JOURNAL FÜR ENTWICKLUNGSPOLITIK

herausgegeben vom Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik
an den österreichischen Universitäten

vol. XXIII 2–2007

PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Schwerpunktredaktion: Karin Fischer, Gerald Hödl

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 4-11

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Perspectives on Development Studies: A Short Introduction

Austria is a latecomer. Whereas in many countries development as an academic subject was firmly established several decades ago, in Austria it was not before the 1980s that first attempts were being made at bringing together a motley crew of scholars researching and teaching development issues. These efforts culminated in the foundation of the Mattersburg Circle (Mattersburger Kreis), an Austria-wide network of academics, whose most tangible achievement of this early period is the journal you are reading.

It took nearly another 20 years before Development Studies was set up as a degree course at an Austrian academic institution. Nesting in the crevices of the University of Vienna, the name Project International Development (Projekt Internationale Entwicklung) still indicates its fragile basis. The signpost which showed the way to the project's first office, located in a derelict building outside the campus, adorns the cover of this issue of *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik*, both as a precious archaeological remain and as a reminder of its anything but glamorous beginnings.

The Viennese undertaking shares many characteristics, which Frans Schuurman describes so vividly in his article (see page 45ff.), with its Western European predecessors, above all the divergent disciplinary backgrounds of the scholars involved, ranging from economics to social history and various area studies, and the common goal of contributing towards a better understanding of inequality and domination on a global scale. The success of the Development Studies programme in Vienna as well as various initiatives in other places (the revitalisation of the Commission for Development Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, a Global Studies programme at the University of Graz, and comparable efforts at the Universities of Linz and Salzburg, to name but a few) suggest that all is well. Nevertheless, the increasing institutionalisation of Development Studies could not detract

from a growing unease among its protagonists. Are they and should they be part of a new academic discipline, with their research and teaching still heavily drawing on the academic disciplines in which they were originally trained? Can and should the boundaries separating them be transcended with a view to adopting a new, genuinely transdisciplinary approach to the subject? What is this subject? How shall we approach it? And to what end?

As we know from Alexander Gerschenkron (1962), being a latecomer is not necessarily a disadvantage. Using the experience of others, learning from their mistakes and steering clear of models that have failed helps the late arrival avoid detours and catch up with the most advanced in the field. These were our somewhat presumptuous intentions when we invited several distinguished scholars from abroad to share their views with us – both in this issue and at a symposium in Mattersburg in October 2007 (see http://entwicklungsforschung.at).

We have managed to assemble a group of academics who represent different generations, different approaches, have different foci of research but two things in common: they all share a social science background and have all tried to transgress the narrow confines of individual academic disciplines. Henry Bernstein's credentials as a radical thinker date back to the early 1970s (Bernstein 1973), and his analysis has maintained its cutting edge since. About a decade later, Frans Schuurman entered the theoretical fray and played an important role in re-conceptualising development theory after the final demise of the dependency paradigm (Schuurman 1993). Uma Kothari and Aram Ziai both represent more recent intellectual trends and approach their subject(s) from a post-colonial and post-structuralist perspective respectively. As development research is by no means confined to universities, we thought it useful to invite EADI, the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes, to outline the perspective of an organisation, the members of which to a large degree work in close cooperation with governmental and non-governmental development agencies. By contrast, the African network CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa) provides not only a non-European point of view but one which stresses the importance of non-conformist approaches within development research.

As we were looking for answers to the problems outlined above, we asked our contributors the following four questions:

(1) What does development (in a North-South context) mean?

As Development Studies, like all academic disciplines, is primarily defined by its subject, it seems worth reflecting on the precise meaning of this subject. Possibly underestimating the complexities of, for example, art history's central concern, we argue that development is an extraordinarily contested matter. Some of the most common definitions may even be well off the mark, as they tend to mistake the almost routinely proclaimed goals of development for the process or practice of development itself (see Cowen/Shenton 1995: 28). This confusion and uncertainty may partly be put down to the fact that the proto-discipline (if we see it as such) of Development Studies has had a comparatively short academic history and that the institutional arrangements which hold together such diverse disciplines as geography and history have not yet been realised. In these disciplines the divergent views of what constitutes the subject matter have been resolved by establishing and finally canonising subdisciplines (thus even combining social and natural sciences under one disciplinary roof, as in the case of geography). Development Studies since its inception has been striving for the academic recognition necessary to become a discipline in its own right and thus to be able to formally integrate those areas of research that relate to its subject matter (development economics, for instance, is still regarded rather as development *economics* than as *development* economics). But, first of all, the subject matter itself has to be delineated in a way that convincingly lays the groundwork for any further exploration.

(2) What and who has influenced you as a researcher?

Several motives lay behind this almost indiscreet inquiry: on the one hand sheer curiosity; on the other hand we were hoping that the personal trajectories might reveal common patterns (decisive intellectual inspirations, moves across disciplinary confines or returns from tumultuous interdisciplinarity into safe disciplinary harbours, political motives, momentous encounters with the development business, etc.) as well as a diversity of routes by which to travel into Development Studies. Moreover, individual experiences might have corresponded to broader trends in intellectual and political history and thus add some autobiographical colour to an otherwise potentially highly abstract account.

(3) What do you consider as the main purpose of development research?
It is a truism that no academic discipline operates in a way that is completely detached from economic and political interests. And yet, there are significant differences between the disciplines with regard to how they define their role and their responsibility. Unlike, let us again say, art history, Development Studies makes particularly strong claims to produce applicable knowledge geared towards specific aims which can, and in the view of many scholars should, be promoted by political and economic actors. This probably also holds true for development-related research within natural sciences such as tropical medicine and agronomy. One of the main issues at stake is the relationship between development research and development practice. Is it a relationship in which Development Studies is reduced to an ancillary role or is Development Studies capable of setting its own research agenda and framing its subject(s) in ways that may even be at odds with the powers that be? Who are the actors to be equipped with the knowledge necessary to achieve the set goals? And what are these goals?

Perhaps there is also another way of conceiving the role of development research, one that focusses on the analysis of social transformations but abstains from drawing practical conclusions. But would that still be development research?

(4) How would you characterise your approach to development research? What do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

These last two questions were meant to provoke some theoretical and methodological reflection on how to carry out development research. To think about development research not only touches upon the question of disciplinarity versus multi- or interdisciplinarity, but also on the appropriate level of analysis. Should we focus our research on the micro or macro level, on local, regional, national or global processes and structures? Apart from general epistemological considerations we were interested in the actual research being done and in the level of self-reflexivity our authors were prepared to disclose. In this respect, we hoped to get a better understanding of the prevailing mood in which they ply their respective trades. Do they display a sense of scepticism and insecurity or are they self-assured, sharing the enthusiasm expressed in a recent book on development research which praises its 'exciting opportunities'? (Holland/Cambell 2005: 1)

Having outlined the directions we would have liked our contributors to take, let us have a brief look at the results. Most of the articles tried to circumvent the 'confessional mode', as Henry Bernstein called our attempts at probing intellectual biographies. Probably this is due to one of the deeply ingrained habits of academia, the decontextualisation of one's own research, a sort of scholarly 'anxiety of influence' (Bloom 1973).

Evidently, the authors felt more at ease sketching out the subject matter of development research, which they link to issues of inequality and poverty in distant parts of the world. At the same time they stress the problematic nature of the concept, inter alia its Eurocentric implications. But whereas Aram Ziai underlines the discursive construction of 'development', avoids putting forward a positive definition and suggests bidding farewell to the term, both Bernstein and Schuurman in similar ways delineate what development is about: 'the structural causes of the lack of emancipation of people in the South as well as in transitional economies elsewhere and the strategies […] which are employed to solve this lack of emancipation.' (Schuurman, p. 50)

Most of our authors agree that the combination of analysis and strategic intervention towards normative goals is a central tenet of Development Studies, though they disagree on how to assess this fact. Their views range from Ziai's scepticism, which regards traditional development research as inextricably enmeshed in relations of power, as thus being a vehicle of domination, to Lawo's and Colberg's optimism about the possibilities of improving development practice by fostering the links between researchers and practitioners.

A recurring theme is the question of the appropriate disciplinary approaches and how to combine them. There is almost unanimity that Development Studies does not constitute a discipline but rather a 'field' (Bernstein) or a closely related, interdisciplinary set of approaches which provides more cognitive value than the sum of its parts (Schuurman). But Schuurman goes on to argue that the integration of various disciplines is becoming increasingly precarious, because the role of the nation state as the common denominator of the main disciplines involved (economics, sociology, political science) has diminished (or at least has substantially changed). Within the 'field' of Development Studies it is economics which is seen as particularly influential, all the more so since the 'economics impe-

rialism' within the social sciences has begun to refashion the other strands of Development Studies in its own, neo-classical image (Bernstein). However, Kothari is hopeful that it is precisely its multidisciplinarity which may protect Development Studies from losing its critical edge, although she does not think this 'hybrid subject' capable of theoretical innovation.

As far as actual (and future) development research is concerned, the general mood among our contributors is rather gloomy. They (apart from Lawo/Colberg) complain about 'the ever-changing fads and fashions' and 'the new sets of language, tools and professionals that go with them' (Kothari, p. 31), and regard neoliberalism as a massive influence on how, and what kind of, development knowledge is produced. According to several of our authors, the structural analysis of inequality and underdevelopment has gradually been replaced by micro-level analysis, be it the evaluation of development projects, or the many studies on poverty which tend to rely on narrow, actor-oriented concepts. Moreover, Kothari criticises the depoliticisation of development research and Bernstein its quest for 'politically supportable' or 'win-win-solutions', which, in a world of fierce contradictions, may lead to intellectual cowardice. Another criticism raised is that most development research is still western-based (Olukoshi/Nyamnjoh) and that it (re)produces rigid dichotomies between the 'West and the rest', between 'here' and 'over there' (Kothari).

The critical stance which characterises most of the articles in this issue is a rare thing in today's Development Studies, as a cursory check of several leading academic journals in the field reveals. Self-reflection or even self-doubt quite obviously are not the order of the day. On the rare occasions when methodological questions stand at the forefront, it is participatory research and context sensitivity which are presented as remedies against the shortcomings of more structurally-oriented approaches (see, for example, Journal of Development Studies 42/7). But, in general, the research community seems to have firmly brushed aside the challenges posed by post-development ideas and is back to normal, instead producing papers on poverty, on security, failed states and migration, but also on environmental, educational and various economic topics, from foreign direct investment to information technologies. Even industrialisation has made a comeback (see Development and Change 36/6). Indeed, in the case of many Asian devel-

opment journals, it has never ceased to be a central issue. Here, development is still widely equated with raising productivity.

This is not the only instance where it seems that we go round in circles. More than 30 years ago, Paul Streeten (1974), in a seminal article, asked similar questions and articulated similar concerns to those being voiced in this issue of *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik*. He complained about the fast-changing fashions in development research, called upon scholars to transcend narrow disciplinary confines while at the same time acknowledging the difficulties with interdisciplinarity, rejected the notion that Development Studies was nothing more than the 'soft underbelly' of economics, and addressed the problem of how development knowledge was being produced, who was financing it and to what extent it was falling prey to 'intellectual imperialism'. Streeten's text is an effective antidote against any exaggerated nostalgia for the 'good old times' of Development Studies, but at the same time it is quite sobering to realize how many of the issues raised by him are still unresolved and how many new items have since been added to our intellectual 'to do' list.

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 12-27

Henry Bernstein

The Antinomies of Development Studies

This commentary suggests some antinomies of Development Studies that generate various tensions: those intrinsic to it as a field rather than a discipline and as a field constituted, or at least justified, by moral purpose; tensions between the demands of and for theoretical knowledge on one hand, applied and useful knowledge on the other; and tensions generated by the pressures to adhere to 'win-win' solutions in a world of savage contradictions, and to devise the means to deliver them in ways that are 'politically supportable'.

1. Introducing Development Studies

Development Studies is a strange academic creation. We who work in it may forget this as we go about our routines: designing and teaching courses; conducting independent or contracted research; lobbying our universities for resources, and government and aid agencies for consultancy contracts and research funding; cultivating connections with aid donors and perhaps NGOs; writing policy-oriented reports, and articles and books for academic audiences; participating in conferences, and the like. At the same time, as we know, much development research is not done in Development Studies departments or institutes but in the main social science disciplines in universities – economics, sociology, anthropology, politics, international relations, and also in history and law, for example – and outside universities by consultancy companies (the heavy hitters of contract research).

This means that our activities can be permeated, with greater or lesser intensity and insecurity, by a protective stance towards Development Studies as an academic specialism of recent provenance and uncertain intel-

lectual identity. In addition to the porousness of its boundaries, it is a field of almost infinite scope that includes everything from international economic relations and the politics of global governance to, say, micro-credit schemes for urban women or new cash crops – in short, everything that can affect the livelihoods and prospects of poorer people in poorer countries. This can generate great intellectual challenges, and with them a sense of excitement, but in practice it might not be conducive to intellectual coherence or innovation, nor necessarily to a clear sense of political purpose or, indeed, a clear conscience.

2. Introducing Myself (Sort of)

I was flattered to be invited by the *Austrian Journal of Development Studies* to reflect on my experiences in Development Studies. I replied that I am not comfortable with the (auto)biographical or 'confessional' mode of expression, and also noted that 'it was my friend Uma Kothari who persuaded me to write about Development Studies for publication for the first time ever' – an essay on 'Development Studies and the Marxists' that I contributed to her collection, *A Radical History of Development Studies* (Bernstein 2005). This was followed by a piece in a *Festschrift* for Bill Freund, in which I contrasted what I called the 'great tradition' of studying development – beginning with the political economy of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and exemplified in Freund's work as a historian of modern Africa – and the much more recent academic creature known as Development Studies (Bernstein 2006).

At least, I thought that I had only recently, and belatedly, committed to print some reflections on Development Studies. Subsequently, I was searching for the text of a speech by Martin Nicolaus (the translator into English of Marx's *Grundrisse*), which I tracked down in *Counter Course*, a 'handbook for course criticism' published as a Penguin Education Special in 1972. When I dusted off and opened the book, there – between Ernest Mandel on *The Changing Role of the Bourgeois University* and Nicolaus's *Sociology Liberation Movement* – I uncovered a piece I had written, and forgotten, entitled *The Institute, the Ministry and the State Corporation* (Bernstein 1972). This is an account of an incident of government pres-

sure on the recently established Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex (IDS) where I was employed briefly in 1969-1970, which also served as a vehicle for some reflections on the nature of Development Studies. So, memory restored, that account provides an early marker of the course of one individual's academic career in (and out of) Development Studies, during which I benefited greatly from formative periods as teacher and researcher in Turkey and Tanzania in the 1970s and in South Africa since 1990.

3. That Was Then, This Is Now…

Rather more significantly, the decades between then and now, so lightly flagged, saw massive changes that included the demise of development as a state-led project supported, if sometimes uneasily, by Western aid agencies in the context of superpower rivalry between the USA and the USSR for allies in the Third World; the advent of contemporary 'globalisation', by which I mean the restructuring of capital on a world scale, arising from a general crisis of accumulation and generating new forms of concentration, centralisation, organisation and mobility (and 'financialisation') of capital; the rise to dominance of neo-liberalism, which I distinguish from globalisation (a new phase of capitalist world economy) as a political and ideological project to promote the freedoms of capital and restrict those of labour; and, of course, the end of state socialism registered in both the implosion of the economies of the former Soviet Union and the extraordinary dynamism of the 'capitalist road' in China and Vietnam.

The consequences of such massive historical changes affect the conditions and agendas of intellectual production in development research as in the social sciences more generally, not least for those on the political left, where I locate myself. To recall the debates about the Soviet Union and once socialist China, to recall Mandel's major contributions and Nicolaus's *enragé* address at the 1968 convention of the American Sociological Association, and even to talk of the Third World, feels like evoking memories of a distant rather than recent past. So too does the suggestion of a '"labour-friendly" (for rich countries) and "development-friendly" (for poor countries) interna-

tional regime established under US hegemony' during the 1950s and 1960s (Silver/Arrighi 2000: 55) – at least 'friendly' relative to what followed.

4. Development Studies: Some Pre-history

Development Studies, as we know it, was established in the context of independence from colonial rule in most of Asia and Africa and the associated aspirations to 'national' development (shared with Latin America). Its trajectory can be traced, if schematically, through two principal moments of its career to date. The first is the more heroic moment of its founding: 'heroic' because of the formative experiences of its intellectual founding figures, including the great depression of the 1930s, the defeat of fascism and the end of colonial imperialism, and their sense of world-historical possibilities presented by a range of capitalist and socialist options and reforms. The second is the subsequent turn to neo-liberalism that gathered from the 1980s, the powerful political and ideological forces that generated it and its effects for intellectual production, not least in areas of policy-relevant research.

Evidently, the founding moment of Development Studies can not be understood outside an adequate 'pre-history', so to speak, which encompasses the dramatic and contradictory formation of the modern world. That includes how people located in the different times and places of its world-historical processes sought to make sense of them, and the effects of their attempts to do so for political projects that generated many variants of the overarching ideologies of modernity and 'development': liberalism and populism, nationalism and socialism. They also include the intellectual paradigms constructed to explain the formation of the modern world from classical political economy onwards, and to address its disorders and dangers, from the preoccupation with social regulation at the core of classical sociology to understanding 'non-Western' cultures and governing colonial peoples, which stimulated the development of anthropology.

In a work of notably subversive intent and effect, Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton (1996) argued that the provenance of today's 'doctrines of development' was in the social upheavals of the heartlands of early indus-

trial capitalism, whence they were rapidly extended and applied to the tasks of governing/'civilising' the peoples of vast colonial empires. A fundamental element of their argument, and one strategic to now as then, is that 'Development was the means by which progress would be subsumed by order' (Cowen/Shenton 1995: 34).

5. Field vs Discipline

The justification of Development Studies as an academic field is that it is dedicated *and* equipped to generate *applied* knowledge in the design and implementation of policies and interventions to stimulate economic growth and overcome poverty and deprivation. The intellectual resources and historical experiences it could draw on to define and meet the challenges of this charter in its founding moment came from very different places, intellectually and ideologically, and hence made for a very mixed bag.

There was a strong strain of Keynesian ideas that fed into a characteristically structuralist development economics and a widely acknowledged need for macroeconomic planning and management to achieve economic growth in poor countries. There were models of political modernisation, centred on the problematic of progress 'subsumed by order' in a now hegemonic US imperialism (mostly) without colonies, confronting revolutionary upheavals in the Third World and the threat of communism. There were elements inherited from social policy in European capitalism and from the administration of late colonial development regimes, with numbers of former colonial officials recruited for Development Studies, notably in Britain, France and the Netherlands. The skills they were deemed to bring to this new field provide an early illustration of the tension between 'practicality' and intellectual vision and rigour (and perhaps in this specific instance between continuity and change too). There were also various traditions of anthropology and other colonial science, like that of the dynamics and management of tropical environments.

Despite aspirations to 'interdisciplinarity', all this could not amount to any coherent intellectual approach although, as so often, some of its ideas might serve different ideological agendas more or less effectively: for example, modernisation theories or W.W. Rostow's 'non-communist mani-

festo' for economic growth, or models of land use management in the tropics (with their demographic calculus), of 'community development' or 'responsible' trade unionism. If there was a more plausible paradigm in this *mélange*, it was structuralist development economics with its typically social democratic (and nationalist?) inspiration. However, this remained a disciplinary approach, albeit intellectually more expansive than conventional neo-classical economics. Structuralist development economics was, in some respects, an 'institutional' economics – at its best open to issues of class and power and of the historical formation of economic structures (for Latin America, see Kay 1989; and for India, see Byres 1998) – but in a radically different sense to today's 'new institutionalism', a branch of neo-classical economics that, more generally, has displaced development economics in the moment of neo-liberalism.

My colleague Ben Fine argues that the 'new' neo-classical development economics 'is silent over the social relations, structures, power, conflicts and meanings that have traditionally been the preoccupation of the social sciences. This is especially important for development studies' (2002: 2066). '[D]evelopment as a process as well as a field of study is reduced to market and nonmarket imperfections' (Fine 2002: 2065), with 'noneconomic or nonmarket behavior […] now understood as the rational, i.e. individual optimizing behavior, response to market imperfections' (Fine 2002: 2059). In short, '[t]he social is the nonmarket response to market imperfections', a construction of 'the social' that marks a new frontier and phase in the intellectual 'imperialism' of neo-classical economics (Fine 2002: 2060).

Here are some tricky questions that bear on the tensions of field vs discipline. Can courses in Development Studies substitute for a rigorous training in an established social science discipline? How many development thinkers and researchers of note had their formation in Development Studies rather than a discipline? Is it not the social science disciplines that generate theoretical innovations which might then be absorbed into Development Studies (for example, ideas concerning globalisation, state failure, gender relations and patriarchy, social capital), as well as some of the most trenchant critiques of development doctrine in theory and practice? Otherwise, the objects of development research and policy are often constituted through practical rather than theoretical concepts, especially at the 'soft' end, which I will come back to.

6. Moral Currency

If 'field vs discipline' is a source of tension specific (albeit not unique) to Development Studies, and one that underlies its tenuous intellectual identity, another source of tension is its claims to moral purpose. Its charter centres on objectives which all people of good will are obliged to support. However, when virtually every government and international agency constantly proclaims its humanitarian commitment to ending poverty and extreme deprivation, and to extending freedom, the moral currency of 'development talk' is easily debased and for a simple and familiar reason: those powerful institutions that 'do' development may be considered part of the problem rather than the solution, especially in the current moment of globalisation and neo-liberalism.

Neo-liberal ideology strives both to establish itself as the unchallenged common sense of the epoch and to subsume the development of poorer countries and people in a grandiose project of social engineering that amounts to establishing bourgeois civilisation on a global scale. Its prescription of comprehensive market reform requires similarly comprehensive state reform; in turn, the pursuit of 'good governance' quickly extends to, and embraces, notions of the construction and management of 'civil society' – in short, the reshaping, or transformation, of political and social (and, by implication, cultural) as well as economic institutions and practices.

By way of illustration, here are several effects of this dynamic. Neo-liberal analysis replaces an earlier 'public interest' view of the state, assumed by the former commitment to development planning, with a 'private interest' view centred on the rent-seeking behaviour of politicians and bureaucrats (Mackintosh 1992). However, it exempts from any such scrutiny the aid and other foreign policies of 'Northern' governments, and the practices of international donor agencies (preeminently the World Bank), which are held to manifest a disinterested humanitarian intent (or, in slightly more sophisticated terms, enlightened self-interest). The credo of development aid remains that 'we are doing this to help you' (because you can not help yourselves).

Second, and linked, is that the substance (rather than the rhetoric) of development purpose and design becomes ever more 'depoliticised' and technified when it assumes a consensus of all those of good heart and sound

mind. The declarations that economic growth will be assured, poverty overcome, 'civil society' and social capital strengthened, and sound democracies established, if only the right reforms are implemented and the right policies pursued – in short, that all is possible here and now in the best of all potential worlds – represent a regression from the earlier moment of development discourse noted above. Then, it was not unusual for a reactionary realism to be explicit about its 'non-' (or anti-) communist intent; to recommend 'modernising elites', including military ones, to oversee a necessary transitional phase of progress with (authoritarian) order; and to deploy other notions of historical sequence, in however attenuated a manner, as in Rostow's 'stages of economic growth'.

Third, I would suggest that the hegemonic reach of neo-liberalism as 'a high modernism of the right' (Therborn 2007: 76) partly explains the articulation and appeal of 'anti-' (or 'post-') development ideas. This is an example of the familiar mirror image effect of ideological confrontation: the ('high modernist') fantasy of a global bourgeois civilisation open to all is countered by the rejection of modernity *tout court* in an equally encompassing vision, similarly dialectically challenged, that pits a golden 'indigenous' past against an iniquitous global present, and hence advocates going 'back to the future'.

Finally, any moral currency based on intent requires its opposite, of course. The project of 'development', driven by the best of purposes, constructs its antagonistic others, driven by the worst. In a probably ascending register of criminality, the enemies of 'development', liberal peace and freedom comprise demagogic politicians, rent-seeking officials, and others who exemplify 'cronyism' (the corrupt), opponents of free trade and the unfettered mobility of capital (protectionists, anti-globalisation 'anarchists'), barbarous warlords ('theirs', not 'ours'), and international terrorists (of a certain religious complexion).

7. Theory and Practice

Michael Burawoy (2004) has written about the tensions between theoretical and practical knowledge in relation to the profession and practice of sociology – where they take the form of the reflexive and the instrumental,

the critical and the policy oriented –and suggested that these are tensions generic to social science, hence relevant to any of its disciplines. This is also the case with Development Studies, and perhaps in exaggerated fashion as they further compound the tensions of field vs discipline; a field, moreover, justified by its commitment to making a difference and its capacity to do so.

This is illustrated in entertaining fashion by two items that appeared in the same issue of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* – the 'trade paper' of the UK academy – of 24 November 2006. One was an advertisement for Research Fellows at the University of Manchester's new Brooks World Poverty Institute of which Joseph Stiglitz is Chair. The advertisment specified that 'Successful applicants will have a demonstrated capacity to conduct innovative and rigorous research that refines and extends our understanding of poverty, while also identifying *plausible and politically supportable* options for what might be done to reduce it' (my emphasis).

The other item was a review of a new book by Stiglitz (2006), that concluded 'In business jargon, he (Stiglitz) is great at talking the talk, less good at walking the walk. He is clearly a good man, and his heart is in the right place. Most of us sympathise with his objectives…so it seems churlish not to support his ideas for achieving them. But *his ideas are so so airy-fairy they cannot be taken seriously*' (my emphasis). In effect, this particular reviewer (Winston Fletcher, chairman of The Royal Institution) disqualifies Professor Stiglitz from holding a research position in the Institute that he adorns!

There are several, connected, issues at stake in this. The broadest, that extends beyond the boundaries of Development Studies, concerns the scope for positive (progressive) change within today's global capitalism, how to identify it, and the means of achieving it. This is where the demands of analysis, the design of policies and practical interventions, and the conditions of political possibility meet in various ways with various consequences. They may clash, converge or compromise, depending on the intellectual and political positions which inform them, and which in turn provide the substance of what are defined as practicable ('realistic') means to desirable ends – where Mr Fletcher disagrees so vehemently with Professor Stiglitz's proposals for 'the next steps to global justice'. This is also the terrain on which the art of the possible in development research and prescription meets

the exercise of power, both material and symbolic, hence where calculations are made of what are 'politically supportable options' for reducing poverty.

This is too large a theme to explore adequately here, but I note several aspects of its overarching problem(atic), which is at the heart of Development Studies. A fundamental question is: what produces and reproduces the poverty which development aims to overcome? One approach is relational: poverty is produced by social inequality, by the divisions of class, gender, ethnicity, nation, and so on, that make up the actually existing worlds of capitalism, large and small. The relational approach goes back to the origins of social science but, as so often in Development Studies, it apparently requires a 'new' concept, or at least name, to stake a discursive claim: in this instance, that of 'adverse incorporation' (in markets) – as if the uneven history of capitalism on a world scale is not inscribed in the 'adverse incorporation' of many, perhaps most, who experienced it and continue to experience it.

Another approach is residual: poverty is an effect of the 'exclusion' of certain types of people from the benefits of (capitalist) development: small farmers, women, 'minority' groups, the 'informally' self-employed, those with insufficient human and social capital. The residual approach to poverty prevails in the official discourses and agendas of the big agencies that 'do' development, with two key policy aspects: to promote the conditions of economic growth and to 'empower' those otherwise excluded to share in its labours and rewards. These two aspects manifest the places and character of theoretical and applied knowledge in development in a rather different fashion than their parallel tensions in sociology traced by Burawoy, and one that expresses a particular pathos of Development Studies today. On one hand, the dominant paradigm is that of (neo-classical) economics (not usually known for its critical or reflexive qualities). It is regarded as *both* the only theoretical paradigm of any rigour *and* the exclusive intellectual instrument for dealing with issues of economic growth: the irreducibly 'hard' side of development policy, hence the business of politically powerful agencies and highly trained technical cadres.

On the other hand, dealing with the poor is the 'soft' side of development intervention: ameliorative, makeshift, faddish, experiential, outsourced to NGOs and 'community' organisations, with few theoretical credentials (if any) although some formation in 'people'-centred disciplines

– anthropology, sociology, social psychology – may be deemed useful. In a typically provocative essay, Pablo Idahosa and Bob Shenton (2006) suggest affinities between this and the history of social work. They note the disproportionate numbers of women taking university courses in Development Studies (in Canada), the 'soft' side of which – helping the poor – assimilates it to more established and similarly gendered 'caring professions'.

The asymmetries of these hierarchical divisions of labour in development work are, in part, explicable by the logic of residual approaches, for which poverty can only be caused by obstacles to the proper functioning of markets, the (entrepreneurial?) inadequacies of some categories of market actors, or 'exclusion' from markets due to negative ('irrational'?) non-market social and cultural 'institutions'. They are also partly explicable by the fact that any (radical) redistribution is no more a 'politically supportable' option today than a central role for the state in stimulating and managing accumulation (both of which were central tenets of much structuralist development economics). Asymmetry is compounded for another reason: while anthropologists or sociologists are not called on to design macroeconomic policy, contemporary 'economics imperialism' (as above) extends its ambitions to the explanation of social phenomena once regarded as the province of other disciplines and approaches. This can create a new and perverse sense of 'interdisciplinarity' in development research when sociologists and political scientists adopt the theoretical framework of neo-classical economics, including its fundamental methodological individualism, and seek to apply its techniques, for example, in modelling 'institutions' and 'social capital'.

8. Win-win Solutions

The various antinomies suggested converge in the commitment to 'win-win' policy solutions that envisage a world where poverty can be ended without threatening existing sources and forms of wealth, and similarly deprivation without threatening privilege and social inequality. Or, in somewhat different terms, the interests of classes of labour are advanced without significantly regulating, let alone threatening, those of capital. The effect is that such constrained notions of what is 'politically supportable' marginalise or displace investigation and understanding of the sources, dynamics

and effects of typically savage social inequality in 'the South', and of no less savage relations of power and inequality in the circuits of the world economy. It elides consideration of the often violent social upheavals and struggles that characterise the processes *and* outcomes of the uneven development of capitalism.

In short, the drive for 'win-win solutions' is a route to intellectual restriction (and possibly self-censorship) in a world of such contradictions. Its inevitable frustration in part explains the continuous succession of new development concepts, targets, and programmes, the 'novelty' of which is more to do with political expedience than the progress of ideas of any substance, theoretical or practical. 'Win-win solutions' impose an impossible burden on those charged with delivering on them, which connects with the current proliferation of schemes and interventions on the 'soft' side of development work. Frustration can lead to another type of pathos, illustrated in the conclusion of the IFAD *Rural Poverty Report 2001*. There it notes what it terms the 'paradox' of 'an ambitious target for (rural) poverty alleviation with fewer resources to achieve it' (IFAD 2001: 232). The *Report* claims that the conditions of a win-win solution exist, namely that the knowledge of how to overcome rural poverty (through market-friendly reform) is available *and* recognised by governments and aid donors which, however, remain reluctant to act on it. Alas, no explanation of this 'paradox' is forthcoming.

9. Critique and Its Limits

Readers may feel that these broad observations present too uniform, as well as gloomy, a picture that denies the diversity of what goes on in Development Studies. It is impossible to present a complete description and assessment of that diversity nor, I presume, was the intention of inviting me to contribute some thoughts to make Development Studies academics feel good about ourselves. Diversity of research agendas, interests and approaches is healthy in itself, but less so when 'diversity' serves as a euphemism that covers disconnection and intellectual shapelessness. In any case, the specific coordinates of diversity, in both its positive and negative (euphemistic) senses, in different Development Studies departments and institutes

are produced by many proximate, sometimes idiosyncratic, factors. There are some departments in which a reflexive and critical stance on the business of development thrives; there are others (increasingly so?) where success is defined, and perhaps enforced, as the ability to secure contract research and consultancies from the agencies that 'do' development, hence to 'talk their talk' and play by their rules. Many are happy to do so, and indeed it is a vital ingredient of their professional identity.

What my observations have largely by-passed is the key political (and existential) issue of the 'room for manoeuvre', that is, of the positioning and practices, collective and individual, of those critical of the dominant ideological tendencies of development doctrine and of the powerful forces that promote them. This is a matter of the spaces available, or that can be 'captured' or created, *within* the discursive and practical fields of dominant development agencies (and not least their funding practices) to articulate alternative ideas and courses of action – in effect to push against, and try to shift, the limits of the 'politically supportable'. And those who pursue 'room for manoeuvre' may do so from a very different politics – of identification, actual or vicarious, with various currents and movements of opposition to the development 'project' (or projects) of global capitalism like, say, *Via Campesina* or the World Social Forum or a host of other less high-profile organisations and struggles.

If dominant notions of the 'politically supportable' constitute one kind of limit, the work of critique runs into another. Such critique can be found within Development Studies today as well as (more significantly) outside it. As might be expected, it embraces a wide range of currents – including various strands and combinations of nationalist, populist and deconstructionist elements – on various sites of contestation, and with different degrees of intellectual coherence and depth. In a sense, the vitality of critique is assured but this is no ground for intellectual complacency that assumes, in Manichaean fashion, its virtue and innocence by contrast with neoliberal vice and guilt. Not only is such critique so diverse (again!) and often confused, but the strength of its fervour can manifest an underlying sense of impotence in the face of an apparently rampant global capitalism.

Furthermore, to the extent that it focuses on discourse, it can divert energies from the formidable analytical and empirical demands of investigating and explaining patterns of change within the uneven development of

global capitalism and how they affect different social classes and groups, as well as understanding and assessing the highly varied struggles their contradictions generate. If these demands can be pursued within the boundaries of Development Studies, then so much to the good: that is a far healthier indicator of its pluralism than an endeavour focussed solely on 'solutions' to poverty and extreme deprivation that are acceptable to the powers of this world.

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Abstracts

Development Studies in universities continues to flourish – and paradoxically so in a period of hegemonic neo-liberalism which seems to subvert key assumptions and commitments on which Development Studies was established as a field of academic attention, not long ago. The paper will examine this and other paradoxes in terms of the underlying tensions that generate them. On one hand, those tensions manifest different kinds of boundary issues: intellectually between Development Studies and the established disciplines (and traditions) on which it draws; practically and politically between the conventions (and conditions) of scholarly inquiry and the demands of agencies that 'do' development (governments, aid donors, various international organisations). On the other hand are issues of how tensions between instrumental and reflexive knowledge (as formulated by Michael Burawoy) are internalised within Development Studies, and with what effects.

Die Entwicklungsforschung an den Universitäten steht nach wie vor hoch im Kurs – und das in Zeiten neoliberaler Hegemonie. Dies ist umso paradoxer, als der Neoliberalismus zentrale Annahmen und Zielsetzungen zu untergraben scheint, mit denen die Entwicklungsforschung auf universitärem Terrain angetreten war. Der Aufsatz widmet sich diesem und anderen Paradoxa und beschäftigt sich dabei mit den zugrundeliegenden Widersprüchen. Einerseits äußern sich diese in Fragen der Abgrenzung: intellektuell zwischen der Entwicklungsforschung und den etablierten Disziplinen (und Traditionen), auf die sie sich stützt; praktisch und politisch zwischen den Konventionen (und Bedingungen) wissenschaftlicher Forschung und den Ansprüchen jener AkteurInnen, die Entwicklung „machen"

(Regierungen, Entwicklungshilfegeber, verschiedene internationale Organisationen). Andererseits geht es darum, wie und mit welchen Folgen sich das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen instrumentellem und reflexivem Wissen (wie Michael Burawoy es nannte) innerhalb der Entwicklungsforschung manifestiert.

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 28-44

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Geographies and Histories of Development

1. Introduction

What Development Studies is, has been subject to significant ongoing debate. In part, it is the multiple and contested theories, ideas and histories and their relationship to development policy and practice that makes the identity of development as a subject of study so complicated and disputed. However, as Smith (2007) writes, while Development Studies cannot be identified as a discrete academic discipline, there is a broad convergence amongst those in the 'community' around shared concerns and objectives. But, it is these collective and universalising goals that can also be problematic. With a development sensibility framed around a language of charity, empathy, humanitarianism and justice and developers seen primarily as having a positive role in alleviating poverty, it might appear irrefutable that motives are wholly noble. This assumption of noble intention and the overwhelming depiction of beneficence go a long way toward silencing a critical appraisal of development intervention and obscures relations of power. With its global institutions and 'experts', proclaimed commitments to universal justice and rights and concern for the distant 'other', the development industry might seem to exemplify cosmopolitanism but these representations conceal the power of the development industry to frame, translate, and represent others in a narrow repertoire of tropes supporting a broader neo-liberal project of capitalist modernity.

In this paper I present some thoughts on the ambivalences, contradictions and assumptions in Development Studies that raise a number of concerns I have with how the field writes and rehearses its history, and its future, and how we identify the object and subject of our study. In part, it is the use of foundational binaries, dichotomies and dualisms underpinning

development that reifies this history in a problematic way and constructs this subject. The paper examines the constraints, and possible ways forward, for creating a critical space to interrogate the ideologies and processes of globalisation and neo-liberalism that shape the context within which development now takes place and sustains global inequalities. I begin, as requested, with a personal note, which reflects some of the tensions within the field, on my involvement in Development Studies as a teacher and researcher.

2. A Personal History: The Early Days and After

'Every time I leave Dr. Kothari's lectures, I have to rewrite my notes to take out the bias. I get the impression that she is a communist.'

'We feel so proud to see an Indian teaching here at a British University – Dr Kothari, one of *our* people in such an important position.'

These quotes from students in my first year of teaching development highlight tensions around politics and identity within and surrounding the field of Development Studies. These revolve around the highly charged political issue of what constitutes knowledge and the related concern of who is regarded as the 'expert'.

I have a certain ambivalence towards Development Studies, partly based on the recognition that it tends to confirm the centrality of Western knowledge and power, a legacy that is often reinforced in the Third World through the continued existence of colonial institutions and education systems. I remain uncomfortable with the persistent belief that Western academia has the answers for the rest of the world and only by gaining access to education in the West can people from the Third World understand their own histories, societies and economies. The majority of students that I teach are from developing societies and for many of them, when I first began teaching, I did not fulfil their expectations of a teacher in Britain. They had come to gain 'expert knowledge' in their particular field, and, almost by definition, many of them perceived expert knowledge as advanced and imparted by white males. As Crewe and Harrison (1998) argued so lucidly, a most obvious distinction persists between those who are thought to possess expertise and

knowledge and those to whom it should be imparted, one that is based on who you are and where you come from rather than what you know. This discomforting relationship between knowledge and expertise is evident in my own experiences of working as a development consultant when 'local' agencies have been visibly disappointed when they realised that their expatriate consultant was not white (see Kothari 2005). This is reflective of what Ngugi calls the 'colonization of the mind' (1986) whereby for some formerly colonised people whiteness becomes associated with high cultural values and the West with modernity and progress.

In an attempt to address some of these and other concerns, my research has been characterised by critical, theoretical engagement and ethnographic research. It has developed historical analyses of international development using social theories to interrogate mainstream approaches and has developed methodologies for collecting and analysing life history narratives. Much of this research challenges colonial representations of Third World peoples and places through an analysis of 'race' and racism, an issue that underpins the theory and practice of development but has been largely invisible. Although I am not immediately comfortable with presenting my own autobiography, my research, rather unfairly, involves collecting other people's life histories, asking them about their lives in an attempt to understand dynamics of inequalities and relations between people and institutions. It is through the experiences of individuals that I believe we can gain insights into the ways in which we embody, reproduce and attempt to disrupt wider historical and social processes. For example, I have carried out research on relations between former colonisers and their colonies after independence, and how these find expression within and against contemporary discourses of Third World development. I also have longstanding research interests in migration, culture and identity, most recently critiquing conventional understandings of cosmopolitanism by demonstrating how transnational migrants embody new kinds of cosmopolitan identities. This research is contextualised not only within dominant development agendas but, more broadly, in the context of contemporary global shifts and restructuring.

The development industry is undoubtedly more diverse now than when I first began teaching development and, as Crush demonstrates, has extensive global reach, encompassing a vast range of institutions and individuals throughout the world, including a 'plethora of development studies

programmes in institutes of learning worldwide' (1995: 6). Although, as Cowen and Shenton note, development is one of the 'central organising concepts of our time' (1995: 27), the present development agenda is very much a practical and technocratic one set out in the programmes of major multilateral and bilateral aid donors. There have been efforts to reconceptualise the field leading, arguably, to some shifts in perspective by practitioners in relation to, for example, participation, gender and environmental sustainability, but these represent only minor adjustments. While we concern ourselves with refining this or that policy, framework and methodology, keeping pace with the ever-changing fads and fashions and acquiring the new sets of language, tools and professionals that go with them, the neo-liberal restructuring of the global economy with all its attendant inequalities continues unabated. So, although the World Bank and other major development actors may appear to accommodate different views of what should constitute development, they give active support to a particular, capitalist-friendly, neo-liberal version.

Engendered by this neo-liberalism, development is becoming increasingly depoliticised, glossing over critical social divisions and inequalities and beset with contradictions over its goals and the means to achieve them (Bernstein 2005). Samir Amin highlighted some of these contradictions when he remarked at a conference in Oslo recently that government departments of international development are behaving irrationally and struggling ineffectively to alleviate poverty since they are part of, and play a role in sustaining, the same system that creates it. Herein lies a key problem of development and how we study it; that the contemporary development agenda can only be understood and realised within a global neo-liberal framework.

3. Interdisciplinarity and the Theory/Practice Divide

An ongoing debate that has implications for how we understand and create spaces to challenge the neo-liberal development agenda, is how we strive towards interdisciplinarity within Development Studies and indeed whether or not this is a goal worth pursuing. There is a paradox here as there are dangers with, as well as advantages to, adopting interdisciplinarity. I have three academic degrees, each in a different discipline, ranging from

an undergraduate in Geography, a Masters in History and a PhD in Sociology. I teach Development Studies but there are practical and political limitations, as I show below, to critiquing and challenging the orthodoxy from within the field. For example, my research on the colonial legacy of development was theoretically grounded upon debates within postcolonial studies as Development Studies did not provide the relevant tools nor would it be possible to challenge the discipline's history from within. More recently, research with migrant street traders was analysed using literature on mobility, migration, identity and cosmopolitanism, as these were not as well developed in Development Studies as in other social science disciplines.

The intellectual conflicts that typify Development Studies, in part engendered by its multidisciplinarity, can be useful in keeping critical debate alive and, importantly, ensuring that radical strands do not become subsumed within a discipline increasingly characterised by a neo-classical economics and neo-liberal agenda. There is already ample evidence that shows how critical, challenging and emancipatory discourses are co-opted into the mainstream, becoming enmeshed in a neo-liberal developmentalist frame in the process of their incorporation. For example, feminist discourses become technicalised and transmute into gender frameworks and planning tools, and thus lose their radical edge as they become part of the development orthodoxy. Interestingly, when in 1988 Leeson called for efforts to construct a more cohesive interdisciplinary perspective, he was minded to stress that the role played by Marxism in Development Studies should not 'cause nervous colleagues to have sleepless nights.' (41). The neo-liberal turn has shifted the politics of the debate, reframing it so that the antagonisms and conflicts within Development Studies today are understood less as those between Marxist and non-Marxist but are instead most evident in the economics/non-economics divide.

Development Studies is clearly a hybrid subject, producing texts that contribute to economic, political, sociological, anthropological and geographical analysis. In an attempt to distinguish the field by creating a separate academic discipline, Development Studies has been shaped around certain theoretical positions borrowed from other disciplines and placed along a historical time-line producing a trajectory that has become the means by which we define the subject. Perhaps it has been easier for Development Studies to develop planning and managing approaches for devel-

opment interventions and to create new practical frameworks that can be applied to concepts such as civil society and social capital, borrowed from other disciplines, rather than create new interdisciplinary theories.

Besides these discussions surrounding the extent and the benefits, or otherwise, of interdisciplinarity, the tension around the theory/practice divide remains unresolved in Development Studies. I suggest that the debate could more usefully be reframed to focus on the political relevance of Development Studies and the relationship between academic research and public engagement as a means of rethinking analyses of power relations. These are questions raised by Carey (1989), who argued that the struggle of the critical researcher is not only to make their scholarship meaningful and intelligible but also to assert its 'public significance'. He suggests that an important role of the critical intellectual is to contribute to the constant expansion of the field of reference of academic work, to contribute to an enlarged international interpretive community, and to the elaboration of a public/democratic discourse on the most important issues of historical and contemporary life. Within sociology, Burawoy (2004) explores this disciplinary division of labour and identifies four interdependent and complementary sociologies – policy, professional, critical and public. His matrix contrasts different audiences and different forms of knowledge and suggests that professional and policy work are primarily instrumental forms of knowledge while critical and public fields are reflexive forms of knowledge. Applying these analyses to Development Studies could provide a useful starting point for identifying and appreciating the interconnectedness of the diverse range of activities, and perspectives, that come under its rubric and foregrounding their political relevance.

4. Distorted Histories and Foreclosed Futures

'Essentially it [Colonial Studies] was concerned with the policy and practice of ruling subject peoples who were mainly of a darker colour and mostly lived in the tropics.' (Killingray 2000: 41)

'The past is rarely over and done with but haunts the present.' (Said 1993: 1)

While the multidisciplinary and theory/practice debates continue to unfold, a key issue for me is how Development Studies defines and sets the limits of its field. It was some of my colleagues in a Development Studies institute that raised concerns over how development constructs its history and field of study. Changes brought about by political independence in former colonies led many of those employed in the British Colonial Office to leave Africa and Asia and find employment back in the UK. Amongst those embarking on second careers were a group of individuals who found employment in the newly emerging and rapidly expanding international development industry in the UK where they are (or were until retirement) involved in teaching Development Studies, devising policies to address issues of Third World development and carrying out research and consultancy work for multi-lateral, bi-lateral and non-governmental organisations. I was now working amongst some of these former colonial officers, who clearly embodied continuities and changes over time, which led me to look into the colonial legacy of development and explore how it finds expression within contemporary policies and discourses of development.

Despite the recognition, in disciplines such as anthropology and geography, of an historical trajectory that links colonialism to development, understanding this interconnectedness is not a mainstream preoccupation within Development Studies. Instead, much research and teaching in Development Studies tends to pick out 1945 as the key year in which development was initiated with the establishment of the World Bank and other Bretton Woods institutions. With a few notable exceptions, such as Crush (1995) and Slater (1995), the history of development often rehearsed in research and teaching has tended towards a compartmentalisation of clearly bounded, successive periods characterised by specific theoretical hegemonies (see Hettne 1995; Preston 1996 for examples of this). Thus they begin with economic growth and modernisation theories, move on to discuss ‚underdevelopment' theories, neo-liberalism and the (Post-)Washington Consensus and culminate in current thinking around globalisation and security. This epochal historicisation obscures both the colonial genealogies of development and historical continuities in the theory and practice of development.

Although there are ongoing critiques of development, this limited historical analysis in much orthodox Development Studies reveals the

largely unreflexive and future-oriented nature of the discipline, partly engendered through the imperative to achieve development goals and targets such as the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, there has been a perceived imperative within Development Studies to effectively distance development thought and practice from the contemporary negativity surrounding Britain's imperial history. This concealment of a colonial past creates and maintains a dichotomy between a colonialism that is 'bad', exploitative and oppressive and a development that is 'good', moralistic and humanitarian. In this way, development is cast as a universally 'good thing', although it is ridden with paradoxes. One former colonial administrator whom I interviewed indicates this social distancing from colonialism when he said, 'It was necessary to present oneself as a new kind of Brit, not like those gin guzzling, idle, red faced colonial chaps.'

The past in Development Studies is a contested historiography, but the future is also problematically framed. Development, a term used to both describe processes of change and to offer a normative framework to guide change, is an idea, an objective and an activity that provides a modernist vision of the future. Projections of where we are, where we should be going, and how we move from one set of circumstances to another are predetermined in ways that foreclose the future. The practice of development depends on notions of progress that assume universal trajectories of development in which certain people and places are left behind and have to be brought into modernity through development interventions (Ferguson 2006). Such assumptions are founded on Western epistemologies in philosophy and social theory that establish the categorical split between past, present and future as distinct kinds of time. The future then, is predictable, ordered and regulated; it is pre-empted and foreclosed through formal planning procedures that assume modernisation in various forms as the ultimate end point. It is exemplified through the targets and future scenarios of major development agencies that can be achieved through the adoption of a particular set of policy prescriptions and planning instruments that impose a predicted future within a short timeframe and with known outcomes. The World Bank's influential *Voices of the Poor* study (Narayan et al. 2000), reinforces this when it concludes that the poor need to change in order to fit in with a future which is already known and aspired to for them. Such perspectives, and the policies that stem from them, ignore the steps and strategies

that people use to imagine and realise their own futures or, as Appadurai puts it, their capacity to aspire (2004).

The implications of this way of thinking are profound, namely that universal history, and inclusion within it, is about progression towards the modern in the context of capitalist development.

5. Making the Field: The Time, Place and Subject of Development Studies

So how does Development Studies mark out the boundaries that define and delimit its field of teaching and research? I suggest that the overarching framework within which this demarcation takes place, and that essentialises much development thinking, is based on spatial and temporal distinctions and distancing, between the 'here and now' of the West and the 'there and then' of the Third World.

If we take the geographical notion of 'over there', development is what happens in other distant places to other distant people. As Humble and Smith (2007) write, what counts as research in Development Studies is almost entirely defined in terms of working in and on the 'South', 'developing' or 'Third World', terms that act as a shorthand for global distinctions between people and places. The project of development is founded upon these politically charged identities and the industry, that is becoming increasingly professionalised, relies for its survival on setting up boundaries around its experts, organisations and approaches.

Development is premised on a complex and contested set of opposites and dualisms. Most significantly, the idea of development is based on the assumption that some people and places are less developed than others (Parpart 1995). Subsequently, at the outset, it depends upon the identification of a subject, the poor and marginalised recipients of interventions, as distinct from those who are developed and can legitimately bestow ideas about modernity, progress, morality and civility. It also demarcates their geographical location and the societies in which they live. Thus, dichotomies are foundational to relations of international aid, institutions of development and discourses of intervention, beginning with the pre-eminent distinctions between developed and underdeveloped and 'First' and

'Third' worlds. These are mapped onto other distinctions in which progress, for example, is conceived as a shift from the traditional to the modern, or as Shanin puts it, 'a movement from badness to goodness and from mindlessness to knowledge' (1997: 65). These spatial (first and third world) and ideological (modern and traditional) binaries provide the rationale and justification for the practice of some people intervening to develop others and thus also shape those who give assistance and those who must be grateful for it. In order to begin to understand these forms of global distinctions we need to ascertain how certain people and places came to exemplify cultural adaptability, political competency and modernity while other people in other places became the symbol of cultural inflexibility, political dysfunction and underdevelopment (see Grovogui 2001). Said (1978) addressed this need when he identified an ongoing dialectical process whereby the representations of other people and places shape not only how non-European societies came to be 'known' but how Europe constructs itself in contradistinction to them. Stuart Hall (1996) meanwhile, employs the 'West and the rest' idiom to reflect the power dynamics embedded within these divisions. It is through these processes that the Third World becomes analytically separate and isolated, as if disconnected from global processes.

So development takes place 'over there' but is also embedded in notions of temporality (contemporary and old; present and past) concerned as it is with transformation over time. A history of development is not simply about what events took place in the past, the charting of a historical trajectory of dominant ideas and approaches, but also how the past is imagined and mapped onto other places in the present. As Hartley (1953) famously wrote: 'the past is another country, they do things differently there'. This thinking is evident in representations of the Third World and those in, and of it as backward and traditional and thus existing in a relational past to the West's modern present. When framing the past time of the Third World the West is simultaneously constructing itself as in the present, thus providing Third World countries with an image of the kind of future to which they can aspire. Development Studies is implicated in this process of temporal distancing and Western development professionals become prophetic time travellers – confronting the past when they visit Third World countries but also able to see their future in the image of their own societies.

I do not wish to deny that there have been attempts to unsettle and challenge the boundaries and borders of development and the categories these construct, as well as to see other people as our contemporaries. But, while some of these do disrupt the centrality of the West and the power of the development professional, others have ambivalent and contradictory effects, appearing to break down global hierarchies but in so doing effectively concealing the workings of power. For example, participatory approaches to development are conventionally represented as emerging out of the recognition of the shortcomings of top-down development approaches and the hierarchical distinction between local and expert knowledge. To address these and the ineffectiveness of externally imposed and expert-oriented forms of research and planning, participatory approaches encourage greater beneficiary involvement in shaping decisions that affect them. Ironically, however, these approaches can confirm, rather than challenge, power relations. Their public and consensus-building nature offers opportunities for dominant groups or people in authority to influence public opinion as their private interests become 'officialised' by incorporation in the 'community consensus', and for development agencies to gain support for predetermined agendas as they continue to influence the outcomes of participatory research, primarily through their control over the finances. Another example of how binaries have been dismantled with contradictory results is evident in changing terminologies. Through a moral and politically correct lens, the label 'Third World' now appears derogatory and is being replaced by the apparently more neutral and acceptable 'South' as distinct from the 'North'. Of course global hierarchies are not transformed nor do they simply disappear by changing appellations despite this attempt to conceal, mute and blur these and to enable middle class Europeans to feel better about themselves.

While I have argued against establishing dichotomies and boundaries that reinforce inequalities, there are distinctions that need to be brought into sharper focus but are very rarely invoked in development. Most obviously in Development Studies, though also in other disciplines, we rarely investigate and explain the interconnectedness of wealth creation and capital accumulation, and the causes of poverty and its dynamics. Instead, we focus on 'the poor' as the problem, positioned in abstraction from the rich, as though the causes, dynamics and consequences of their poverty take place outside of structural inequalities. In Development Studies we need

to consider more centrally how poverty and the experiences of the poor and marginalised can be understood in the context of capital accumulation and global restructuring and the extent to which economic growth and inequality may be incompatible goals of development. In Development Studies we cannot properly investigate the interplay between the powerful and the powerless without instating a crucial binary – that between, put simply, the rich and the poor.

Postcolonial approaches are useful in understanding global power and privilege over time, as they critically engage with, and resist, the variety of ways in which the West produces knowledge about other people in other places. Postcolonial studies are more central to discussions within literary criticism, history and art and are beginning to be taken more seriously in sociology, cultural studies and geography but have only recently, and partially, been identified in the development literature (see Sylvester 1999). These studies interrogate the hegemonic understandings of space, history, subjectivities and progress that continue to be played out in various ways in international development and thus can take us some way to addressing the issues identified above (see Slater and Bell 2002).

6. Moving On

I am aware that the discussion above may appear to be overwhelmingly negative, pessimistic and universalising. There are of course multiple and conflicting political positions within development and important ongoing discursive critiques within, and outside of, the field, as well as grounded empirical research that identifies the various distorted effects of globalisation generally and development interventions more specifically. Effective though these can be, they tend to be limited to offering solutions to prescribed development problems for predetermined groups of non-modern people in other places. Confined to the realm of acceptable critique, they tinker around at the edges, refining this or that tool, technique or policy, resulting in limited methodological revisionism rather than a wholesale questioning of what has become acceptable in an increasingly rigid and all encompassing neo-liberalism. These critiques keep within the limits of the discourse as it is currently framed, thus confirming and supporting the continuation of

the neo-liberal project. As I wrote in an article for a special issue of Antipode on 'Working the Spaces of Neo-Liberalism', in part, it is the increasing professionalisation of the development industry that has exacerbated the depoliticisation of development and the atheoretical perspective of much development discourse. Development is now primarily limited to a technical process of intervention that maintains the legitimacy of a nonlinear notion of modernising progress and limits the effectiveness of critical voices and contesting discourses through their conscription into neo-liberal practices (Kothari 2005a).

Those of us in Development Studies who are critical of mainstream development and its complicity with the neo-liberal project need to uncover ways in which critical voices can be more effective in creating spaces to challenge the orthodoxy. One way perhaps is to engage more with discussions and debates that are pertinent to development but tend to take place outside the discourse, such as David Harvey's 'accumulation through dispossession' (2005). Clearly, neo-liberal policies are not only economic but extend to and effect social, cultural and political processes, including access to rights and justice and individual and collective dispossession. What does development have to say about these and other politically charged issues, such as processes of dispossession and the experiences of the dispossessed, the relationship between structural causes of poverty and wealth creation and racist immigration laws that increasingly restrict the mobility of some while encouraging that of others? At an empirical level, we need to extend our understanding and analysis of the actions, networks and relations of those whose everyday lives reflect global inequalities, those who are dispossessed and their attempts to rework the spaces of their marginality and vulnerability, and who imagine and work to realise futures other than those prescribed.

Critical spaces to address the dilemmas of representations of other people and places identified above could also be encouraged through challenging the assumed moral sensibility and superiority of many within the development industry. The development industry has an assumed cosmopolitanism inherent in its North-South connections and redistributive ethos of care for distant strangers. Many development practitioners assume that they are classic cosmopolitans in being able to observe and translate between cultures and contexts as they travel to many places and confront different

kinds of people. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that they possess a set of skills that allows them to negotiate and understand diversity, nor does it engender an understanding of how difference is commodified within a discourse obsessed with labelling to differentiate between different places and peoples. Indeed, the increasing professionalisation of agents of development intervention produces a kind of techno-cosmopolitan, one who has greater allegiance and commitment to their profession and its institutions than to other people in other places. Relatedly, the façade of 'goodness' masks the political economy of the 'intellectual-financial complex' of development research in which research funding is unevenly distributed to centres and individuals who deliver acceptable policy advice. While 'we' all pull together for global social justice, behind the scenes are the usual academic (and extra-academic) tensions, subterfuges and struggles over funding, which demonstrate that we are anything but 'universal' or 'good'. This highlights a further challenge for those of us who teach Development Studies to consider more carefully what forms of knowledge constitute worldliness (Clifford 1997) and importantly, to learn from other kinds of knowledge, particularly academic and non-academic accounts that emerge from non-Western contexts. These have been significant in my own teaching and research in shaping understanding, enriching analysis and providing tools to investigate and challenge the various effects of global processes.

At an individual level, we may not feel implicated by the attitudes and practices alluded to above. However, irrespective of our individual sensibilities we cannot absolve ourselves from the machinations of the (neo-liberal) project as a whole. We could do worse than encourage a form of worldliness that acknowledges how capitalist modernity shapes the global playing field in which we operate and to take an overt ethical and political position about what is and what is *not* acceptable.

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Abstracts

This paper presents some thoughts on the ambivalences, contradictions and assumptions in Development Studies and raises concerns about how the field writes and rehearses its history and future, and how it identifies its field of study. It foregrounds the problems associated with foundational dichotomies and distinctions within development and examines the constraints, and possible ways forward, for creating a critical space for development to interrogate the ideologies, processes and practices of globalisation and neoliberalism.

Der Aufsatz beschäftigt sich mit den Grundannahmen, Ambivalenzen und Widersprüchen der Entwicklungsforschung und problematisiert dabei ihr Verhältnis zur Vergangenheit und Zukunft, aber auch die Art und Weise, wie sie ihren Wissenschaftsbereich definiert. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird jenen Dichotomien und Merkmalen zuteil, die dem Forschungsfeld

Entwicklung zugrunde liegen. Außerdem widmet sich der Beitrag der Frage, welchen Hindernissen eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den Ideologien, Prozessen und Praktiken der Globalisierung und des Neoliberalismus gegenübersteht und welche Auswege es gibt.

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 45-63

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Development Studies: Work in Progress

1. Introduction

At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s Development Studies was established in several European universities in the form of new academic institutes. Over time these institutes evolved from a highly differentiated amalgam consisting of leftist students and lecturers towards representatives of an established academic discipline. Lately, a number of these institutes are celebrating or are preparing to celebrate their 35 or 40 years of existence (like the IDS in the UK in 2006 and CIDIN in the Netherlands in 2008). It is interesting to notice that these celebrations are specifically dedicated to a critical introspection, which, in the case of the IDS, resulted in a conference entitled 'Reinventing Development Studies'. Furthermore, the Dutch CIDIN will use the celebration of its 35 years of existence to critically reflect upon the current status and future perspectives of Development Studies.

There are reasons enough for these introspective exercises. Firstly, there is an undeniable trend that academic institutes in general have to increasingly operate according to a market logic. Input and output in terms of the number of students, the amount of publications in peer-refereed top of the bill reviews, the yearly count of large-scale research projects, ratings indicating the academic prestige of universities, etc. are nowadays grudgingly accepted as part of academic survival. Secondly, this trend seems to stand in contradiction to the critical contents of the mission and scientific object of Development Studies. For example, it is increasingly difficult to find funds for development research which are either not directly related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or which try to critically assess the whole MDG-related media circus. As such, thirdly, there is an increasing

influence of neo-liberal thinking on the research agenda of Development Studies, making it increasingly difficult to maintain a critical research tradition. Fourthly, although on the one hand the geographical scale of Development Studies research nowadays incorporates Eastern and Central European countries, on the other hand with respect to research in the traditional development countries the geographical focus seems to be reduced to Africa (also a consequence of the focus on the MDG-issues; if this trend continues we better might rename Development Studies 'Africanism'). Fifthly, but not lastly, globalization (whether as an ontological phenomenon and/or as a discourse) has significantly challenged Development Studies in many respects (cf. Schuurman 2001). In short, there are enough reasons to critically reflect upon the current status of Development Studies. I will first outline shortly the generic core characteristics of Development Studies and then give a highly subjective account of what the situation is with 1) critical theory in relation to the market logic which has penetrated academia, and 2) interdisciplinarity as one of the core characteristics of Development Studies. In the conclusion I will return to the current status of the core characteristics and the way forward.

2. Core Characteristics of Development Studies

Development Studies has always been the Robin Hood of the social sciences. As a self-proclaimed ally in the emancipatory struggle of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised, the exploited, the underdeveloped in the Third World, Development Studies took what it needed from 'the rich' social sciences (economy, sociology, anthropology and political science): paradigms, theories, concepts and methodologies. If need be, small marauding bands of Development Studies teachers and students were dropped behind the academic borders of even the technical sciences and departments of law to assemble relevant information. Of vital importance was the existence of a fifth column of development experts firmly embedded in the other fields of social science. In fact, this is how Development Studies started its academic life back in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Economists, sociologists, geographers and political scientists interested in studying the plight of the Third World got together and created an academic niche in their univer-

sities. Of course, at the time, the anti-modernisation *Zeitgeist* created a favorable circumstance which allowed this fledgling among the social sciences to grow to what Development Studies is nowadays with its own established (1 or 2 years) MA- and PhD-programs, sometimes combined with an independent BA.

Specifically because of its relatively recent emergence, the normativity of its research object and the interdisciplinary character of its scientific mission, Development Studies has always been the odd one out in academia but at the same time has always attracted enough students to be reckoned with. In addition, the number of students finding a job in the sector of development cooperation has always been more than acceptable in relation to, for example, students of anthropology which have a much more difficult time finding jobs which correspond with their academic training.

It did not take long for Development Studies to develop the following core characteristics:

Normativity: although there are many definitions of the core object of Development Studies, they share a rather strong and explicit value-laden content. It is about poverty, progress (however defined), emancipation, inequality, injustice, empowerment, etc.

Interdisciplinarity: a normative *explanandum* almost by definition requires an interdisciplinary approach. This is to be distinguished from a multi-disciplinary approach where an object is studied from different perspectives without combining the evolving insights to produce a surplus value.

Emphasis on the role of the state: there are two reasons for this characteristic. Firstly, as Development Studies emerged in a period where the welfare state was created in the North it incorporated the notion that the nation-state was the most important actor in creating development and progress. Secondly, Development Studies as such also copied this characteristic from the neighbouring social sciences with their 19th century heritage concerning the importance of the role of the (nation) state.

A strong belief in the makeability of society: this characteristic is a part of the Enlightenment heritage which characterizes the social sciences in general. Specifically the sub-discipline of development policy and management within Development Studies is a typical example of this characteristic.

Comparative research: traditionally Development Studies is involved with the comparison of geographical units (e.g. rich and poor countries with all the inherent dangers of teleology).

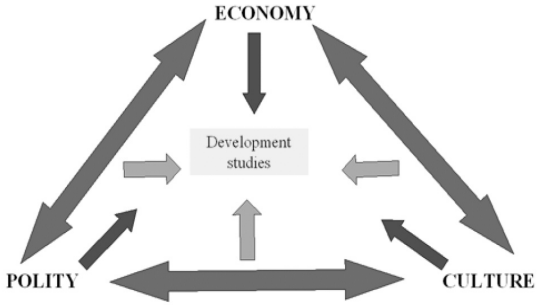
A strong historical component: understanding the reasons for the emergence and continuation of the lack of emancipation in the Third World in combination with a meaningful comparative research unavoidably involves historical research.

Multi-level analysis: the two previous characteristics are combined with a multi-level analysis where factors and actors or structure and agency at a macro, meso and micro level and their interactions are made visible and analysed.

All these generic characteristics of Development Studies have been involved since the 1960s in a dynamic process of change and adaptation. To get a grip on these changes it is helpful to distinguish four paradigmatic periods in the post-World War II era: modernisation, anti-modernisation, neo-liberalism and globalisation. These paradigmatic changes did not only affect Development Studies but the social sciences in general. It is important to point out that paradigms within the social sciences (and probably even in general) not only reflect the spirit of the time, but at the same time contribute to the formation of the *Zeitgeist* (Alexander 1995). In terms of paradigmatic changes, the post-WW II era, in contradistinction to pre-WW II times, is remarkable because of the relatively quick succession of these changes (every 10-15 years). New dynamics within and between technological, political, cultural, economic and military domains created such a flux at national and international levels that social sciences could hardly keep up to reflect upon this at a paradigmatic level. In the mid-1980s Development Studies moved into what became know as 'the impasse' (Booth 1985; Schuurman 1993) which need not be further elaborated here. The paradigmatic and theoretical flux that Development Studies entered into was reinforced by the combined appearance on the scene of 1) globalisation and 2) the entrance of market logic in academia. I would like to concentrate first specifically on the impact of globalisation on interdisciplinarity as well as on the role of space in the comparative method as core characteristics of Development Studies. Next I will pay attention to the effects of the market logic in academia on research and students in Development Studies.

3. Interdisciplinarity and the Role of Space in a Globalising World

Over time the interdisciplinarity of Development Studies has become one of its most important trademarks, which, besides the obvious advantages, also has its drawbacks. The big advantage is that the object of Development Studies is a major social problem (let's keep it simple for the moment: widespread poverty in the Third World) and social problems in general can only be studied adequately from an interdisciplinary perspective. These problems always have economic, political and socio-cultural aspects and also contextual influencing factors which interrelate them. It is specifically the attempt to take into account the interrelations between these aspects which makes Development Studies interdisciplinary. Just looking at a social problem from different disciplinary angles would make it multi- but not interdisciplinary.



The multidisciplinary angle in this triangle is represented by the small arrows from the three corners. The other, light gray, small arrows specifically represent the added value of an interdisciplinary approach. For example, if we study the developmental role of civil society organisations (which is one of the hot topics nowadays) and one does not take into account the influence on the characteristics of civil society of 1) the type of the political regime (e.g. whether it is a weak or a strong state) and 2) the influence of modes of production (the relative importance of and the interrelation between a capitalist and a non-capitalist mode of production), then only

a small part of the total picture can be captured. Another example would be the influence of the interrelation between characteristics of economic growth (e.g. in terms of inward- and outward orientation) and the democratic content of an evolving political regime on the developmental paths of countries. In short, interdisciplinarity is the strong point of Development Studies as it studies historic trajectories of underdevelopment.

The disadvantage of interdisciplinarity is that the training of students in the academic field of each of the major sciences which are reflected in the corner points of the interdisciplinary triangle (i.e. political science, economy and sociology) is sometimes considered insufficient as Development Studies tries to keep various balls in the air at the same time. Development Studies students are not economists, sociologists or political scientists *pur sang* yet they compensate for this lack of specific disciplinary knowledge with a better insight into the complexity of developmental problems. Yet, Development Studies is not infrequently seen as an applied science narrowed down to development policy and management. Looking at Development Studies from the outside, specifically given its problem-oriented object definition, it is to be expected that its focus seems to be on policy-oriented research, contributing to further developmental processes in the Third World. As such, Development Studies is sometimes looked at by the other branches of social sciences as lacking in academic status, also because of its interdisciplinary character, as discussed above. It is, however, a common mistake to reduce Development Studies to development policy and management, thereby emphasising an empiricist and solution-oriented approach to the problem of underdevelopment. The object of Development Studies is much broader, i.e. it takes as its *explanandum* the structural causes of the lack of emancipation of people in the South as well as in transitional economies elsewhere and the strategies (at a local, national and international scale) which are employed to solve this lack of emancipation. A lack of emancipation refers to an inadequate access to material (e.g. income) and immaterial (e.g. education) resources, which leads to widespread poverty, exploitation, inequality and injustice. The emphasis on structural causes does not imply just a structuralist approach but combines this with actor-oriented perspectives in order not to lose sight of the actors' views. Strategies to solve the lack of emancipation involve various actors in the South as well as in the North: social movements, NGOs, and national and international Governmental

Organisations. Of course, this is a subjective definition of Development Studies but one which I feel does more justice to what Development Studies is all about without reducing it to development policy and management.

A recent addition to the geographical scale of Development Studies shows that besides countries in the South and transitional economies in, for example, former Eastern Europe, the emancipatory problems in multicultural societies in the North are also increasingly incorporated into the object of Development Studies. Students of Development Studies are very much interested in the emancipatory problems related to multiculturality in their own societies. In this case also, an interdisciplinary approach is the most awarding.

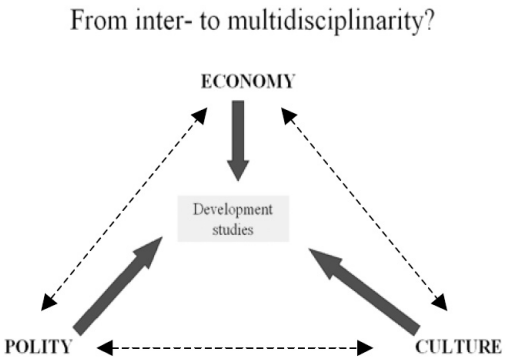
Nevertheless, the (short) history of Development Studies reflects a dialectical relationship between the advantages and disadvantages of an interdisciplinary approach. In the first place, climbing over the fence of the neighbouring sciences can lead to muddy feet. The paradigms and theories which are 'imported' from the three major social science disciplines (economy, political science and sociology) could for a long time only be fruitfully combined by Development Studies because of their common denominator, which is the linch-pin behind such interdisciplinarity, i.e. the role of the (nation) state. The bulk of the paradigms and theories from these three major domains of the social sciences have their roots in the 19th century with an emphasis on the role of the (nation) state in, respectively, the establishment of national markets and international trade relations, the establishment of democratic governments, and the aim of these governments to create a national identity (thereby suppressing other forms of identity based, for example, on regional or religious affiliations). In short, Development Studies' interdisciplinarity reflected right from the start the 19th century roots of other social sciences with the nation-state as the main actor in development processes and as the main geographical referent.

These paradigmatic views on the role of the (nation) state have changed as we move closer to the so-called global era. Globalisation challenges the interdisciplinary character of Development Studies. Many globalisation authors agree on the decreasing, or at least changing, economic, political and cultural importance of (nation) states. A shift in analytical perspective from the nation-state to transnational social space does not make it any easier for the interdisciplinary approach of Development Studies. On the other

hand, the 'global-local' as the new binary has surplus value above the established dichotomies of core-periphery and developed-underdeveloped exactly because it is less spatial and allows for inequality within the binary code. Leo Ching (2000) speculates that under globalisation traditional binary models of social analysis and political struggle (coloniser-colonised, First World-Third World, centre-periphery) are inapplicable to a spatial economy of power irreducible to geographical dichotomies. In the same line Appadurai is in favour of a 'process' geography instead of a 'trait' geography which considers areas as relatively immobile aggregates of traits (values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, etc.) with more or less durable boundaries. A process geography sees areas as precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction and motion (trade, travel, warfare, colonisation, exile, etc.). Current area studies, says Appadurai, consider areas as permanent associations between space, territory and cultural organization. It is not only that the globalisation debate gives reason to suppose that the role of the (nation) state has been and still is declining but also that, as a consequence, the former conjunctive dynamic (i.e. following the same spatial and time paths) of economy, polity and culture – upon which the interdisciplinary character of many a development theory was based – has been replaced by a disjunctive dynamic (Appadurai 1990, 2000).

To get to grips with an increasingly deterritorialised world, where relations between time and space are no longer bound within the borders of a nation-state, Appadurai introduces his notion of 'scapes': global configurations of flows within a certain networked environment. He introduces the 'ethnoscape' (a 'landscape' consisting of tourists, immigrants, refugees, etc.), the 'technoscape' (the global configuration of technological flows), the 'financescape' (global flows of various forms of financial capital), the 'mediascape' (a global network in which information dissemination and the creation of images and narratives are concentrated), and the 'ideoscape' (simply put networks of pro- and anti-state ideologies). The crucial point Appadurai makes is that these post-territorial scapes, even if they are interrelated in a 'glocal' (global/local) context, follow their own time-space trajectories. Basically this means that under globalisation the political, economic and socio-cultural domains increasingly follow their own time-space paths; whatever interconnecting logic is left is not bound within the nation-state context. If Appadurai's notion of disjunctive domains is a fruitful approach

then the interdisciplinarity of Development Studies would probably have to be replaced by a more multi-disciplinary approach which looks as follows:



In a deterritorialised world the nation-state would have lost its role as a connecting linch-pin between the economic, political and cultural domains which now largely follow their own disjunctive dynamics which are only partly interrelated (indicated by the dotted arrows). The traditional inter-disciplinary approach of development theories which, for example, used to draw upon the interrelation between national economic growth and processes of democratisation through the role of the (nation) state is now confronted with domains which follow different logics that are not necessarily interrelated as they form part of different transnational scapes. For the time being Development Studies seems obliged to move towards a multidisciplinary approach (i.e. without a clear theoretical view of the interrelations between the economic, political and cultural domains) which at the same time poses a new challenge. In addition, the normativity and the policy-orientation of its *explanandum* require some answers in this respect.

Considering specifically the spatial element in development research, Saskia Sassen (2000a, 2000b) stresses the increasing importance of urban-oriented research because world or global cities (also in the Third World) form the key nodes in a physical and digital space according to a logic which knows no national boundaries.

There is a growing awareness that geographical space does not play the role that it used to. Specifically for Development Studies this leads to the following questions.

First, if nation-states are of declining importance in offering a framework to understand and theorise social, cultural, political and economic dynamics, is there a *remplaçant* necessary and if so what will that be? World regions as Hettne (1999) proposes, network societies following Castells (1996), the world cities as suggested by Sassen or is the idea of social spaces fruitful as Robinson (2001a, 2001b) puts forward?

Second, if geographical space is of declining importance what does this mean for the comparative method which in Development Studies has traditionally meant above all comparison between nation-states, i.e. what does one compare in the global age to understand (under)development: social spaces, nodes within networks or world regions?

Robinson is convinced that the 'new locus of development processes is emergent transnational social spaces'. He finds no theoretical reason to give primacy to the nation-state as the particular territorial expression of uneven development. Concepts like centre and periphery should be reconceived in terms of global social groups. In an increasingly interconnected world time is annihilating space and unevenness resulting from that process should as such not be understood in geographical terms; for some this would mean the end of geography. Manuel Castells also stresses the annihilation of space through time, but does not replace geographical space with social space but with digital space, i.e. the network society. For the comparative method this would mean focussing on nodes in networks in terms of their location in digital space. It would be the ultimate consequence of David Harvey's 'space-time compression' image of globalisation (Harvey 1989). If these interpretations of globalisation bear any analytical weight then the traditional trusted comparative method in Development Studies would urgently need a revision. Also in politico-ideological terms this would mean a shift of focus within Development Studies. According to Fred Block (2001) the position, which Robinson takes, would, for example, mean that subordinate classes, instead of opposing their own national bourgeoisie should now have to transnationalise and confront the new transnational bourgeoisie, a strategy which Block, by the way, finds rather premature (on this debate see also McMichael 2001; Robinson 2001c).

However, it is not at all clear to what extent the nation-state as a political, economic and socio-cultural actor and/or frame of reference has lost its previous importance (Schuurman 2001). The characteristics and functions of the nation-state have been significantly changed, no doubt, within the political, economic and socio-cultural domains. But it seems too soon to get rid of the nation-state and declare a moratorium on the importance of geography at the same time. Even Robinson (2001b: 558) himself sees that '…some zones are selected for global production activities, others assigned "feeder roles" (e.g. labour or raw materials), and still others marginalised entirely from the global economy (the so-called "fourth world")'. This in fact would open interesting perspectives on the relation between physical space, social space and digital space. The marginal position of some groups is connected with them being locked into physical space, as it were, not being able to enjoy the advantages of access to digital space which has become the privilege of the global elites. These global elites appear as primary nodes in the global network society without necessarily sharing a physical space. Nevertheless, reality shows that there are in fact spatial concentrations of these global elites (in global cities or regions) which would still allow for an important role of physical space in constructing either defensive mechanisms ('Fortress Europe') or providing a battlefield where warlords set the world in flames.

Understanding globalisation in terms of a dialectical relation between 'the global' and 'the local' would greatly facilitate a correct understanding of the role of physical space in the global era. Henry Yeung (1999) emphasizes that although 'the global' invades local contexts of actions, it does not destroy them; instead, new forms of local resistance and local expressions emerge, reinforcing the interconnectedness of the local and the global and the multiplicity of hybridisation of social life on every spatial scale. Yeung, in contrast to the ultra-globalists, sees a significant national diversity in the face of global capitalism. Even Sassen (2000a, 2000b) declares that even the most globalized and dematerialized business sectors, such as global finance, inhabit both physical and digital space. These activities are simultaneously partly deterritorialised and partly deeply territorialised, spanning the globe, yet strategically concentrated in specific places.

Still, the increasing interconnectedness at a global scale, the increase in the importance of digital space, the changing (perhaps not decreasing)

role of the nation-state, the emergence of a transnational class, the growth of a global economy as materializing in a worldwide grid of strategic places leading to a new economic geography of centrality – all this new global dynamic cannot bypass development research and in particular not Development Studies without stirring up important discussions on the status of physical space and the comparative method.

4. The Market Logic in Academia and Critical Theory

What does it mean for a Development Studies institute to be functioning in an academic setting, which is increasingly being invaded by a market logic? As mentioned before, in the current academic climate what is considered as important is: size (number of PhDs and staff, number of publications, amount of students), large-scale research projects (preferably in combination with large quantitative data banks) in combination with outside funding (an indication apparently of the relevance of the research activities and at the same time thankfully appreciated by the financial bureaucracy of the university), and the amount of evaluation missions (on behalf of the Ministry of International Development Cooperation and/or non-governmental development organizations in the Northern countries). In practice this means for Development Studies institutes that in order to survive concessions have to be made. Original mission statements, which were strongly normatively inspired, increasingly started to act as barriers in the survival strategy. For example, when the current Centre for International Development Issues (CIDIN) of the Radboud University in Nijmegen (the Netherlands) started functioning in 1973 as the Third World Centre, one of the first publications concerned the negative role of multinationals in maintaining poverty-related issues in the Third World. The name of Third World Centre was changed into CIDIN in the year 2000 as the term Third World was considered outdated and in the Dutch academic collective memory too much connected to 'Third Worldism'. Currently, one of the research projects of CIDIN concerns the measurement of the efficiency and impact of development projects (in collaboration with a Dutch NGO which is financing this research). The purpose of this project is to deliver academically sound advice to NGOs to improve their project efficiency and

impact. In the 1970s, a common view in Development Studies circles was that development projects were an extension of Northern based imperialism (a basic view of 'Third Worldists' or 'TierMondistas') or at the most a way to evade more fundamental changes in North-South trade relations and political regimes in underdeveloped countries themselves. There is in fact little reason to believe that current development cooperation has changed dramatically in its implicit intentions.

Maybe this is an extreme example, yet it shows a number of dramatic shifts that Development Studies went through in terms of its *explanandum* (object), *explanans* (explanatory framework) and subject (methodology). In terms of its object, Development Studies (at least in this example but I venture that it is a general characteristic) went from a structural analysis of the mechanics of underdevelopment to studying the efficiency of development projects (Harriss 2002). In this shift an approach inspired by critical theory was entirely lost. In fact, in general the adjective 'critical' lost its original meaning. Many Development Studies students nowadays interpret 'critical' only in the dictionary sense of the word. In addition, the example also shows that there is an historic shift (not only in Development Studies but also in social sciences in general) from structural analysis to actor-oriented analysis. Studying and/or evaluating development projects in terms of efficiency and impact means a shift from macro- to micro-level analysis. Now, there is nothing wrong with actor-oriented analysis as long as the structural context is not lost from sight. But this is exactly the point; the broader context in project-based evaluation studies remains often outside the analytical framework (partly also because it falls outside the sphere of influence of the NGOs which finance these studies in the first place).

Another example of the shift within Development Studies from structural to actor-oriented analysis is the way that concepts like poverty and inequality are looked at. We see here a historic shift in the level of analysis from macro to meso to micro. Poverty in the Third World used to be conceptualised in terms of differences between rich and poor countries. Admittedly, the definition of poverty has been much improved through the years (from a purely income-oriented definition to a much broader set of indicators) but poverty is now often brought down to an individual characteristic with individual solutions (e.g. through micro-credit schemes). This trend is also reflected in analytical frameworks like, for example, the

currently much favored livelihood approaches where individual actors are plotted into a matrix according to their access (or lack thereof) to assets or different forms of capital (financial, social, human, etc.). Now, the livelihood framework is very useful to point out the heterogeneity existing within a particular local space, something which has always been a notoriously weak point in critical theory. But this can hardly compensate for the lack of an analysis of more structural components. In other words, the shift within Development Studies from research inspired by critical theory to research according to a neo-liberal agenda is accompanied by dramatic shifts in object, subject and explanatory framework.

Now the above probably are nothing more than the grumblings of an old Development Studies dinosaur. So let me turn to these issues from the student's point of view (i.e. more precisely: my perspective on their perspective). Development Studies still attracts a sufficient number of students. The reasons for studying Development Studies have not changed over the years. It is a genuine concern for the plight of the poor in the Third World, indignation about the unequal distribution of resources on a global scale and the urge to do something about this. Students also are still very active outside the university, although the characteristics of their activities have changed somewhat. In the 'old days' students joined anti-imperialism working groups and as such were well equipped with theoretical knowledge which enabled them to discuss Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* on the same level with their professors. Nowadays students join United Nations Youth Fora and travel to Washington to meet their peers from other countries to discuss good governance. So, extra-curricula activities still are there and still express a basic concern with the 'Other' which goes beyond studying at the university. In fact, these activities could be more appreciated than in the old days because a lot of students are working about 20 hours per week to earn their livelihood. The job market for Development Studies students is still largely composed of employment in the domain of international development cooperation, although, significantly less than before, this means being sent overseas. Only a small percentage manages to proceed to writing a PhD thesis. Although I mentioned earlier that Development Studies should not be reduced to development management and policy the reality is that a lot of the students end up in Ministries of Development Cooperation, NGOs, embassies or international development organisations which do nothing else

than development management and policy-making. Here we have another reason why critical theory came increasingly under pressure, i.e. not only as a framework for research but also because of the knowledge required by future employers of Development Studies students. Of course the job market wants critical students but more in a generalised academic sense of the word. There is a need for students who know how to prepare, manage and evaluate development projects, who know how to measure efficiency and increase the impact of projects. The job market does not need students who think that the Millennium Development Goals are the latest example of the depoliticisation of the development debate. All this does not mean the students are ignorant of what critical theory is, but it seems to be more considered as something of the past than of any immediate use in research projects or in future jobs. Besides, by now every European university has implemented the Bologna Treaty, which means that officially the academic period for students consists of a 3-year BA followed by a 1-year MA. Time for fieldwork is limited which means that students need a pragmatic 'toolkit' for local level research. Critical theory is rather abstract and needs a lot of operationalisation to be used in short term micro-level MA-research projects. It can be considered as a major challenge for Development Studies to try to reincorporate critical theory into that pragmatic toolkit.

5. Conclusion: Development Studies as 'Work in Progress'

So, what does the above mean for the core characteristics of Development Studies as well as for critical theory? Again, a rather subjective enlistment of consequences is the following:

Normativity: the rather strong and explicit value-laden content of the core object of Development Studies (inequality, injustice, etc.) has been replaced by a poverty concept which, although defined in a multidimensional way, seems to be increasingly, if not already exclusively, applied at the individual level. Efficiency and impact seem to be considered more important than injustice.

Interdisciplinarity: as explained above, this core characteristic is shifting towards a multi-disciplinary approach in research as well as in academic training.

Emphasis on the role of the state: this has been substituted for concepts like good governance, co-production, public-private enterprises, etc. Although still important the state is no longer considered the hegemonic actor in development processes.

A strong belief in the makeability of society: the concept of risk society has increasingly captured the minds of policy makers and scientists. Especially as far as the global climate is concerned, it is the containment of risk which is at stake. As such, the neo-liberal solution seems to be that private insurance against risks in general is also possible for the poor in the Third World.

Comparative research: traditional country-wise comparisons are replaced by research projects at a local level or comparisons between social groups in a so-called transnational context (e.g. migration studies).

A strong historical component: this has been replaced by much more emphasis on the 'here and now'.

Multi-level analysis: a combination of the above changes has led away from a multi-level towards a mono-level analysis. Structural analysis with a strong historical element is increasingly replaced by an actor-oriented approach.

Development Studies is still, perhaps more than ever, 'work in progress'. We are in more need than ever of analytical schemes to understand what is going on in the world, how globalisation produces inequality (the role of digital, physical and social space), what strategies subaltern classes could follow to gather their strength, and what exactly the emancipatory spaces are in the 21st Century. There is reason enough to try and find our way back to critical theory and that quest might well take us towards a sort of neo-dependency paradigm. We have learned from the past what a static and rigid structural or actor-oriented approach can do to our understanding of reality but we have also seen how the backbone of critical theory was often formed by exactly these kinds of dependency approaches. Development Studies should not be afraid to reassert in the *explanandum* and the *explanans* of its discipline a normative approach in development research; an approach where inequality, progress and the role of the state still find a place next to concepts like diversity, risk management and livelihood strategies of individual actors. The challenge is to incorporate these concepts in a critical theory which reflects the economic, political and socio-cultural realities of

globalisation. If globalisation is about an increasingly interconnected world, what would be more suitable than a neo-dependency kind of theory to critically analyse how capitalism and modernity in the 21st century have found new ways to proceed and have created new patterns of inequalities and new conflicts? It is, however, to be recommended that the previously mentioned contentious issues be incorporated in such a new paradigmatic approach to the reality of the global age.

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Abstracts

Since the establishment of Development Studies at several European universities at the end of the 1960s, these institutes evolved from an amalgam of left-inclined students and professors towards representatives of an established academic discipline. The author critically reflects upon the transformations that have taken place over that period. In doing so, he first outlines the foundational characteristics of Development Studies and then gives a subjective account of the current situation. In his view, contemporary Development Studies are challenged by 1) a market logic which has penetrated academia and stands in a contradiction to the critical contents of Development Studies and 2) the material and discursive processes of globalisation which require a shift in analytical perspective, disciplinary approach and methods. When addressing the future perspectives of Development Studies in the concluding part, the author argues for a return to a critical research tradition. Critical theory within Development Studies should incorporate new analytical schemes to analyse the economic, political and socio-cultural realities of globalisation. At the same time, Development Studies should not be afraid to reassert a normative approach. That quest might well take us towards a sort of neo-dependency paradigm.

Die seit Ende der 1960er Jahre an zahlreichen europäischen Universitäten gegründeten Institute für Entwicklungsfragen wurden aus Sammelpunkten zumeist linker StudentInnen und ProfessorInnen zu Repräsentanten einer etablierten akademischen Disziplin. Der Autor geht

den Veränderungen nach, die diesen Bereich im Lauf der Zeit geprägt haben. Zu Beginn skizziert er jene grundlegenden Merkmale, die die Anfänge der Entwicklungsforschung prägten. In der gegenwärtigen Situation sieht er das Studien- und Forschungsfeld vor zwei Herausforderungen gestellt: Erstens steht die Marktlogik, die in das akademische Terrain eingedrungen ist, im Widerspruch zum kritischen Gehalt der Entwicklungsforschung; zweitens erfordern die durch die Globalisierung materiell und diskursiv erzeugten Transformationen eine Veränderung der analytischen Perspektive, der disziplinären Herangehensweise und der Methoden. Im abschließenden Teil begibt sich der Autor auf die Suche nach den Zukunftsperspektiven. Eine kritische Entwicklungstheorie muss demnach neue Analysemethoden integrieren, mit denen die wirtschaftlichen, politischen und soziokulturellen Realitäten der Globalisierung erfasst werden können. Gleichzeitig sollte Entwicklungsforschung sich auf ihre kritische Tradition besinnen und ihren normativen Anspruch nicht aufgeben. Als Ergebnis dieser Bemühungen könnte so etwas wie ein Neo-Dependenzparadigma entstehen.

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 64-79

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The Meaning of 'Development': A Critical Poststructuralist Perspective

1. 'Development' – Know What I Mean?

'Development', obviously, means different things to different people. Therefore, we should be careful not to use this word as if its meaning was self-evident. Even if we narrow down the discussion to what has been referred to by the editors as the 'North-South context', we often find widely diverging conceptions between the World Development Report, people working at a governmental agency for development and overseas aid, and those who are supposed to benefit from 'development'.

While using the term 'development', some may talk about creating an investment-friendly environment or about enabling small-scale enterprises to compete in the world market, some about building roads and power plants and dams and irrigation schemes, a third party about access to land and clean drinking water, a fourth about micro-credits for women. Others, however, may see in 'development' mainly the spread of capitalism and the maintenance of core-periphery relations even after formal independence.

So we are confronted with a web of meanings that is not easy to disentangle. At the very least, we can state that 'development' refers to some kind of social change and is usually connected with Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Within the discourse of 'development', it is possible to identify a dominant notion, which has been called the 'classical paradigm of development'. Although it was most prevalent during the 1960s and 70s, it still retains many followers, and its roots go back to the 19th century: to the marriage of the concepts of the evolution of society on the one hand (Nisbet 1969) and of state intervention to ameliorate social problems on the other (Cowen/Shenton 1996). This new concept of 'development' was

then, in the first half of the 20th century (under the influence of anti-colonial struggles and the Russian Revolution), progressively linked to the European colonies (Alcalde 1987). After 1945 the colonial discourse was finally transformed into development discourse, leaving behind the assumption that the people in the colonies were too backward to govern themselves, thus transferring the trusteeship from the colonisers to state officials and development experts (Cooper 1997). The task of 'civilising the uncivilised' was replaced by that of 'developing the underdeveloped'.

The discourse of development was (in its dominant notion) based on Cartesian rationality, a Baconian view of nature, and a Hobbesian image of human beings. At its most abstract level, it assumed that there is a universal conception of a good society and of the path to a good society, that this state and this process can be called 'development' and can be identified by experts (from the disciplines of Development Studies/development economics), and that basically all societies are capable of achieving this happy state of development. The normative definition of this state was derived from the Western industrialised countries, as well as the norms of this process, which were derived from their history after the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Those societies found to be deficient in comparison to these norms needed economic growth (usually induced by foreign investment and participation in the capitalist world market), as well as social and political modernisation and industrialisation (or at least some transfer of technology). The dominant notion was based on a dualism: there were developed and less developed societies, which could be identified through comparative analyses and certain indicators, above all economic performance measured in terms of GNP or PCE (assuming of course that development could be measured statistically). The unit of analysis was the state (or a state/society complex). The discourse also implied that development could be achieved through planned intervention by the state or development agencies – and that in the light of the greater common good to be realised ('development') certain negative consequences or hardships caused by these interventions were justified (Ziai 2003).

The dependency theories of the 1960s and 70s constituted a challenge to the dominant notion of 'development' through examining the links between the entities in which 'development' was to take place. They put forward the thesis that the mechanisms of the world market prevented

peripheral societies from taking their proper course of 'development' and condemned them to remaining 'underdeveloped'. This change in perspective concerning the unit of analysis (most rigorously pursued by Wallerstein's world system theory) has been a major achievement in contrast to the methodological nationalism which had been dominant. Nevertheless, most dependency theorists agreed that the countries in the periphery were in a state of deficiency and needed economic growth, modernisation and industrialisation in order to become like the 'developed' societies, only in a more social or socialist variant. The method of achieving the desired state of society was very different in theories of dependency – for some, nothing short of a socialist revolution was necessary – but the goal (apart from the crucial question of the economic system) was remarkably similar to that of the diametrically opposed camp of modernisation theories. To a certain extent this also applies to other critics of 'development', who formulated their critique within the borders outlined by development discourse. In the words of Escobar: '[...] from the economic development theories of the 1950s to the "basic human needs approach" in the 1970s – which emphasized not only economic growth per se as in earlier decades but also the distribution of the benefits of growth – the main preoccupation of theorists and politicians was the kinds of development that needed to be pursued to solve the social and economic problems of these parts of the world. Even those who opposed the prevailing capitalist strategies were obliged to couch their critique in terms of the need for development, through concepts such as "another development", "participatory development", "socialist development", and the like. In short, one could criticize a given approach and propose modifications or improvements accordingly, but the fact of development itself, and the need for it, could not be doubted. Development had achieved the status of a certainty in the social imaginary.' (Escobar 1995: 5)

However, one might reasonably object that in these alternative concepts 'development' surely had a different meaning in comparison to modernisation theories. This is the central question that we have to deal with. The short answer is: yes and no. The longer answer requires a bit more patience, and a closer look at what has been called the 'crisis of development'. The crisis, which was diagnosed during the 1980s, had numerous aspects: the frustration over the growing gap between 'developed' and (most) 'less developed' countries, the dissatisfaction with orthodox dependency theories unable to

explain the success of export-oriented processes of growth and industrialisation in East Asia, the disillusionment over the developmental state, especially in Africa, and the critique voiced by grassroots movements and NGOs over the top-down manner in which many development projects had been implemented despite disastrous social and ecological consequences, to name but the most significant. There were different responses to the crisis: some tried to integrate the critiques into the dominant model, which led to the concepts of sustainable development, participatory development and gender mainstreaming. Others drew the conclusion that development aid had to be finally done away with. One faction saw development aid as a mechanism distorting market prices, producing inefficiencies and financing rentier states. In the course of the 'counter revolution in development theory and policy' (Toye 1987), the debate revolved less and less around the question of how to transform the 'underdeveloped' areas into 'developed' ones, but more about questions of market-oriented institutional reforms in order to increase efficiency and competitiveness: liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, etc. The promises of Truman and Rostow thus appeared increasingly obsolete during the 1980s and 90s. While the ideal of a modern, Western, industrialised society was still implicit in neo-liberal discourse, interventions in the world market to help 'underdeveloped' countries progress towards this ideal (which had been the normal practice of development policy) were rejected, and so was the assumption that sooner or later all countries in the periphery would reach this happy state. Only the strong, that is, those with a competitive investment climate, would survive.

Another faction, however, promoted an even more radical repudiation of 'development': in contrast to (most) earlier critics, they reject the entire paradigm, i.e. they do not call for a better version of or some kind of alternative road to 'development', but for 'alternatives to development'. These alternatives, that they locate in social movements and communities all over the Third World, practice (according to the authors) forms of production and exchange beyond capitalism and *homo oeconomicus*, forms of community and democracy beyond the state, and forms of knowledge beyond Western science. The meaning of 'development' for these critics is obvious: it is a 'malignant myth', 'installing [...] the economic sphere [...] at the centre of politics and ethics', economic growth being 'its very essence', wrongly assuming that 'man's wants are great, not to say infinite' and giving

'global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing peoples of different cultures of the opportunity to define the forms of their social life' by attributing to them 'the undignified position called underdevelopment' (Esteva 1991: 76, 1992: 17, 19, 9, 7). It is 'an ideology that was born and refined in the North, mainly to meet the needs of the dominant powers in search of a more "appropriate" tool for their economic and geopolitical expansion' which 'helped a dying and obsolete colonialism to transform itself into an aggressive – even sometimes an attractive –instrument able to recapture new ground' and functions like 'a socio-cultural variant of AIDS' by undermining the 'tissue of solidarities' of 'vernacular societies' through teaching people the 'economic principle to maximise the possibilities of accumulating wealth' (Rahnema 1997c: 379, 1997b: 112, 119). It implies the 'Westernisation of the world' and 'allows any intervention to be sanctified in the name of a higher goal' (Sachs 1992b: 4); 'it implies that what is done to people by those more powerful than themselves is their fate, their potential, their fault' (Frank 1986: 263).

This view can be called the critical perspective on development. It does not take the terms of discourse as given. It points to the political, economic and cultural relations of power which constitute the historical context of the concept of development. Its polemic will seem alienating to many, and its claims are certainly overstated in ignoring the diversity of development projects and policies. Several other critical points could be raised against this perspective, and I have done so elsewhere. But its central claims, namely that the concept of development is Eurocentric, has to be analysed within the context of these power structures and has authoritarian implications, are perfectly valid.

Nevertheless, it has to be said that the critical perspective cannot account for the brighter side of what its representatives term the 'development project', and it cannot do so because of a theoretical problem: it attributes one single meaning to the term 'development' – namely, the Western ideology so harshly rejected. But to do so is a contingent practice, and it is not unlikely that representatives of the development establishment who claim that the meaning of 'development' is in fact something else, namely the improvement of standards of living according to the Human Development Index, will find as many empirical examples to base their claim on as the critics for their view on development. What is urgently

needed is a perspective that recognizes its perspectivity, and this is why we need to turn to poststructuralism.

In a nutshell: the poststructuralist perspective relies on the work of de Saussure's structural linguistics. It assumes that linguistic signs are composed of a signifier (e.g. the word 'development' in the English language) and a signified (that which is denoted by the word, its referent). The relation between the two is arbitrary; it differs between language systems. Meaning is therefore not inherent in the relation between signifier and signified, but is a result of a differential relation between the signifiers: the signifier 'development' can only convey meaning if it is different from other signifiers, it could not do so if (in the extreme case) cars, hurricanes, horses, measles, etc. were also to be expressed by this signifier. Now poststructuralism further assumes that the relation between signifier and signified is unstable and has to be reproduced continuously within discourse in order to function. Discursive practices therefore do not simply represent, but at the same time construct social reality. Our access to reality is therefore always mediated through discourse. (This applies, of course, also to poststructuralism, as well as to definitions of poststructuralism.)

This poststructuralist perspective has practical consequences, the most relevant being that *there is no 'meaning of development'*: the signifier is linked to different signifieds in different discourses (which has in the past led to some misunderstandings between groups employing different definitions) and it is thus impossible to decide which definition, that is, which relation between signifier and signified, is the 'right' one. The 'true meaning' of 'development' is always a matter of controversy, and knowledge claims concerning this question are political claims, claims to power. This does not mean they have to be generally opposed; it merely highlights the fact that seemingly neutral academic definitions may have serious political consequences. For example, the question whether 'development' means economic growth plus industrialisation or empowerment plus autarky.

Now the interesting point is that those critics condemning 'development' as a Western myth also share (at least in part) the poststructuralist perspective. This becomes obvious in the recognition that the numerous (re-) definitions of the term make it impossible to pinpoint its meaning: 'By now development has become an amoeba-like concept, shapeless but ineradicable. Its contours are so blurred that it denotes nothing – while it spreads

everywhere because it connotes the best of intentions. The term is hailed by the IMF and the Vatican alike, by revolutionaries carrying their guns as well as field experts carrying their Samsonites.' (Sachs 1992b: 4) 'It is an empty word which can be filled by any user to conceal any hidden intention, a Trojan horse of a word.' (Frank 1986: 263) But if that is all there is, if the meaning of the term merely depends on its definition, then why not enter the discursive struggle and try to establish a new signified for the signifier? Why not redefine the concept with a more progressive, liberating content, as so many alternative development theorists have attempted to?

The answer given by Esteva is because discourses cannot be transformed so easily: 'development' cannot delink itself from the words with which it was formed – growth, evolution, maturation. Just the same, those who now use the word cannot free themselves from a web of meanings that impart a specific blindness to their language, thought, and action. No matter the context in which it is used, or the precise connotation that the person using the word wants to give it, the expression becomes qualified and coloured by meanings perhaps unwanted. The word always implies a favourable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior, from worse to better. The word indicates that one is doing well because one is advancing in the sense of a necessary, ineluctable, universal law and towards a desirable goal. [...] For two-thirds of the people on earth, this positive meaning of the word "development" [...] is a reminder of *what they are not*. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition.' (Esteva 1992: 10, emphasis in the original) It is impossible to step out of development discourse by simply adopting a new definition.

Returning to the question whether alternative development approaches did or did not give the word 'development' a different meaning, we can state that, first of all, many of the alternative approaches were in fact adhering to many central tenets of development discourse: that there are 'developed' and 'less developed' societies (and by implication a universal scale according to which they can be measured), that countries or states are the units for measurement (ignoring international links and intra-national disparities), that 'development' is something positive, that there are experts who know how to achieve this state of 'development', and that the industrialised capitalist countries are 'developed' while the less industrialised countries are deficient and in urgent need of social transformation according to the Western ideal.

Secondly, even if an alternative approach explicitly rejects these tenets and employs an entirely different definition of 'development', it cannot escape the fact that most people will still associate the term with the above assumptions, and that practices diametrically opposed to the ideals of social change articulated in this perspective are subsumed under the same term. And in the light of the scale of knowledge production of the development business, any subversive attempt to redefine 'development' is most likely to be a losing battle. The consequence of this argument is easy to grasp, but hard to accept: the term should be abandoned by those who do not share the Eurocentric assumptions of the dominant notion of 'development'.

There are other concepts to describe societies and desired processes of social change which are closer to the ideals of liberation and justice. Their meaning is of course not eternally fixed, but open to contestation, co-option and corruption. (Prominent social democrats in Germany have redefined social justice as 'productive inequality'.) But their history, context and associations are far less tainted by the oppressive relations of colonialism.

Verhelst suggested replacing 'development' with 'good life', and argued that achieving the necessary conditions to lead a 'good life' may be a less Eurocentric and more universal exercise than promoting 'development' (Verhelst quoted in Rahnema 1997: 267). If we describe a desired condition of society not as 'developed', but as 'hospitable' (as suggested by Esteva), we easily become aware of phenomena like racism or exclusion and the deportation of migrants, which are widespread and frequent in industrialised capitalist societies. They are of course prevalent in other societies as well, but these have not been portrayed as universal ideals. If we imagine a progressive society not as 'economically advanced' but as 'fair', the internal distribution of wealth (and opportunities) and the ethical or less-than-ethical conduct in foreign economic policy gain more significance. And if the greatness of a society is expressed in the term 'peaceful' rather than 'powerful', urban violence and nuclear missiles seem less acceptable than they are today. If we stop measuring the achievements of a society in the value of goods produced and consumed, and consider the amount of nature and of other people's work being used (and even destroyed) in order to maintain certain patterns of consumption, the UN rankings would look very different. Spivak argues that we, as those comfortably living in the West, ought to redefine our

privileges as a loss, as something we enjoy while and because others cannot enjoy them.

The suggestions given here belong to the position of an alternative universalism that still believes that all societies can be compared and evaluated according to certain universal values. The position of more radical critics would be to reject this alternative universalism on the grounds of cultural differences, or, rather, the heterogeneous understandings of what constitutes a good society. From this perspective, evaluations would only be possible according to standards that form a consensus for the people living in these societies.

This, to sum up, constitutes my view on the 'meaning of development'. So where does it come from?

2. The Giants on Whose Shoulders We Stand: Intellectual Influences

Obviously, the main influence on my work comes from critical and poststructuralist theory, as well as from postdevelopment and postcolonial writers. To do justice to these influences is hardly possible within the confines of a few paragraphs: nevertheless, I shall at least try to briefly summarise their significant arguments.

Horkheimer and Adorno, the most influential writers of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, distinguished their intellectual project from that of 'traditional' theory, above all by the following characteristics: 1) a historical perspective that views the current social, political and economic order as subject to change; 2) a method that aims at generating knowledge by analysing the whole of this order in connection to the individual subject; 3) a rejection of the separation between subject and object, theory and practice, factual and value statement; 4) the commitment to social transformation according to humanistic ideals and the struggle against social injustice; 5) the acknowledgement of the historicity of truth claims. In their main work (written during World War II), they warn that the mechanisms guiding critical thinking since the Enlightenment not only serve to produce knowledge and control nature, but that they imply totalitarian tendencies and subject humankind to new oppressive practices, e.g. by subsuming the

unknown under a universal system of scientific, quantifiable knowledge. Although many elements of poststructuralist theory can already be found in their work, they often seem convinced that their approach had a direct access to historical truth, not being one among numerous ways of perceiving reality, but the 'right' one (Horkheimer 1995/1937; Horkheimer/Adorno 1988/1944).

Poststructuralism was in general far more sceptical and self-critical in this respect. Foucault, who was for me the most important of the poststructuralist theorists, impressively revealed the historicity and contingency of many self-evident practices of our modern world – e.g. those concerning hospitals, asylums, prisons, and sexuality – and the workings of power in many areas where I had not expected them. His main achievement in my view was to stress the link between knowledge and power, that knowledge is produced within discourses that are thoroughly imbued with power, and that a 'political economy of truth' should analyse this production without maintaining the illusion that it has to substitute 'ideological' knowledge with 'true' knowledge. According to Foucault, power has to be analysed as productive (not only as oppressive), omnipresent (there are no spaces free from it), relational (not as a possession of the powerful), decentralised (it does not emanate from centres, rather, these centres are merely constituted by relations), intentional (there is a system of regularities) and non-subjective (it cannot be traced back to individual decisions) (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b).

Foucault's thinking was taken up by many postcolonial authors. Postcolonial theory is concerned with the relationship between Europe and its colonies and today's legacies of this relationship, especially in theory, literature and popular culture. It asks how non-European areas, peoples and cultures were constructed in opposition to the European self-image of seeing itself as the pinnacle of humankind – and how this knowledge legitimated oppression. A famous (and often misunderstood) illustration of the complex intersection of relations of power is given by Spivak in her essay *Can the subaltern speak?*, dealing with the possibility of female subjects in colonial India expressing their thoughts in the context of imperialist Enlightenment discourse on the one and traditional patriarchal discourse on the other hand (Said 1993; Hall 1992; Spivak 1994/1988).

The postdevelopment writers (whose arguments have already been summarised above) have been concerned with the fundamental critique of development policy and aid in the post-World War II-era (the 'age of development'). Beyond the 'standard literature' associated with postdevelopment (Sachs 1992a; Escobar 1995; Rahnema 1997), I found other even more remarkable works that were expressing a very similar perspective, but which were slightly less polemical and grandiose while arguing their case (to my mind) more thoroughly (Ferguson 1994; Apffel-Marglin/Marglin 1990, 1994; Nandy 1988; Rist 1997). Postdevelopment was no doubt the most important influence, but also the most controversial. This was due to the fact that the universalism of development discourse so decidedly rejected as a Eurocentric imposition of ways of living and thinking did have progressive aspects in comparison to its colonial predecessor. Cooper correctly notes: 'Much as one can read the universalism of development discourse as a form of European particularism imposed abroad, it could also be read [...] as a rejection of the fundamental premises of colonial rule, a firm assertation of people of all races to participate in global politics and lay claim to a globally defined standard of living.' (Cooper 1997: 84) Especially in the context of the rise of neo-liberalism, many critics of postdevelopment felt they had to defend this claim to global equality in the face of relativist pretensions, which is certainly understandable. Whether postdevelopment was in fact the main threat, is another question.

3. Three Approaches to Development Research and Why I Chose Mine

So what can we learn from all these theories and ideas for development research? If we are talking about development research, we have to differentiate between at least three approaches. The first approach represents the traditional way of thinking: doing research on the universal evolutionary process of societal change and conceiving measures of speeding it up. Its aim is to transform the 'underdeveloped' regions into 'developed' ones. For reasons given above, this approach (which we might name 'development research as modernisation theory') is not considered further here.

The second approach is concerned with research on the concept of development, its origins, its implications, and its consequences. This approach (which could be called 'development research as discourse analysis') has the aim of revealing the historicity and contingency of development discourse, and especially its interweaving with cultural, political, social and economic relations of power.

The third approach might be entitled 'development research as studies in global inequality and social change'. It is concerned with the development of capitalism on a global, regional, national or local scale and often uses exactly the term that has been criticised so much – 'development'. However, many writers in a Marxist tradition use this term in a (seemingly) neutral manner, without intending any implications of development discourse. I have argued above that these implications are still present, if only in the associations of the reader. Still, some writers may correctly insist that to talk about the development of capitalism is neither a Eurocentric nor an authoritarian enterprise. It is important to point out the differences here.

If 'development' is used as an analytical term without attributing it a normative aspect, if heterogeneous developments (plural!) are considered in relation to local, regional and national circumstances, without situating societies on some sort of scale, then there are few reasons for admonition. If, however, 'development' is used to express political objectives, if the term has a positive value and promises a brighter future, if it is seen as a universal process occurring in all societies which is only more advanced in some of them, then many of the critiques listed earlier are appropriate. Then, again, European history is universalised, and sacrifices can be demanded in the name of the greater common good. (This by no means implies arguing against political objectives; rather, they can be better formulated in terms of solidarity and justice, for example.)

My own approach, a critical poststructuralist perspective, has been illustrated above. It contains the reflections of the Frankfurt School as well as the analytical method of Foucault and the preoccupations of the postcolonial and postdevelopment writers. I believe the poststructuralist element is necessary to bear in mind the contingency of one's own perspective, truth claims and statements on social reality, and the critical element is necessary to bear in mind that the academic exercise is no goal in itself but has to yield

results that are politically relevant, and therefore to also produce clear statements on social reality.

Adopting a poststructuralist perspective is by no means identical with privileging the study of texts. Those who criticise 'postmodern theory' for being unable to deal with 'real facts' are assuming that there is a realm of matter (or materialism), and a realm of ideas. Discourse analysis may at best be interesting according to this critique, but it does not say anything about the 'really important' part of reality. To clear up this misunderstanding: Poststructuralism does not privilege the realm of ideas, claiming that ideas determine reality, but it does challenge the separation between these realms. Language has material aspects and material consequences, and material facts are never simply there, but are always mediated by discourse, socially constructed. This misunderstanding has been supported by the preoccupation of many poststructuralists with texts and by their reluctance to carry out empirical research in the traditional sense. The latter is, however, perfectly possible, as has by now been sufficiently illustrated.

Poststructuralist social research reveals its main weakness in comparison to positivist approaches: it highlights the discursive construction of reality and can explain how competing constructions come about. If it is not critical, it remains at this point without judging between competing constructions, thus making it politically dissatisfying. If it is critical, it does pass judgement on the different perspectives and their legitimacy, plausibility and political consequences. Plausibility, however, entails judgement as to whether the construction of the reality in question finds an empirical basis in that reality. But even those works that convincingly argue their case lack a theoretical basis for their conclusion, because the positivist criteria for social science have been eroded and the poststructuralist criteria are not clear yet. Another weakness of poststructuralist perspectives (if it is a weakness) is their aversion to grand theory. Because of their inherent focus on differences and heterogeneity, they are ill disposed to generalise, to draw conclusions beyond their case study. This makes them unable to provide a general theory of capitalism, for example (if they remain true to their epistemological foundations).

In my approach to development research, I attempt to combine the second and the third approaches outlined in the previous section. On the one hand, I believe that an exclusive preoccupation with texts and concepts

is clearly not enough for a social science with political commitments. On the other hand, the preoccupation with texts and discourses is the crucial precondition for a social science unwilling to accept the status quo and the prevailing research categories as given. Social science therefore has to combine discourse analysis and the study of global capitalism. This is at least the consequence of the critical poststructuralist perspective of which I have given a brief outline in this article.

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Abstracts

'Development' is a term which has been linked to widely diverging meanings. Predominantly, it has broadly referred to a process of positive social change which has been achieved in 'developed' countries and is yet to be achieved in 'developing' countries. A critical perspective on the enterprise of 'development' is necessary in order to situate it within a context of political, economic and cultural power relations, but this perspective lacks awareness of its own contingency. A poststructuralist perspective is useful to trace the links between signifier and signified in 'development', and to

denaturalise the concept, but lacks political commitment. Consequently, a synthesis of these perspectives is needed to analyse 'development' in a way that is both theoretically adequate and politically meaningful.

„Entwicklung" ist ein Begriff, der mit äußerst unterschiedlichen Bedeutungsinhalten verbunden ist. Vorwiegend wird darunter der Prozess eines positiven sozialen Wandels verstanden, der in den „entwickelten" Ländern erreicht und von „Entwicklungsländern" noch nicht erreicht wurde. Eine kritische Perspektive analysiert zwar das „Unternehmen Entwicklung" im Kontext politischer, wirtschaftlicher und kultureller Machtverhältnisse, lässt aber Aufmerksamkeit gegenüber ihrer eigenen Kontingenz vermissen. Eine poststrukturalistische Perspektive ist sinnvoll, um die Verbindungen zwischen dem Bezeichnenden (Signifikant) und dem Bezeichneten (Signifikat) aufzuzeigen und das Konzept zu entnaturalisieren – allerdings fehlen politische Aussagen und Festlegungen. Der Autor plädiert für eine Synthese dieser beiden Ansätze, um „Entwicklung" auf eine Weise zu analysieren, die theoretisch angemessen und zugleich politisch aussagekräftig ist.

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 80-93

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Development Research: Quo vadis?

1. Introduction

The combination of a growing population and worldwide increasing standards of living threatens to overstretch the carrying capacity of our planet at both ends: in the use of finite energy and non-renewable natural resources and in the capacity to absorb the polluting effects of human activities. The impact of past and present carbon dioxide emissions is now felt around the world in turbulent weather conditions and, over the years, the phenomenon seems to have worsened.

Global trends such as climate change and other environmental disasters affect all countries whether developed or developing. Poorer countries and the poor in all countries will be the most affected as they have fewer resources to protect themselves against the new risks of global warming, rising sea levels, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. They will need more assistance to meet those complex and interconnected challenges. On the other hand, the rapid industrialisation of China and India and other large emerging economies like Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico or South Africa weighs increasingly on the acceleration of climate change. Understandably, the 'late-comers' claim the right to industrialise as Europe and North America have done during the past centuries, or Japan and 'the Asian Tigers' during the last decades.

Thus, the challenges of sustainable development are manifold: how can the economically more advanced countries be persuaded to accept their responsibility for the protection of global public goods? Can a grand bargain between the developed and the rapidly developing countries give the latter an opportunity to raise their living standards without compromising the future and sustainable development of all countries? How can the poorest

countries of all be protected against the impact of climate change and the depletion of other natural resources? Finally, what are the policies that would serve to reconcile diverse and conflicting interests?

Largely, the management of global policies has been shaped by the 'powerful' players. Most developing countries still have very limited influence in setting the agenda of global negotiations and in the determination of policies by key financial and economic institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group. These institutions, along with the World Trade Organization (WTO), have played an important role in global economic management. But while opportunities have been created, the outcomes have manifested a degree of imbalance. The current multilateral system responsible for designing and implementing international policies is under-performing and lacks policy coherence as the social and environmental dimensions of globalisation tend to be overlooked. The shortcomings of the current waves of economic and financial globalisation, i.e. rising inequalities in and between nations and the neglect of the destructive effects of unfettered economic growth, are only too obvious. How can this problem be dealt with?

Increasing asymmetries in power and inequalities in living standards within and across countries are a fertile ground for violent conflicts, terrorism and, ultimately, insecurity. In this context, religion plays a decisive role for development. To date, the international discourse on cleavages has become obsessed with the supposed threat of the 'clash of civilizations'. It is therefore imperative to search for possible remedies to prevent this and rather initiate a peaceful and constructive dialogue aiming at a universal ethic for sustainable development. How can the positive elements of each culture and civilization be identified and mobilised for peaceful international co-operation and sustainable development?

The credit for putting these pertinent questions on the global agenda goes to far-sighted researchers and puts to the test all development scholars in a special way. They must take into account the fundamental challenges stemming from these global paradigm shifts to keep their research policy-relevant. This means in fact that the profession has to rethink its own role and has to acquire competencies accordingly by adapting methods and theories. This includes thoroughly examining past and present debates on development research. What are the central characteristics of develop-

ment research? What has marked the discipline at its origins and what is of relevance today? Addressing these questions is the *conditio sine qua non* for drawing lessons for the future, and fits with the overarching question of this article: *Development research: Quo vadis?* In other words, which determinants will shape its paths in future? Which fields will be of interest? And, above all, to ask how it can exert a stronger influence on the political decision-making process.

This article deals with these questions by exploring the role of development research in different contexts. Firstly, it provides a brief overview of development research from its early stages after World War II until today. Secondly, it analyses the status quo of our knowledge by identifying central characteristics and current deficits that need to be addressed. Thirdly, it sheds light on possible future research paths and provides insights into potential ways of enhancing the influence and impact of research on development policies.

2. Brief Overview

2.1 Initial Situation

The emergence of development research in the second half of the twentieth century is in large part due to increasing concerns about socio-economic prospects for the so-called 'Third World' after decolonisation. The inauguration speech of the US President Harry S. Truman in 1949 announcing 'a bold new program […] [to] make the benefits of industrial progress […] available for the improvement and growth of under-developed areas' (Sumner 2006: 645) is widely seen as the starting point of development aid and corresponding research activities. In the beginning, the central area of focus was the cluster of 'Third World' countries which were considered, until the late 1960s, to be a relatively homogenous ensemble of developing countries. The overarching principles of the profession can be characterized by normative policy concerns leading to efforts that find possible solutions for development problems, e.g. the inhuman living conditions in poor countries.

Yet, in the context of the Cold War, development policies were definitely shaped by bloc thinking. Running counter to its self-proclaimed

honourable objectives, there were in fact geo-strategic questions of power on top of the – not necessarily hidden – agenda. Since the two rivalling superpowers (USA and USSR) wanted to maintain and expand their spheres of influence and thus had a genuine interest in strong economic – and reliable military – partners, development co-operation was mainly reduced to economic issues. Other aspects such as human rights or good governance played a subordinate role. Moreover, the research community was dominated by economic thinking as well; in particular, modern development theorists equated development with economic growth and propagated the flow of capital as a quick-fix solution and the best and only recipe for development.

2.2 Status Quo

With the end of the Cold War, development co-operation suddenly ceased to be a strategic policy tool of the two blocs. Though the ambition for development co-operation was reduced in the aftermath of the East-West conflict, the new situation permitted the emergence of an enlarged concept of 'development' reflecting a multitude of aspects like natural resources, human rights, public affairs and human security. This was an important step, since the economic-centred approach had finally proven to be a failure. The more the developing world tried to integrate itself into the world economy, the more it became heterogeneous and it became evident that a single approach was insufficient and obsolete for trying to manage or even explain the whole Third World. The phenomena encountered were just too varied and intertwined. Today, in the context of globalisation, they are all the more differentiated and this complexity can hardly be properly addressed or understood from a solely mono-disciplinary perspective. Only a multi-disciplinary approach is adequate for understanding not only economic, but also political, social, cultural and technological aspects of societal change.

Furthermore, even industrialised countries face serious difficulties in adjusting themselves to the neo-liberal world order. Growing parts of their populations are, or risk being, economically and socially marginalised. The economic fragmentation of societies has increased, economic and social costs attached to unsustainable levels of resource consumption are excessive and some economic sectors are faced with the challenge of adjusting to

structural changes at home or abroad. This is just to highlight a few developmental problems of industrialized countries and to refute the presumption that generally associates development problems with poor nations. Today, apart from being confronted by the inherent problems of development, developing countries (and especially those with emerging economies) find themselves facing the developmental problems characteristic of rich countries as well. Therefore, development, as an issue, simultaneously challenging both rich and poor countries, implies that the paths that proved successful for industrialised countries can no longer serve as *the* model for development. Conversely, these established development routes are areas of substantive development research themselves, given that their concept for development is inadequate in dealing with their own problems.

Besides that, a development concept can never be simply transferred, because contextual factors must be considered closely. It is crucial to take into account the specific characteristics of different societies in terms of history, ecology, culture, technology, etc. and determine how these differences can be translated into varied strategies of development. Also, since contextual factors change over time, development research is a dynamic and self-evolving field of study. It covers burning issues and recurring themes most relevant for development such as growth strategies, poverty reduction, gender equality, migration trends, environmental degradation, sociopolitical change or cultural diversity. However, the range of topics covered by development researchers is not cast in stone. They will inevitably evolve as they have over the past decades.

3. Present and Future Trends

3.1 Challenges

As described, development research can be characterized by its inter- or multi-disciplinary perspective, its normative orientation, its awareness of cultural diversity and context sensitivity as well as by its changing and evolving field of research topics (Maurer 2006). These central characteristics implicate different imperatives.

In particular since the 1990 launch of the annual United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report*, one

has emphasized the wide range of disciplinary perspectives in approaching development issues. However, there is still a lack of inter-disciplinary exchange. Therefore, scientists should explore the questions: What are the mental and organisational prerequisites for a fruitful dialogue across the disciplines? How can the gaps be bridged? Further, an important area for future discussion is how development research moves from an 'additive' inter- or multi-disciplinary to an 'integrative' trans-disciplinary perspective (Sumner 2006).

Normative orientation, as identified previously, implies the commitment of development research to policy relevance. This means that development researchers are driven to pro-actively contribute to the formulation of relevant policies and to build bridges between theory and practice. However, the harsh realities of implementation lag far behind the proclaimed goals. There is a need for research programmes that analyse the role of research in the political process. Whose and which knowledge are policies formulated upon? Why do some knowledge producers and providers have a privileged position, especially with donors? These are intrinsic questions to be addressed by the profession of development research. It seems that policy-makers in the multi-lateral institutions and industrialised countries value research undertaken by financial institutions (e.g. the World Bank) more highly than any local ('Southern') research or indigenous knowledge. What an alarming observation! It is crucial to make research available. Tangible results must be heard, especially the ones of Southern institutions which are generally deprived of a direct access to 'Northern' or 'Western' policy-makers. Research must be made available and communicated more effectively to policy-makers and to development practitioners. How can the link between development research and policy be strengthened? This is an important research question, because knowledge does not automatically flow into political decision-making processes. Differences in methodology and discourse between academics and policy-makers as well as mutual prejudices interfere with this flow. Thus, it is indispensable to analyse why and where research does or does not influence policy, and what can be done to achieve greater impact and to better communicate knowledge at the political level (Maxwell/Stone 2004).

Context sensitivity can be better achieved through the inclusion of area studies. Since area studies analyse specific global regions, their findings

should ideally be shared by development researchers. Besides that, context specificity can also be better achieved by the inclusion of research findings of local research institutes that are more aware of local conditions from live-in and face-to-face perspectives. To this end, one must especially strengthen the voice of Southern researchers by promoting their research results and by interconnecting Northern and Southern researchers, for example through scientific partnerships. It is extremely important that Northern and Southern countries learn from each other, draw lessons from past development experiences and, of course, from research findings.

Since development research is a constantly changing and evolving field of study, scholars are continually challenged to elaborate new subject areas. Just a few years ago, the world leaders celebrated the signing of the 'Millennium Declaration' and the global consensus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with concrete objectives, especially in relation to the eradication of extreme poverty. These were put forward as forming the overarching aim for the international development agenda and thus research activities focussed on this aim. Priorities for research interests delineated questions for more and better aid, improved policy coherence and a new strategy for Africa. In the follow up, the 'principle of recipient ownership' as developed in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and the harmonisation and alignment of donor policies and procedures (Rome Declaration) have been accepted as key policy instruments for poverty eradication. Today, just a few years later, the concept of the MDGs, although already out-dated, is not obsolete. Of course, poverty is still a very grave problem and even in rich countries questions of growing social inequalities and distributive justice (a case in point being the concept of the 'new poverty') are rising. However, the relationships between the developed and the developing world are more complex than the MDG agenda suggests. Development issues now go far beyond aid and poverty reduction: they are supranational in scope as they link international relations, trade, aid and security policy. Development research is forced to focus to a greater extent on strategies that manage the dynamic challenges of globalisation, on regional and inter-regional collaboration and on linkages with non-aid development issues like security and the management of the 'global commons'.

The emphasis laid on non-aid development issues can be exemplified by the issue of security. This stream of research emerged with the national secu-

rity strategy that was submitted by the United States after 9/11 and focussed on fragile states and weak societies. As a result, there is a need for contributions of development research in the field of conflict prevention, political stabilization, nation building or transformation. It is also interesting to examine the relation of security to development for other regions. How does Europe, for example, integrate its vision of security into its development agenda? Several studies analysing the link between security and development have shown that both concepts are experiencing an important widening, inclusive of political, social, cultural and ecological aspects. But the question persists: do the two aspects reinforce each other or can there be a trade-off between them? Is security a precondition for development or vice versa?

In the process of globalisation, power constellations are subject to permanent change and thus global interdependencies are shifting constantly. On the regional level, the enlargement process of the European Union (EU) is a striking issue of interest. The accession of Romania and Bulgaria has raised the EU population to around 490 million people and the EU now represents the world's third largest population area after China and India. While the incorporation of twelve new EU member states since 2000 has further increased the EU's overall research capacity, it has also increased the diversity in terms of development gaps, scientific cultures, and specialization patterns. There is a need at all levels for coordination, coherence and visibility that must be carefully taken into consideration by researchers. The success of the EU in coordinating policies among member states and in achieving more coherence between different policy fields is a prerequisite if Europe is to play a more effective role in the field of development co-operation. Research papers are therefore welcomed to analyse the integration and transformation of Eastern European countries and their experiences to cope with these changes on the one hand and to find solutions to the policy incoherence and legitimacy deficit in the EU on the other. What form of specialization do the new members bring to the European Union? How will this transform the policy focus of the EU? Where does the coordination among the European Commission and member states in third countries work? Where does it not work? How can it be improved? What are the institutional mechanisms which enable the EU to respond to man-made disasters? Does the EU serve as a model for post-national problem-solving? Questions galore!

On the international level, relationships are changing, too. Growing tensions between the Western world and Islamic countries can hardly be overlooked. This highlights the need to examine more deeply the role of religion in development. Also, new actors are emerging and positioning themselves on the international stage. The so-called anchor countries – leading regional economic powers such as China, India, Brazil and South Africa – are showing signs of becoming significant drivers of global change. Due to their economic weight, political influence and increasing determination to participate in international processes, they have become indispensable partners in searching for solutions to global structural problems. There is a need for research programmes looking into possibilities to put development co-operation with anchor countries on a new footing of strategic partnership and to place the various instruments of co-operation and other policy fields in a common substantive corridor. The role of these countries as new donors and their impact on the demand for energy and raw materials as well as challenges linked to population growth, urbanization, technological change and economic globalisation require close analysis. There is a special need for research programmes dealing with this subject, because the expected period of 'turbulent multilateralism' (Messner et al. 2007) arising from the new multi-polar power constellation and the competition for power and policy options resulting from it may become the central line of conflicts in the next five decades.

Besides that, private actors are increasingly gaining political importance. Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are getting more and more involved in local, national and global politics. Together with regional and international organizations, they must take their role as global players seriously and are obliged to fulfil conditions of transparency, accountability and good governance. Therefore the scientific community must find a global governance model which sensitively manages international co-operation through international norms and multilateral policies. This is perhaps the only way to deal with global problems. Development research will have to concentrate on global issues more than ever before, notably on the impact of global problems on public resources, on different individual regions, on the interactions between global problems such as the influences of climate change on poverty, and finally on the role of main actors.

3.2 The Way Ahead

An opportunity to think about future development issues and to assess actual development policies is given by development reports. For example, there is the annual *Human Development Report* published by the UNDP, or the *World Development Report* by the World Bank. They provide a means to allow reflection and critical appraisal of past action and performance in the decision-making process. Similar reports should be initiated at the regional level to set out clearly the different perspectives on development co-operation of different regions. What are the differences between US-led development research and European development research, for example? Which kind of development discourse is state-of-the-art in which region?

Providing a genuinely European view to the global debate, a draft concept for the production of a first *European Development Report* (EDR) has recently been submitted by a task group commissioned by the European Commission/DG Development. It aims at strengthening the link between research and policy by initiating a dialogue between policy-makers and researchers in order to identify problems, design research priorities and conduct analysis. This is a substantial step towards creating more visibility and influence for Europe on the international stage. Understandably, there is immense scope for more.

At the heart of the thinking behind the design of the EDR is the normative idea of global well-being or a 'globally inclusive society' based on 'fair multilateralism' (Messner et al. 2007). The EDR firstly endeavours to develop a concept of global social inclusion; secondly, to take stock of reactions of developing countries; lastly, to examine Europe's position and to identify the scope for new approaches. Therefore, it foresees the development of a cluster of global challenges, namely development-security issues, global issues where common action is in every nation's interest and competition issues where interests between countries diverge.

According to the European Consensus on Development, the EU should stimulate the international debate on development and promote best practice examples (Council of the European Union 2005). Concretely, a European network of research centres for development policies is to be promoted – the already existing European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) has offered to fill this gap.

EADI is committed to fostering linkages among researchers and promotes Europe-wide, cross-border, multidisciplinary and policy-relevant debates on the full range of development issues. As the leading network of development research institutes, it offers knowledge brokering and research services as well as training in development and job and funding services. It sets quality standards for development research and fosters links with international research organisations. For example, it has developed a knowledge and information management network aiming to collect and to promote research findings from all over Europe. The best example of successful networking for over thirty years has been its triennial general conference. The next conference will be held in June 2008 in Geneva and will present the opinions of leading European and international development experts and their associates in developing regions on dramatic global challenges as well as on possible policy options and governance models to meet the challenges of sustainable development. Hence, this conference will provide yet another occasion to pursue the discussion on issues touched upon in this article.

4. Conclusion

Efforts such as the ones described above are a good example of ways of fostering the dialogue on future development matters within the scientific community as well as between scholars and practitioners. As this paper has shown, it is vital to review applied research methods and theories again and again to ensure the quality of research and to keep it policy-relevant.

As described, the content of development research changed quite dramatically from its origins in the 1950s and changes were particularly conspicuous during the 1990s and the first years of the new century. The qualitative shift in development co-operation that has been underway still needs to be strengthened. High quality research is fundamentally needed to explore strategies of coping with development problems.

Existing approaches like the MDG concept are laudable in terms of having achieved a global consensus on concerted action in development affairs. But what can be stated at the midterm of the MDG timeline? The

targeted problems persist and in addition other problems that have been neglected so far are becoming aggravated.

Consequently, development researchers must adopt a decisive role in advising policy-makers and practitioners. Otherwise, aid will be delivered less effectively, rather than in accordance with the approved strategy of the European Union, which focusses on responding faster to unexpected events and striving to find better ways to reach those most in need.

Even if scepticism on the effectiveness of development policies has been expressed, progress can be observed: The donor community is uniting and new donors are emerging. It is now the task of development researchers to take stock and positively respond to changing donor-recipient relationships and other global trends. This implies developing new ways, mechanisms and strategies to address and manage the profession and enable its members to better face the inter-related complex problems in the era of globalisation.

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Abstracts

This article provides an overview of past and present debates relating to the essential terms and role of development research. It starts by briefly exploring the paradigm shifts in (research on) international relations from post-colonial area studies and the evolution of development research from the second half of the twentieth century until today. It considers their interrelationship and links to various past and newly emerging development challenges. The authors argue that global paradigm shifts posed a number of fundamental challenges to development research and the profession had to re-think its role and acquire competencies accordingly. The second part considers how to make development research more relevant for the twenty-first century. Today, the prospects for development research are much better than usually acknowledged, for a host of different reasons. However, development research needs to develop new ways and strategies in order to address complex inter-related problems in the era of globalization as well as changing donor-recipient relationships. This is even more important since policies regarding the Millennium Development Goals would seem to be insufficient in the future. New threats such as security risks or climate change and the emergence of China and India must be considered carefully.

Der Beitrag gibt einen Überblick über vergangene und gegenwärtige Debatten über die Rolle und Aufgaben von Entwicklungsforschung. Der erste Teil behandelt die Paradigmenwechsel im Forschungsfeld der Internationalen Beziehungen von postkolonialen *area studies* über die Entste-

hung der Entwicklungsforschung zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts bis heute. Diese werden jeweils in Zusammenhang mit den damals bestehenden und aktuellen Entwicklungsproblemen gestellt. Die AutorInnen zeigen auf, dass globale Paradigmenwechsel eine Reihe grundlegender Herausforderungen an die Entwicklungsforschung stellten, die die dort Tätigen veranlassten, ihre Rolle zu überdenken und sich neue Kompetenzen anzueignen. Im zweiten Teil werden Überlegungen darüber angestellt, wie Entwicklungsforschung eine größere Relevanz für das 21. Jahrhundert erlangen kann. Für die AutorInnen sind die Aussichten für Entwicklungsforschung heutzutage aus mehreren Gründen besser als gemeinhin angenommen. Jedoch müssen in der Forschung neue Wege beschritten und neue Strategien entwickelt werden, um den komplexen Problemen der Globalisierung und den geänderten Beziehungen zwischen GeberInnen und NehmerInnen gerecht zu werden. Dies ist umso wichtiger, als sich die Politiken, die zur Erreichung der Millennium Entwicklungsziele eingesetzt werden, in Zukunft als unzureichend erweisen werden.

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Journal für Entwicklungspolitik XXIII 2-2007, S. 94-104

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Rethinking African Development: Beyond Impasse, Towards Alternatives

1. Developing Africa

The theme of development is one which has been central to African socio-economic and political thought and engineering in the period since the end of the Second World War. Indeed, it was also integral to the birth of pan-Africanism, the onset of the national liberation project, and the launching of the post-independence social contract which the nationalists attempted to construct as the legitimising covenant with the peoples whom they had succeeded in mobilising to reject continued colonial domination. From the time of Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, and the other early pioneers of pan-Africanism to the period of Casely Hayford, C.L.R. James, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nwafor Orizu and other second and third generation pan-Africanist thinkers, the issue of how to develop the African continent has been a constant concern in the ongoing quest for the attainment of continental re-birth. In sum, it is a pre-occupation that has been passed from one generation to the other. The nationalist generation whose struggles ushered Africa into the postcolonial period underpinned their push for political power with the hope that independence would enhance the scope for the realisation of the goals of national and continental socio-economic well-being and advancement that the peoples of the continent craved. A doyen of African historians, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, in seeking to underscore the centrality of the theme of development to the social project of the African nationalist movement, once remarked in retrospect that, at one point, it had become so all-engrossing that the feeling was palpable across the continent that the entrances to the state houses were emblazoned with the notice: 'Silence! Development in

Progress!' Ki-Zerbo should know. He was a contemporary of many of the pioneer nationalists and pan-Africanists whose efforts defined the African world in the period from the early 1940s onwards. He also played an active role in helping to shape the debates that animated the national liberation project. Furthermore, he witnessed the effort – and its attendant limitations – to translate the developmentalist vision that fired the nationalists into policy as African countries, one after the other, attained their independence. So powerful was the ideology of development that was espoused by the nationalists and so rich its promise that it served as a credible platform for the mobilisation of the entire populace, who in turn bought into it to varying degrees, and with an equally varied menu of expectations.

But the pre-occupation with development that was manifest in the period after the Second World War was not limited to Africa alone. In other regions of the world, the problematic of development was one which occupied a central role as governments and thinkers addressed their minds to the question of how to achieve or cement social and economic progress in the face of rapidly changing contexts and the requirements for accumulation. In Europe, for example, where war and economic depression had combined to take a severe toll on national economic well-being and the quality of life, and where popular pressures were mounting for social inclusion, a distinctive field of Development Studies began to emerge after 1945 as an area of scholarly specialisation. Across significant swathes of Europe and Asia, under the banner of revolution, attempts were made to seek a socialist route to development, one which, it was hoped, would avoid the pitfalls of the capitalist mode of accumulation and its vulnerability to cyclical crises that took a huge toll on human populations. Considering, therefore, the fact that the problematic of development was one which resonated in all parts of the contemporary world, it is not surprising that the body of work which has been generated on the theme has spanned virtually all spheres of human endeavour, with insights drawn from various disciplines and, in most cases, mirroring different aspects of the international scholarly and policy preoccupations of this conjuncture. The issues that have been covered have been as varied as the kinds of debates that have taken place. By and large, they are also issues which have remained an abiding part of the quest for African development: industrialisation, agrarian transformation, economic stability and growth, international trade, investments, fiscal policy, science,

technology and innovation, unemployment, income distribution, the mobilisation of domestic savings, public expenditure systems, environmental sustainability, gender dynamics, and foreign aid.

And yet, although imbued with a popular base at the dawn of independence, discontent within the ideology and practice of development was quickly to emerge as the first decade of the postcolonial period came to a close. Under the guise of development, and in the name of catching up with the West, many post-independence African governments sought to stifle opposing views and oppositional politics as power became concentrated in the hands of an increasingly detached elite organised into governments of various forms, be they single party, military or civilian-military diarchies. In this environment, 'development' became an omnibus slogan for silencing contrary voices and concentrating power. Citizens who had been mobilised around visions of self-reliance, nation-building, the ideals of equality and social justice, popular participation and democratic accountability, gradually saw the blurring of those visions under the weight of pressures, both domestic and external. Regimes sought one after the other to dampen expectations and demobilise the populace; repression and authoritarian tactics were freely deployed to this end. The post-colonial social contract that was in the making collapsed even before it could be consolidated as the foundation for the exercise of full citizenship. There was clearly more than a passing irony in Ki-Zerbo's observation that, across Africa, as regimes purported to bury their heads in the business of development, their case appeared to be little more than that of the proverbial ostrich that tucked its head in the sand in order to hide itself, forgetting that the rest of its body was in full view to the world. Increasingly, as the gulf between the government and the people widened, only African leaders and their courtiers believed the rhetoric of development that they themselves pronounced. The bulk of the populace, in a mood of *déjà vu, déjà entendu,* quietly asked 'when will this development finish?' since, the development of which leaders preached was not one that was any longer recognisable to them.

Various explanations have been proffered as to why the vision of development, such as it was enunciated in the national liberation struggle, failed to materialise as expected and in a sustained manner. For instance, it has been claimed that: a carefully programmed project of neo-colonialism by the departing colonial authorities ensured that independent Africa sank

deeper into dependence; the national liberation project was betrayed by many of the nationalists who inherited state power; economies built on a narrow resource base and sectoral imbalances were particularly vulnerable to external shocks; multinational corporations exploited monopolistic or oligopolistic advantages to the disadvantage of their African hosts; the pressures mounted on African governments soon after independence by the principal protagonists of the East-West Cold War had a destabilising effect; and so on. But, of the many interesting arguments that have been adduced, few have emphasised the point that the policies that were implemented were either crafted by 'development experts' seconded from abroad, or borrowed outright from external sources. For, in the end, when we carefully re-read the experience of the 1960s, it should be obvious that the dawn of independence was not accompanied by an investment in independent development thinking for tackling problems that were either peculiar or generic or both. The speed with which foreign aid was woven into the fabric of the domestic policy process after independence and the consequence of that aid in fostering a culture of dependency was to set the stage for a complete erosion, in the 1980s and 1990s, of the capacity of governments to define their priorities and choices in accordance with the exigencies of national development. Foreign aid became the harbinger of foreign models and the soft underbelly of self-reliance. This realisation, together with the rapacious pursuit of narrow commercial interests by donors through the practice of tying aid, is what motivated one commentator to lament: 'Development, development, what crimes are committed in thy name?' Nevertheless, the intellectual roots of the deficit of independent development thinking which African countries experienced are much deeper and are connected to the terms in which African researchers were trained to conceptualise the problematic of socio-economic and political transformation.

2. Development Studies: Science by Analogy

As African countries grappled with the challenges of adding substance to their independence, Development Studies inevitably offered its attractions as a scholarly field. As it became gradually conflated with Area Studies, it also became perversely restricted to an exclusive preoccupation

with the difficulties experienced by developing countries, as though they were the only ones that had a problem of development. Perhaps it is here that the welter of problems that have trailed the concept and conceptualisation of development can be located. These problems have a strong definitional component, but they also go beyond simple definitions to strike at the heart of the very ways in which we think about development, irrespective of whether we characterise it as sustainable, sustained, or human development. For, as Development Studies became reduced to a study of the problems of developing countries, theoretical thinking was gradually oriented in directions which essentially sought to address the experiences of, and challenges faced by, African countries by means of analogies that purported to draw from the history and experiences of the developed countries of Western Europe. In this way, the mainstream theory of development became little less than what Mahmood Mamdani, in a different context, once described as 'science by analogy'; the practice of development itself became an elaborate exercise in mimicry and the concept of development was to be the poorer for it. From the influential work of W.W. Rostow and his *Stages of Economic Growth*, which served as the intellectual foundation for much of the output produced by the modernisation approach to development, to some of the more nuanced modernisation critiques of the Rostowian model, development was consciously or unconsciously seen as an exercise in unilinear evolutionism by means of which the countries of Africa were condemned to pass through the different stages which Europe and the United States had already traversed before arriving at 'development'. The challenge before the scholar and policy intellectual was to identify these stages and then determine what African countries and those of other developing regions needed to do in order to go through them successfully, and arrive at the ultimate goal of development. History, culture, geography, and other contextual factors did not matter much in this analytic frame.

An entire generation of African scholars, schooled in the modernisation tradition, devoted its energies to debating the terms of modernisation as set out in the Rostowian paradigm. How were traditional/cultural barriers to modernisation to be broken down? Who were the social actors best positioned to lead the modernisation project between the 'traditional' elites (chiefs and priests) and the non-traditional elites (military oligarchs and civil servants)? What role could foreign investment play in nurturing struc-

tures of modernisation? From Political Science to Sociology, Economics to Anthropology, History and Geography, social scientists were encouraged to explore the problematic of development from the viewpoint of modernisation. But for all the energies invested in these types of questions, there was silence on a critical concern: how was this notion of modernisation fundamentally different from the ideology of the 'civilising mission' on the basis of which colonialism was justified? After all, the idea of this mission was to make the 'native' look more like the European, including, if necessary, through policies of assimilation that included teaching him/her European table manners and dress codes. At its crudest, the modernisation approach reduced the development problematic to a question of how African countries could be made to become more like Europe and the United States. This unilinear evolutionism continues, to varying extents, to influence development thinking on, and development policy-making for, Africa. Thus, when World Bank economists speak about 'leapfrogging' development in Africa or elsewhere through the instrumentality of the fabled free market, when others insist that what Africa requires is a strong dose of Protestant/Calvinist, or Confucian ethic, when otherwise knowledgeable commentators suggest that what Africa needs is to strengthen a culture of trust and build up its social capital, their thoughts, however well-meaning, harken back to the Rostowian model by which it is assumed that the development tracks that must be beaten by nations are already set and cast in terms of the history of Europe and North America. The entire structural adjustment model of the IMF and the World Bank is also framed in that mould; it is only the jargon by which the message is transmitted that has changed.

The emergence of the dependency school and the justifiable diatribe which its leading exponents launched against the modernisation approach represented a concerted effort at a radical break from the dominant thinking about development that prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s. It also provided much-needed relief from the suffocating dominance of modernisation perspectives. The dependency school succeeded in demolishing a key pillar on which the modernisation approach rested, namely, the assumption that African countries were 'backward'/'undeveloped'/'underdeveloped'/'traditional' only because of deep-seated domestic structures that were resistant to modernisation – and which were ultimately tied to culture. From Andre Gunder Frank and Ernesto Laclau to Walter Rodney, Samir

Amin and Claude Ake, among others, they showed that there was a close correlation between the mode of integration of Africa and other developing regions into the world system and the state of underdevelopment they were experiencing. Where the modernisation approach denied or downplayed the role of the external in obstructing or distorting domestic accumulation, the dependency school stressed the centrality of the external to domestic outcomes. The more sophisticated among the theorists of the dependency approach went a step further and attempted to establish a dialectic of the internal and external in ways which sought to capture the complex interplay of local and international factors, actors, and politics in conditioning the development process. However, the problematic as posed by many a dependency theorist was one which did not completely free itself from the conceptual frame of the modernisation approach, insofar as they mostly treated underdevelopment mechanically as the flip side of development. In positing itself as the opposite of the modernisation approach, the underdevelopment school ultimately remained within the terrain of the former, the only difference being that it drew a different set of conclusions.

3. Structural Adjustment and the Crisis of Development Thinking

The global political and economic crises experienced during the course of the first and second halves of the 1970s also translated into a crisis for development thinking. Symbolised by the OPEC oil price increases and Middle East conflicts of the period, the crises produced right-ward shifts in the politics of the leading industrial countries of the global North and culminated in the elevation of free market principles to a core position in macro-economic policy-making. The resultant decline of Keynesian economic thinking, side by side with the decline of the dependency school, was accompanied by the rise to ascendancy and hegemony of a neo-liberal economic orthodoxy that was first mooted in the contemporary period by Milton Friedman and his disciples in the Chicago School. Matters were not helped by the collapse of the experiments in socialist economic planning championed by Russia and its COMECON/Warsaw Pact allies. The end of the Soviet socialist model gave force to the claim which champions of the

emerging neo-liberal orthodoxy of the free market, now enthroned in the most important international/multilateral financial institutions, freely made in the course of the 1980s and 1990s: namely, that there was no alternative to their policy reform package. The more exuberant intellectual partisans of this emerging neo-liberal age were to proclaim the end of history and the death of development, in celebration of the market-based counter-revolution that was in the making. The market-based blueprint which they were advancing was already being promoted in Africa as a comprehensive structural adjustment package which was purportedly designed to rescue the continent from the consequences of two decades of *dirigiste* and state-interventionist development, and to pave the way for a market-led framework for accumulation. In order to strengthen the intellectual and political case for structural adjustment, officials and partisans of the IMF and the World Bank spared no effort in promoting a wholesale revisionist interpretation of the economic history of Africa from the 1960s through to the end of the 1970s. Their verdict from this revisionism was that the first 20 years of African independence were lost decades, on account of the 'irresponsible' state-interventionist policies pursued by governments. It is a verdict that offers an insight into the very narrowly economistic interpretation of development built into the adjustment model promoted by the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors.

The history of the introduction of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment into the African policy environment is still so fresh in our minds that, like its content, it needs no repetition here. Also, the methods by which the neo-liberal adjustment framework itself was secured are too well-known to merit rehashing. Furthermore, the consequences of structural adjustment – ranging from deindustrialisation to the collapse of incomes and the decline of civil service capacities – remain such harsh realities with which the populace grapples on a daily basis that they need no detailed presentation here. Suffice it then to note that for 25 years, that is, from the period since the early 1980s to date, the structural adjustment model has either defined policy choices made by African leaders outright, or underpinned the priorities set for the continent. This turn of events came about, not because it has proved to be impeccable in conceptualisation or successful in practice but because the autonomy of the entire African policy system had been eroded and its structures – or what is left of them – hijacked. Thus

it is, that in spite of the fact that structural adjustment has been a signal failure on virtually all fronts – a failure to which the World Bank has itself admitted – Africa has remained stuck with the macro-economic prescriptions of the Bretton Woods institutions as if in fulfillment of the claim that there is no alternative to the model. But the ideological position that denies alternatives in life – even when they seem remote – is one which destroys all critical thinking and carries an authoritarian load that should be resisted. And when it pertains to such matters as development, it is important for the African academy to challenge itself and make a bold push to reclaim the right, both to independent thinking about development and the domestic and/or global policy spaces for the exercise of that thinking. No matter how we look at the issue, no people can develop themselves by the good will of others, however genuine, or the charity of others, however generous. And it is this, together with the 25 years lost to the careless experimentations carried out by the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the need to address the challenges of continental recovery from the effects of maladjustment, that make it necessary for African scholars to engage with the subject.

4. Beyond the Impasse, Towards Alternatives

Researchers and policy intellectuals active in the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) have historically been at the forefront of the contestation of much of the received wisdom that has supported the dominant development policies implemented by governments, bilateral donors and multilateral institutions in the period since the end of the Second World War. The translation of that contestation into alternative frames of analysis for the liberation of the continent, however, has remained an unfinished business to which attention must now be focused full-scale and full-time. The urgency of the challenge is located on many fronts, but there is perhaps none more worrisome than the spirited investment which is being made under different guises to argue the case for a second colonialism. Given CODESRIA's history and mandate, it is the one institution which is properly positioned to lead an African counter-counter-revolution to neo-liberal orthodoxy and its pernicious effects, doing so by

marshalling the best of the critical social thought available in the community it was established to serve and represent.

CODESRIA was established in 1973 as an initiative of the African social research community. It was given a specific mandate to extend the frontiers of knowledge production on and about Africa. The specific goals for which the Council was set up and which are stated in its Charter arose directly from the aspiration of the peoples of Africa to achieve all-round socio-economic and political development that would qualitatively improve human conditions across the continent. Its triennial meetings have also become the most significant gathering of intellectuals on the African continent and are convened to take stock of the road, which, as a community, we have travelled and the challenges that lie ahead. At a time when there is a widespread feeling that the contemporary development debate is characterised by a deep-seated poverty of imagination, CODESRIA calls on the African social research community to engage in a collective re-thinking of development with a view to proposing alternatives to the current stalemate in thinking and policy. In this sense, we want to carry the social research community beyond the parameters that have informed development thinking in and about Africa to date, including the more recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

This text was first published in a special issue of the CODESRIA Bulletin, No. 3 & 4 (2005), focussing on development alternatives for Africa (http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/contents_bulletin/bulletin_3_05.htm). It has been slightly changed for our purpose.

Abstracts

The article discusses the role of the developmentalist project within an African context, such project being part both of the national liberation struggles and the descent of most post-colonial states into authoritarianism and economic crisis. Special emphasis is given to the problematic role of Western prescriptions that shaped the fate of the continent – from the modernization approach to the neo-liberal orthodoxy. As a consequence,

the article calls on African social scientists to find new, independent and imaginative ways of thinking about development.

Der Aufsatz befasst sich mit dem „Projekt Entwicklung“ in Afrika, das mit den nationalen Befreiungskämpfen ebenso eng verbunden war wie mit dem Abgleiten der meisten postkolonialen Staaten in Autoritarismus und Wirtschaftskrise. Eine problematische Rolle spielten dabei westliche Rezepte – vom Modernisierungsansatz bis hin zur neoliberalen Orthodoxie. Der Artikel ruft daher afrikanische SozialwissenschaftlerInnen dazu auf, neue, unabhängige und unkonventionelle Entwicklungskonzepte zu erarbeiten.

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Gefördert aus öffentlichen Mitteln der

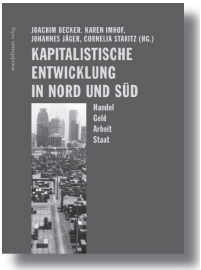
Österreichische
Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

Journal für Entwicklungspolitik (JEP)
ISSN 0258-2384, Erscheinungsweise: vierteljährlich
Heft XXIII, 2-2007, ISBN 978385476-226-3
Preis des Einzelhefts: Euro 9,80; sFr 17,50
Preis des Jahresabonnements: Euro 39,80; sFr 69,–
Abonnementbezug über die Redaktion:
Journal für Entwicklungspolitik, Berggasse 7, A-1090 Wien,
e-mail: office@mattersburgerkreis.at
Das Abonnement kann unter Einhaltung einer dreimonatigen Kündigungsfrist gekündigt werden.

1. Auflage 2007

Satz: Julia Löw, Wien
Druck: Interpress, Budapest

Offenlegung nach § 25 Mediengesetz
Medieninhaber: Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik an den Österreichischen Hochschulen, Berggasse 7, A-1090 Wien
Grundlegende Richtung des JEP: Wissenschaftliche Analysen und Diskussionen von entwicklungspolitischen Fragestellungen und Berichte über die entwicklungspolitische Praxis. Verantwortlich für Inhalt und Korrekturen sind die AutorInnen bzw. die Redaktion.



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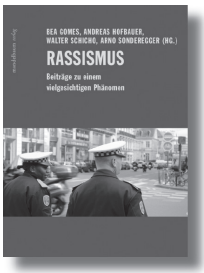

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