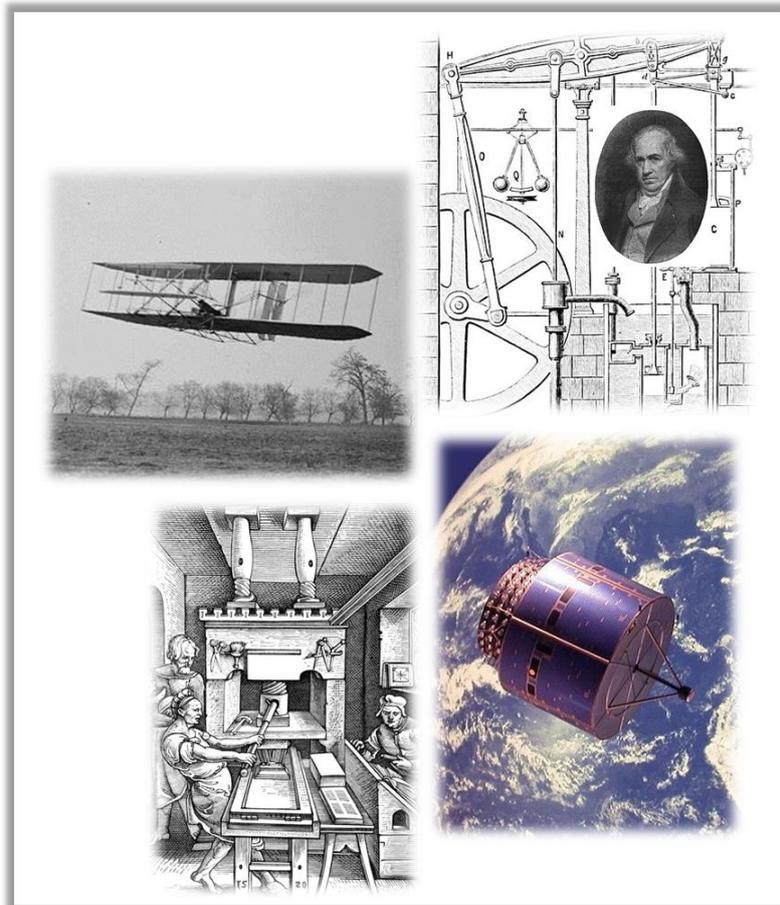


Ancient Greece

What makes the economy tick series

Understanding our economic future through history



Created by the Forecasting Net

www.forecastingnet.com

February 2015



Follow us on LinkedIn: [Forecasting Net Group](#)



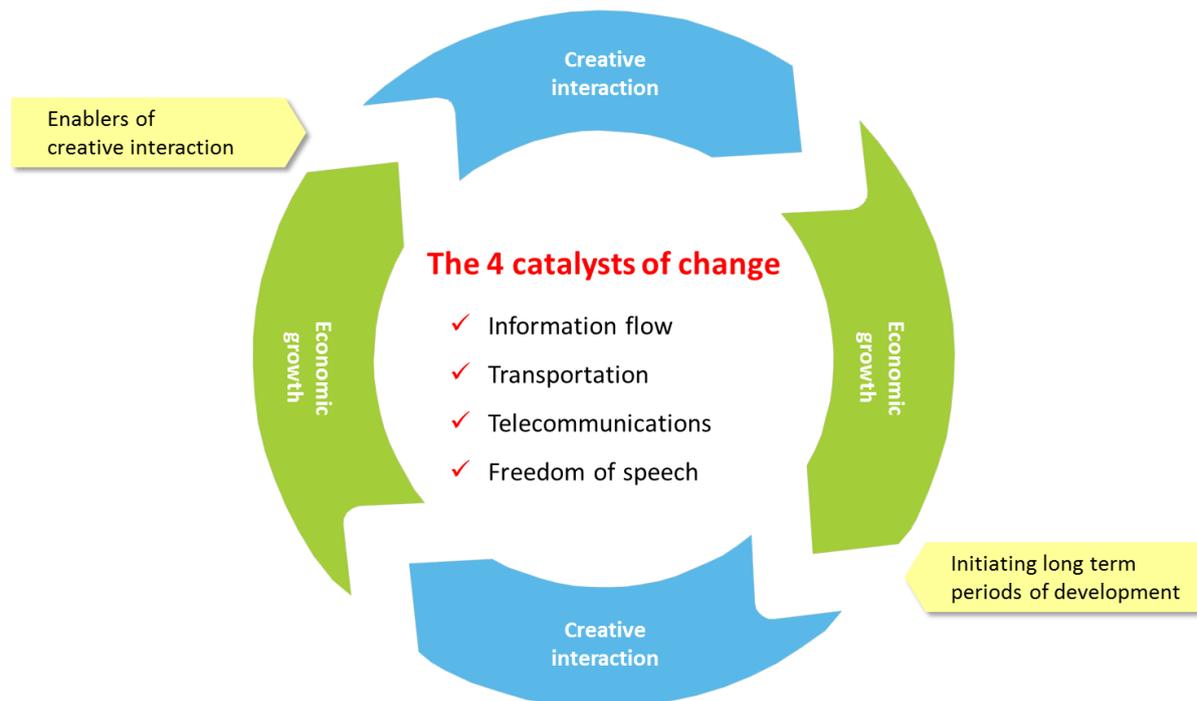
Like us on Facebook: [Forecasting Net page](#)

*“Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn’t really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while”, **Steve Jobs***

A new way of understanding growth

Ever wondered what triggers periods of forward thinking and accelerated growth like the modern Globalization Era or the rise of the Ancient Greek civilization?

Based on the methodology presented in a recent post, titled "[What makes our world and the economy tick?](#)", in order to understand these periods of great development, we should seek for significant progress in the following key areas: information flow, transportation, telecommunications, and freedom of speech.



These advancements, apart from being important on their own, act as a **catalyst** for future growth by boosting effective communication, thus facilitating business and economic transactions, free exchange of ideas, and other types of **creative interaction**, therefore, resulting in the initiation of a virtuous cycle of more innovation and economic activity.

The theory was tested in the three most recent periods of the modern western civilization, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the Globalization Era, and it turned out to work fine.

In this post, we will use the same framework to explain the rise of Ancient Greek civilization during and after the 8th century BC.

The Ancient Greek civilization from an interaction perspective

The story of classical Greece starts even earlier than most people think, first, with the [Minoan civilization](#) from 2700 to 1450 BC, in the Greek island of Crete and then with the [Mycenaean civilization](#) from 1600 to 1100 BC, in the Peloponnese, Southern Greece. Despite the significant development of the Greek peninsula and islands during the third and second millennia BC, after the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization, a prolonged period of low or no development followed, the [Greek Dark Ages](#) that lasted until 800 BC. And then, almost out of nowhere, the ancient Greek civilization emerged, reaching a peak point in just three centuries, the [Golden Age of Pericles](#) in the 5th century BC that is still considered one of the most brilliant moments of human history.

So, what triggered this?

Key to understanding these growth cycles is the **changing level of interaction** both inside Greece and also with other parts of the world, in the context of the aforementioned catalysts of change.

Transportation

The first important advancement is about ancient means of transportation. The Greeks are well known for their naval tradition. Today, the [Greek shipping](#) industry is one of the best ranking globally accounting for almost one fifth of the world's tankers and bulk carriers. What most people don't realize is that this tradition originated in ancient times when the Greeks started sailing the Mediterranean. An important development at the time was the [trireme ship](#), which, according to Thucydides, was introduced to Greece by the Corinthians in the late 8th century BC, considerably improving the speed and cost-effectiveness of traveling by sea. This had an enormous impact on Greece's development as it facilitated trade and, as we will see in the following paragraph, knowledge sharing as well.

Information flow

During their extended sea quests, the Greeks came to know the Phoenician alphabet, which they further developed, when they invented the [Greek alphabet](#), in the 8th century BC. A product of cross-nations interaction itself, it greatly helped information transfer and archiving by means of the written Greek Language. Any new idea, concept, methodology, or thought could not only be passed precisely from one place to another, but also from one generation to the next one. Information could now be accumulated and the Greeks were able to build a knowledge capital preserved for future generations, so, that they didn't have to "reinvent the wheel" every time, thus securing the continuity of skills and boosting their growth potential.

Telecommunications

The next catalyst of change, telecommunications, did not formally exist in ancient times, at least not in the sense that we know it today, due to the lack of the appropriate technology. However, the improvements made in transportation and the written language served as an indirect “postal service” to carry messages and packages from one place to another, adding to this area as well.

Freedom of speech

The last area of improvement, freedom of speech, is, by any standard, one of the most important contributions of the ancient Greek spirit to our civilization, shaping our society, economy, and culture, even today. Democracy is itself a product of interaction. Greece, in ancient times, was not a single sovereign state, but a loose consolidation of many independent city states that were often at war with each other. However, the coexistence of many small states in a relatively small geographical region, with the means for better communication and transport, allowed for more diversity and for the quick exploration of new creative directions. One such direction was the participation of the people in public matters and decisions that originated in the city state of [Sparta](#). Male citizens assembled every month in the [Apella](#) to elect leaders and decide on important city matters. The concept was further developed, by the city state of [Athens](#), into an integrated political system that respected human rights, leading to the invention of [Democracy](#) in the late 6th century BC, by Cleisthenes. The new political system, by definition, granted more rights to the people, thus facilitating the free thinking that led to the [Golden Age of Pericles](#) in the 5th century BC.

Conclusion

Ancient Greece scored very high, in all the aforementioned factors of change compared to other nations and regions at the time. In that context, Greece demonstrated significant advancements that are still considered major breakthroughs throughout human history. All these resulted to the wonders of the Greek civilization in science and art that were the foundation of the modern western civilization.

So, it seems that the presented framework of the four catalysts of change works well in ancient times as it works today, unveiling the truly important elements of long term development.