Lecture Notes

DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES: NATURE & TREND OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

(Part-I)

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Learning outcomes:

Having read this lecture note, you should understand:

- ***D/development is both a continuous intellectual and ideological project as well as an ongoing material process***
- ***The value of historical and geographical perspectives on D/development***
- ***The power and politics of 'labelling' and categorizing poor peoples, places and the spaces of development.***
- ***The changing geographies of north-south and south-south interactions and development cooperation and the rise of emerging economies from the global South like China, India and Brazil.***

Introduction

Development is one of the most complex words in the English language (Williams 1976) and little consensus exists around the meaning of this heavily contested term, yet many nation-states and international organizations claim to be pursuing this objective in some way and vast sums of money are spent every year in its name. Notoriously hard to define, the term 'development' often refers simply to 'good change', a positive word that in everyday parlance is practically synonymous with 'progress' and is typically viewed in terms of increased living standards, better health and well-being and other forms of common good that are seen to benefit society at large. Development also often simply means 'more': whatever we might have some of today we might or should have more of tomorrow (Wallerstein 1994). In many ways the strength of development as an idea comes from its power to seduce, in every sense of the term: 'to please, to fascinate, to set dreaming but also to abuse, to turn away from the truth, to deceive' (Rist 1997: 1).

A distinction can usefully be made here between 'big D' Development and 'little d' development (Hart 2001). The former refers to a post-Second World War project of intervention in the 'Third World' whilst the latter points to the development of capitalism as a 'geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes' (Hart 2001: 650). D/development can thus be viewed simultaneously as both a project and a process. In other words, development is both a continuous intellectual and ideological project as well as an ongoing material process. Historically the pursuit of 'development' has been focused on

particular spaces and regions: most frequently on the space of the 'Third World', which was often seen to be characterized by common features such as poverty, famine, environmental disaster and degradation, political instability, regional inequalities and so on. A particular geography of the 'Third World' has thus been historically imagined around a powerful and negative set of images and a series of tragic stereotypes, along with a bewildering array of labels for people and places that are seen as 'deficient' in some way or that are not considered 'developed' and therefore require external intervention. In many ways this is the power of development: 'the power to transform old worlds, the power to imagine new ones' (Crush 1995: 2).

Development agencies often draw upon statistical indicators to produce certain stories about the peoples and places where they seek to intervene and to narrate the lives and geographies of aid recipients, but what constitutes 'knowledge' in development policy and practice is often defined in relation to quantitative measures, statistical data, formal academic research and Western 'science' and this often helps to reproduce the image of an underdeveloped, primordial, traditional and war-ravaged 'Third World' (Ahluwalia 2001). In other words, these narrations of the disparities between regions are spaceproducing practices that help to construct and imagine a world in need of development. As Escobar (1995) has argued, the idea of a 'Third World' gives enormous power to Western development institutions to shape popular perceptions of Africa, Asia or Latin America. The 'Third World' is thus partly defined by and becomes intelligible through the languages and representations of the agencies and institutions of global development.

In some ways the lack of an agreed set of international development indicators and measures or of common systems of data collection tells its own story of the failure of international development since 1945 (see Case study 8.1). A major problem with the geographies of development produced from these statistics is that they have allowed some observers to label whole areas as 'Third World' or 'lesser developed' as if the same could be said of all its constituents (Wood 1985). In emphasizing what people are deprived of (as is implied by poverty), statistics impose a negative uniformity upon non-Western societies as poor people are categorized and become objects of study or are labelled in ways that homogenize them, ignoring the complexity of their identities (which are then 'fixed' and reduced by imposing labels such as 'poor' or 'refugee'). Further, labelling whole regions and spaces as 'developed', 'lesser developed' or 'developing' (all of which are valueladen expressions) reduces and overlooks the political, economic, social and cultural *diversity* of the places and communities included within these gross generalizations, simplifications and aggregations.

Thus, the picture of unevenness and injustice in the contemporary world that comes to us through these labels is not always a sharp, coherent and precise one and often this unevenness is not effectively conveyed in the statistical measures that are taken as indices of what constitutes 'development'. Crucial then to the imagination of a world requiring development interventions is a process of setting worlds apart and a politics of labelling. All too often the 'developing world' has been defined as a 'problem' for Western governments that can only be resolved with the intervention of Western 'experts', donors, technology, expertise or ideology (see Case study 8.2). Moving

beyond the labelling of 'Third World' peoples and places as a homogeneous group, it is important to grasp how places and peoples are spatially and socially *differentiated* through development and inequality, experiencing progress and 'good change' in a variety of ways.

Behind the tragic stereotype of the 'Third World' there is an alternative geography, one which demonstrates that the introduction of development has been a 'protracted, painstaking and fiercely contested process'(Bell 1994: 175). The chapter also argues that the use of categories (such as 'developing world' or 'Third World') to demarcate world regions on the basis of their levels of development is increasingly disputed as these categories are beginning to break down and decompose (Sidaway 2012). This is happening partly as a consequence of the recent (re)emergence of a number of 'rising powers' in the global South such as Brazil, China and India which are shifting global economic power towards the South and unsettling the boundaries used to differentiate rich and poor, 'First' and 'Third' World, 'developed' and 'developing' countries.

The first section of the chapter examines the origins of the 'three worlds' schema during the Cold War and the emergence of a space called the 'Third World' that became a focal point for the ideological struggle between capitalism and communism, between the USA and the USSR and their different forms of aid and 'development'. The next section then discusses two of the most important conceptual perspectives that have been formulated on the relations between development and inequality: the *modernization* and *dependency* schools. Although there have been many other different strands of development thinking, both these perspectives have been widely influential and remain relevant to an understanding of theory and practice today. The next section then outlines the need to view development historically and to formulate a sense of how it has been redefined through time. How have historical forces shaped our understanding of the geography of development and in what ways are the legacies of the past important to understanding contemporary global economic difference and inequality? The penultimate section of the chapter then looks at the 'rising powers' and examines the emergence of new Southern donors, exploring the implications of their rise for contemporary geographies of development. The concluding section returns to the key themes of unevenness and inequality and challenges the notion that 'development' is just an issue for the global South.

Conceptualizing the Development

When considering the many ways in which development has been conceptualized it is useful to consider the history of 'Development thinking' (Hettne 1995), or the sum total of ideas about development theory, ideology and strategy. Development *theories* are logical propositions about how development occurred in the past and/ or should occur in the future. Development *strategies*are the practical paths to development adopted by a wide range of actors, from the 'grassroots' to the international. Development *ideologies* are the different goals and objectives that underpin development theories and strategies. In many ways this 'development thinking' has often been caught in a 'Western' perception of reality or has been based around 'Western' philosophies, experiences and histories (Hettne 1995; Power 2003). Conceptualizing development is partly about the negotiation of what constitutes 'progress' and 'improvement' and the

definition of what constitutes 'appropriate' intervention in the affairs of 'poor' or 'lesser developed' countries. Since all-encompassing definitions have been contested and controversial, little consensus exists today but some core conceptions have emerged, many of which have continued relevance in the contemporary world. Although there are many different strands of development thinking to explore, the modernization and dependency approaches have been two of the most influential in the twentieth century. Both approaches were far from being static, uniform or unified, however, and neither represents a singular commonly agreed approach. In discussing these different conceptions then it is important to think about where and when they emerged. Most reflect some of the priorities of development thinking characteristic of their era. The formation of development theories, therefore, depends on different perceptions of 'development challenges' at different times.

Development and the geography of the 'Third World'

Definitions of the term 'Third World' have been contested, as have the origins of the phrase (Mountjoy 1976; O'Connor 1976; Auty 1979; Pletsch 1981; Wolfe-Phillips 1987), yet the concept of 'three worlds' can hardly be said to convey a precise meaning or to be characterized by a specific geography with clear boundaries. The three worlds schema posited a 'First World' of advanced

The Millennium Development Goals

One area where a consensus has been established by the international community is around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations had agreed to achieve by the year 2015, following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000. They included: (1) eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieving universal primary education; (3) promoting gender equality and empowering women; (4) reducing child mortality; (5) improving maternal health; (6) combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensuring environmental sustainability; and (8) developing a global partnership for development. Together with these eight goals were 21 targets and a series of measurable indicators for each target. There is broad agreement that while the MDGs provided a focal point for governments on which to hinge their policies and overseas aid programmes to end poverty and improve the lives of poor people – as well as provide a rallying point for NGOs to hold them to account – they have been criticized for being too narrow. The eight MDGs failed to consider the root causes of poverty, or gender inequality, or the holistic nature of development. No mention was made of human rights or energy issues, nor did the MDGs specifically address economic development. While the MDGs, in theory, applied to all countries, in reality, they were considered targets for poor countries to achieve, with finance from wealthy states. There was often a perception then that the MDGs were rooted in a Northern agenda and that countries of the North should thus pay for them (in other words that the MDGs were to be achieved through aid alone). As the MDG deadline approached, around 1 billion people were still living on less than US$1.25 a day – the World Bank measure on poverty – and more than 800 million people do not have enough food to eat. Women are still fighting hard for their rights and millions of women still die in childbirth. To take these targets beyond 2015 a set of 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) have been agreed that represent a new universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and policies over the next 15 years. In total 17 goals have been agreed (and within them are a further 169 targets), although it remains unclear how they will be funded. Member states agreed the draft of 17 SDGs set at a UN summit in September 2015. They became applicable from January 2016 and must be met before the deadline of 2030. Their success or failure will have immense consequences, not only for the world's poor, but also for the credibility of collective action by the international community.

capitalism in Europe, the USA, Australia and Japan, a 'Second World' of the socialist bloc (China's position within this has been much debated) and a 'Third World' made up of the countries that remained when the supposedly 'significant' spaces of the world had been accounted for. These terms thus have to be approached with some caution. For some observers the terms global 'North' and 'South' are preferable to the 'three worlds' scheme but again there have been problems with defining where the boundaries of this global divide can be drawn.

Following the fall of the Eastern Bloc (or Second World), many of its constituent countries were reclassified as 'developing', despite being geographically located in the 'North'. At the same time, geographically 'southern' nations previously considered to be part of the 'Third World' such as China, Brazil, India and South Africa, have experienced levels of economic growth that appear to bring them closer to the 'First World'. Furthermore, the lines that have so far divided North and South are now present within *every nation-state* and are making ever less appropriate the conventional language used to interpret the geography of development in the world economy (rich/poor, North/South, First World/Third World, developed/developing) (Power 2003).

Subscribers to the three worlds scheme have been criticized for the simplicity of these divisions and their failure to recognize diversity and difference within these spaces; the world does not consist of a series of discrete individual national or regional economies in the way often suggested in United Nations and World Bank reports and in the context of globalization it is important to attend the *interdependencies* that link and connect different places, peoples, nations and regions. We also need to remember that the pursuit of development is not exclusive to particular regions (such as the so-called 'Third World') and that issues of poverty and inequality are also highly pertinent in both the 'First World' and in the former socialist states that comprised the 'Second world'. The onset of a global economic downturn in 2007 has had implications for the livelihoods of almost everyone in an increasingly interconnected world and there has been evidence of rising levels of unemployment, poverty and homelessness in many supposedly 'advanced' and 'developed' Western economies.

'Development' has historically served in part as a kind of 'lighthouse' (Sachs 1992) or as a 'lodestar' (Wallerstein 1991) into which several different movements, governments and institutions have invested faith and meaning. The period 1955–75 was one of extraordinary global change and of confrontational political realignment as a result of the global ideological struggle between capitalism and communism (the Cold War), but it was also a period that saw an intensification of debates concerning the development of the 'Third World' and the beginning of collective political demands in the fields of 'development' and politics (see Case study 8.2). With the accelerating pace of decolonization and the creation of independent states in the South, geopolitical questions begun to be addressed from a set of new or 'Third World' perspectives and there was a growing perception that 'underdeveloped' countries had distinct geopolitical considerations from those of Western societies (see also Chapter 20).

The 'three worlds' schema is very much a Cold War conceptualization of space and is strongly associated with the global social and political conflict between capitalism and communism, between the USA and USSR, in the second half of the twentieth century. During this time both

these superpowers used the giving of foreign aid as a way to promote their own wider political and strategic objectives and to promote their own particular ideological visions of the 'correct' pathways to development (capitalist or communist) (see Case study 8.2). For the USA, on the one hand, the idea of development was seen as the way to counter the spread of communism and of 'making the world safe for capitalism' (Westad 2006: 31) since the donation of foreign aid was often linked to a recipients acceptance of market access and the exclusion of communists and left-wing socialists from government. The USSR, on the other hand, saw foreign aid as a way of 'exporting' communist revolution to the periphery, of building a sphere of influence and creating a block in opposition to the West (Berzoets 2011). Both the USA and USSR identified vital national interests in 'Third World' territories and for both Washington and Moscow 'developing areas appeared critical to the achievement of basic strategic, economic, political and ideological goals' (McMahon 2001: 2). In both cases foreign aid was thus used to secure alignment between the politics of emergent 'Third World' countries and the wider geopolitical strategies of the USA and USSR (see Case study 8.3) underlining the importance of geopolitics to both the theory and practice of development.

In 1949, US President Harry Truman spoke of the emergence of an 'underdeveloped' world that presented a 'handicap and threat both to them and the more prosperous areas' (Truman 1949). Truman went on to explain the need for 'modern, scientific and technical knowledge' as a pathway to overcoming this 'handicap' of underdevelopment and announced the beginning of a 'bold new program' within the 'developed world' to resolve inequality and remedy impoverishment in 'backward' areas. This agenda was further advanced under the administration of President John F. Kennedy (1961–3) that oversaw the creation of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1961. In the same year Kennedy also proposed an 'Alliance for Progress', a 10-year US$20 billion programme that considerably increased economic and development cooperation between the US and Latin America as a way of stopping the spread of communism in its tracks.

Bandung, non-alignment and the 'Third World'

The Bandung conference was a meeting of representatives from 29 African and Asian nations, held in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955, which aimed to promote economic and political cooperation within the 'Third World' and to oppose colonialism. The conference was sponsored by Burma, India, Indonesia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Pakistan and tried to cut through the layers of social, political and economic difference that separated nations of the 'Third World' in order to think about the possibility of common agendas and actions. The aims of the 29 nations that attended included a desire to promote goodwill and cooperation among Third World nations and to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests. Bandung was in many ways the 'launching pad for Third World demands' where countries distanced themselves from the 'big powers seeking to lay down the law' (Rist 1997: 86). It was not hard for countries with shared histories of colonial exploitation to find something in common, since the 'agenda and subject matter had been written for centuries in the blood and bones of participants' (Wright 1995: 14). In his opening speech to the conference on 18 April 1955, President Sukarno of Indonesia urged participants to remember that they were all united by a common 'detestation' of colonialism and racism (Sukarno 1955: 1) and pointed out that colonialism was not dead or in the past but also had its modern ('neo-colonial') forms. The conference was especially successful in hastening the arrival of new international institutions explicitly dealing with 'development' (Rist 1997)

The Soviet Union also sought influence through aid after the Second World War. Initially it offered modest amounts of subsidized oil and technical assistance along with weaponry and military training before moving to a much more extensive involvement in regional conflicts through the supply of military capabilities and the use of proxies, such as Cuba. After Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union progressively drew in Cuba, Vietnam, Laos and several African states (such as Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique), drawing upon Lenin's argument that the peoples of the colonial world represented *de facto* allies of the proletariat and of the first proletarian state, the Soviet Union. Their struggle for independence from the imperialist West would contribute to the weakening of the major opponents of the Soviet Union, including ultimately the United States. In the early stages of Soviet involvement in the 'Third World' the model that clients were expected to follow was that of the Soviet Union itself with its focus on state control of the 'heights' of the economy, heavy industrial projects, import substitution, reduction of ties with the capitalist West, and closer integration with socialist states (Valkenier 1983). An important aspect of Soviet policy toward countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America was the provision of equipment for infrastructure and industrial development projects as well as technical assistance and the education and training of local people to build the foundations of modern industrial and agricultural enterprises. Soviet aid almost always went for large and visible projects in the state sector that were expected to increase the productive capacities of the recipient country and reduce their dependence on the capitalist West. Over time, however, military support generally outweighed economic assistance in Soviet policy.

China also used aid and development cooperation to further its socialist agenda and to compete with Soviet and US influence in regions like Africa, constructing itself as part of the 'Third World' and at the head of a united international proletariat battling against imperialism. Chinese leaders believed that by fomenting revolution in the various 'rural' areas of the world, eventually the liberation movements would surround and overrun the urban areas, just as they had in China during its civil war. Between 1967 and 1976 China's aid had reached an average of 5 per cent of government expenditure and at the start of the 1970s Chinese teams were building close to 100 different turn-key aid projects around the world (Brautigam 2009: 41). By 1978 some 74 countries were receiving aid from China, the largest group of which were in Africa, and by then China had aid programs in more African countries than the USA. The Chinese often made a point of supporting schemes that the West had rejected on narrowly economic grounds or which were important to African states for political or psychological reasons, and they also made a point of 'doing something' for districts that the Europeans had been content to leave as backwaters (Snow 1988). Aid was also an important geopolitical tool for the Chinese in the contest with Taiwan (also an aid giver) and the USSR (where the Chinese aimed to shame the Kremlin by stepping up their charity and economic aid and by providing fewer arms). Aid thus became an important way of exposing the limitations of China's opponents, both Western and Soviet.

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