucid refinement of discussions related to the efficacy and value of development.

Building on the extant literature, we define development as an unfolding process of growth that occurs in various ways along multiple trajectories at different levels of analysis, influenced by context and leading to a range of positive outcomes. The definition highlights two essential characteristics: (a) development as an unfolding process (building upon the work of Pace, 2000) and (b) development as pursued in independent or interdependent ways involving the autonomous individual or interdependently the team, organization, community, or society.

The first dimension of our typology, therefore, refers to how development unfolds and whether it unfolds in a planned or emergent way. The unfolding dimension captures the distinction between development that is considered planned, rationalistic, goal focused, and continuous and development that is emergent, holistic, tentative, and ambiguous in nature (Lee, 2001). The second dimension—structural—captures whether development is realized within individuals or within interdependent units (Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997). Where development is pursued by individuals, it is considered to be structurally independent; however, where it involves collectives, such as teams, organizations, communities, or societies, it is considered to be interdependent. By juxtaposing these dimensions in Figure 1, we present a two-by-two typology that differentiates four types of development. We posit that each of these dimensions captures various approaches to development found in the literature. We acknowledge, in
formulating this typology, that concepts of development found in the HRD field have become something of an umbrella term that is often meaningless (Mankin, 2001). In proposing this typology, we acknowledge the need to move beyond the narrow remit ascribed to the concept of development by Holton and Naquin (2004) that it focuses primarily on “increasing knowledge or skills” (p. 58). Below we discuss the theoretical grounding, antecedents, and outcomes of each development type to further justify each one as well as contribute to aligning the extant literature on development. We believe that there is value in typologies as a form of theorizing. Doty and Glick (1994) pointed out that typologies represent a special form of theorizing in that they allow researchers to organize complex ideas. Delbridge and Fiss (2013) proposed that typologies represent a “particularly attractive form of theorizing” (p. 329) and suggested that some of the most significant contributions to the field of management have been in the form of typologies. Snow and Ketchen (2014) are supportive of the general attractiveness of typologies as a form of theorizing, and they emphasize that typologies can perform a number of functions, in terms of clarifying concepts, accounting for multiple casual relationships, and reducing complexity in theoretical and methodological terms.

A typology allows for a more focused and systematic investigation of the development concept. Prior efforts to understand the origins and outcomes of development have been curtailed by the lack of a holistic theoretical framework to distinguish between development types and guide future research. Having identified the dimensions of our typology, we now review and categorize the existing literature to demonstrate that each type is sustainable as a distinct category and evaluate the theoretical underpinnings, antecedents, and outcomes of each. We acknowledge that although prior research has focused on investigating some of the types we propose, very little attention has been paid to some types (co-emergent), and there are significant knowledge gaps in our understanding of the outcomes associated with each type.

**Figure 1.** Typology of development.
Acquisitive Development

**Definition.** The acquisition type envisages development as an individual human process of developing new knowledge, skill, and behaviors that contribute to personal, professional job, or organizational resources (Nafukho, Hairston, & Brooks, 2004). Various conceptualizations of this development type are found in the literature such as professional development (Blau et al., 2008; Sankey & Machin, 2014) or organizationally focused development (Maurer, Lippstreu, & Judge, 2008). A particular preoccupation of strategic HRD concerns how to draw out and use developed knowledge and skill to enhance organizational performance (Garavan, 2007). This development type is conceptualized as a planned and purposeful activity, deliberately entered into (Garavan, Hogan, & Cahir-O‘Donnell, 2009), and it has a continuous character (Irving & Williams, 1999). It also assumes that the source of development comes from inside the individual.

**Theoretical grounding.** Acquisitive development is grounded in the literature on cognitive development theory, theories of expertise, behaviorism, theories of skill acquisition, and social learning theories. At a philosophical level (Kitchenham, 2008), the acquisitive type is supported by a notion of development that is goal focused and involves a repetitive sequence of goal formulation, implementation, and modification of goals based on learning outcomes. Development is essentially an entity that moves an individual toward a final state (Van De Ven & Poole, 1995).

The acquisitive type draws heavily from individual learning theory. Piaget (1953), for example, proposed that the key to development is the mutual interaction of accommodation (changing mental concepts based on experience) and assimilation (integrating experience into existing mental concepts). For his part, Kolb (1984) argued that development takes place as individuals engage in a four-stage process—experience, reflection, conceptualization, and planning. Theories of expertise development are also relevant to the acquisitive type. These theories emphasize the integration of conceptual knowledge and practical knowledge as fundamental to expertise development (Tynjälä, Välimaa, & Sarja, 2003). They proposed that formal knowledge is transformed into expertise through problem solving. The extent of problem solving is considered a mediating tool for the integration of conceptual and practical knowledge. Revans (1985) also highlighted this problem-solving dimension within action learning in that acquisitive development starts from questions raised by a problem, leading to hypotheses, experimentation, verification, and review. Revans was keen to emphasize that the essence of acquisitive development is real-life work problems. Other theoretical approaches that emphasize this perspective include problem-based learning (Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche, & Gijbels, 2003), project-based learning (Helle, Tynjälä, & Olkinuora, 2006), and problem-based project work learning (Illeris, 2003). Schön (1983, 1987) has similarly emphasized reflection in action and on action as an essential component of professional development. Mezirow (1991) similarly underlined the importance of the transformative development process and the extent to which learners challenge and question existing assumptions and thinking. A process of critical reflection leads to the development of new meanings and assumptions.
Finally, theories from the domain of professional development also have relevance to the acquisitive type. Desimone (2009) proposed a path model incorporating five core features for effective professional development: content focused, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) suggested a nonlinear model incorporating four domains (personal, external, practice, and consequence). They maintained that professional development is complex and involves multiple growth pathways between these domains.

Antecedents. The literature highlights a multiplicity of antecedents relevant to the acquisitive type. Individual antecedents include self-efficacy (Maurer & Tarulli, 1994), employee perceptions of their capabilities (Noe, Wilk, Mullen, & Wanek, 1997), learning motivation (Birdi, Allen, & Warr, 1997), and professional commitment (Culpin, Eichenberg, Haywalk, & Abraham, 2014). Other studies have highlighted the important role of work attitudes as antecedents including organizational commitment (McEnrue, 1989), job satisfaction (Blau, Paul, & St. John, 1993), and organizational career satisfaction (Van Emmerick, 2004). Job characteristics have also been emphasized. Skule and Reichborn (2002) identified several antecedent conditions that are job focused. These include managerial responsibility, significant external professional contacts, opportunities for feedback, support and encouragement, and the high possibility that the job knowledge and skills developed will be rewarded. Ellström (2001) also identified the development potential of tasks, opportunities for feedback, evaluation and reflection on outcomes, the formulation of work processes, the extent of participation by learners in developing work processes, and the availability of learning resources as important antecedents to acquisitive development.

Noe et al. (1997) suggested climate as an important organizational antecedent of acquisitive development. Dimensions emphasized included support from supervisors and coworkers, situational constraints such as lack of time resources (Noe & Wilk, 1993), and levels of job uncertainty (Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002). Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, and Bravo (2011) highlighted the important role of organizational support for development such as information exchange, rewards and resources for development, challenging roles, and professional assignments and organizational support for updating skills and professional competencies. Garofano and Salas (2005) and Carbery and Garavan (2007) in their models highlighted the role of the organizational environment and placed particular salience on the extent of development benefits, the availability of learning materials, and opportunities for acquisitive development outcomes.

Outcomes. Based on the available research, acquisitive development is more strongly associated with expertise development outcomes, professional development outcomes, job and role performance outcomes, and individual outcomes such as enhanced competency and self-confidence and career progression (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). Scholars have also highlighted that the enhancement of work performance may also lead to organizational outcomes (Noe & Colquitt, 2002). Maurer, Weiss, and Barbeite (2003) identified a range of outcomes such as a more rounded and better individual, enhanced potential, and flexibility to perform effectively in a multiplicity of roles and professions.
**Autonomous Development**

**Definition.** The autonomous type envisages development as a process that is centered on the autonomous individual. The focus is on developing individuals rather than producing skills that are of value to jobs and organizations (Jacobs & Washington, 2003). Autonomous development can be conceptualized or understood as an individual’s ability to develop independently by processes determined by the learner, or it may be viewed as an individual psychological characteristic where there is a capacity to act independently and direct development processes (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Autonomous development involves personal initiative, persistence in development, resourcefulness (Ponton, Carr, & Confessore, 2000), and can sometimes be characterized by discontinuous development activities. A central feature of autonomous development is the notion that the learner is the author of his or her development. As a consequence, development is considered organic and amorphous rather than planned. The process is open-ended and perceivable only in retrospect. Donati and Watts (2005) suggested that the focus of development is personal growth or becoming a certain kind of individual.

**Theoretical grounding.** Humanistic psychology plays a dominant role in our understanding of the autonomous development type. There are multiple manifestations of this theory including self-directed learning (Rogers, 1983), andragogy (Knowles, 1984), and Mezirow’s (1991) theory of transformational learning (Kitchenham, 2008). Boud (1981) identified Rogers as the seminal figure in the emergence of self-directed development. His ideas reinforced the notion that development is essentially about personal growth and self-actualization. Development is about the discovery of personal learnings. Other theoretical traditions relevant to this development type include life span theories of development (Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999), theories of psychosocial development (Erickson, 1963), life structure models (Levinson, 1978), and the life transition models (Schlossberg, 1987). Self-determination theory is also a useful theoretical underpinning with its emphasis on self-regulation, life goals and aspirations, and universal psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The majority of humanistic perspectives on development emphasize constructivism. Cognitive constructivism stresses the individual dimension of development and that development occurs through the individual—the internal construction of knowledge with new knowledge modifying or changing existing knowledge structures (Billett, 1998).

**Antecedents.** Several antecedents of autonomous development have been widely acknowledged in the literature. A cornerstone of this development type is the role of aspirations or life goals. Kasser and Ryan (1996) differentiated intrinsic aspirations from extrinsic ones. The former include life goals such as personal development, whereas the latter include wealth, fame, and attractiveness. Life span and cognitive models give primacy to the role of individual agency as a basis for moving through the various stages of development. Mezirow (2000) placed particular emphasis on the role of critical reflection. He characterized ideal critical reflection as complete information, the ability to evaluate arguments objectively, and freedom from coercion. The
development of a learner’s self-regulatory capacity is also considered important. Boekaerts (1996) found that self-regulated learners can develop more effectively because they utilize cognitive and motivational regulatory strategies. More recently, researchers have investigated the role of mindfulness, an open awareness, and interested attention to what is happening within and around oneself (K. W. Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness is, therefore, theorized to be a central element of autonomous development and the development of an autonomous orientation (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

**Outcomes.** Despite the interest in autonomous development, research on its outcomes is quite limited and fragmented. However, the emerging evidence suggests that this type of development will be closely associated with individual development outcomes such as more sustained goal-directed behavior, goal attainment, employee intentions to engage in self-directed or autonomous development, the pursuance of self-concordant outcomes or goals that are consistent with inherent core values and developing interests (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, & Sheldon, 2004), and intrinsically driven self-improvement activities (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

**Dialogic Development**

**Definition.** The dialogic type envisages development that is emergent, involves coparticipation, mutual constitution, and sensemaking. Individual and context are enmeshed, and development occurs through social participation (Tempest & Starkey, 2004). Learners socially construct organizational reality through dialogue and interaction with each other (Cummings & Cummings, 2014). Ellsworth (1988) proposed that development does not occur in a linear or straightforward way: This type envisages development as unpredictable and occurring within a set of emerging relationships. The development of the individual transpires in relation to others and taking into account their unique characteristics and context. Kemmis (2009) suggests that development is co-constructed, socially situated, and embodied. Individuals engage in a generative process of “inquiring about their organizational realities” (Cummings & Cummings, 2014, p. 150). Johnson and Boud (2010) characterized this type as development that evolves over time and over contexts. New challenges require new ways of thinking, and development is, therefore, unanticipated and unpredictable. A fundamental consequence from this development type is that it is necessarily contextualized and cannot be understood away from the setting in which it occurs (Boud & Brew, 2013).

**Theoretical grounding.** The dialogic type may be viewed as a postmodernist notion of what constitutes development. In terms of theoretical grounding, it draws heavily on interpretive approaches to social science. Given the social and sensemaking nature of this type, situated learning theorists have emphasized the role of communities of practice on development (J. S. Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Wenger, 1998). They argued that it is not sufficient to consider development in terms of individual cognition. Communities of practice form units of action in which individuals construct their identities, understandings, and shared practices (O’Donnell et al., 2003). Sociocultural
theories emphasize the role of authenticity, suggesting that development should take place in contexts that are real life. This type draws heavily on social-constructionist theories and argues that to consider development as a planned individual activity is misguided (Popper & Lipshitz, 1993). Gherardi, Nicolini, and Odella (1998) posited that people and groups create knowledge and negotiate meaning in terms of words, actions, situations, and artifacts. Social constructivism stresses the importance of interactions between individual and context. Context shapes the development process; it involves self-reflection and working with others. This theoretical perspective is particularly useful in understanding the social arrangements that provide the context for development. Collectives create knowledge and attribute meaning to particular words and actions (J. S. Brown & Duguid, 1991).

Other theories that help us to understand the dialogic type include collective learning theory (Capello, 1999), complexity (Fenwick, 2010; Hazy, Goldstein, & Lichtenstein, 2007), and actor network theory (Fenwick, 2010). Theories of collective learning emphasize that development is cumulative, interactive, and public. It is socially determined, and it is emergent (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). Complexity theory highlights emergence and the role of self-organization. Fenwick (2010) emphasized that a central premise of complexity theory is that the person and the context are inseparable and that development occurs through an intentional tinkering of one with the other. She also stressed that knowledge and action are a continuous cycle of invention and exploration and come about through relations among structural dimensions, objects, identity, action, and interaction. Therefore, complexity theory focuses on the relationship between learners and the environment. Cultural-historical activity theory (Engeström, 2001; Fuller & Unwin, 2004) is also appropriate in understanding dialogic development. This theory examines socio-material interactions and how a system emerges. It underlines the role of contradictions inherent in organizations and suggests that development occurs when contradictions are questioned. Development is viewed as a collective expansion of the objectives and practices of a system.

Actor network theory considers development as a joint exercise of relational strategies within networks. This theory has the potential to explore more fully development processes and account for nonhuman elements such as technology, texts, and objects and the role they play in development (Bell, 2010). It also has value in revealing assumptions that are taken for granted and actors who may be marginalized or powerless. Fundamentally, it brings to the fore the importance of networks for development and how they are in constant motion (Heeks & Stanforth, 2014). Membership, interests, identities, and discourse change over time, and actor network theory highlights how these changes come about (Whittle & Spicer, 2008).

Antecedents. To date, relatively few studies have investigated the dialogic type. Given that the dialogic type emphasizes discourse, emergence, and generativity (Bushe & Marshak, 2014), a number of antecedent conditions can be highlighted. Leadership is a particularly important antecedent. Therefore, the extent to which leaders demonstrate behaviors such as listening, respecting, voicing, and suspending (Isaacs, 1999) will be important. Other researchers suggest that leaders need to create spaces for and facilitate opportunities for dialogic development (Syvänen et al., 2012). Antecedents
such as collaboration, the sharing of knowledge, employee participation, and organizational learning are also emphasized (Syvänen & Tikkamäki, 2013).

The requirement for participation is given particular significance in the context of dialogic development. Wenger (2003) defined participation “as action, the gained experiences, relations and interactions with others” (p. 26). Without participation, there will be no development. This participation will have a particular character, with an emphasis on activeness, voicing, giving and receiving, and engaging (Tomer, 1988). Knowing is highlighted as another proximate antecedent condition. Orlikowski (2002) defined knowing as an ongoing socially constructed process; it is interactive in nature, and it consists of competence and knowledge in practice. Blackler (1995) highlighted specific dimensions of knowing such as embracing, embodying, encoding, enculturing, and embedding. Researchers have underscored the importance of social interaction, support, and reflection as important antecedents to the dialogic type. Taylor, Templeton, and Baker (2010) suggested that social interaction is facilitated through a commitment to participation and willingness to demonstrate dialogue competencies. Social support is helped by the skills of actors to conduct dialogue and commitment to participation (Tikkamäki, 2013). Reflection requires individual capabilities such as self-directedness, self-awareness, and the willingness to reflect and carry out reflective dialogue (Hiloden & Tikkamäki, 2013). Boud and Brew (2013) highlighted the importance of productive reflection where there is consideration of time and space for reflection.

Outcomes. Given the lack of research on dialogical development, little is known about its outcomes and in particular its performance effects. The majority of studies imply the use of a dialogical approach, rather than explicitly investigate it. Sveningsson and Larsson (2006) found that individuals’ participation in developmental activities contributed to identity work through developing an idealized managerial vision of the future and developing fantasies of leadership. S. Clarke (2006) investigated dissonance between individual needs and organizational boundaries and how over time they blurred the boundaries and considered themselves to be “the organization.” Carroll and Levy (2010) also found that dialogic development led to the crafting of selves that were fluid, overlapping and sometimes contradictory.

Networked Development

Definition. While the acquisitive and autonomous types emphasize individual-level development and the dialogic stresses co-emergent development, the networked type highlights development that focuses on organizational and interorganizational relationships. Teams, or the organization as a whole, are the focus of development, which is formally designed with specific goals and timelines, rather than emerging through communities of practice (J. S. Brown & Duguid, 2001; Leitch, McMullan, & Harrison, 2013). The developmental process associated with this type is considered purposeful. Development processes are interdependent “comprised of purposeful actions, discovered consequences, implications, reassessments and further action” (Knapp, 2010, p. 288). Cummings and Cummings (2014) suggested that the networked type is illustrated in organization development where the focus is on enhancing competence “to
solve problems, adapt to change and improve” (p. 144). Interorganizational dimensions of this type include development processes that occur within strategic alliances, networks of organizations, and its partners and development as part of collaborative relationships.

**Theoretical grounding.** The networked type draws heavily from positivist social science where organizations are considered tangible entities that can be objectively assessed. A variety of team, organizational, and interorganizational theories have relevance at the level of the team. Lynham, Chermack, and Noggle (2004) suggested that team-building theory represents a cluster of theories that explain how teams develop. Zuckman’s stage theory is one particular example. Team development theories emphasize issues such as role analysis, role negotiation, relationships, processes, and task accomplishment. Yeager and Nafukho (2011) highlighted a cluster of relevant theories including social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), social identity theory and mental models (Van den Bossche, Gijseelaers, Segers, Woltjer, & Kirschner, 2011; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998), and cultural mosaic theory (Chao & Moon, 2005).

A number of organizational-level theoretical perspectives that help us to understand the networked type include explorative theory (March, 1991), single-loop/adaptive learning, double-loop/generative learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978), organizational learning theory (Huber, 1991), and higher and lower level learning theory (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Open systems theory emphasizes the role of context or environmental factors in the incremental nature of development processes (Lynham et al., 2004). For his part, McLean (2009) pointed to the contribution of action research and the need for a system focus in framing developmental interventions.

**Antecedents.** Several antecedents of the networked type are identified in the literature. The environment in which an organization operates will have a significant impact on the development process. Antecedents such as wider societal and institutional factors will affect the development process in very specific ways (Lam, 2000). A number of internal factors will also act as antecedents. An important antecedent of this development type is a clear statement of strategic intent and vision for the development unit (team, organization, or strategic partnership). Important senior management team antecedents include their skills to manage information and knowledge, the existence of transformational leaders, matrix-type structures, conflict resolution mechanisms, and the existence of HRD practices that encourage collaboration, flexibility, and teamwork (Carmeli, Atwater, & Levi, 2011; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002).

The organization’s culture will act as an antecedent: In particular, cultures that promote trust, cross-functional networks, and risk-taking will support networked development (Weick, 1996). Learning culture is also considered an important antecedent to networked development. Characteristics of learning culture that are particularly salient include the opportunities to question and challenge assumptions, opportunities to share knowledge and resources (Reagans & McEvily, 2003), and the promotion of social interaction and communication at individual and team levels. Vince and Saleem
Garavan and McGuire (2004) argued that the existence of a blame culture will affect communication and sharing processes and maintain that strong subcultures will impede development across the organization.

Structural characteristics highlighted include decentralized, informal structures with an emphasis on informality. Hierarchical structures may also impede development (Lord & Hall, 2005). Absorptive capacity (Van den Bosch, Van Wijk, & Volbreda, 2005) will affect the extent of network development. Aspects of absorptive capacity that are relevant include long-term planning, efforts to acquire and integrate knowledge, and the encouragement of experimental learning.

Outcomes. Despite the considerable interest in the networked type, research on its outcomes is limited. However, the existing evidence suggests that this type of development is closely associated with organizational performance, innovation, and financial performance (Lopez, Peón, & Ordás, 2005). Very few studies have systematically investigated the outcomes of networked development or have determined whether these development processes produce these results.

Promising Directions and Recommendations

Turning now to the implications of our typology for future research, we examine areas in theoretical grounding (including methodological), antecedents, and outcomes (see Table 1). We do not seek to be all inclusive and exhaustive but rather to present a number of paths that will enhance future research. How development is conceptualized is fundamental to HRD. Kuchinke (2014) argued that the conceptualization of development will shape dialogue and research. Our typology suggests four development types that vary in how they unfold and their structure, antecedents, and outcomes.

The reality is that relatively little is known about the characteristics of each type. This has arisen due to the interdisciplinary and fragmented nature of research on development and the broad base of theories that are used as foundation for such research. Each of the four types have distinct theoretical underpinnings; however, we acknowledge that some theories may be relevant to one or more types. The mechanisms through which the four types of development take place are primarily drawn from the individual literatures with great scope to tap into the organizational and institutional literatures.

There are also a number of significant methodological challenges. In particular, the study of development types that are conceptualized as more dynamic, unfolding, and emergent (autonomous and dialogic) require an approach to research that moves beyond traditional cross-sectional research designs. Cross-sectional methods are considered to be a poor fit when studying development processes that are dynamic, unfold along multiple trajectories, and are temporal in nature (Cohen & Manion, 1980). We suggest the need for more innovative and context-specific approaches. Researchers have suggested concepts such as localized interpretation, contextual rationality, and polyphony (Nolan & Garavan, 2012). These three ideas are informed by social constructivist ideas and focus on how social experience is created and given meaning by
**Table 1. Development Types: Researching Antecedents and Outcomes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key development type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Methodology issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Development is a process centered on intrapersonal development rather than producing skills of value to values and organizations</td>
<td>What are the individual-level predictors of autonomous development?</td>
<td>How do autonomous development outcomes endure?</td>
<td>Develop measures of outcomes unique to autonomous outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What self-directed characteristics drive autonomous development behavior?</td>
<td>How does autonomous development enhance self-awareness, future development behavior, and well-being?</td>
<td>Need to capture autonomous development in different contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How do self-regulatory processes affect autonomous development?</td>
<td>Does autonomous development lead to performance outcomes?</td>
<td>Use of qualitative and in particular innovative methodologies to capture nuance and unique outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What influence does development orientation play?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How does organizational and development climate influence autonomous development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitive</td>
<td>The development of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that contribute to personal, professional, job, and organizational resources</td>
<td>What intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors drive acquisitive development?</td>
<td>What are the short- and long-term outcomes of acquisitive development?</td>
<td>Develop objective measures of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What particular organizational and environmental antecedents influence acquisitive development?</td>
<td>Do individual outcomes of acquisitive development influence organizational outcomes?</td>
<td>Pay more attention to sample selection and the use of experimental and control groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What influence do characteristics of the job or professional selling have on acquisitive development?</td>
<td>How does acquisitive development affect human capital outcomes?</td>
<td>Encourage longitudinal studies and generate samples that enable investigation of internal and external context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Table 1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key development type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Methodology issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dialogic</strong></td>
<td>Development is emergent and involves co-participation, mutual consultation, and sensemaking. Individual and context are enmeshed as development occurs.</td>
<td>Make greater use of ethnographic methodologies such as close-observational and participative research. Utilize methodological approaches such as localized interpretation, contextual rationality, and polyphony. Utilize research designs that explore the “how” and “why” of dialogic development. Develop measures of outcomes unique to dialogic development. Develop more objective measures of networked development.</td>
<td>What organizational conditions facilitate or inhibit dialogic development? How does dialogic development shape an organization or community? How does dialogic development evolve over time? What types of outcomes (if any) are unique to dialogic development? Make greater use of ethnographic methodologies such as close-observational and participative research. Utilize methodological approaches such as localized interpretation, contextual rationality, and polyphony. Utilize research designs that explore the “how” and “why” of dialogic development. Develop measures of outcomes unique to dialogic development. Develop more objective measures of networked development.</td>
<td>How does dialogic development occur within an organization or community? How does dialogic development occur within an organization or community? How does dialogic development occur within an organization or community? What kinds of participatory development arenas, spaces, and tools facilitate dialogic development?</td>
<td>Make greater use of ethnographic methodologies such as close-observational and participative research. Utilize methodological approaches such as localized interpretation, contextual rationality, and polyphony. Utilize research designs that explore the “how” and “why” of dialogic development. Develop measures of outcomes unique to dialogic development. Develop more objective measures of networked development. Utilize longitudinal studies that track outcomes over time. Use multiple perspectives on outcomes. Broaden the organization types and contexts in which networked development is studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Networked</strong></td>
<td>Planned development processes that focus on teams, organizations, relationships between organizations, development as an interdependent intentional process.</td>
<td>What are the outcomes of networked development unique to teams, organizations, and strategic relationships? What are the short- and long-term outcomes of networked development? Does networked development lead to unanticipated or negative outcomes?</td>
<td>How does planned development occur in teams, organizations, strategic alliances, and other relationships? What types of HRD interventions facilitate network development? What role do organizational and environmental influences have on networked development? What is the influence of organizational and management support, reward systems, and procedural justice have on networked development?</td>
<td>What are the outcomes of networked development unique to teams, organizations, and strategic relationships? What are the short- and long-term outcomes of networked development? Does networked development lead to unanticipated or negative outcomes?</td>
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Note. HRD = human resource development.
actors in an organizational setting. Localized interpretation emphasizes the notion of development as a socially constructed construct and helps to capture the dynamics of emergence (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Contextual rationality gives salience to the role by context in explaining development (Townley, 2008). Polyphony (Bakhtin, 1984) emphasizes that development be understood as a polyphonic phenomenon if different discourses on development are to be accommodated.

We also suggest that several of the development types we propose require a longitudinal approach, the use of qualitative research designs, and multiple methods of data collection. Qualitative designs are better at capturing the dynamic development types—they have the potential to provide more fine-grained theoretical understandings of antecedents and outcomes. Wang and Chugh (2014) emphasized the value of what they call “qualitative, phenomenon-driven” research. They viewed this type of research to be particularly effective in addressing “how” and “why” in less-explored areas, such as dialogic development where there is an absence of empirical evidence.

**Antecedents**

Our knowledge base is generally weak on all four development types. There is a particular paucity of research on the antecedents of dialogic and networked development types. Insights on these types are scant. Research on development has largely focused on explorations of acquisitive development and to a lesser extent autonomous development. Future research must focus more on theory building on dialogic and networked development types. Therefore, we need to understand the antecedent conditions that facilitate dialogic development. Specifically, what organizational conditions (cultural, environmental, and structural) promote or facilitate dialogic development? We need more theoretical insights into how dialogic development occurs within development units and how it evolves over time? Are there unique development arenas, spaces, and tools that enable dialogic development? Scholars have highlighted that structural and professional boundaries can inhibit the emergence process that characterizes dialogic development (Nicolini, Powell, Conville, & Martinez-Solano, 2007), suggesting the need to conduct research on how these factors influence sensemaking processes.

The networked type has a central characteristic: the notion that development is planned and initiated which contrasts with the dialogic type. The networked type postulates that organizations can create development processes that enhance organizational effectiveness. There is scope to gain further insights into a variety of cultural factors such as commitment to development, the role of systems to support development, and the investment of employees in networked development. Other researchers have emphasized the potential role of policies that promote networked development (Taylor et al., 2010) and the importance of organizational leadership style and mental models. Therefore, we suggest further research on leader and manager engagement with development processes and the role of attitudes toward development. We have identified research gaps in our understanding of planned development in teams, organizations, strategic alliances, and other relationships. What are the interventions that facilitate networked development? What is the influence of organizational and management
support, rewards systems, and procedural justice? These are just some of the research questions on antecedents that can be explored.

We have scope to enhance our understanding of the autonomous development type. The notion of the autonomous self is, however, not particularly prevalent in discussions of development within HRD. Therefore, research gaps remain around how the autonomous self is expressed in development processes. What are the limitations of intrapersonal development? What are the trigger events that stimulate autonomous development? How does personal history and accumulated life experiences trigger autonomous development? What role do personal values play? Does emotional intelligence influence autonomous development, and in what ways? These are just a sample of the antecedents where major research gaps exist.

The acquisitive development type provides important opportunities for the research of antecedents. Questions that can be usefully explored include the following: What role do intrinsic and extrinsic factors have in triggering acquisitive development? How do job professional and environmental factors facilitate and/or constrain acquisitive development?

Outcomes

Research is needed that examines the differential outcomes associated with each development type. We propose that this type of research will provide us with more fine-grained and nuanced understandings of the relationships between development types and outcomes. The limited research suggests that different types of development can lead to positive and negative outcomes. However, whether these outcomes are directly or indirectly affected by development is contested. Further research should study both short- and long-term outcomes. Researchers need to develop more multidimensional notions of outcomes to capture the complexity of the dialogic type. Do different development types require unique conceptualizations of outcomes? Outcomes research should examine the full range from intrapersonal, interpersonal, team, organizational, financial, and innovative outcomes.

We need to move beyond the situation where there is an absence of evidence to either support or refute relationships between the four types of development and performance. HRD is replete with assertions or assumptions that development leads to performance gains. A recent review of the leadership development literature highlights the paucity of the evidence supporting performance improvement claims (Garavan, O’Brien, & Watson, 2014). There is, therefore, a need to develop methods that sensitively measure and capture outcomes. The development of such measures will significantly enhance the case for development in multiple organizations and contexts.

Conclusion

Our understanding of development has come a long way since the concept was first identified as central to HRD. Much has been learned from previous research on development, but the topic is ripe for further investigation. To this end, we believe that our
review, typology, and discussion of four development types will help set the stage for new research avenues. Therefore, we encourage researchers across disciplines to shed light on development as a construct and to use the typology to better understand this important and complex organizational phenomenon. From a practice perspective, we agree with Kuchinke (2014) that HRD practice is enhanced where practitioners can respond to different notions of development in their day-to-day practice. We believe that practitioners can use the typology as an analytical and diagnostic framework or tool to create conditions for the four types of development and select the development type most suited to their context and circumstances.

**Limitations**

Although Doty and Glick (1994) have acknowledged that typologies represent conceptually derived sets of ideal types, with each construct representing a unique set of attributes linked to a particular relevant outcome, they also argued that the ideal types are theoretical abstractions and accentuations of a particular point of view. They go on to suggest that ideal types represent organizational forms that might exist but for which empirical examples are expected to be rare. In practice, development processes in organizations are often driven by multiple motivations and agendas, whereby HRD practitioners are tasked with meeting the expectations of a number of stakeholders. As a result, it is possible that development in organizations falls across more than one of the dimensions specified and is designed to achieve several valued outcomes.

Second, although we have worked hard to reduce researcher bias, this cannot be fully eliminated. As the research approach adopted involved both interpretation and comparison of scholarly works, unconscious bias may have entered the analysis in terms of the value and significance we attached to particular scholarly works or indeed the manner in which we describe or articulate the four dimensions of the typology (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). We strongly urge future researchers to consider adopting more quantitative approaches to confirm the four dimensions of development established in this article.

Finally, we acknowledge that approaches to development are continually evolving and that our typology must remain fluid to encompass new avenues for developing individuals, groups, and organizations. Emerging research in the areas of positive psychology and mindfulness continues to awaken interest in stimulus-based approaches to attitudinal and behavioral change (George, 2014), and considerable emphasis has been placed in recent years on more effective ways of developing talented employees (Collings, 2014; Garavan et al., 2012). Hence, any typology of development must recognize new and emergent approaches to development and identify the theoretical underpinnings, antecedents, and outcomes associated with such practices.

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Author Biographies

Thomas N. Garavan is research professor-leadership at Edinburgh Napier Business School. He has authored or co-authored 14 books and more than 100 refereed journal articles and book chapters. He is Editor-in-Chief of European Journal of Training and Development and Associate Editor of Personnel Review. He is a member of the editorial board of Human Resource Development Review, Advances in Developing Human Resources, Human Resource Management Journal, Human Resource Development International, and Human Resource Development Quarterly.

David McGuire is reader in human resource development and deputy director of MBA programs at Edinburgh Napier University. He has authored 2 textbooks and more than 30 articles in journals including Human Resource Development Review, European Journal of Training and Development, Advances in Developing Human Resources, and Human Resource Development Quarterly. He serves as associate editor of Advances in Developing Human Resources and also sits on the editorial boards of Human Resource Development Review and Human Resource Development Quarterly.