

7 Trajectories of Development Theory: Capitalism, Socialism, and Beyond

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Introduction

Ours is an epoch of closures and openings, of chilling conformity and vibrant resistances. The literature of the late twentieth century was pervaded by a sense of departure from the ostensible security of the past. Theoretical debates have been frequently punctuated by the prefix "post" – so we can move, for example, from postmodernism to postcolonialism, or from post-Marxism to post-development. At the same moment, we have been confronted by the signifiers of a radical closure, so that one can encounter the posited "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992). Conversely, in a symptomatic reaction to assertions of endings, we have been encouraged to believe in new beginnings or new affirmations. Critically juxtaposed to the notion of the "end of history," it has been suggested that we have been witnessing the emergence of a *new* globalism in human relations, the proliferation of *new* social movements, and the surfacing of a *new* age for democracy. Equally, in the more specific context of development theories, it is possible to discern a connected juxtaposition, whereby ideas concerning the end of development, or "post-development" (Latouche 1993; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997), exist next to the desire to rethink and reproblematicize what can be meant by "development" (Nederveen Pieterse 2000; Pretes 1997). Furthermore, the contemporary scene continues to be characterized by the continuing dissemination of an orthodox Western vision of development for the non-West, most clearly reflected in notions of "structural adjustment," deregulation of the economy, privatization, "good governance," and more recently "social capital" (Fine 1999). Such a vision, which is a continuation of an apparently endless Western will to develop the world, has become the subject

of an increasingly multi-dimensional critique relating to such questions as democracy, social justice, environmental sustainability, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the geopolitics of knowledge (Coronil 2000; Escobar 1995; Marglin and Marglin 1990; Sachs 1992; Slater 1995; Tucker 1999).

What is now clear is that with the post-1989 dissolution of the Second World, the accelerating tendencies of globalization, and the proliferation of a series of acute social tensions and conflicts, there has also been a resurgence of interest in the state of North-South relations and in the ways in which development is conceived. This resurgence has also been reflected in the domain of geographical scholarship, where contributions by, *inter alia*, Corbridge (1993b), Crush (1995), Peet and Watts (1993b, 1996), Power (1998), Schuurman (1993, 2000), and Simon (1998) have connected development thinking to debt, environmental issues, postcolonialism, and problems of Eurocentrism.

In the present climate of intellectual as well as sociopolitical turmoil, it is even more necessary than before to trace the breaks and connections in the formation of development discourses. And it is not only the history but also the geopolitics of ideas that is so crucial, as I shall seek to demonstrate below. An active politics of memory, carrying on and revivifying what is considered to be significant and relevant, is accompanied by a politics of forgetting that can be used to insinuate the idea of a new truth, the roots of which may actually stretch far back into the past.

In this chapter, I discuss two major perspectives on development, perspectives which are counterposed and essentially incompatible. The first I shall simply refer to as the orthodox Occidental vision, which has been expressed by both modernization theory and neoliberalism. In opposition to such a vision the postwar period has witnessed the rise and decline of a Marxist-inspired theorization of development, which despite a degree of internal heterogeneity, has possessed a certain conceptual and political regularity. In the third and final section of the chapter I shall refer, if only briefly, to the outlines of today's situation within which a critical recasting of development theory has acquired an increasingly global meaning. For the most part, my examples will be taken from the geopolitical encounters between the United States and Latin America. My concentration on the United States relates to two main factors.

- First, it is increasingly crucial to expend more analytical energy on seeking to comprehend the "lone superpower" in its historical, economic, cultural, and geopolitical specificity, since its position in the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century is increasingly pervasive, its impact on all aspects of global affairs being quite profound (Slater and Taylor 1999).
- Second, given the undeniable reality that the United States has been the key imperial power of the twentieth century, it follows that any understanding of the dynamic between geopolitics and development theory must attempt to come to terms with the nature of the relations between the United States and the Third World.

Develop and Rule: A Western Project

It was Enlightenment discourse which originally gave meaning to concepts of the "modern." The West became the universalizing model for societal progress. It was Western civilization, rationality, and order that were proclaimed and bestowed with universal relevance. At the same time, such an enunciation was intimately connected to the creation of a series of oppositions – for example, "civilized versus barbaric nations," or "peoples *with* history and those *without*" – which were reflections of the need to construct a non-West other so as to ground a positive identity for the West itself, as well as providing a legitimizing logic for the will to conquer.

The nurturing of a positive identity for the West found a key expression in the United States of the nineteenth century. Already by the 1850s it was firmly believed that the American Anglo-Saxons were a separate and innately superior people who were destined to bring good government, commercial prosperity, and Christianity to the American continents and to the world. Thomas Jefferson, for example, wrote that England and the United States would be models for "regenerating the condition of man, the sources from which representative government is to flow over the whole earth" (quoted in Horsman 1981: 23). The sense of mission and the ethos of geopolitical predestination were captured in the phrase "Manifest Destiny," which first appeared in the 1840s. This belief in the drive of destiny, embedded in a particular religious conviction, did not remain restricted to the territories of North America, but extended south into Central America, the Caribbean, and subsequently to the whole of the Americas. Furthermore, throughout the nineteenth century Anglo-Saxon assumptions about US civilization being the highest form of civilization in history took firm root, as US attitudes toward other nations and inhabitants came also to be increasingly based on a well-defined racial hierarchy (Berger 1993; Stephanson 1995; Weinberg 1963).

Adherence to a sense of mission, and to Anglo-Saxon supremacy, carried within it a driving desire to bring the posited benefits of a superior way of life to other less fortunate peoples and societies. Frequently the desire to "civilize" and the will to "modernize" another society went together with a belief in the need for order and pacification. At the beginning of the twentieth century, President Theodore Roosevelt, casting his eye southward to the Latin American world – this "weak and chaotic people south of us" – wrote that "it is our duty, when it becomes absolutely inevitable, to police these countries in the interest of order and civilization" (Niess 1990: 76).

The idea of a modernizing and civilizing project, that was justified as part of a wider mission of imperial destiny, was given a practical political realization in a whole series of occupations. Before 1917, and the birth of what came to be seen as the "communist threat" to Western freedom and civilization, the United States occupied and administered the governments of the Dominican Republic (1916–24), Haiti (1915–34), and Nicaragua (1912–

25 and 1926–33), as well as maintaining a Protectorate role over Cuba from 1903 to 1934. In the case of the Dominican Republic, the imposition of development through occupation went together with a five-year guerrilla war against the forces of the US military government, and in other instances too, especially in the Nicaraguan case, there was no absence of resistance. While preserving order and deploying a geopolitical will to power over these other societies, the United States also introduced a series of related social and economic programs that were the precursors of contemporary development projects. There were initiatives to expand education, improve health and sanitation, create constabularies, build public works and communications, establish judicial and penal reforms, take censuses, and improve agriculture. In the case of Cuba, for example, which was occupied and ruled by the United States from 1898 to 1902, public school reformers built a new instructional system with organization and texts imported from Ohio. In 1900 Harvard brought 1,300 Cuban teachers to Cambridge for instruction in US teaching methods, and Protestant evangelists established around 90 schools in Catholic Cuba between 1898 and 1901. At the same time, serious efforts were made to "Americanize" the systems of justice, sanitation, transportation, and trade, while the institutions of the Cuban independence movement – the Liberation Army, the Provisional Government, and the Cuban Revolutionary Party – were disbanded by the US military government.

These geopolitical interventions entailed projects for the modernization and development of other societies. The interventions and penetrations were portrayed and underwritten in terms of order, civilization, and destiny. To develop another society was also to rule over it, and to restore order was part of a wider project of civilizing the Latin South. Moreover, the early part of the twentieth century was also witness to a dramatic expansion of US corporate capital into Latin America. American corporations committed hundreds of millions of dollars to developing mining, agriculture, and the petroleum industry, as well as modernizing electrical and telecommunications systems. US business leaders thought of their industrial civilization as an exportable commodity that could take root in Latin America, provided that business practices could be standardized across the Americas (Salvatore 1998). Nor was this vision only held by American business leaders; the Peruvian president of the 1920s, Augusto Leguía, once declared that if he had his way "Peru would be practically American within ten or fifteen years" (quoted in O'Brien 1999: 109). Naturally, such a vision was not shared across the political spectrum and increasing US corporate penetrations fueled the fires of Latin American nationalisms and growing opposition to US hegemony.

It is important to remember these earlier forms of intervention and representation because in the post-World War II period the growth of modernization theory had key roots in these previous North–South encounters. There were significant discursive continuities, but equally the post-1946 period

witnessed the emergence of a series of crucial geopolitical changes.

Since the late 1940s, two related but far from identical discourses of Western development came to be constructed. First, during the 1950s and 1960s, in a time of the Cold War and the coming into being of a whole series of newly independent nation-states, conceptualizations of the modern became central. Modernization theory, as it came to be called, took root in the academic citadels of the West and found expression across a broad spectrum of disciplinary domains. It was multidisciplinary and more multidimensional than the econocentric Marxist analysis of the 1970s. It encompassed questions of economic growth, social institutions, political change, and psychological factors. Its tenets found a home in geography as well as history. Essentially, modernization theory was constructed around three interrelated components: an uncritical vision of the West, largely based on a selective reading of the history of the United States and Britain; a perspective on the non-West, or traditional, societies that ignored their own histories and measured their innate value in terms of their level of Westernization; and an interpretation of the West–non-West encounter which was based on the governing assumption that the non-West could only progress, become developed, throw off its backwardness and traditions, by embracing relations with the West. The posited dichotomy between the “modern” and the “traditional,” ideal types of a Weberian vintage, was also replicated within the so-called traditional societies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Here, the researcher was encouraged to observe a duality between modern urban centers of growing Western innovation and traditional rural peripheries; “development” would come about, would be engineered, through the diffusion of innovations (capital, technology, entrepreneurship, democratic institutions, and the values of the West).

Such a brief sketch remains unavoidably incomplete. For example, it needs to be stressed that modernization theory went through two phases, especially visible in the political science and sociological literature. In the initial phase, that lasted until the mid-1960s, there was a sense of optimism, a firm belief in the potential success of modernizing and Westernizing the traditional society. If only the premodern society could find ways of accepting and adapting to the spreading tide of modernization, its future long-term development would be assured. But with the rise of radical nationalist movements in the Third World, the onset of the Vietnam War, the Cuban Revolution, and the growth of social protest inside the United States itself, notions of modernization increasingly came to be associated with discussions of political order, societal breakdown, and “diseases of the transition,” as ostensibly exemplified by communism. Finally, by the beginning of the 1970s, belief in the universal applicability of the modernizing imperative was clearly on the wane. This can be explained partly as a result of the growing realization in the West that the societies of the developing world were far more heterogeneous and complex than originally depicted by the protagonists of modernization theory, but also because of the upsurge of resistance to the

West's, and especially the United States', project of developmental rule. Defeat in Vietnam, and the earlier “loss” of Cuba to communism were key crystallizing moments for this new *Zeitgeist*. The will to modernize and control the recalcitrant other had been broken, albeit temporarily.

In a second wave of developmental doctrine, frequently considered as neoliberal, and customarily couched in the terminology of structural adjustment, privatization, deregulation, free trade, and market-based development, an apparently new model from the West was prescribed for the Rest, as their model too. Economies had to be opened as never before; state structures, an ostensibly rigid barrier to successful development, had to be rolled back and streamlined; financial discipline was to be strictly imposed; and the logic of the market was to be given full reign for the benefit of all. Initially and fundamentally rooted in earlier currents of economic liberalism, the discourse of the 1980s was amplified to incorporate notions of good governance, fiscal decentralization, participation in development, and the strengthening of civil society. By the late 1990s, governing representations of the economy and the state had been joined to “social capital,” which has been deployed to cover notions of trust, networks, associations, and movements. From the early 1980s onwards, the terrain of intervention has been extended and the project of development has become thoroughly global in reach, encompassing both the South and the North. Already, in the early 1990s, an OECD (1992b: 49) report noted that solutions to the domestic problems for which policy-makers in the West have responsibility “are increasingly associated with the economic and institutional functioning of other societies . . . and this creates new scope for mutual understanding and synergy among policy-makers in donor governments as they tackle development as part of achieving a global agenda.”

In comparing these two waves of Western development theory, it is important to understand the convergences as well as the points of difference. One important break characteristic of neoliberalism has concerned the treatment of relations between the public and private sectors. In the 1980s the private sector was championed, whereas the public sector, and more specifically the state, has been envisaged as a brake on development, a site of inefficiency, and institutional stagnation. A supreme belief in the benign opacity of market forces, the sanctity of private ownership, and the superiority of achievement-oriented individuals has permeated the orthodox texts of neoliberalist doctrine. In contrast, modernization theory gave greater weight to the nation-state in developing countries, and stressed the importance of a greater degree of balance between the public and private sectors. At this time the influence of Keynesian ideas was still an important factor, and overall the state's role in economic development was seen in a more pragmatic and less doctrinaire light. Equally, however, it needs to be kept in mind that the official discourse of development has its own dynamic. For example, in this particular case, in the wake of growing social inequalities and instabilities, we have seen a shift in the way the state has been depicted,

with the World Bank, in its *Annual Development Reports*, moving from an earlier notion of a "minimal state" to a more recent call for an "effective state," where a previously negative portrayal of the state's role in economic development has been replaced by a more balanced interpretation (World Bank 1997; for a critique of the World Bank's concept of an "effective state" see Hildyard and Wilks 1998).

In terms of commonality, both theorizations have shared a belief in the universal relevance of Western models of development. Their points of departure have both drawn on an idealized construction of Occidental history and geopolitics, and their recommendations for development and progress have all assumed that the North-South encounter has been intrinsically beneficial to the South. The ethnocentric universalism of modernization theory provided one of the main targets of the dependency critique of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Slater 1993b) but, in contrast, the neoliberalism of the 1980s and beyond, which has been equally Westocentric, has tended to escape a similar interrogation (for an exception, see Brohman 1996), even though many other elements of the neoliberal "regime of truth" have been subjected to detailed critiques (for a recent geographical text, see Klak 1998).

Overall, the encompassing political climate has clearly favored the reassertion of Occidental hegemony in matters of development and modernization. And it is precisely in this context that we need to stress the fact that it is the political ascendancy of those who believe in the supposed superiority of the orthodox Western model of development, combined with their institutionalized power and enormous resources, that explains the widespread effectiveness of the "development as Westernization" discourse.

The Waning of the Marxist Challenge

The emergence of a Marxist and neo-Marxist challenge to orthodox, or what were customarily referred to as capitalist, views of modernization and development dates from the 1960s, and, with reference to the imperialist countries, especially from 1968. Dependency perspectives, which have been discussed in great length elsewhere (Kay 1989), prepared the ground for a move on to a more clearly inscribed Marxist terrain. The rise of Marxist thought was a generalized phenomenon in the 1970s world of the social sciences, and in the domain of development studies theoretical interpretations of modes of production, unequal exchange, world systems, and class conflicts figured prominently. While primary conceptual importance was given to the relations and forces of production, to capital and wage labor, to the internationalization of capital as a social relation, and to class structures and struggles, in a more directly political language, capitalism was denounced as a system of exploitation that had to be replaced by socialism.

Although it is certainly the case that the Marxist diagnosis of the social and economic issues of development retains a role in the critical geographi-

cal and social science literature, its generalized influence has declined. Apart from the impact of the events of 1989 and the disintegration of the erstwhile Second World, the fading intellectual and political influence of Marxist approaches can be related to three interrelated problems.

- 1 First, there has been a traditional tendency, although now much less marked, to assume that the economy would always be determinant in the last instance. In other words, it was presupposed that the logic of capitalist economic development governed the outcome of social and political processes. In one such reading the nature of the state was read off from the dynamic of this underlying logic. Moreover, it was frequently the case that not only was the economic structure centralized within the overall explanatory frame, but additionally subjects or social actors came to be absorbed within this determining structure. This analytical tendency represents an undiluted example of Marxist economism.
- 2 Second, in the examination of sociopolitical change, the key subject has always been a class subject, and the class struggle has been interpreted as the defining historical struggle. There have been two interconnected difficulties here. Overall, there has been a failure to analyze the ways in which different forms of social subjectivity come into being. The processes through which individuals in society are constituted as social subjects or agents have been neglected, since the overriding concern has been with class subjects. Instead of viewing the class category as one possible point of arrival in an examination of social subjectivities, it has been taken as a pre-given point of departure. In addition, it has been assumed that in the construction of social consciousness, the point of production is central and determinant. Consequently, the understanding of the heterogeneity and complexity of social consciousness has been severely circumscribed. But also, since the social subject at the point of production has been interpreted as a unified subject, centered around the experiences of the workplace, it has been less possible to begin to comprehend the barriers to mobilization at this site of potential conflict.
- 3 Third, permeating so much of the Marxist and neo-Marxist canon has been the belief in the existence of a pre-given, privileged social subject,

cast in the role of the historical bearer of the revolutionary rupture from capitalism. Working-class revolution was for so long seen as a species of cure for the diseases of capitalism. But when actual revolutionary breaks occurred, as in a number of peripheral societies, the agents of those ruptures and splits could not be straitjacketed into any category of class belonging. In the cases of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions for instance, at specific historical moments, a variety of social subjects, unified around a particular political horizon, which combined a range of attitudes, feelings, sentiments and desires – around questions of the nation, of the fight against dictatorship, of the need for social justice and equality, of the struggle against US imperialism – came together and took a series of actions that culminated in the moment of revolution. These revolutions, and others in the societies of the South, were not engineered by an insurgent working class but were brought to fruition by an aggregation of forces sharing a common political imagination. And such a sharing was precarious, temporary, and unfixed. What these kinds of revolutionary upheaval demonstrated was the emergence at given moments of a *collective will* to overturn an existing order. Crucial to these processes of change was the fusion of a will to overthrow an established and unjust order with a desire for national dignity and independence.

Further to these three analytical problems of the Marxist reading of development and political change, we have witnessed the institutionalized embodiment of Marxist, and more precisely Marxist-Leninist, ideas, in authoritarian, one-party states. Cuba is a striking example of such a phenomenon. With its one-party system there has been a clear lack of any division of powers within the political space of the state. The notion that the party is a synthesis of society, or the earlier belief dating back to Che Guevara that in the post-revolutionary period there ought to be a total identification between society and government, capture the meaning of a desire for total power. Within such a system, Marxist-Leninist thought was converted into a state doctrine, and used to portray the idea of a society without antagonisms, a society in which the class conflicts of capitalism had been transcended, a society in which political struggle had been successfully concluded. The lack of any institutionalization of the means for the expression of effective difference, or alternative strategies, has sealed into place a relatively inflexible structure that carries within it a reduced potential for constructive renewal. It can be argued of course that such an institutionalization of revolution was perhaps inevitable given the unrelenting hostility of the United States, the continuing blockade of the island, and the permanent specter of destabilization.

On the other side, the development achievements of the Cuban Revolution are well known: transformations in the systems of health and education; impressive improvements in the utilization of agricultural and mineral

resources; the installation and extension of public utilities and services; and sharp reductions in the degree of social and economic inequality. The meeting of basic needs was always a key priority of the Cuban Revolution before it became a catch phrase for international organizations. But, unlike the Nicaraguan Revolution of the 1980s, or the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico, post-1994, the Cuban process has not been characterized by any attempts to create new ways of combining different democratic practices. The longevity of the US embargo and general geopolitical isolation in the Western hemisphere ushered in a protracted reliance on the former Soviet-bloc countries. With the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, the drastic decline in trading and financial ties with Russia, and the continuance of US hostility, expressed in the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, Cuba's political future has become far more precarious. The lack of political plurality and the absence of institutional channels for the expression of difference have thrown a long shadow over the basic-needs achievements of the Revolution. For many years the debate on Cuba was polarized between the uncritical supporters of revolutionary change and those who obstinately refused to countenance any positive evaluation of Cuban development. One of the contemporary dilemmas takes shape around the following problem: how will it be possible to preserve those social and economic achievements of the post-revolutionary period, while at the same time opening up the political system to a variety of different currents? In the Cuban case not only is the primacy of the political so apparent but equally the future trajectory of the island's development will be intimately connected to the changing impact of geopolitical circumstances and specifically, at the beginning of 2001, to the future strategy adopted by the incoming Washington administration.

Development and the Geopolitics of Knowledge

As traditional Marxist perspectives have faded in significance, the more recent critical currents of theory have been particularly concerned with questions of identity, difference, subjectivity, knowledge, and power. In development studies, and as exemplified in the contributions of Escobar (1995), Ferguson (1994), Rahnema and Bawtree (1997), and Tucker (1997), attempts have been made to construct a radical critique of the discourse of "development," seen as a hegemonic form of representation of the Third World. This new critical current carries within it certain shared assumptions and concerns. Prominent among these are: an interest in local knowledge and cultures as bases for redefining representation and societal values; a critical stance with respect to the established discourse of development knowledge, as produced and disseminated by international organizations; and the defense and promotion of indigenous grassroots movements.

One of the encouraging and stimulating facets of today's critical research is the opening up of a series of interconnected pathways of analysis. En-

couraged and enriched by the influence of feminist theories which have established not only the significance of gender, but also the centrality of questions of identity and difference, new work on the possible meanings of development has increasingly come to include a key gender dimension (Marchand and Parpart 1995). In the connected analysis of new social movements and their relevance for rethinking the purposes and ends of development in neoliberal times, the role of women in these struggles has been paramount, just as the investigations carried out by women social scientists and activists have been so fundamental to the theorization of social movements (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998; Radcliffe and Westwood 1993).

Environmental issues, and the movements that have emerged to counter the damaging effects of conventional development projects, have received increasing attention and have been linked to the relevance of indigenous knowledge for the protection and sustainability of vital resources. When considering environmental politics, the links with the relevance of indigenous movements leads to a broader discussion of the objectives of development within which a challenging of the orthodox Western definition of knowledge for development can take place (see Routledge, chapter 20, this volume). At the same time, as environmental issues are also global issues, the framing of the agenda and the selection of priorities directly connects with the geopolitics of North-South relations. While in the North, for example, there has been a tendency to concentrate on the rural aspects of environmental policy, in the South more urgent issues relate to the *urban* nature of environmental deterioration. Also the attempts by the North to define the environmental agenda and monitor the policies of Third World governments evoke crucial problems of ethics and international justice.

The processes of self-reflexivity, of stretching out toward new themes of dialogue, learning, and rethinking, can well be regarded as a positive and enabling element of the postmodern sensibility. In the North there is the need to reinvent ourselves as other, which can be set in the context of taking historic responsibility for the social locations from which our speech and actions issue. The process of this reinvention requires the will and desire to learn from the South, not in a romantic or uncritical vein, fueled by an unconscious sense of culpability, but as a way of better understanding the North itself, and with it the South. The life of the mind does not begin and end inside the Occident; the enclosure of Occidental thought needs to be fissured and broken open to other currents of thinking and reflection. If we are to develop a genuine global expansion of knowledge and understanding, the West's self-enclosure within ethnocentric standards will have to be transcended. Conventional development theory and practice has been one expression of power over another society and economy – a reflection of a belief in the West's manifest destiny. The Marxist challenge sought to bring into being another form of power based on socialist principles, but here too there has been a tendency to underwrite a privileged position for the West's standards and meanings of development. In today's discussion of the sig-

nificance and dispositions of development, the politics of the production and deployment of knowledge has become an increasingly pivotal question. In an increasingly global world, the geopolitics of knowledge and power is a theme for which geographers can make an important analytical contribution, and, in the field of development studies, a critical geopolitics can begin by considering the dynamic of power relations involved in the past and present of the North-South divide.