

# **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

mandelbaum *edition südwind*

## **Inhaltsverzeichnis**

- 4      KARIN FISCHER, GERALD HÖDL  
Perspectives on Development Studies: A Short Introduction
- 12     HENRY BERNSTEIN  
The Antinomies of Development Studies
- 28     UMA KOTHARI  
Geographies and Histories of Development
- 45     FRANS J. SCHUURMAN  
Development Studies: Work in Progress
- 64     ARAM ZIAI  
The Meaning of 'Development': A Critical Poststructuralist  
Perspective
- 80     THOMAS LAWO, EDITHA LOEFFELHOLZ VON COLBERG  
Development Research: Quo vadis?
- 94     ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI, FRANCIS B. NYAMNJOH  
Rethinking African Development: Beyond Impasse, Towards  
Alternatives
- 105    Editors and Authors
- 109    Impressum

ARAM ZIAI

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 assertion 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.

## References

- Alcalde, Javier Gonzalo (1987): *The Idea of Third World Development. Emerging Perspectives in the United States and Britain, 1900-1950*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Apffel-Marglin, Frédérique/Marglin, Stephen (eds., 1990): *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Apffel-Marglin, Frédérique/Marglin, Stephen (eds., 1996): *Decolonising Knowledge. From Development to Dialogue*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Cooper, Frederick (1997): *Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept*. In: Cooper, Frederick/Packard, Randall (eds.): *International Development and the Social Sciences. Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 64-92.
- Cowen, Michael P./Shenton, Robert W. (1996): *Doctrines of Development*. London: Routledge.
- Escobar, Arturo (1995): *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gustavo Esteva (1991): *Preventing Green Redevelopment*. In: *Development* 2, 74-78.
- Esteva, Gustavo (1992): *Development*. In: Sachs (ed.): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books, 6-25.
- Foucault, Michel (1979): *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, Michel (1980a): *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972- 1977*, ed. C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, Michel (1980b): *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. New York: Vintage.
- Frank, Leonard (1986): *The Development Game*. In: Rahnema 1997a, 263-273.
- Hall, Stuart (1992): *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power*. In: Hall, Stuart/Gieben, Bram: *Formations of Modernity*. London: Polity, 276-320.
- Horkheimer, Max (1995/1937): *Traditionelle und kritische Theorie*. In: Horkheimer, Max: *Traditionelle und kritische Theorie. Fünf Aufsätze*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 205-260.

- Horkheimer, Max/Adorno, Theodor W. (1988/1944): *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer.
- Nandy, Ashis (ed., 1988): *Science, Hegemony and Violence. A Requiem for Modernity*. Tokyo: Oxford University Press.
- Nisbet, Robert (1969): *Social Change and History. Aspects of the Western Theory of Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rahnema, Majid (ed., 1997a): *The Post-Development Reader*, London: Zed Books.
- Rahnema, Majid (1997b): *Development and the People's Immune System: The Story of another Variety of AIDS*. In: Rahnema 1997a, 111-129.
- Rahnema, Majid (1997c): *Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signposts, a New Language and New Paradigms*. In: Rahnema 1997a, 377-403.
- Rist, Gilbert 1997: *The History of Development. From Western Origins to Global Faith*. London: Zed Books.
- Sachs, Wolfgang (ed., 1992a): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books.
- Sachs, Wolfgang (1992b): *Introduction*. In: Sachs (ed.): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books, 1-5.
- Said, Edward (1993): *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1994/1988): *Can the Subaltern Speak?* In: Williams, Patrick/Chrisman, Laura (eds.): *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 66-111.
- Toye, John (1987): *Dilemmas of Development. Reflections on the counter-revolution in development theory and policy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ziai, Aram (2004): *Entwicklung als Ideologie? Das klassische Entwicklungsparadigma und die Post-Development Kritik*. Hamburg: Deutsches Übersee-Institut.
- Ziai, Aram (2007): *Globale Strukturpolitik? Die Entwicklungspolitik der BRD und das Dispositiv der Entwicklung im Zeitalter von neoliberaler Globalisierung und neuer Weltordnung*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.

## 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.

Aram Ziai  
Projekt Internationale Entwicklung  
Universität Wien  
Spitalgasse 2-4, Altes AKH, Campus Hof 5.1  
A-1090 Wien  
aram.z@gmx.net