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The development of development theory: towards critical globalism

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ABSTRACT

This article presents, first, two arguments in the mode of development discourse analysis. Development thinking is usually regarded as an offshoot of the family of notions of evolution and progress and as part of western notions of change as growth. On the basis of a genealogy of development theory, this perspective is questioned. It displays an essentialism of ideas, overlooks discontinuities within western thought, exaggerates the special character of western notions of change, and privileges endogenous over exogenous change. The second argument is to view development theories in the plural - diverging in terms of sociology and economics and in relation to different sectors. In each of these spheres different theories have been prevalent. In development theory, endogenous models of development have predominated to the neglect of diffusionist perspectives. The closing argument concerns the challenge of globalization, seeks to redefine development as global development, and argues for an in-between position of critical globalism.

KEYWORDS

Development theory; globalism; globalization; modernization theory.

INTRODUCTION

The prevalent note in development thinking nowadays is saying goodbye to paradigms. Many articles open by saying goodbye to modernization and dependency, while insisting that no new paradigm will be proposed. The objections to these paradigms are familiar enough and there is no need to restate them here. Still this is not just a time of 'waiting for a text'. Several new departures in development thinking parallel general tendencies in social theory, such as the problematization of modernity, poststructuralism and postmodernism. Development discourse is examined in Foucauldian terms of power/knowledge (Sachs, 1992; Marglin and Marglin, 1990; DuBois, 1991; Escobar, 1985), deconstructed *à la* Derrida (Roe, 1995; Johnston, 1991), subjected to

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archaeological excavation (Sachs, 1989), or juxtaposed to explorations of the postmodern (Schuurman, 1993; Slater, 1992). These contributions expand on the critiques of Eurocentrism, orientalism and occidental cultural homogenization in postcolonial and cultural studies. They are also limited by their preoccupation with discourse. While deepening our critical insight they do not offer alternatives. The strength of discourse analysis is to make subjectivities transparent: this may offer grounds for renegotiating subjectivities; but it engages the representations rather than the specifics of political economies.

No doubt the debates on modernity and postmodernity carry major implications for development theory for they are concerned with re-defining 'development' writ large. This carries a potential for the renewal of development thinking especially if taken in combination with non-western studies interrogating modernity.¹ At the same time that postmodern interrogations provide the basis for new critiques of modernization theory, modernity as a theme is making a come-back, now in the plural – as late, advanced, radical or reworked modernity, neomodernization theory or new modernity. New modernity involves the notion of risk society and the argument that all societies, developed and less developed, are exposed to the globalization of ecological and other risks (Beck, 1992).

A recurring feature of many discussions is that development theory is being attributed more coherence and consistency than it possesses. Thus in being criticized as a discourse of power (Sachs, 1992; Escobar, 1992, 1995), as opposed to democracy (Lummis, 1991), as the 'religion of the West' (Rist, 1990) or as the 'myth of development' (Tucker, 1992), 'development' is being homogenized and discussed as if it were cut from a single cloth. In addition, the deconstruction of development texts does not necessarily amount to unpacking development theory, disaggregating its lineages, dimensions and projects.

At the same time, the notion of development is increasingly being bracketed. The questioning comes from various directions: from deconstructions of development discourse but also from the momentum of globalization on account of which the special status of developing economies – the original rationale of the development position – is gradually eroding. Structural adjustment represents a radical break with the development tradition, not even because of its neoliberal thrust but, more importantly, because of the implication that *all* societies must adjust to global economic imperatives. The implication is that *either* development is gradually fading out as an outdated perspective belonging to a bygone era of economic apartheid, *or* is broadened to apply to all societies, as a global logic. If this is the case it would be logical to assume that the content and meaning of development would be changing too. These various notions – deconstruction of development, structural adjustment,

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globalization – seem to point in a similar direction: the demise of ‘development’ and its gradually emerging reconstruction as *world development*.

This article seeks to develop three arguments. First, it argues that development thinking has not been the single paradigm for which it is often taken, but that all along it has been a heterogeneous set of approaches that has been not only variable over time but highly diverse at any given time. Second, it zeroes in on one particular unresolved dilemma in several forms of development thinking, the disparity and tension between endogenous and exogenous dynamics in development. This, too, may point towards a reconceptualization of development as a transnational problematic. Third, it explores the current tendency to rethink development as a process that is not reserved to ‘developing countries’ but that all societies are developing, as part of a global process. Thus it juxtaposes development discourse and globalization. I argue that globalization should neither be blocked out nor unconditionally embraced. The term I propose for this in-between position is critical globalism.²

Part 1 of this article takes the form of development discourse analysis. Part 2 continues this analysis with metatheoretical reflections. In the third part the mode of argument changes. The closing argument seeks to combine the insights gained from analysing development discourse with the debate on globalization, so as to arrive at critical policy orientations.

1 NOTIONS OF CHANGE

There is a tendency among users as well as critics of development theory to attribute to it a certain coherence and consistency, with the exception of one or other favourite cleavage. This easily produces a dichotomous view of development theory, as in marxism versus neoclassical economics, mainstream versus counterpoint, etc. Development theories promote the façade of consistency as part of their singleminded future-building project. Critics contribute to it by following the logic of binary opposition. It may be fruitful instead to view development theories in the plural, not as the unfolding of a grand paradigm neatly bifurcating in contesting models, but as hybrids made up of uneven elements, of borrowings and incursions from alien sources, and improvisations spurred by crises; in a word, to consider the inconsistencies of what goes under the heading of development theory.

It may be appropriate to start by taking a step back to consider first not development theory as such but the underlying ideas of change. Robert Nisbet is widely regarded as an authoritative source on the history of western notions of change, while he is also a spectacular representative of the tendency to ‘homogenize’ developmental thinking. In *Social Change and History* he maintains that: ‘For twenty-five hundred

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years a single metaphoric conception of change has dominated Western thought' (1969: 211).

The theory of social development, in his view, derives from the ancient metaphor of growth. With the Greeks this took on the form of *cycles* of change; in the Christian version formulated by Augustine, it was modified to an *epic* form, which was still cyclical but without recurrence; and by the seventeenth century it was again modified to produce the modern idea of *linear progress*. In the eighteenth century this set of assumptions engendered the idea of 'natural history', and in the nineteenth century, the theory of social evolution that was common to Hegel, Saint-Simon, Comte, Marx, Spencer, Morgan, Tylor. This theory, according to Nisbet, regarded change as natural, immanent, or proceeding from forces within the entity, continuous, directional, necessary, corresponding to differentiation in society, typically moving from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, and, finally, as proceeding from uniform causes.

Nisbet concedes that in twentieth-century social science there has been a revolt against evolutionism, replacing unilinear evolutionism with multilinear evolution, but he maintains that even the critics reproduced the underlying metaphor of growth: 'although they were denouncing the schemes of social evolution, they were accepting at full value the concepts of change that underlay the theory of social evolution' (1969: 225). That is, the belief in origins, immanence, continuity, uniform causes, etc. are reproduced in twentieth-century conceptions of social change. This bold thesis raises several questions: is this representation plausible, or does it reflect itself a belief in origins and continuity?

A different way of reading the development of development theory may be genealogy in the Nietzschean sense. Nietzsche, as Foucault reminds us, was opposed to the search for 'origins': 'because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities; because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession.' However, Foucault continues, 'if the genealogist ... listens to history', he finds behind things 'not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms' (Foucault, 1984: 78). An example of the preoccupation with origins is Hegel:

The principle of development involves also the existence of a latent germ of being – a capacity or potentiality striving to realize itself. This formal conception finds actual existence in spirit; which has the history of the world for its theatre, its possession, and the sphere of its realization.

(quoted in Nisbet, 1969: 159)

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For Nietzsche this would be an example of the 'Egyptianism' of philosophers, the obstinate 'placing of conclusions at the beginning' (in Foucault, 1984: 90). History is replaced by metaphysics, by Neoplatonic essences beyond time. Let's contrast this with Nietzsche (1976: 470): 'By searching out origins, one becomes a crab. The historian looks backward; eventually he also *believes* backward.'

Nisbet's history of the idea of development as a continuous outgrowth of the Greek metaphor of growth exhibits not only the preoccupation with origins and continuity but also an essentialism of ideas. It lays claim to a grand cohesiveness of western thought, uniting pagan and Christian, classical and modern notions in a single weave. On the one hand it sets the west apart from the rest of the world, while on the other it tacitly removes the main lines of cleavage within western thought, those separating ancients and moderns, religious and secular elites, elites and dissidents. An exercise in high humanism, it produces an elite representation of western notions of change, with the classics duly towering above subsequent thinkers, as the true ancestors of western thought.

What faithful conformism to begin with the Greeks, the proverbial 'cradle of western civilization'. Why not consider the divergencies *among* Greek notions of change? For example, among the Peripatetics, the followers of Aristotle, who along with the Neoplatonists adhered to a cyclical notion of time, whereas the Stoics moved away from this, and historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides broke altogether with the doctrine of recurrence.

In his essay on Chinese 'Attitudes toward time and change as compared with Europe', Joseph Needham groups non-Christian Greek thought together with Indian thought and the Hindu and Buddhist notion of the endless repetition of the wheel of existence. Needham refers to 'the intense history-consciousness of Christendom' and contrasts linear Judaeo-Christian time to cyclical Indo-Hellenic time. With regard to China he concludes: 'Strange as it may seem to those who still think in terms of the "timeless Orient", the culture of China was, on the whole, more of the Iranian, Judaeo-Christian than of the Indo-Hellenic types' (Needham, 1981: 131). This gives us a rather different view of the distribution of civilizational perceptions of change, and a totally different map of world history from Nisbet's. The grounds for the singularity of the west as a special case, a deviation from the 'general human pattern', are eliminated.

Why not highlight, rather than continuity and uniformity, the discontinuities and divergencies in western notions of change? Western views, of course, have also been an amalgam, as we can see, for instance, in the *mélange* of Christian views in Augustine's time and later in the return to cyclical thinking in Nietzsche ('ewige Wiederkehr', eternal recurrence), Spengler and Toynbee (Needham, 1981: 128). A re-examination of

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western notions of development may reveal a far more heterogeneous history, replete with moments of improvisation, dissonance, discontinuity. Leaving aside that Nisbet simplified the notions of change of Greeks and Christians – which to an extent he nuanced in a later work (1980) – let's turn to the moderns.

Nisbet rightly mentions that the nineteenth-century theories of social development applied to different *entities* – to reason for Turgot and Condorcet, to knowledge and civilization for Comte, to freedom for Hegel, to democracy for Tocqueville, to the forces of production for Marx, to social institutions for Spencer, to kinship, property and civil government for Morgan, to legal institutions for Maine, to culture and religion for Tylor. Nisbet insists: 'it was the *entity* . . . for which natural development in time was claimed. It was *not* the sum total of geographical areas on earth' (1969: 167). But this is not the whole story of the theory of social evolution. Evolutionist stages theories, such as that of Victorian anthropology – primitivism, savagery, barbarism, civilization – were also taken to apply to human cultures, which were identified with societies (Stocking, 1987). Theorists of social evolution regularly applied their views to geographical areas: Hegel on Africa and Marx on Asia are familiar examples.

Nisbet's focus is on development conceived as natural and *endogenous* to the entity or society, but another dimension to nineteenth-century developmental thought which is glossed over in his account is development arising from *exogenous* influences and conditions – from diffusion, international influences or what we would now call globalization. Marx's theory is both: 'the new grows in the womb of the old' refers to endogenous, organic growth, while his statements on capitalism as a 'permanently revolutionizing force', on its progressive effects on the 'rural idiocy' of the countryside, and of colonialism on 'stagnant' societies refer to external dynamics.

Nisbet is sensitive to western ethnocentrism: 'No one can miss the fact that in every instance – there is no exception – the direction of change found by the evolutionist was toward the specific set of qualities possessed by Western Europe alone' (1969: 169–70). But, just as geography is missing, the imperial setting is absent from his account. Edward Said (1993: 225) argues that imperialism is marked by 'the primacy of the geographical', for it is after all 'an act of geographical violence'. While this overlooks the political economy of imperialism (which may well transcend geographical, territorial boundaries), the element of geography is not to be ignored either.

Nisbet's argument of continuity overlooks the actual shifts in western developmental thinking, it papers over the dynamics over time of European views. Thus, briefly, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century views tended to be ambivalent as to Europe's status in the world and

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looked up to non-European models such as China, Turkey, Persia, the noble savages of America, the Pacific and Africa. Only in nineteenth-century theories of social evolution did the European will to power prevail; they took a more single-focused form which provided greater consistency (particularly during the second half of the century), than before or after.³

If Nisbet's representation is fundamentally flawed, how can we account for the fact that his kind of views have found such wide acceptance? A related question is to what extent we can recognize the same implicit model of endogenous, organic growth in contemporary development theory.

2 DEVELOPMENT THEORIES IN THE PLURAL

If we consider twentieth-century development thinking and its theoretical lineages, does Nisbet's metaphor of growth hold? Is the tenor one of continuity and consistency or one of disparity and improvisation? The term development theory suggests a coherence which in fact is hard to find. What we do find is a plethora of competing and successive currents, schools, paradigms, models, several of which claim to exclude one another. For a start, development theory refers to two terrains which have converged only at certain junctures: development sociology and development economics. Further more or less obvious distinctions run between theory and ideology, policy and practice.

Development sociology has been by and large the critical successor to the nineteenth-century theories of social development, whereas development economics owes its origin to a deviation from late-nineteenth-century economic orthodoxy. Neoclassical economics took shape after 1870 as a theory of fully industrialized economies. Kurt Martin (1991) points out that development economics resuscitates and revisits the basic findings of classical political economy, of Smith, Ricardo and Marx, who were development economists in that their basic problematic was the transition from agrarian to industrial society.

'Development', if understood as the problematic of the transition from agriculture to industry, has been reinvented several times over: it has been a question facing several generations of late developers. It was the question facing central, eastern and southern European economies during the early twentieth century. Hence the involvement of central Europeans in the early stages of modern development theory. Hence Alex Nove's claim that development theory was 'born in Russia in the twenties' (Martin, 1991: 28). The formative period of 'modern' development economic theory was the 1940s and 1950s. The colonial economies were the terrain of development theory but the problematic was that of the *transition* or, in a word, industrialization. Thus, while 'colonial

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economics' was transformed into 'development economics', at the same time it borrowed from the existing theories of transition, either from classical political economy or other 'late developers'.

The premise of postwar development economics was that it was a separate branch of economics, different from neoclassical economics in the industrialized countries. State intervention and planning, along with accumulation and growth, were part of its founding discourse which showed affinities with Keynesianism. Foreign assistance, in a context of mutual benefit, was another element. In relation to trade, different outlooks prevailed. In mainstream economics the free trade argument prevailed while the neomercantilist policies which sheltered the late developers (the American Republic, followed by Germany, France, Russia) were relegated to the margins, as deviations from the norm, to be reclaimed later as part of neomarxist theory.

Thus from the outset development thinking has been marked by an uneven and contradictory patchwork with divergent paradigms operating in different sectors: in industrialized economies, neoclassical economics coexisted with industrial policy; in trade, liberalism in theory combined with neomercantilism in practice; in finance, monetarism prevailed. Each of these policy orientations made its imprint on developing economies, simultaneously in different sectors, although usually articulated under the umbrella of an overarching development rhetoric.

As a concept, 'development' papers over the different interests involved in economic, social and political change. 'Development' suggests the possibility of a package formula in which all these interests come to some form of crystallization and convergence. As such, it displays an intrinsically positivist bias. Obviously, at any given point social and economic change is a field of contestation among different stakeholders. Each of these will construct a history to validate its claims. A political economy of development theory as a subset of the general sociology of knowledge might not have too much difficulty in identifying the shifting historical blocs that have set the agenda of development ideology at different points in time,⁴ except, of course, that at no time has it been a single or uncontested agenda.

The political economy of monopoly enterprise (mercantilism, Old Colonial System) was contested by new trades and manufactures (Manchester school). The political economy of competition capital and manufacturing was contested by finance capital (monetarism). All along, the political economies of capital in its different articulations have been contested by the political economies of labour (trade unionism, marxism, socialism). The claims of national firms and agricultural interests (protection) have been contested by internationally oriented enterprise (free trade). And so on. These various sets of contestations have been played out through alignments of interests favouring either state intervention

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or market forces. Like masks in a puppet show, both 'state' and 'market' have signified complex fields of forces and interests. Both 'state' and 'market' have been on either side of these contesting forces, with the state as the meeting place where political and social contracts among the diverging interests were fashioned. Development thinking implicitly carries two sets of meanings: an actual diversity of interests and perspectives, and a hegemony, i.e. an inherently unstable settlement of differences resulting in a development posture. The hegemonic effect occurs both at national and at international levels (on hegemony in international relations see Singham and Hune, 1986; Cox, 1991).

In the 1960s what consensus existed in development economics was destroyed 'so that it is no longer possible to talk of a mainstream of development economics' (Martin, 1991: 55). In the 1970s the Chicago version of monetarism became dominant: 'little more than a revival of nineteenth century bankers' principles of "sound money" – currency convertibility, stable parity, fiscal thrift, low wages and minimal government influence in business' (FitzGerald, 1991: 15). The wave of generalized neoliberalism which ensued rejects the 'limitations of the special case' and argues that poor countries are poor mainly because of mismanagement. Put another way, the compartments which hitherto separated development economics from the mainstream economics prevailing in industrialized economies, international trade and finance fell away, so that development economics is being integrated into general economics. Whether or not there is a ground for a separate theory of development is at present one of the key debates (Martin, 1991: 55; Hettne, 1990: 57–60). The logic of structural adjustment follows from and fosters the demise of separate development economics.

These shifts of alignment make for a second deep rupture in the overall history of 'development'. The career of development has typically been one of state intervention and we now witness a new ascendancy of market forces. A feature of this process is the renewed predominance of finance capital since the 1970s and the cycle of debt expansion and debt crisis, which turned the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank into leading arbiters of macroeconomic policy, with the banking orthodoxy of sound money recycled as the newest beacon on the development horizon. In the late twentieth century, as in the late nineteenth century, finance capital predominates as the cement of the historic bloc of interests that frames 'development'. Under the circumstances what public sovereignty remains, in the words of Kuttner (1991: 260–1),

has been entrusted to perhaps the most conservative and market-oriented of all public institutions – central banks ... the triad of central bankers, IMF, and World Bank has been so thoroughly creditor-oriented that it might as well have been the House of Rothschild or the House of Morgan.

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Along with the discourse the models shifted: no more American Dream, no more China, Cuba, Tanzania, Nicaragua either, but the accumulation model of the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of East Asia. It spelled the 'end of the Third World' (Harris, 1986) and of Third Worldism. In the process another instance of development doublespeak emerges, for the East Asian experience is not one of unfettered markets but of development states following highly restrictive trade and investment policies (Johnson, 1982; White, 1988; Chowdhury and Islam, 1993). The divergencies within current development discourse can be observed on the level of development theory – which is increasingly diversifying (Booth, 1994); in development ideology – where neoliberalism appears to be over its peak; and development policy – which is inspired as much by *ad hoc* manoeuvring and pragmatism as it is driven by ideological posturing. Development speak is an uneven mélange of theoretical precepts, ideological subscriptions and political preferences. A related trend is the growing recognition of the diversity among developing countries (Schuurman, 1993; Booth, 1993).

One line of thinking holds that the dividing line between development successes and failures does not run between models or theories, but that what matters most, rather than the model, is how it is implemented. For instance, what matters is not whether or not a state intervenes but what kind of state intervenes and in what political culture. Several countries have sought to implement NIC strategies with strong doses of state intervention and this has generated high growth rates in several South-East Asian countries, but not in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. To explain this variation, factors have been brought in such as economic and political history, political culture and institutions, 'crony capitalism' (Litonjua, 1994) and questions such as ethnic politics.

It might be difficult to oppose privatization in general if privatization can also serve as a barrier against corrupt politicians. This does not settle the underlying problem of accountability: on the contrary, for market forces are likely to be still less accountable than state bureaucracies. The privatization process itself can be used by politicians as a source of extracting privatization rents. The question, then, is not one of state versus market, but rather points towards democratization and democratic reforms of state structures which make states more accountable.

Policy implementation is affected by factors such as political culture, historical itineraries, location in the regional and international environment. This also affects the behaviour of the World Bank which in the actual implementation of its policies is more concerned with negotiation than with simply imposing its economic model (Mosley *et al.*, 1991).

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3 MODERNIZATION REVISITED

In development sociology the leading paradigm has been modernization. Modernization theory took shape in the 1950s in the United States and bears an American stamp – if we recall that Dahrendorf called the United States the country of *angewandte Aufklärung*, the applied Enlightenment. At the time the United States entered its era of globalism and a ‘can do’ attitude characterized its approach, as in the functionalist modernization advanced by Hoselitz: ‘You subtract the ideal typical features or indices of underdevelopment from those of development, and the remainder is your development program’ (Gunder Frank in Worsley, 1984: 18).

Most forms of evolutionism conceived of development as being natural and endogenous, whereas modernization theory makes room for exogenous influences. Modernization theory is usually referred to as a paradigm, but upon closer consideration turns out to be host to a wide variety of projects, some presumably along the lines of *endogenous change*, namely social differentiation, rationalization, the spread of universalism, achievement and specificity; while it has also been associated with projects of *exogenous change*: the spread of capitalism, industrialization through technological diffusion, westernization, nation building (nationalism as a derivative discourse), state formation (as in postcolonial inheritor states). If occasionally this diversity within modernization is recognized, still the importance of exogenous influences is considered minor and secondary.

I do not view ‘modernization’ as a single, unified, integrated theory in any strict sense of ‘theory’. It was an overarching perspective concerned with comparative issues of national development, which treated development as multidimensional and multicausal along various axes (economic, political, cultural), and which gave primacy to endogenous rather than exogenous factors.

(Tiryakian, 1992: 78)

In the context of the Cold War modernization theory operated as a highly interventionist tool enabling the ‘free world’ to impose its rules and engage in ‘structural imperialism’. Typically it did so in the name of the forces of endogenous change such as nation building, the entrepreneurial spirit and achievement orientation. In effect modernization was a form of globalization that was presented as endogenous change.

This may be the steepest contradiction within modernization theory: between modernization as an endogenous and an exogenous dynamic. It may also be the most significant contradiction in development thinking generally: the hiatus between development as an endogenous process and as externally induced change, under the aegis of imperialism, capitalism, globalism.

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The theory of dualism, developed in the 1940s and 1950s by Boeke, Lewis and Kuznets, accommodates this contradiction with the idea of a traditional and modern sector. In effect the traditional sector represents endogenous growth and the modern sector the interaction with outside forces, in terms of production techniques, trade, values and aid. The diffusion approach was institutionalized in the 'geography of modernization', focusing on transportation and on core urban areas as the vehicles for the 'mobilization of the periphery' (Brookfield, 1975).

Phrased in another way, there is a hiatus between development theory as a *national* project and as an *international* or *global* dynamic. From the outset the main development theories, economic and sociological, have been national or, more accurately, state projects. Neomercantilism, 'socialism in one country', Keynesianism, self-reliance all represent state projects. By contrast, the market-oriented approaches from neoclassical economics to neoliberalism have been equally comfortable in national *and* international domains.

This may give us a clue to the impasses of development theories. The major turns in development have been shaped by supranational dynamics entirely outside the scope of standard development theory: the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system, the emergence of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the gradual shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific era, the shift to flexible production, the rise of information technology. Time and again, crisis has been a greater teacher than theory – the energy crisis, the debt crisis, the ecological crisis, the crisis of currency instability – and each crisis concerns supranational dynamics.

Neomarxism, dependency theory, world-system theory follow the external model: capitalism flows in, travels from the centre to the periphery, 'external areas' are *incorporated* into the world system. Their positive programmes, however, at any rate in the case of dependency theory, defend development as a *national* logic. Cardoso's notion of 'dependent development' represented a more sophisticated position which *did* take into account external influences. The difference between Bill Warren and most dependency thinkers was also that Warren followed a transnational and diffusionist approach to accumulation and development, whereas the *dependentistas* operated within a nationalitarian logic. Likewise, the key concepts of critical or alternative development thinking implicitly echo and revisit endogenous development as the norm: self-reliance, auto-centric development and delinking advocated in some forms of dependency theory, historicist views on modernization, polycentrism and indigenization.

The *unit* of development, however, is not a given or a constant. The boundaries between what is internal and external are by no means fixed. Development discourse with its implicit assumption of the 'country',

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'society', 'economy' as the developing unit papers over this issue and assumes much greater nationwide cohesiveness and thus state control than is realistic. The assumption has been questioned on several grounds. The by now classic argument of world-system theory maintains that the developing unit is not the society but the 'world system' (i.e. the unit integrated by an international division of labour of goods necessary for reproduction). Michael Mann (1986) contends that the very term 'society' is misleading and proposes instead 'social networks' that sprawl across borders. Cross-border enterprises of various kinds such as the *maquiladores* at the Mexican-United States border have drawn growing attention. The unit of development is shifting further in light of the growing concern with regions and localities as the sites of development, which finds expression in the regionalist turn (Amin and Thrift, 1993) and the 'new localism' (Goetz and Clarke, 1993).

This also relates to the familiar question of the reach and strength of the state (Migdal, 1988). The nation state is caught in a dialectic of subnationalism and supranationalism. Still the weakening of the state is by no means a straightforward process. 'One of the paradoxes of the late twentieth century is that the tendency of the state to intervene in economic affairs has increased – political rhetoric notwithstanding – at a time when the effectiveness of its interventions has declined' (Griffin and Khan, 1992: 64).

There is no question as to the central and enduring importance of the state: 'until world government arrives the nation state is the necessary locus of social contracts between market and society' (Kuttner, 1991: 9). Unfettered markets increase inequality and in the age of information economies, which puts a premium on human resource development, inequality is an economic liability. Generally, then, current arguments go far beyond the ideological dispute of state versus market; the real issue is the kind of role that the state is to play. Carnoy (1993: 91) contends: 'The role of the nation-state in creating an innovation society is thus absolutely crucial to the well-being of its citizens in the information age.' Meanwhile the policy options in most countries remain narrow: internationalization or globalization, meaning *de facto* liberalization; state-guided internationalization with restrictions and regional cooperation; and alternative development.

4 CRITICAL GLOBALISM

The argument of this article is that an essentialist notion of development, of good, natural, endogenous development, bedevils development thinking. What else is the notion of 'stunted development' (Marx on Ireland), 'stagnation' (Marx on India), underdevelopment (dependency theory), 'maldevelopment' (Amin, 1990) but the deviation from a norm

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of good, that is natural, development? This might explain the appeal of Nisbet's kind of approach for it asserts an organic model of development as the norm. Even modernization thinking which is highly interventionist in policy remains endogenist in theory. One reason for this is that as such it can be assimilated in the general strain of 'organic development'. In addition to the trend towards discursive consistency there are political reasons why endogenism is appealing.

The politics of development, from the earliest 'late developer' to the latest, has in the main been state politics. Endogenous development which is intrinsic to the developing entity is controllable by the state. The career of postwar development theory is synchronic with the career of decolonization and has served as a state doctrine of new nations. If endogenism is a powerful political tool, it is also a prism through which exogenous influences can be negotiated, a screen behind which contradictions can be papered over in the name of the 'national interest', maintaining the fiction of sovereignty, precious in the postcolonial era. In the era of accelerated globalization, however, endogenism backfires and a new settlement is required.

The weakness of the endogenous outlook on development is its single and narrow focus. In turning one's back to and seeking shelter from international turbulence one is in fact likely to make development more vulnerable to it. Accordingly, what is needed is to rethink development as a regional, transnational, global project, such that the international domain is not left to the strong players and their 'might is right' alone; in a word, to theorize *world development*. Hettne (1990: 34) contends: 'In fact it may be argued that the crisis in development theory is a reflection of the disparity between the growing irrelevance of a "nation-state" approach and the prematurity of a "world" approach.'

Part of the problem of development thinking is the hiatus between development economics and development sociology, or, phrased otherwise, its lack of comprehensiveness: *market-oriented* approaches marginalize the state; *state-oriented* approaches marginalize market forces; both marginalize society; *civil society-oriented* approaches marginalize the state and often the market as well, and international forces remain largely untheorized. Market-oriented globalism (neoliberalism, structural adjustment, monetarism, export-led growth) clashes with state-oriented endogenism or indigenization (delinking, import substitution), leaving social forces (grassroots, non-government organizations (NGOs), informal sector) in no man's land.

Critical globalism means theorizing the entire field of forces in a way that takes into account not just market forces but also interstate relations, international agencies and civil society in its domestic as well as transnational manifestations (cf. Scholte, 1993; Nederveen Pieterse, 1989). This is an argument for interdisciplinarity in development studies.

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Second it means a critical position *vis-à-vis* globalization, avoiding the clichés of globo speak without recycling dependency orthodoxy.

This brings us to the question of the relationship between globalization and development. If delinking is no longer a viable option (Nederveen Pieterse, 1994a), neither is globalization *tout court* an attractive avenue. It might be argued that globalization is the successor paradigm to dependency, except that globalization is not a paradigm but a shorthand description of a set of processes. What is relevant is that there is an underlying shift in attitude: if from the point of view of dependency theory, exogenous influences have been viewed with suspicion, from the point of view of globalism, they are celebrated.

In relation to globalization there is a wide spectrum of positions. On the part of extreme globalization thinkers such as Kenichi Ohmae (1992), globalization is celebrated and presented as global destiny, a destiny that very much resembles a worldwide duty-free store. On the part of neomarxists, it is denounced as the 'tyranny of globalism'. In making this case Petras and Brill (1985) in effect reassert the primacy of endogenous dynamics. But, even if market globalism is the issue, the alternative is not to retreat to statism or endogenism.⁵

The problems with this position are several. First, globalization is narrowed down to globalism which in turn is identified with market internationalism. Globalization, then, is no more than a fashionable code word for advanced capitalism. It is neoliberalism masquerading as global momentum. Obviously this only captures one face of current globalizations. Even if it is at present the dominant face, the reductionism is not warranted. The second limitation is historical shallowness. The equation of globalization with neoliberal globalization is a function of the circumstance that the recent acceleration of globalization, technological and economic, has coincided with the 1980s wave of neoliberalism. Globalization however is *not* a new dynamic – it would be so only and typically from the point of view of the endogenist reading of history. In reality globalization has been a long-term process and what distinguishes contemporary globalization is that it is accelerated (Waters, 1995; Nederveen Pieterse, 1994b). The third aspect that is overlooked in this position is that globalization does not come alone but in a package. Speed is not all that distinguishes contemporary globalization. Globalization at present is much more than merely intensified economic internationalization because it comes together and is intertwined with the growth of the information economy and the onset of flexible production systems (e.g. Castells, 1993).

In a recent formulation of Cardoso, various elements, old and new, are represented. There is a note of frustration that has not changed: 'the South is in double jeopardy – seemingly able neither to integrate itself, pursuing its own best interests, nor to avoid "being integrated" as

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servants of the rich economies' (1993: 156). There is a note of recognition of change. Globalization, according to Cardoso, necessitates the 'redefinition of dependency'. In this context two points are emphasized: the South has lost its great comparative advantage, the abundance of land, mineral resources and cheap labour, for these are no longer of vital importance to the globalized economy. The second major change is that economic development now affects all of society, for the democratization of society and state are now necessary conditions for organizational and technological innovation. The bottom line is that only one choice remains: 'either the South (or a portion of it) enters the democratic-technological-scientific race, invests heavily in R&D, and endures the "information economy" metamorphosis, or it becomes unimportant, unexploited, and unexploitable' (1993: 156).⁶

Obviously not all developing countries are able to connect with the new global economic dynamics. Castells observes the emergence or consolidation of a Fourth World: 'Within the framework of the new informational economy, a significant part of the world population is shifting from a structural position of exploitation to a structural position of irrelevance' (1993: 37). Cardoso concurs: 'They will not even be considered worth the trouble of exploitation, they will become inconsequential, of no interest to the developing globalized economy' (1993: 156). This is hardly a new theme. Decades ago a similar point was made about the lack of interest of multinational corporations to invest in peripheral countries; but because of structural changes in the world economy it has taken on a new gravity and a new, rough edge.

Globalism means either fostering or managing globalization: Critical globalism refers to the critical engagement with globalization processes, neither blocking them out nor celebrating globalization. As a policy framework for developing countries it refers to a cautious but forward-looking engagement with globalization processes, weighing the ramifications of different types of capital flow, financial transactions and technological transformations. If Samir Amin proposed selective delinking, critical globalism might be summed up as selective globalization. The keynote of globalization is that the nation state can no longer be taken for granted as the unit of development; cross-border transactions and micro- or macro-regionalization are becoming major development avenues. As a global agenda, critical globalism means posing the central question of global inequality in its new manifestations. As a research agenda, it entails the identification of the social forces that carry different transnational processes and examining the varying conceptualizations of the global environment and the globalizing momentum; an analysis of global babble and whose interests are being served.

The overall situation raises a number of questions on one of which I want to focus. What, under the circumstances, is the meaning of *world*

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development? Because of the combined changes of globalization, informatization and flexibilization there is a new relevance to the notion that 'all societies are developing'. This is not just a nice-sounding cliché but a reality confirmed by the transformations and transitions taking place everywhere, on macro- as well as micro-levels. All the world is 'in transition'.

One way to read the current dispensation is that the gap between semi-peripheral countries, at least the most advanced among them, and core countries is narrowing, while the gap between peripheral countries and the others is widening. There is a new meaning to Trotsky's law of combined and uneven development. The scope of economic innovation combined with the operation of the 'law of the retarding lead' places new investors in technology, infrastructure and human resources in several respects in virtually the same position as the conventionally industrialized countries. If we compare the profiles of economic renewal and industrialization strategies in the United States (e.g. Reich, 1983; Kuttner, 1991) with those of South Korea, or for that matter Brazil, there is considerable overlap. Thus, the 1986 Industrial Technology White Paper of the Korea Industrial Technology Association mentions as targets for the 1990s, as regards the direction of development, the realization of an advanced industrial society and the establishment of knowledge-intensive industries; as regards technology strategies, the continuous supply of high-quality brainpower and R&D for future-oriented projects and advanced high-technology development; and as regards leading industrial sectors, information industry, advanced materials, bio-engineering and systems engineering (Lim, 1995: 2). This is, in other words, the convergence thesis of industrial societies revisited, but on different grounds and combined with new patterns of disjuncture.

At the same time, the unit of development is not what it used to be. The conceptualization of the unit of development that was relevant politically and economically under the previous dispensation changes under the sign of globalization. The unit is no longer simply national (to the extent that this endogenist political fiction was relevant at all) but increasingly regional, local. Thus the frostbelt of traditional industries in the United States has been decaying while Silicon Valleys, though not all of those either, are prospering. *Within* countries there are growing regional disparities. The stilted arrangement of core/semiperiphery/periphery – all along an echo of nineteenth-century geopolitics translated into economic geography – is even less adequate than it used to be.

In these circumstances the notion of *world development* takes on different meanings. One window is the growing awareness of global risk, involving ecological hazards and phenomena such as currency instability. Accelerated globalization heightens the need for global governance. The fact that world development takes place at different

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speeds and makes for a world of 'variable geometry' (to borrow the term used for the European Union) itself calls for global engagement and governance. For marginalized countries and regions do find niches in the interstices of the maelstrom of globalization – through labour migration, crime networks, drug trafficking, political and cultural defiance. Ethnonationalist and religious resurgence in a globalized world of instant communication, portable technological capabilities and two-way migration flows has become a neighbourhood affair.

Another window is the role of the state in relation to economic development in the context of globalization: this may well be a greater role but especially a different role considering that the state has been internationalized. A further window is that, because of the new disjunctures, there is a new relevance to the project of 'global Keynesianism' or international reformism. Represented at various junctures by the New International Economic Order project, the Brandt, Bruntland, South Commission and Commission on Global Governance reports, supported by the 'middle powers', the Non-Aligned Movement and G-77, this remains one of the key dimensions of reorienting development. The case for global reform is not difficult to make.

Robinson (1995) argues that current globalization parallels the process of Polanyi's 'Great Transition' – the formation of national markets and tearing down of institutions that regulated economic relations, replacing them with uniform nationwide arrangements regulating property rights – and that a similar process, a second Great Transition, is now taking place on a global scale, as the spearpoint of economic globalization. Structural adjustment, the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), multinational corporate expansion, supranational financial cooperation, and growing regional cooperation on the basis of free capital agreements are part of this overall trend.

Can we afford global *laissez-faire*? Free capital agreements, Robinson (1995: 376) notes, 'exacerbate the inequalities in bargaining power between increasingly mobile transnational corporations, on the one hand, and immobile governments and unions on the other'. They 'limit the state's capacity to fund the existing social wage'. One of the consequences is substantial increases in income inequality. 'The experience of the last fifteen years supports this expectation. In this period, income inequality in the three countries that pursued neoliberal policies most rigorously – the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand – increased more rapidly than in other OECD countries' (1995: 376). Next, growing income inequality reduces the quality of democratic politics.

These trends and ramifications are thoroughly familiar. In the framework of globalization thinking there is a variety of reactions to this situation: one, conventional critical reactions, denouncing the steamroller

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of free market forces without offering alternatives; two, more complex and probing positions arise in international political economy and new political economy, partly more constructive in orientation; three, a celebration of the multiplicity, diversity and complexity of globalization processes, ignoring the steamroller of free market forces – in other words, a postmodern position of denial, based on a tacit hope that complexity will set us free. What is generally missing is a politically enabling analysis and an overall sense of direction. This itself reflects a general condition of epistemological transition and paradigm shift and, in addition, a profound process of political reorientation related to the end of the Cold War.

One of the priority concerns for globalization research is to formulate a politically enabling analysis of globalization, as part of an agenda of global futures. Robinson puts on the map the notion of social democratic globalization. His concern is

to demonstrate to democratic publics that the neoliberal form of globalization is not natural, inevitable, or desirable. Success in this regard will undercut the hegemony that neoliberal ideas currently enjoy. Putting a simple, yet radical alternative form of globalization on the political agenda weakens the standard argument – ‘there is no alternative’.

(1995: 379)

The specific reference is to the tax on international currency transactions proposed by James Tobin in 1972 and recently revived at the Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen. But this kind of orientation should be taken further.

International reformism is host to many projects, such as the formation of an international public sector or the project ‘towards an international social welfare state’ (Pronk, 1990). Global democratization is a vital part of this agenda. This involves the democratization of international institutions, the reform of the United Nations, the restructuring of the Bretton Woods institutions. Griffin and Khan (1992) see three possible scenarios in which global governance may develop: one, the gradual withdrawal of the United States from international governance; two, *de facto* international governance by entities such as the G-7, bypassing established institutions and constituting a global plutocracy; three, a consensus in favour of the reform of existing institutions or the creation of new ones, strengthening the multilateral approach to international governance. They favour the latter option and advocate better structures of global governance, including the reform and strengthening of the UN system, bringing the Bretton Woods institutions under UN supervision and introducing forms of international taxation. Even though political conjunctures have not been favourable to fashioning a

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global reform coalition, this remains a crucial agenda for development reconceived as world development.

It is not obvious how this relates to the grassroots, small-scale, small-is-beautiful approach of 'alternative development'. The weakness of the alternative development approach as it stands is that the role of the state is neglected while the local/global nexus is undertheorized. A question that often looms in the background is whether social movements, old and new, and NGOs should serve as buffers against globalization, providing shelter from the storm, shielding local culture and local identity, or whether their role should be to help connect regions and communities to the globalized economy. This is not an occasion for easy answers. But it bears pointing out that NGOs, especially international NGOs, are part of globalization (e.g. Willets, 1982) – globalizations in the plural and viewed multidimensionally. On this premise, for NGOs to block globalization *tout court*, the right hand would not know what the left hand was doing. As NGOs carry a globalizing ethos, what they can do and are doing is *negotiate* the *kind* of globalization which they are willing to be a part of.

In my view, then, the question of whether the role of NGOs should be to connect with or disconnect from globalization is a non-issue. NGOs are part of globalization. The position of specific NGOs within globalization processes depends on their role in the wide spectrum of types of NGOs. Transnational advocacy NGOs can contribute to shaping national and international opinion climates in favour of global governance. (See, for example, several articles in the collection on the Bretton Woods institutions by Cavanagh *et al.*, 1994.) Part of this horizon is transnational collective action and social movements operating across national and zone boundaries, in the context of transnational civil society. Obviously the agenda of global democratization requires many moves, conceptually and strategically, but that is not the subject here.

NGOs can use their influence to make and shape the case for *social development*, not just as a matter of tinkering in the margins but now as representing the very cutting edge of contemporary development: social development used in the substantive sense, not in the disciplinary sense. This is another window of global reform. What NGOs have stood for all along, that 'development is for people', now figures higher on mainstream agendas than ever. The experiences in East Asia and the combination package of globalization/informatization/flexibilization converge on several of the elements that NGOs have all along been pleading for: human resource development, social infrastructure, social institution building. In East Asia this has been guided by development states, on the basis of deeply historically embedded institutions of social cooperation, while NGOs flourish within a democratic climate. NGOs can play key roles in the development of social institution building

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which, according to the new institutional economics and sociology of socioeconomics, is part of the crux of development success or failure.

NOTES

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- 1 The historicist approach to modernization and the notion of multiple paths of modernization have been well established in China, Japan and India (Singh, 1989). In a broad way this parallels the theme of polycentrism – as against Eurocentrism (Amin, 1990).
- 2 The relationship between successive forms of hegemony and ascendant development ideologies is discussed in Nederveen Pieterse (1991). Imperialism is discussed in Nederveen Pieterse (1989). Alternative development and 'alternatives to development' I will take up as part of a book in preparation on development theory.
- 3 This is discussed at greater length in Nederveen Pieterse (1989: Ch. 15).
- 4 This relationship between interests and development discourse is suggested for development *ideology*, not for development theory, which has much greater autonomy.
- 5 Cf. Hettne (1990: 244): 'there have been two kinds of bias in development theory: endogenism and exogenism. Both approaches are, if carried to their extremes, equally misleading. The obvious remedy is to transcend the dichotomy and find a synthesis.'
- 6 Cardoso in his new role of President of Brazil is criticized for ignoring a political and power dimension to the globalization process and accused of naivety by Fiori (1995) who himself follows a predictable perspective on globalization as a new chapter in dependency.

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