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## Introduction: Development Theory in the 1990s

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Many developing countries will remember the 1980s as the lost decade. The same assessment could perhaps be applied to the field of development theory. Especially from the mid-1980s onwards, an increasing number of publications outlined the contours of what became known as 'the impasse in development theory'. Major factors contributing to this impasse were post-modern criticism of theory formation in the social sciences, the growing awareness that the emphasis on economic growth – awarded a central role in development theory – resulted in an insupportable burden on the natural environment, and loss of the socialist paradigm as the link between theory and development praxis.

For reasons elaborated later, the development theory impasse especially concerned Marxist and neo-Marxist thinking. Consequently, adherence to the neo-liberal paradigm – the 'counter-revolution' in John Toye's terms (1987) – seems to have reached major proportions. The euphoria on the right concerning Fukuyama's view of 'the end of history' (1989) seems premature at least: many Third World countries continue to have major economic problems, although, in political terms, the ongoing democratisation process would seem to allow for better conditions for the development process.

In spite of the development theory impasse, empirical studies of development themes continued in the Third World. However, they lacked the paradigmatic umbrella of, for example, dependency theory or the modes of production theorem. Given the criticism levelled against these analytical frameworks, it was logical that Third World studies in the 1980s should emphasise empirical research, linked only occasionally to metatheory.

In the meantime, however, attempts were increasingly being made to go beyond the development theory impasse. The contributions in this volume offer an overview of these endeavours, without, however, coming up with a fully-fledged new theory of development. The aim of the anthology is to examine the scientific tools which could be used to construct a post-impasse development theory, and to identify constraints on their application.



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This introductory chapter provides the reader with some necessary background to the discussions. It begins with a short overview of the major Marxist and neo-Marxist development theories which were criticised so severely in the 1980s. Next, several contributions to the impasse debate which subsequently arose are dealt with, using David Booth's article on the subject as a central point of reference (1985). In the following section, several attempts to reconstruct development theory will be introduced – e.g., the regulation school and post-imperialism. Attention then shifts to the question of whether the post-modern discourse has anything positive to offer post-impasse development studies, other than a general criticism of theory formation.

Many of the themes discussed will be elaborated in the other contributions to this volume.

### **An Overview of Neo-Marxist Development Theories**

Relevant to any discussion of Marxist and neo-Marxist development theories are their points of similarity and difference. Both Marxism and neo-Marxism regard social and political relations as determined by the primacy of production relations. However, as far as development theory is concerned, the differences between the two schools of thought are considerable. The major points of difference are the following:

1. Marxism is Eurocentric in its approach. It examines imperialism from the perspective of the central capitalist countries (the core), looks for reasons for imperialism's existence (the search for markets, cheap raw materials and labour so as to maintain profits at the core) and, consequently, for imperialism's function in the economic development of the core countries.

Neo-Marxism, on the other hand, looks at imperialism from the perspective of the peripheral countries, studying the consequences on the periphery of imperialist penetration. The best-known neo-Marxist development theories are the dependency theories, the modes of production theories and the world systems theories, which will be dealt with later.

2. Marxism emphasises the historically progressive role of capitalism. Marx and the 'early' Lenin describe the role of the spread of capitalism in Eastern despotic societies as historically progressive. Economic development was stimulated as major feudal landholders transformed themselves into capitalist entrepreneurs. Simultaneously the feudal yoke was lifted from the shoulders of the peasants, who would in due course form a working class (impossible under a feudal system), which could then be recruited for a socialist revolution.

In his later publications, Lenin (1917) pointed out the dangers of

exorbitant profits being transferred from the periphery to the core countries, retarding capitalistic development potential. Further, he pointed to the relationships between the local bourgeoisie in the periphery and the bourgeoisie in the core, preventing the genesis of a progressive bourgeoisie (as in Western Europe during the Industrial Revolution).

The unilinearity of orthodox Marxism is obvious: societies evolve from feudalism to capitalism and finally to socialism. This unilinear thinking will be criticised below.

Neo-Marxists disagree with this historically progressive role of imperialism and capitalism, arguing that they are more likely to lead to underdevelopment in the periphery than development. Second, they see other potentially revolutionary actors apart from workers, namely peasants. In the 1980s this vision had to make room for the attention focused on yet other actors, the 'new social movements'. (I will return to this point).

3. Marxists still adhere to a 19th-century development optimism. For example, they view the concept of scarcity as an invention of the bourgeoisie to legitimise economic inequality.

Increasingly, neo-Marxists integrate an ecological consciousness in their vision, although this approach is very recent and rather problematic (Benton 1989).

4. In discussing the appropriation of economic surplus, neo-Marxists look not only at class relations (where one class exploits the labour of another), but also at relations in a spatial sense where appropriation of surplus can play a role, namely between countries. This follows the 'later' Lenin, who signalled the possibility of excessive profiteering in this way.

### *Dependency Theory*

One of the best-known neo-Marxist development theories is the dependency theory. As with most social science theories, this theory was a child of its time (the end of the 1960s), the major characteristics of which were:

1. *The failure of the import substitution strategy.* After World War 2 a number of Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Argentina) adopted an industrialisation programme emphasising the so-called 'infant industry' argument, that goes back to the 19th-century German economist Friedrich List. Analyses by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), under the direction of Raul Prebisch, confirmed a deterioration in the terms of trade for traditional Latin American primary product exports compared to imported industrial goods. A number of countries consequently decided to produce industrial goods themselves, both to

limit their dependence on imported goods and to set an autonomous development process in place.

Towards the end of the 1960s it was becoming increasingly clear that this import substitution policy was not decreasing dependency on foreign countries. Foreign companies went behind tariff walls, national industry remained dependent on the import of machinery, and the internal market was too limited (through unequal income distribution) to generate sufficient demand. The dependent countries showed a pattern of increasing influence of foreign capital and increasing dependency. According to the dependency theorists (*dependentistas*), this process led to a growing social, political and economic marginalisation of many Latin Americans. This large-scale marginalisation could not be adequately explained by the then-current modernisation theory, which blamed the traditional (meaning non-functional or even dysfunctional) values of the marginalised population for preventing their integration into the economic dynamic.

A number of political events were also of significance in the birth of dependency theory.

2. *The Cuban revolution.* In 1959 this event presented Latin America with the possibility of socialist revolution. This created the demand for theoretical support which was not provided by orthodox Marxist writings on revolution.

3. *The military coup in Brazil.* This coup d'état in 1964 led to a policy that opened the floodgates for foreign capital, resulting in increasing marginalisation of the working population. Many critical academics, among them the future *dependentistas*, were exiled abroad, where they began to examine, and to criticise, the economic model of the Brazilian government.

4. *The US invasion of the Dominican Republic.* In 1965 this invasion quashed a popular uprising (supported by some enlightened army officers), emphasising that imperialism was prepared to defend its interests in Latin America. Anti-imperialist feelings in Latin America stirred up by this intervention played a distinct role in the development of dependency theory.

Dependency theory drew on a diverse range of earlier theoretic schools.<sup>1</sup> Hence, it is hardly surprising that there has been a diversity of elaborations of the dependency idea.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, the common spirit of the time allowed the following consensus to be reached with respect to the dependency concept:

- Underdevelopment is a historical process. It is not a condition necessarily intrinsic to the Third World.
  - The dominant and dependent countries together form a capitalist system (a standpoint which would later be developed by world systems theoreticians).
  - Underdevelopment is an inherent consequence of the functioning of the world system. The periphery is plundered of its surplus: this leads to development of the core and underdevelopment of the periphery.
- There was also a reasonable level of agreement about the role of multinational corporations:
- Multinationals impose a universal consumption pattern, without taking local needs into account.
  - They use capital-intensive techniques in areas with large labour resources.
  - They out-compete national capital, or undertake joint ventures with local capital.
  - They use a variety of methods to transfer capital (e.g., fictitious price systems).
  - They involve themselves in national political and economic affairs, via (among others) their relationships with the local bourgeoisie.

In short, the contention was that both a penetration of bank and industrial capital, and a consumption ideology that alienated the periphery from itself and made it dependent on the core, led to large-scale marginalisation and the non-realisation of development potential.

In the beginning there was little criticism from the modernisation school; increasingly, however, orthodox Marxists took the neo-Marxist renegades to task. In the early 1970s the critique concentrated on André Gunder Frank (1967, 1969), not necessarily because he was the most typical of the dependency school, but for a number of other reasons. First, Frank wrote in English – the Spanish of the other *dependentistas* seems to have been too inaccessible to the critics. Second, Frank was both polemical and outspoken in his arguments. He was also sometimes placed with the world systems theorists because he not only wrote about Latin America but also about the historical development of the capitalist world system, and the 'true' world system writers based themselves on his work.

It is beyond the scope of this introduction fully to elaborate Frank's ideas and the criticisms thereof. I will, however, look at one element of this criticism, as it led to the formation of the modes of production theories and emphasised the contrast between Marxists and neo-Marxists.

Frank asserted that Latin America could be characterised as capitalist practically from the start of the colonial period. There was no question of the dual society proposed by modernisation theorists. There was

something approximating production for the world market and there was a system for appropriation of the economic surplus. The way in which the surplus was appropriated varied over time (from plunder to unequal trade), but the surplus was always usurped in one way or another.

Frank's assertion that Latin America was capitalist from the beginning of the colonial period brought him under heavy fire, particularly from the Argentinian economist Ernesto Laclau (1971). Laclau argued that Frank had used a mistaken definition of capitalism, that capitalism was a mode of production, rather than a mode of exchange. He concentrated on the sort of labour relations which created a product in the first place, rather than on what happened to the surplus. If, rather than the manner of production, matters such as production for a market and appropriation of the surplus were of prime importance in defining capitalism, reasoned Laclau, then capitalism should be defined as having existed since the Ancient Greeks.<sup>3</sup> According to Laclau, such a definition turns capitalism into a meaningless concept.

In the meantime, the modernisation theorists had recovered from their shock, and began to direct their criticism at the inadequate empirical evidence supporting the dependency thesis that differences in degree of dependency were causally related to differences in economic development (Ray 1973, von Albertini 1980, Bairoch 1980). In general this criticism followed the tactic of erecting a straw man (of dependency theories) which was then knocked down. Soon, however, modernisation theorists became more interested in computerised global growth models (Kahn and Wiener 1967, Rostow 1978, Kahn *et al.* 1979).

### *Modes of Production Theory*

Laclau went further in his criticism of Frank, attempting to develop an idea where the emphasis lay not on the circulation sphere (trade, appropriation of surplus) but on the production sphere. The question of how products were produced (the production relationships) was further examined. In France, especially, the modes of production concept was given a clearer theoretical form, particularly by anthropologists Pierre Philippe Rey (1971, 1973) and Claude Meillassoux (1971, 1972, 1981). The anthropologists found an opportunity to address what they saw as a 'need' in the dependency theories, namely, lack of attention to the local level.

The basic idea of the modes of production theory is that a number of modes of production coexist in a society, and that they have a relationship to each other (regarding exchange of labour, goods, capital, etc.): they articulate with each other. Further, it was thought that a relationship between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production was favourable for the capitalist mode of production. Apartheid was used as a classic

example of an articulation between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production. The workers lived in their traditional homelands, where they had land that didn't produce enough to live on, and so had to offer their labour to South African industry. Salaries, however, could remain low, because workers had some income from their land.

This example shows that a capitalist mode of production not only relates to existing non-capitalist modes of production, but it can also create new ones. The conclusion was that in many developing countries capitalism articulated with non-capitalist modes of production and so retarded the development of these countries.

From the time this concept became known in international literature there was a boom in the number of modes of production identified by anthropologists. In addition to Rey's colonial (see also Banaji 1972), lineage and transitional modes of production, other modes of production were 'discovered', such as the peasant mode of production (Bartra 1975, Harrison 1977), the African mode of production (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1969) and the petty-commodity mode of production (Poulantzas 1975, Amin 1974, 1976). Eventually it appeared as if every village could be identified as having its own unique mode of production, and the concept threatened to become meaningless (Foster-Carter 1978).

The Marxists argued that this neo-Marxist interpretation of modes of production was incorrect. Marx's standpoint was that 'mode of production' was a concept that had to be used at a national level, and that at any one point in time, there was only one mode of production.

Opinions on the articulation of production modes also diverged among supporters of the theory. Some felt that non-capitalist modes of production had resisted capitalist penetration, others argued that the non-capitalist production modes were kept alive by capitalism, if not even created by capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

The modes of production concept maintained itself successfully for a reasonably long time; however, interest in it began to wane in the 1980s. Nonetheless, the development of this concept offered many fruitful studies during the 1970s, above all because these discussions offered insight into why development projects can be problematic.<sup>5</sup>

### *World Systems Theory*

Just as the dependency school was a child of its time, so were the world systems theories. This approach was developed in the mid-1970s, when East Asian countries were experiencing swift growth that could no longer be described as dependent development, particularly as they had begun to challenge the economic superiority of the USA in a number of areas.

Another factor conducive to the rise of world systems theories was the oncoming crisis in socialist countries. The failure of the Cultural

Revolution in China and economic stagnation in the Eastern Bloc led to an opening in the direction of international capital. Previously unthinkable alliances were formed: for example between Washington and Peking. These were developments to which revolutionary Marxism could contribute nothing. It could be said that developments were happening on a world scale that were not covered by existing development theories.

Wallerstein was the most outspoken figure in this new terrain. His work from the mid-1970s onwards was strongly based on the ideas of André Gunder Frank and other *dependentistas*. Unequal trade, the exploitation of the periphery by the core, and the existence of a world market were concepts taken from dependency school thinking.

Like Frank, Wallerstein argued that a capitalist world economy had existed since the 16th century, that is, since the beginning of the colonial era. He saw non-capitalist modes of production as a part of capitalism, the definition of which (based on 19th-century England) he saw as too narrow. Increasingly, countries which were previously isolated and self-supporting became involved in the world economy. The final result is the creation of a core and a periphery, with a number of semi-periphery countries in between.

The core consists of the industrialised countries, the periphery of the agricultural export countries. The semi-peripheral countries (like Brazil), which act as a buffer between the core and the periphery, are differentiated from the periphery by their more significant industrial production. The semi-periphery functions as a go-between: it imports hi-tech from the core, and in return exports semi-manufactured goods to the core. It imports raw materials from the periphery and exports to it industrial end-products.

Wallerstein saw the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) as examples of the semi-periphery. A peripheral country can achieve the status of semi-periphery and in this way can be brought into the core. The spread of as large a market as possible is essential to his reasoning. These were areas where Wallerstein clearly diverged from dependency school thinking, if only in that *dependentistas* did not reason in terms of a semi-periphery.

The world systems concept was seen, in this period, as a handy solution to a problem that *dependentistas* were increasingly confronted with: how to differentiate between internal and external factors as explanations for underdevelopment. The world systems theory offered a simple solution: in moving to a more abstract level (with countries as global analysis units) there are no more external factors. There are also no longer different sorts of capitalism, such as core capitalism and peripheral capitalism; instead there is one capitalist world system. The origin of development and underdevelopment is then found in the

incorporation of countries within the world system. Underdevelopment occurs because countries are subject to a trade regime and produce for a world market that is characterised by unequal trade.<sup>6</sup> Wallerstein was criticised by followers of the modes of production theory, who argued that there were a number of production modes, each articulating in its own way with the dominant capitalist mode.<sup>7</sup>

Another world systems author is Samir Amin, who began publishing on this topic in 1976. In contrast to Wallerstein, Amin did not agree with the presence of a capitalist mode of production in Latin America from the 16th century. He did agree with the existence of a non-capitalist mode of production which saw its surplus appropriated through unequal trade. This unequal trade led to a stagnation in the expansion of the national market and thus to a disarticulated economic system.<sup>8</sup> Like Wallerstein, Amin argued for the existence of the go-betweens, the semi-peripheral countries.

In general, the criticism of the world systems approach is the same as that of the dependency theories: the neglect of class analysis, the neglect of the diversity of the Third World, and the assumption of non-workable political options such as self-reliance and a socialist world government. In taking a global view, the findings are difficult to translate to the concrete realities of Third World countries.

As with previous approaches, the world systems theory was also pushed to the background in the 1980s.

### Some Causes of the Impasse in Development Theories

The criticism of Marxist and neo-Marxist development theories as well as of modernisation theories led to a theoretical vacuum in the 1980s, which for many Third World countries was a decade of economic crisis.

In the past 30 years (the period of the existence of development theories) developing countries have realised an improvement in life expectancy, child mortality and literacy rates. However, these are averages only and are less valid for lower socio-economic groups. In the 1980s there was actually a reversal in these indicators (the outbreak of cholera epidemics in Latin America and Africa point to this). With the current per capita growth of 1.3–1.6 per cent it will take another 150 years for Third World countries to achieve half the per capita income of Western countries, and that is without taking into consideration the sometimes negative growth figures of the 1980s. Instead of a self-sustained growth (to use Rostow's terms), many developing countries are up to their ears in debt. Problems such as unemployment, housing, human rights, poverty and landlessness are increasing at alarming rates. UNICEF estimated a fall of 10–15 per cent in the income of the poor in the Third World between 1983 and 1987. In 1978 the Third World

received 5.6 per cent of the world's income; in 1984 that had fallen to 4.5 per cent. The 'trickle-down' process had failed absolutely. Two hundred years ago the income ratio between the world's rich and poor countries was 1.5:1, in 1960 it was 20:1, in 1980 it went up to 46:1 and in 1989 the ratio was 60:1 (Trainer 1989, World Bank 1991).

From the mid-1980s the vacuum in development theories was raised in an increasing number of publications in terms of a crisis, an impasse, for the following reasons:<sup>9</sup>

1. The realisation that the gap between poor and rich countries continued to widen and that the developing countries were unlikely to be able to bridge that gap whatever strategy they would follow.
2. The realisation that developing countries, in the 1980s, were preoccupied with short-term policies aimed at keeping their heads above water in terms of debt. Policies did not take intermediate or long-term goals into consideration, nor did it seem likely that they would be able to do so in the future.
3. The growing awareness that economic growth has had, and is having, a catastrophic effect on the environment. It was calculated that if developed countries maintained their current level of growth, by 2050 they would need an output eight times higher than the current level. That this would cause an ecological disaster is obvious. Advocates of sustainable development argued that growth = development is not only invalid for the Third World, but also for the wealthy industrialised countries – and why wait for a major ecological catastrophe before we realise this? The 'zero growth' option increasingly came into the picture, but found no foundation in any of the already discredited development theories.
4. The delegitimation of socialism as a viable political means of solving the problem of underdevelopment. Although Marxist and neo-Marxist development theories were never particularly strong in presenting realisable policy alternatives, socialist-inspired development trajectories were now totally removed from the policy agenda.
5. The conviction that the world market is an over-arching whole which cannot be approached using development policies oriented at the national level. Individual nation-states are assigned an increasingly smaller function. Development theories, however, still used the nation-state as a meaningful context for political praxis.
6. The growing recognition of differentiation within the Third World that could no longer be handled by global theories assuming a homogenous First and Third World. The 1980s saw an avalanche of books on the subject of whether or not 'the' Third World exists as an entity.

7. The advancement of post-modernism within the social sciences, where there has been a tendency to undermine 'the great narratives' (capitalism, socialism, communism, etc.) by arguing that there is no common reality outside the individual. Political alternatives, which always exist by the grace of a minimum of common perception, are in this way manoeuvred out of sight. Development theories based on metadiscourses have no right to exist, according to post-modernists.

At the end of the 1980s, the only group not touched by the crisis (and who reacted with a sometimes irritating and unfounded triumphalism) were the neo-liberal adherents of the open market ideology. This post-Keynesian vision (also known as Reaganomics) has, since the middle of the 1970s, turned the crisis to its advantage.

#### *Neo-Liberalism*

From the mid-1970s this development ideology enjoyed increasing popularity. The oil crisis at the beginning of that decade and the subsequent restructuring of international capitalism led to a redefinition of the role of the state. This meant the end of Keynesianism and the idea of the welfare state. Publications by Bauer (1981, 1984), Little (1974, 1982), Lai (1983) and Balassa (1982) gave substance to what John Toye (1987) labelled the counter-revolution in development thinking. What started in the 1970s as a neo-monetarist vision on the problem of hyperinflation in many Third World countries, grew into a new development ideology.

State interference with the market mechanism was considered ineffective, counterproductive and basically inconsistent. According to David Lehmann (1990), Chile under Pinochet exhibited one of the clearest examples of neo-liberal policy. The state should primarily endeavour to lower the fiscal deficit through devaluation, deregulation of prices and decreasing state subsidies. The circumstances in Chile at the time – a military dictatorship – were highly suitable for the introduction of this neo-liberal and neo-monetarist economic policy. The rounds of applause which Chile earned in international financial circles encouraged many currently democratising governments in developing countries to follow Chile's example. Limiting the role of the state, a liberal economy and a strict monetary policy according to the guidelines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, are the major policy options in many Third World countries.

However, as Chossudovsky (1991) rightly observes, the structural adjustment package of the IMF can increasingly be considered as the cause rather than the solution to the economic problems experienced in the Third World. The withdrawal of the state led to the increasing impoverishment of low-income groups. Liberalisation of the economy

and the growing emphasis on export-led industrialisation resulted in a dual economy, with one sector producing for the international market and another sector producing for a shrinking national market. Euphoric interpretations of Mexico's and Argentina's recent economic upsurge seem rather premature because the state deficit has been cut back primarily by large-scale privatisations which cannot go on indefinitely.

As a development ideology, neo-liberalism most resembles the well known modernisation paradigm, but in fact it has less to offer because the role of the state has been minimalised.

After so many years of oligarchic, restricted democratic or military regimes which neglected the basic needs of their people, many Third World countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia alike have currently entered a process of transition to democracy which could create the conditions for states finally to start caring for the poor and the excluded. However, the neo-liberal trajectory denies the Third World states the policy tools to intercede actively in favour of those without jobs, houses, health care, schooling and food. Instead, national assets are sold out on a large scale to (inter)national private capital, leading to a recolonisation of the Third World. The current status of the concept of modernisation – and modernisation theory for that matter – seems increasingly to refer only to political aspects of the transition to democracy in the Third World (Apter 1987).

### *Substantiating the Impasse*

Although in the preceding section some criticism of neo-Marxist development theory has already been dealt with, it must be pointed out that much of this criticism has been generated within the (neo)Marxist camp itself. In 1985, David Booth published an article in which he approached the problem somewhat more thoroughly, raising questions over both the neo-Marxist and Marxist development theories as such. This article has since functioned as an important reference for the theoretical substantiation of the impasse in the sociology of development.

Stuart Corbridge (1989) identifies three dimensions in Booth's critique of (neo)Marxist development studies: 'essentialism', 'economism' and 'epistemology'. Regarding the first dimension, Booth argues that (neo)Marxists, from the perspective of their metatheory, attempt to prove the necessity of economic development *casu quo* underdevelopment as such, instead of attempting to explain the underlying dynamics. In this respect, Booth criticises both the circulationists and productionists in the Marxist camp.<sup>10</sup> According to Booth, the similarity between these two schools of thought is that capitalism is defined in terms of laws that produce inescapable and fixed outcomes (for example, a socialist revolution). Theories with this characteristic have been named

teleological. The publications of Bill Warren (1980), which have a structural Marxist character wherein Warren positions himself against the *dependencia* theories, are also placed by Booth under the 'teleological' banner. The dependency school was further criticised on the basis of the tautological relationship between underdevelopment and dependency.<sup>11</sup> It is worth mentioning here that modernisation theory also exhibited a teleological trait: the example of the United States was held up to developing countries as an end goal that was reachable by following the rules laid down by the modernisation theory.

The second dimension in Booth's critique refers to the economism in Marxist development studies. With this he means that the complex of political, social and cultural factors in developing countries is seen as a consequence of the national and international economic structure. According to Booth, this interpretation interferes with the study of these factors as independent dimensions. To interpret culture patterns in developing countries exclusively in terms of the functional needs of the metropolitan capital is meaningless in Booth's eyes.

The third dimension, that of epistemology, concerns Booth's comment that Marxists have closed their eyes to relevant issues in what he calls 'mainstream' literature. They have ignored, for example, literature about industrialisation processes in the Third World, where the state fulfils a pioneering role. Booth claims that Marxists were placed in an epistemological confrontation with 'mainstream' literature that led to concepts (such as unequal trade and exploitation) which were rarely based on empirical data, were almost never calculable and, on top of that, were wrapped in pseudo-scientific jargon.<sup>12</sup>

Although Booth's article attracted much attention, the basis of his critique was not in itself new. In 1979 Henry Bernstein was already moving away from the *dependentistas* and the modes of production school. Bernstein reproached the then-radical development theorists for wanting to have their cake and eat it too. The fundamental difference between the developed core in the industrialised world and the underdeveloped periphery was, according to Bernstein, cast in terms (respectively) of autonomous and dependent development processes. On the other hand, there is talk of exploitation of the periphery by the core to oppose the fall in the rate of profit. According to Bernstein this logic is not consistent: one cannot describe the development process of the core as independent if that process depends on exploitative relations with the periphery in order to keep the dynamics of its own development going.

Further, Bernstein scorns the modes of production school for the 'shopping list' of production modes which turns it into an empty concept. His conclusion – that underdevelopment is not a uniform process with uniform causes and consequences – led to Bernstein's conviction that a

theory of underdevelopment was not possible. He sees attempts to construct such a theory as ideologically coloured. With this critique, Bernstein in fact pre-empted both Booth and post-modernist thought. However, neither Bernstein in 1979 nor Booth in 1985 (contrary to his chapter in this volume) offered a concrete way out of the impasse in radical development theories.

#### *Continuation of the Impasse Debate*

In an article published in 1988, Leslie Sklair added weight to Booth's argument for a temporary shift of attention within development studies from the level of theory to the level of *metatheory*.

Sklair sees the only way out of the impasse described by Booth as the combination of metatheory, theory and empirical research in one project.<sup>13</sup> According to Sklair, the impasse arose from the confusion of metatheory and theory, where attempts were made to test a metatheory which was, by definition, untestable. On top of that is the problem that diverse, and sometimes divergent, theories can be derived from one metatheory. These can be internally consistent, but are not necessarily consistent with each other.

As an example Sklair cites the historic-materialist metatheory from which were derived theories of 'dependent underdevelopment' (Frank 1976, 1969), 'dependent development' (Cardoso and Faletto 1970) and 'dependency reversal' (Warren 1980). Sklair follows the same reasoning for gender theories such as liberal feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism, which he sees as deriving from the same historic-materialist metatheory, and which take as their central substantive element the conflict between 'patriarchy and the liberation of women under capitalism'. Sklair argues for a cross-fertilisation between theories that are derived from the same metatheory, for example, between 'dependent development' and particular gender theories that can then be empirically tested by a study of the role of women in the internationalisation of production.

Sklair's differentiation between theory and metatheory is not in itself new; however, it is worth bringing it to the fore again in the light of the development theory impasse. The suggestion of cross-fertilisation can also be useful. However, two problems are still with us. First is the post-modernist criticism of metatheoretical assumptions, such as those inherited from the Enlightenment. (I shall return to this point later in this chapter.) Second, I get a hint in Sklair's article of a not-known manoeuvre, namely, that if a theory is untestable, or falsified through testing, then it can be promoted to the rank of metatheory. That looks to me like merely shifting the problem, rather than solving it. I say a 'not-known manoeuvre' as it puts me in mind of the way world systems

theorists 'solved' the problem confronting the *dependentistas*: the difficult empirical difference between internal and external factors that play a role in (under)development. This problem was solved by world systems theorists by shifting their analysis to a higher level. On a world level we are no longer confronted with the problematic differentiation between internal and external factors.

Vandergeest and Buttel (1988) have also picked up the thread of Booth's critique of the underlying metatheoretical assumptions of Marxism. Furthermore, they have established that neo-Marxism sets itself against an orthodox Parsonian version of Max Weber (Parsons 1937) that was subsequently annexed by the modernisation theory. They feel that this version does not do justice to Weber's thinking, and point to a recent school of neo-Weberians to which Claus Offe (1985), Charles Tilly (1984), Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and Anthony Giddens (1981, 1984), among others, belong.

According to Vandergeest and Buttel, Weber accused Marxists of failing to see their model as an ideal type and attempting to identify reality with the model. At the same time Weber held the opinion that socio-political analyses should put more emphasis on the 'historic-interpretative specificity'. This approach stands firmly against the way Parsons and the modernisation theory have reified Weber's concept of ideal type.<sup>14</sup> Neo-Weberians handle the concept of ideal type as neither outcome deterministic (teleological) nor as explanatory of reality. The identification of obstacles to development (as happens in Marxism and the modernisation theory) is irrelevant, according to neo-Weberians, because this assumes a particular, identifiable route to a defined end-situation that is called 'development'. Thus, in the modernisation theory, culture is seen as something static and, in the Third World, a possible obstacle to development. In Marxist analysis, on the other hand, culture is seen as being determined by the economy. The neo-Weberian approach, however, sees culture as a creative process that must be studied in locally oriented research.

Vandergeest and Buttel also label analysis of the state, where political power is placed in a cultural context, as belonging to the neo-Weberian approach. As a possible disadvantage they cite Weber's lack of attention to practical political intervention. Concerning what must be done with a quantity of locally oriented research, Vandergeest and Buttel point to the possibility, in fact the necessity, of looking within the heterogeneity of developing countries for common denominators.

It is a pity that these authors have not developed this line of thought further. The necessity of historical comparative research is, for me, precisely the point here, and something Vandergeest and Buttel correctly refer to in their introduction.



Mouzelis (1988) takes up the baton handed on by Vandergeest and Buttel. So as not to become bogged down in generalities such as 'the reality in the Third World is so complex and diverse', Mouzelis proposes '... to go beyond the case study, without sacrificing context in terms of time and space'. He proposes an attempt to analyse specific development trajectories and use that analysis as a basis for typologies, as Barrington Moore (1966) has done for industrialised countries. Mouzelis assumes that if development trajectories plotted for Argentina, Chile and Brazil (for example) are compared to those of the Asian NICs (Newly Industrialised Countries), we would then be presented with essential factors that influence the development process, such as the amount and form of state dirigism, the influence of agrarian reform, relations between agriculture and industry, and the development of the internal market.

Mouzelis's approach emphasises that it is not necessary to limit comparisons to regional studies; for example, it is valid to place Greece in the same category as the countries of the Latin American southern cone. He argues here for a more autonomous position for the political dimension in the analysis.<sup>15</sup> Thus he sees military regimes in Latin America more as independent actors than as promoters of ruling class interests. According to Mouzelis, development trajectories in the Third World are more often characterised by competition for the means of domination and coercion than competition for means of production. He refers explicitly to concepts developed by the French regulation school, namely regime of accumulation and mode of regulation, which is discussed in the following section.

### Initiating Post-Impasse Development Theory

The continuation and development of the debate begun by Booth (detailed above) over the impasse in (neo)Marxist development theories has shed light on a number of attempts to give substance to post-impasse development theories. It is remarkable that a number of these attempts are not particularly recent and even predate the generally felt impasse.

In this section I will discuss the French regulation school, the actor-oriented approach, post-imperialism, gender studies, and finally the research agenda on sustainable development, which is in fact more concerned with defining development strategies than with theoretical explorations.

#### *The Regulation School*

The French regulation school, led by Lipietz and Aglietta, formulated its thinking in the early 1980s. The essence of the regulation school was clearly presented in a succinct article by Lipietz in 1984. Like Mouzelis, Lipietz is of the opinion that regularities in development trajectories are

observable through historical comparative research. He explicitly warns against the deduction of a concrete reality from supposed regularities that are themselves deduced from a universal concept such as imperialism or dependency.

According to Lipietz, regularities (that is, a sequence of contradictions, crises and transformation) in development trajectories can be abstracted in two concepts: 'regime of accumulation' and 'mode of regulation'. A regime of accumulation describes the way in which the economic product is allocated between consumption and accumulation. In Marxist terminology this leads to a particular stabilised reproduction scheme.<sup>16</sup> This is coupled with a particular mode of regulation: regulating norms, values and laws – in short, a set of internalised rules and procedures that integrate social elements in individual behaviour.<sup>17</sup>

Lipietz cites Fordism as an example of a regime of accumulation and a mode of regulation.<sup>18</sup> He warns against the approach that a predictable dynamic in capitalism produces a particular consecutive combination of his dyadic concepts. He opts for *a posteriori* functionalism, where the furthest one can go is to assert that a particular combination of regime of accumulation and mode of regulation can reproduce itself for a period without crisis. The stability and consistency of an economic world system is therefore not the consequence of the working of the 'invisible hand' of capitalism: rather it is the result of the interaction between relatively autonomous national regimes of accumulation. Thus the functioning of multinational corporations leads to an international division of labour; however, there is still the prerequisite of the cooperation of the individual countries, which can be further complicated by involvement in a completely different project.<sup>19</sup>

Lipietz's approach can offer a way of giving a more precise form to the historical comparative research supported by a number of authors previously discussed. In any case, it prevents Argentina falling into the same category as the 'banana republics' because of the export of primary products. Nevertheless, Lipietz finds it difficult to heed his own warning that the theory of international relations is extremely sensitive to functionalism and holism. He suggests that so-called peripheral Fordism, just as Fordism is a particular combination of a regime of accumulation and a mode of regulation.<sup>20</sup> At the same time he argues, justifiably, that there are vast differences in the mode of regulation between, for example, South Korea and Mexico (in terms of land reform, for instance).

Lipietz's observation that development strategies cannot be seen out of the context of the position the countries ('social formations' in Lipietz's terms) take in the international circuit, leads us to two other attempts to go beyond the development theory impasse.

### **The Actor-Oriented Approach**

In contrast to the work of Lipietz and Aglietta, which concentrates on the level of nation-state and internationalisation, sociologist Norman Long (1990) is more interested in the relationships between the meso level (the 'habitus': the wider context wherein access to power and resources plays a role) and the micro level. In his 'actor-oriented approach' Long asserts that the actors' behaviour is not derived from their structural position – a similar standpoint to Lipietz, but on a lower analytical level. Long argues that both the modernisation theory and the neo-Marxist approach are too deterministic, that their vision of development trajectories is too linear, and that they see social change as emanating from external impulses (such as state policy or a dynamic in the market system). For Long, human (re)action and consciousness play a central role.

Long indicated his actor-oriented approach as early as the 1970s, in his work with Brian Roberts in Long and Roberts, 1978. On the basis of his research in Peru and Mexico, Long came to the conclusion that even where structural conditions and types of external impulses are relatively constant, behaviour of actors can take a diverse range of forms. He expressly did not reduce behaviour of individual actors to individual motives and interests. This would lead to an empty voluntarism. Instead, Long is interested in the interface between the meso level and the individual actor. He suggests that the latter has a wider range of actions available than is usually presumed. Furthermore, these actions can have an effect on a meso level, contrary to the widely-held view that it is primarily meso-level impulses that determine the behaviour of individual actors.

Referring to Hindess (1986), Long asserts that actors have access to a variety of discourses upon which to base their actions. Long labels not only individuals as actors (or 'agents') but also corporations, the church and the state bureaucracy. On the other hand, he does not see gender or class as actors or agents. He denies having reverted to the trap of ethnographic particularism, because he specifically concentrates on the relation between the meso and micro levels.

Reacting to Long's actor-oriented approach, David Slater (1990) asserts that Long correctly refutes the Marxist 'econocentric' vision of class as actor. Class is an abstract concept and is therefore not capable of social action. However, he finds Long's rendering of the neo-Marxist dependency idea somewhat one-sided, in his neglect of Cardoso's concept of dependent development, for example. Moreover, Slater – *à la* Leslie Sklair – would like to see more attention paid to the integration of metatheory, theory and empirical research, and to social movements and resistance on a regional/local level.

### **Post-Imperialism**

The third proposal for a renewal in development theories, which I would like to cover briefly, is that of post-imperialism, which has its most important exponents in David Becker and Richard Sklar (1987). The latter began to develop his ideas in 1976.

Post-imperialism is not actually a development theory, but rather a set of ideas about the political and social organisation of international capitalism. Becker and Sklar begin with a critique of the standard neo-imperialist theories. In the first neo-imperialist variant that they identify, capitalism is seen to be the root of all evil (surplus extraction, inappropriate technology, anti-democratic bourgeoisie in alliance with international capital, etc.). The second neo-imperialist theory they argue against is Cardoso's 'dependent development', the viewpoint of which was that the Third World was industrialising (also Warren's position) but that it remained structurally incomplete. Developing countries then must bring themselves into line with a world economy dominated by transnational corporations, which could supply the missing inputs, and as such would also be in a position to exercise decision-making power. The authors reproach Cardoso for underestimating the NICs' capacities for technical innovation, and for presenting an unrealistic alternative in the form of total autonomy and a state that would have to represent the will of the people.

Becker and Sklar contend that neo-imperialism in general is based on the false assumption that international capitalist expansion is of necessity imperialistic in its nature. In their vision the transnational corporations (TNCs) offer Third World countries access to capital, markets and technology. There is a harmony of interests between politically autonomous countries, in spite of differences in phases of economic development. There is then no question of a growing international domination. Everywhere in the Third World the elite will form stable relationships with the TNCs, according to Becker and Sklar. Thus there is a 'managerial' bourgeoisie consisting of a 'corporate wing' and a 'local wing', which in general have common interests. The only danger for this coalition occurs when the 'local wing' expresses overly nationalistic rhetoric. The TNCs tend to behave as 'good corporate citizens'. Becker and Sklar call this adaptation to the local political climate the 'doctrine of domicile'.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, Becker and Sklar contend that the members of the international bourgeoisie are also influenced by development values in the host country, and that communication is not simply one-way traffic between international and national bourgeoisie.<sup>22</sup> By assertively and pragmatically interacting with foreign investment and the corporate managerial elite, a new local bourgeoisie has, in many Third World

countries, managed to usurp political power from the old oligarchical elite. The new local bourgeoisie no longer needs an authoritative administration to be able to exercise their class domination. Becker and Sklar feel that their post-imperialist interpretation corresponds with the beginning of a post-nationalist period.

In a certain sense, post-imperialism seems to show some similarity to Long's actor-oriented approach, in that the spotlight is on the actors in the development process, and not so specifically on mechanistic processes. Still, Becker and Sklar employ a much more structuralist approach. Their class analysis is characterised by awarding important weight to the political context in comparison to the economic overdeterminism in the orthodox Marxist class analysis.<sup>23</sup>

In a critical comment, Frieden (1987) praises the post-imperialists for drawing attention to the assertive pragmatism with which Third World countries can respond to foreign capital investments. Frieden (justifiably) comments that these ideas have not yet reached the level of development theory, and that much analysis still has to be done. Class formation and the dialectics of class struggle are central in the analysis of post-imperialism, but Frieden warns not only against political determinism, but also against underestimating the economic levers available to international capital to gain entrance to certain countries. In addition, he establishes that the case studies used (Zambia and Peru) concentrate on TNCs in the mining sector (copper). In comparison to other economic activities this is a very specific sector and not particularly representative of the behaviour of foreign capital in the Third World.<sup>24</sup>

Frieden's criticism is justified. Post-imperialism is not a development theory; at most it is a theory regarding a recently arisen international oligarchy. This 'managerial' bourgeoisie is a new class which defends its interests against the proletariat and the old oligarchic classes. In the Third World this results in a great diversity in relations between the state and (international) capital. Although attention to the behaviour of the corporate and 'local' part of the managerial bourgeoisie is a useful element within post-imperialism, it places too much emphasis on the political element in the analysis, and not enough on the economic element.<sup>25</sup> Despite criticism by Becker and Sklar of the historical *dependencia* school of Cardoso *et al.*, the strength here was the connection, on a national level, of an economic analysis to an analysis of the variety in class alliances and class oppositions.

The post-impatse development studies dealt with up to now vary in regard to the formal object (the explanatory framework) and the material object (what needs to be explained). Despite their differences, the development theories discussed have at least one common feature,

namely positivism. The world is regarded as it is and not as it should be. There are also, however, post-impatse approaches of a more normative nature, the most important of which concern gender studies and sustainable development.

### Gender Studies

Gender studies show a dialectical relation to development theories. On the one hand, gender studies contributed to the impasse in development theories by consistently criticising the 'invisibility of women' in these theories. However, gender studies, on the other hand, used metatheories which they shared with the heavily criticised development theories. In other words, gender studies chose a material object (e.g., the position of women, gender relations), using as a formal object the same inspirational source (Marxist metatheory) as many development theories. Gender studies were thus confronted with a similar impasse, which took some time to materialise because of the epistemological confrontation which gender studies saw itself engaged in. Thus, according to Komter (1991), feminist theory in the past had constantly looked for a structuralist approach, and moved into a crisis when the material object opened more space for the study of pluralism and diversity among women. The subsequent liaisons with Marxism, psychoanalysis and post-modernism only led gender studies to growing theoretical fragmentation.

Komter limits herself to commenting upon gender studies in Western industrialised countries, but Marnia Lazreg (1988) goes beyond that. She accuses Western feminism of a Eurocentric view of the position of women in the Third World in general, and women in Islamic countries in particular. According to Lazreg, women in the Third World are considered the helpless victims of systems reigned by tradition, patriarchy and religion. Post-modern Western studies, based on the theories of Foucault and Derrida, tend to ignore totally the daily reality of women in the Third World.

Considering the analogy of the impasse in development theories and that in gender studies, the shift to post-modernism in gender studies does not come as a surprise (Delsing 1991, Risseuw 1991). Given Lazreg's criticism, the recent attention feminist analyses have paid to Giddens's structuration theory seems most promising (Davis 1991, Wolffensperger 1991).

The theoretical field of gender studies is moving beyond the impasse but a clear post-impatse approach has yet to emerge.

### Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is most often defined as a strategy to satisfy the needs of the present generation without interfering with the needs of

future generations. The definition itself and the way it is used in practice offer a rather heterogeneous picture. The term sustainable development encompasses development strategies which range from light-green to dark-green, from romantic and nostalgic conservatism to utopian socialism, from absolute-zero growth in the economy to maintaining the present world economic growth rate. As a result, the 'green' notion of sustainable development could be incorporated without effort into both the 'blue' development model (neo-liberal) and the 'red' development model (socialist, and these days social democratic). In a number of cases one can therefore hardly speak of an *alternative* development model.

Employing the common terms mentioned above increasingly leads to interconnections between the discourse of sustainable development and that of women's emancipation. Exploitative behaviour towards nature, it is argued, is a typical patriarchal attitude, in which both women and nature are given a subordinate role (Mies 1986, Shiva 1988). Women's emancipation would, therefore, also lead to less exploitative relations with nature. In addition, attention to ethnic minorities in the Third World – who generally are considered to treat nature in a less damaging manner – can give further shape to sustainable development.

The different ways industrialised countries on the one hand and developing countries on the other hand regard the substantiation of sustainable development strategies point to the danger of ethnocentric handling of this concept.<sup>26</sup>

Bill Adams (in this volume) finds sustainable development to be a flag for many ships, and because of this the concept does not enjoy an accepted theoretical foundation. Yet, the power of the concept lies in the insights derived from micro-level praxis. Thus, Adams favours a theory formation of sustainable development which includes the macro as well as the micro: the transnational corporation and the peasant, the biosphere and the field. The fragmented praxis of ecological research, planning and policy, in developed as well as in underdeveloped countries, indicate the necessity of theory formation for sustainable development.

In his criticism of neo-Marxist development theories, Booth concluded that the problems and the solutions lay particularly at a metaphysical level. However, since the mid-1980s, criticism from post-modernism of the social sciences in general has taken a position against metatheories in any shape or form. In the present case, the impasse in development theories is increasingly attributed to a modernity discourse with untenable metaphysical starting points. The question which arises next is the extent to which post-modernism can contribute to the further shaping of post-impasse development studies. Or is post-modernism simply a fashionable

ethnocentric phenomenon which manoeuvres development studies into a cul-de-sac?

Before answering this question, the next section will first briefly outline the contours of post-modernism.

### Post-Modernism

Within the framework of this introduction there is no room for an extensive discourse on post-modernism.<sup>27</sup> I will limit myself to those elements which in the ensuing sections are directly or indirectly relevant to post-impasse development theories.

Post-modernism is a reaction to the Enlightenment narrative of the development of scientific knowledge, along lines laid out by Galileo and Newton, which should lead to a rational control by man (sic) over his natural and social surroundings. The notion of a transcendental God allowed the view that society was 'makeable'. The Enlightenment narrative is given shape in the assumed emancipation of humankind: liberation from poverty, slavery and ignorance. Since the French Revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity have been held high as a banner of modernity.

Post-modernists react against this modernity discourse. Thus Lyotard (1984, 1985) believes that Auschwitz and Stalin heralded the ultimate fiasco of the modernity project. Science is not employed to emancipate humanity, but enlisted by capital and subjugated to efficiency rather than truth. There is no one single truth, as depicted by modernity philosophy; rather there is a plurality of perspectives, each with its own language, its own rules and myths. French post-structuralists such as Derrida (1973, 1976), Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987) developed the thesis that language consists of a set of 'signifiers' which do not give access to reality, and where the existence of one reality is moreover doubted.<sup>28</sup> Symbols become more important than the message they must convey. There is no longer a distinction between truth and lie, between reason and rhetoric, between essence and semblance, between science and ideology. An apparent reality is created by mass media through an endless circulation of symbols. Production no longer sets the tone in society, consumption of symbols replaces it. Universal values do not exist and metatheories (both Marxism and modernisation theories) which take universal values as given and see society as 'makeable' are suspect and merely contribute to an apparent reality. The Enlightenment ideal of the emancipation of humanity has not been achieved nor can it be achieved.

There are three currents which fall under the term post-modernism, originating respectively from art, from literature and language philosophy (the post-structuralists), and from social sciences (the post-industrialists). The oldest claims to the title post-modernism lie with the

arts, which, in the 1950s, reacted against the abstract in paintings and the International Style in architecture.

Of particular importance here is the philosophy of post-industrialism. The basic idea is that Western countries entered a post-industrial phase whereby the concentration on production of goods was replaced by production of technical knowledge (Bell 1973, Touraine 1974). Post-industrial society is a 'knowledge' society, in which a growing part of the labour force is used for the production of technical know-how. Basically, the argument goes as follows. Fordism reached a crisis in the 1970s, heralding a late-Fordist phase for capitalism, which exhibited the following features:

- increasing internationalisation of capital, especially through the spread of assembly activities;
- a decrease in importance of the nation-state, and an absolute and relative decrease of the traditional core of the working class;
- a marked increase in the service class through the increased role of management, research and financial transactions;
- increasing unemployment and a growing distinction between skilled and unskilled labourers;
- an increasing difference in consumer patterns;
- a larger role of mass media in the process of socialisation.

According to the post-industrialists, late Fordism displayed such distinct contours during the 1980s that it is legitimate to talk of a post-Fordist period. Here, the development of micro-electronics provides the industrial sector with an even more flexible organisation, with a hard core of well-paid labourers in the areas of research and development and in management. The role of the state is reduced to keeping the whole internationally competitive.<sup>29</sup> The individualisation of society increases (e.g., the increase in single-person or childless households). Consumption is characterised by stressing constant renewal of the products on offer. This consumer hedonism leads to 'disposable life-styles' (Berman 1982). The functionalistic aesthetic of Fordist use values, which were related to the norms of rigid Taylorist mass production, belongs permanently to the past.

I have discussed post-industrialism in some detail here because it provides a good background to understanding post-modernist schools of thought.<sup>30</sup> Thus Callinicos (1989, 1990) argues that it is not coincidental that post-modernism is particularly fed by French philosophers and social scientists. In these circles a number of events in Europe at the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s were greeted as accelerations of class struggle. Euphoria over the revolts of 1968 in France and 1969 in Italy, the Portuguese revolution of 1974-75 and the end of the Franco regime in Spain in 1975-76 turned into bitter disappointments at the end of the

1970s. According to Callinicos, the tightly-laced corset of Althusserian Marxism did not offer space for any reaction other than an exodus in the direction of post-modernism.

The manner in which post-modernism subsequently took shape is much more heterogenic than I have suggested so far. The notion about the end of the Enlightenment narrative of growth and emancipation is substantiated in three post-modern sub-directions:

1. *A neo-conservative communitarianism.* Social anomic must be opposed by a return to tradition and history, a type of neo-romantic nature philosophy.
2. *A progressive communitarianism.* The Marxist adage of the socialist revolution must be forgotten. This would only lead to a new kind of Stalinism. Instead one must search for other types of local sources of resistance against the governing power and knowledge system. One must hereby think of new social movements. Michel Foucault also wants to involve hospital patients, prisoners and gypsies – in short, groups familiar with the effect of hegemonic power.
3. *Nihilism.* Truth and reason have been lost sight of and simulation is the 'name of the game'. Jean Baudrillard (1975) is the most outspoken exponent of this philosophy. The only hope cherished by this sceptic is that the masses will become so numbed by media bombardment that they can no longer be indoctrinated because of their 'unresisting imbecility'.<sup>31</sup>

In the following section post-modernism (and post-Marxism for that matter) will be critically examined, delimiting its possible relevance for post-impasse development theory.

### Post-Modernism and Post-Marxism: A Critique

If we consider labour as the principle of modernity and communication as the principle of post-modernity, then the post-modern is the name of the transition from Labour to Communication as the fundamental power of structuration and social formation. Marx is dead, the workers are not a class destined to emancipate itself and thereby everyone else. In short: the dialectic of the Enlightenment has been defeated, the grand narratives are over. I suspect that this enthusiasm is premature, or rather, that those who want to shout with joy should hurry up and do it now, before the minor narratives they are so jubilant about begin to grow again.

(Flogstad, in Albertsen 1988: 339)

Post-modernism has shifted from awkward neologism to derelict cliché without ever attaining to the dignity of concept.

(Hassan, in Boyne and Rattansi 1990: 9)

My position in this section will be that, however relevant it may be to characterise the industrial North as post-modern or post-industrial, the developing countries in the South cannot be characterised as such. On the contrary, what typifies those countries is an aborted modernity project, whereby the Ideals of Enlightenment such as Freedom, Equality and Fraternity are further out of reach than they ever were in the North. The equating of the failure of the modernity project in the South to a post-modern situation exhibits a far-reaching naivety and leads to a political demobilisation and conservatism.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the post-modern debate has resulted in an understanding which can benefit development studies, without it being necessary to adopt the entire baggage of post-modern ideas.

One of the most central notions in the post-modernism debate is *deconstruction*. I interpret this notion in three related ways:

1. It points to the delegitimisation of Enlightenment discourses (liberalism and socialism) which had not resulted in general emancipation of humankind.

2. Deconstruction entails the dismantling of structures to find the actors within these structures. Structures are considered to be reified notions (e.g. the world system) which have merely an apparent value. Deconstruction in this sense eventually leads to the individual actor as the only valid unit of analysis.

3. Deconstruction is the quest for the hidden metaphors in some central concepts within the Enlightenment discourse. An example is given by Derrida with his notion of logocentrism, mentioned above.

Another example offering even more insight can be found in Lummis (1991), who deconstructs the notion of 'development' which stands so central in Enlightenment discourse. According to Lummis the term 'development' contains a number of metaphors which lead to evolutionary, universal and reductionist interpretations. The first metaphor he observes is development in the sense of making something visible which is latently present, as if a positive print is made of a negative. The positive, then, already exists in the shape economic development has adopted in the industrialised societies. In the structure of developing countries this image is latently present (as a negative), and can only be made visible through a number of actions (development policy).

Another semantic metaphor Lummis observes in 'development' is the interpretation of a literal process: something develops in the sense of unfurling, becoming visible piece by piece. That which slowly becomes visible is, however, already embedded in the structure (the 'genes'). The result of the 'development process' is thus fixed – it is merely a matter of

speed. Here, as well, policy can help out, in the case of developing countries. This policy is then formulated by those who pretend to know the building blocks ('genes') of the structure, as well as the final outcome. This interpretation also leads to an evolutionary and reductionist view of the developing process in Third World countries, one devoid of reality.<sup>33</sup>

The current attraction of Lummis's article is that he deconstructs the notion of development in a post-modern manner, without becoming trapped in political nihilism. On the contrary, he ventures a political alternative (albeit a utopian one).

Although my first interpretation of deconstruction given above seems to imply political nihilism, the second and third interpretations are of importance to a more detailed shaping of post-impasse development theory. An attempt to deconstruct structures into actors has already been indicated in the preceding section, in the shape of the actor-oriented approach of Norman Long. An attempt at objectifying notions relevant to development (without ethnocentric connotations) can be found in Rawls (1972).

Direct application of post-modern views with respect to research themes within the Third World have, up to now, been limited to the new social movements as expressions of resistance against modernity.<sup>34</sup> In a contribution on social movements in this volume I have argued that this is an unrealistic interpretation of social movements in the Third World. In order not to repeat all the arguments here I will only reproduce my principle objection, as it further clarifies the position in the beginning of this section, namely that the Third World does not consist of post-modern societies.

Social movements (new and old) in the Third World are not expressions of resistance against modernity; rather, they are demands for access to it. There are enough reasons to characterise many Third World countries as aborted modernity projects, if only because of the exclusion of large parts of the population. When those excluded unite in groups and forge ties of solidarity, this must not be seen as an embryonic form of a new society, but rather as a survival strategy. Citizenship and Participation (Enlightenment ideals!) are (directly or indirectly) highly regarded by these social movements; participants want access to welfare and well-being. They are no longer prepared to be shifted to the sidelines. Romantic post-modern interpretations, where it is stressed that autonomy must be maintained, do not do justice to the essence of these movements. In addition, they disregard the historical origin of many of these movements.<sup>35</sup>

Similar criticisms can be levelled at post-modern treatises of emancipation movements in industrial societies. Thus Sabina Lovibond in her

article about feminism and post-modernism stated: 'How can anyone ask me to say goodbye to "emancipatory metanarratives" when my own emancipation is still such a patchy hit and miss affair?' (Lovibond in Boyne and Rattansi 1990).

This brief exposé of social movements leads us to a less direct link between post-modernism and development theory, via post-Marxism. Anthony Giddens (1976) with his structuration theory, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) with their notion of radical democracy, are known exponents of post-Marxism.<sup>36</sup> As is the case with post-modernism, post-Marxist studies are rather heterogeneous. Nevertheless there are certain points of departure in common, and as far as these are relevant here, I will briefly mention them.

To a large extent, post-Marxists go along with post-modern characterisations of contemporary Western societies, but they do not conclude from this an intrinsic post-modern condition. According to Giddens, the central process is the radicalisation of modernisation 'as it is universalised by the global spread of its distinctive institutions'. These 'institutions' are capitalism, industrialism, and administrative and military powers. The hegemony of each of these institutions is disputed by several forms of social movements. Giddens rejects the analytical centrality of class and the capitalist mode of production.

Laclau and Mouffe also question the structural centrality of the class notion. They no longer accept that consciousness, culture and politics can be derived from structural positions within society. The search for a metadiscourse leads to theoretical confusion and political dogmatism. In their discourse theory Laclau and Mouffe stress the autonomy of the existing discourses and argue this as follows:

- Societies are characterised by a variety of social conflicts, of which one is not by definition more important than another.
- The groups involved (social movements) do not necessarily have a unified/single goal and not necessarily the same opponent.
- The outcome of the conflicts is not pre-determined by structural factors but by the interaction between the internal dynamics of social movements on the one hand and the reaction of external actors on the other.

An important conclusion here is that Giddens and Laclau/Mouffe doubt the possibility of a coherent socialist policy based on class or on (new) social movements. At this point Laclau and Mouffe replace the notion of socialism with the more vague term of radical democracy, which departs from a marked reduction of the hegemony of the institutionalised discourses. Given their vague elaboration of the concept of radical democracy and their emphasis on the autonomy of discourses,

Laclau and Mouffe are perilously close to approaching the political nihilism of post-modernism – which leads Scott (1990) to disqualify Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory as an 'anti-theory' theory.

Laclau and Mouffe are correct in arguing for the heterogeneity of discourses within social movements, but this does not exclude that (i) certain emancipatory goals, such as Citizenship and Participation, are found in all social movements, and as such (ii) there is a feasible basis for meaningful relations between social movements, which (iii) can further substantiate the concept of radical democracy.

Although, as mentioned above, Laclau and Mouffe are known as post-Marxists, it is not clear to me from the above which elements of the Marxist frame of reference they try to save through the introduction of their central concept of radical democracy. Giddens, with his four 'institutional axes of modernity', is much more clearly a post-Marxist in this respect than Laclau and Mouffe (see also Bromley 1991).

#### Diversity and Inequality, Universalism and Specificity, Determinism and Voluntarism:

##### The Narrow Path of Post-Impassé Development Theory

How does the preceding affect post-impassé development studies? In answering this question I return to the differentiation between formal and material object mentioned in an earlier section (see *Post-Imperialism*, page 19).

According to Buttel and McMichael (1991), it is necessary to change the *explanandum* (that which needs to be explained) in order to substantiate post-impassé development theory.<sup>37</sup> They argue that in the diagnosis of the impasse in development theory unilateral attention was paid to the *explanans* (the explaining framework). The stated problems with the *explanans* in development studies (functionalistic, teleological, reductionist, etc.) originate from the *explanandum*, where the understanding of an assumed homogeneity within the Third World is important. The solution Buttel and McMichael offer is then relatively obvious: alter the *explanandum*! In other words: not the homogeneity but the *diversity* within the Third World should become the new research theme.

The authors offer as *explanans* a certain type of historical-comparative framework ('incorporated comparison') leading to a typology of development trajectories. This argument seems so amazingly simple that one wonders why no one had come up with it before. If the *explanans* is criticised, then you must not in the first instance alter the *explanans*, but rather the *explanandum* – and in such a way that the ensuing *explanans* can no longer be accused of misplaced teleology, evolutionism and reductionism. Instead of homogeneity within the Third World we now concentrate on explaining the diversity, the result of which is that we are

less likely to develop a universal metatheory. Post-modern and post-Marxist notions such as deconstruction, autonomous discourses and pluralism can subsequently be incorporated without much effort into the Buttel and McMichael approach (although they do not regard themselves as post-modernists). In addition, their proposal is reminiscent of certain post-impasse approaches previously mentioned (Mouzelis, the regulation school).

Nevertheless, Buttel and McMichael all too easily disregard two important points, and some aspects of their proposal must be questioned. In the first place, their *explanandum* (diversity within the Third World) suggests a contradiction in terms. If one maintains the term 'Third World' as part of the *explanandum*, this means that the Third World countries have certain features in common, which allow them to be characterised as such. It appears illogical to me then to turn immediately to studying diversity, without first finding a more detailed definition and explanation of these common features. Second (and I have previously tried to make this clear), I object to this rather voluntary use of the term diversity. In my opinion, development theory must not only be concerned with studying diversity, but also with *inequality*—this in spite of the fact that usage of this term is overlaid with negative post-modern connotations. Studying diversity solves a lot of the problems in post-impasse development theory that post-modernism and criticism à la Booth have pointed to. In my opinion, too great an emphasis on diversity and specificity leads to a voluntarist, pluralist approach to the development problem, allowing no space for a universalistic emancipation discourse. Buttel and McMichael find a rather easy solution because they argue a separation between development theory and development praxis. They feel the latter is a millstone around the neck of development theory.<sup>38</sup>

I feel that a new *explanandum* for development studies should not be restricted to 'diversity' but be explicitly concerned with 'inequality': inequality of access to power, to resources, to a humane existence — in short, inequality in emancipation. If we were to let go of this, there would be no justification for the existence of development theory. We must not be afraid to work normatively on a theoretical level as is argued in several contributions to the present volume. However, we have not yet answered the question of which theoretical framework belongs to such an *explanandum*. In this respect, the proposed approaches to post-impasse development theory dealt with so far should pay more attention to the *explanandum*, as this is often a problematic area. Only Norman Long's actor-oriented approach conveys the impression that not just diversity but also inequality is manifest. In addition, the theoretical framework (the *explanans*) of Long's approach takes into account the criticisms of

Booth and of post-modernism. Nevertheless, Long's approach also has drawbacks when we discuss inequality.

Whichever theoretical corner we may choose to sit in, it cannot be denied that development on a global scale is of importance to the inequalities within the Third World, and between the First and Third Worlds. The debt burden of the Third World and the influence of international financial organisations on policies in these countries are known examples. Lesser known, though not less important, is the increasing triadisation of the world economy, whereby Europe, the U.S. and Japan 'play ball' with each other and increasingly large parts of the Third World stand on the sidelines, while summoned at the same time to throw themselves at the mercy of the world market. Inequality is thus a relevant concept, not only on a micro-level (the household) or meso-level (social categories), but also on a supranational level.

Thus the central question for post-impasse development theory is to design a theoretical framework that links these analytical levels. One of the problems to be faced is that, while the micro- and the meso-levels are primarily defined using socio-cultural variables, and the spatial dimension is present only implicitly, analyses of diversity and inequality on a national or supranational level have an explicit spatial dimension which, in turn, does not tell us very much about the actors involved. A meaningful connection between all the analytical levels can only be made if the relevant actors are displayed. For example, national and supranational structures are not organic entities, but consist of interrelated actors such as the state bureaucracy, the national and international bourgeoisie, political parties, international financial institutions, etc. In other words, the analytical framework of post-impasse development theory would have to involve the relationship between power, actors and structure, which subsequently would have to be substantiated at the various analytical levels using historical comparative research. Diversity and inequality would then form the *explanandum*.

More narrowly defined, development theories address situations where large parts of the human population suffer from substantial inequalities in emancipation. I interpret emancipation not in a teleological sense as a narrowly defined concept using certain (Western) standards as absolute criteria in terms of development of the production forces, standards of living, etc. In my opinion, emancipation should be defined dynamically in terms of a process whereby social actors try to liberate themselves from structurally defined hierarchical relations which are discriminatory and as such give unequal access to material (e.g., land, housing, services) and immaterial resources (e.g., ideology, political power). In a structure characterised by hierarchical relations, some actors extract more value from a set of relations than others.



Value must be interpreted here in a rather wide sense: economic, financial, social, psychological, political, etc. The reason some actors extract more value from the interaction is that they have more power – power which is as multi-faceted as the value being extracted. Multi-levelled structures characterised by a generalised low degree of emancipation do have things in common, but, as has been emphasised in this section, inequality (and the struggle against inequality for that matter) takes very diverse forms.

So power, actors, multi-levelled structure, inequality and diversity are the key concepts in the construction of post-impasse development theories. Many of these concepts can be detected, implicitly or explicitly, in the new approaches to post-impasse development theories treated in this introduction. What is lacking, however, is an attempt to cross-fertilise these approaches, which differ at the spatial level of analysis. Mouzelis's concept of 'mode of domination', the dyadic concepts 'regime of accumulation' and 'mode of regulation' of the regulation school, and the 'actor-oriented approach' of Norman Long remain unrelated. In addition, only Long's analysis attempts to reformulate development policies on the local/regional level.

The point is not to strive for one grand and glorious development metatheory *per se* but rather to stress that a lot of new ground has already been covered, but that the plots still remain rather isolated. In addition, the argument here is not solely concerned with the attempt to provide post-impasse development theory with a new *explanans* (e.g., historical comparative research) and *explanandum* (e.g., inequalities in emancipation, or differences in development trajectories). This must be accompanied by an attempt to develop a meaningful development policy (a political praxis) which avoids being dogmatic, which in the past was a consequence of unilinear and universalistic views of development issues.

The construction of a post-impasse development theory on a non-reductionist and non-teleological basis is the challenge of the 1990s. Much of the groundwork has been done in the last decade, but this must not remain as isolated empirical research, nor as the construction of concepts which on a higher level of abstraction do not result in relevant development praxis.

### The Contributions

In the first few chapters in this volume the conditions necessary to move beyond the impasse in development theory are further specified. In his contribution David Booth suggests that the heavy atmosphere of intellectual stagnation and self-imposed insulation from practical issues that was so prevalent in development research in the early 1980s seems to have cleared. Fresh and exciting work is being carried out at a variety

of levels and on a host of different topics. However, identifying what effectively distinguishes the new research agenda is no easy matter, given the variety of substantive concerns and cross-cutting intellectual influences that have played a role in its emergence. One thing is obvious: whereas formerly influential theories more or less deliberately ignored the complex diversity of the real world of development, the style of research that has come into prominence since the early 1980s takes as its central task the explanation of significant variations in patterns of development in different local, regional and national settings. As such, social study of development is brought back into touch with the alternatives facing real actors – governments, business enterprises, mass organisations, local communities, etc.

At the same time, Booth notes that the revival of interest in the diversity of development is related to a rather heterogeneous set of related intellectual developments, with different perspectives and priorities. The chapter gives a systematic consideration of these perspectives along lines of:

- theory and method;
- agency, structure and explanation;
- deconstruction and concept formation;
- relevance.

Michael Edwards, representing the voice of development praxis, takes as his point of departure the need for development studies to contribute in a practical way to the resolution of the problems and issues facing poor and powerless people around the world. Conventional development studies have largely failed to do this, and the chapter analyses the factors underlying this situation.

New directions in development studies, such as participatory research and growing links between NGOs and academics, are explored to see what hope they offer for the future. The chapter updates the author's earlier article, *The Irrelevance of Development Studies* (Edwards 1989), and attempts to answer some of the criticisms levelled at it.

David Slater specifies some themes connected to the political dimension of the research agenda for the 1990s. One of the current trends in the discussion of Third World development is characterised by a return to the social dimension. It is no longer sufficient to talk of economic growth, privatisation, rolling back the state and freeing the market; equity has also to be firmly placed on the agenda, just as, previously, structural adjustment had to be given a 'human face'.

Slater argues, first, that neo-liberal discourse, including monetarist imperatives, has a deep political meaning that is rooted in possessive

individualism, and, second, that, in stark contrast, mainstream Marxism has prioritised class struggle and state control over the individual citizen. In an era of shifting meanings, the re-contextualisation of critical development theory needs to include a re-thinking of the political imagery.

The chapter illustrates this position in relation to four themes:

- the periphery as subordinated other;
- state power and democracy;
- civil society and movements of resistance;
- the eclipse of revolutionary rupture.

Ronaldo Munck also discusses the political agenda for post-impasse development theory, though specifically for Latin America. The chapter focuses on the question: since Leninism operated as developmentalist ideology in many Third World countries, why not social democracy? During the re-democratisation of Latin America in the 1980s, social democracy began to act as a point of reference for virtually all progressive forces. Whereas in the 1970s dependency theory pointed towards socialism as the way to development, now social democracy is stressed.

The question is, though, whether the methods of social democracy will be able to achieve its traditional objectives. Structural heterogeneity and unstable political cycles still characterise Latin America. An alternative of radical democracy or revolutionary reforms has been proposed as a more viable alternative to the present impasse. Modernisation theory is now resurgent in the new world order. Dependency theory is no longer seen as a viable radical alternative. Although Munck offers some suggestions on how social democracy may provide a way out of the impasse, he warns against magic answers or bold new 'ways forward'.

Stuart Corbridge considers how attention to development ethics might inform our accounts of the developing countries' debt crisis and how our accounts of development ethics might be informed by our knowledge of the developing countries' debt crisis.

He begins his contribution with some remarks on development ethics and its possible relation to a continuing, and much-remarked, crisis in development studies and policy. He next outlines a standard narrative account of the debt crisis. The third and fourth parts of the contribution re-examine the debt crisis from the viewpoint of some propositions derived from development ethics. No simple conclusions are drawn, nor solutions put forward; rather, the chapter concludes by reflecting on the difficulties of attending to the dilemmas of development without lapsing into either an unhelpful pessimism or an unwarranted certainty about 'what should be done'.

Norman Long and Magdalena Villarreal examine existing attempts to theorise and investigate the nature of knowledge processes inherent in development intervention. Their chapter opens with a discussion of current struggles to integrate theoretical understanding and practical concerns, leading to a critical view of systems models, particularly as applied in extension science.

The need for a more sophisticated analysis of how knowledge and power are socially constructed is identified through the presentation of three cases, exploring organisational and strategic elements involved in development interfaces. This points to the centrality of power differentials and struggles over social meaning for an understanding of knowledge processes, which are interwoven with actors' accumulated social experiences, commitments and culturally-acquired dispositions.

Long and Villarreal argue that an actor-and-interface perspective, which challenges interventionist thinking, can revitalise the sociology of development, thus building a better bridge between theory and practice and at the same time bringing the study of development into more direct contact with mainstream sociological and anthropological theory and debate.

The last three chapters shed some light on more specific themes in post-impasse development research: gender, social movements and the environment.

The chapter by Janet Townsend draws on Caroline Moser's analysis of research on women in development (World Development, 1989) and the author's own research experience in land settlements in Latin America.

Townsend examines the following topics: empowerment as a leading development strategy; the difficulties of cross-cultural comparison; the silencing of the poor; the silencing of women; the role of the researcher; alternatives to academic centralism and control of knowledge; and the uses of extensive and intensive research.

Her contribution adopts significant parts of post-modern critique, but accepts the validity of development studies and gender studies, which is denied by certain forms of post-modern thought.

In his chapter on social movements research, Frans Schuurman also takes post-modern-inspired interpretations to task. Disillusionment with respect to the progressive role of the labour proletariat and the virtual disappearance of socialism as a political project led to a scramble of radical social scientists for either a post-Marxist or a post-modern position. Attention increasingly fell upon the so-called new social movements in the North as well as in the South as collective attempts

within civil society to create new identities and to thwart attempts of the mainstream ideology to hegemonise the inner life-spaces.

After rescuing some valuable notions of post-Marxism (the concept of discourse) and post-modernism (the concept of deconstruction), Schuurman takes issue with the interpretation of these new currents concerning new social movements in the South. It is argued that, contrary to being post-modern, these movements are engaged in a new modernity project where Citizenship and Participation are central values. The arguments put forward are illustrated by the case of Chile.

Bill Adams discusses the problems connected with the 'greening' of post-impasse development theory. The rhetoric of sustainable development is widely used by very different actors in the development process. Some use it to promote a radical restructuring of priorities with regard to environmental development and economic growth. Others simply intend a change in attitudes, emphasis and, in some cases, project appraisal methods. Such approaches are sometimes labelled 'dark green' and 'light green' respectively.

The chapter argues that the diversity of sustainable development ideologies reflects reformist/radical divisions within post-1970s environmentalism. The influences of technocentrist and ecocentrist/biocentrist thinking in environmentalism can be distinguished, and related to the reformism/radicalism continuum in sustainable development.

Divergent radical environmental ideologies, particularly Deep Ecology and Social Ecology, compete for claims to define a coherent 'green' development ideology. The confusion inherent in sustainable development thinking creates serious problems for practical application on the ground in the Third World, and the implications of this for the longevity of the rhetoric and ideologies behind it are considered.

#### Notes

1. Of influence were: i) publications by Marx and Lenin on class analysis, and the relation between imperialism and capitalism; ii) Rosa Luxemburg on the penetration of the capitalist mode of production in non-capitalist societies, and its consequences on the dismantling of the 'natural economy'; iii) Raul Prebisch and Gunnar Myrdal with their analyses in terms of core and periphery; iv) the French structural Marxists who in the 1970s strongly advocated the modes of production concept; v) Paul Baran, who as early as the 1950s wrote about the negative consequences of monopoly capitalism for the periphery. He stressed the transfer of economic surplus, which checked the development of the periphery. Baran is also known as the first neo-Marxist.
2. The differences between the *dependencia* authors can be found, among

- others, in Hunt (1989), Larrain (1989) and Hettne (1990). For a critique of the various ways of categorising the *dependentistas*, see Frank (1991).
3. This opposition between those who emphasise the 'mode of production' and those who emphasise the 'mode of exchange' is also sometimes referred to as the argument between the 'productionists' and the 'circulationists' respectively. The basic idea of the circulationists is that underdevelopment is caused by and maintained by surplus transfer (for instance by the mechanism of unequal exchange) from the periphery to the centre. Productionists on the other hand argue that the question which must be addressed is the way surplus is produced in the periphery and the class formation that results. For further discussion of these 'schools' and criticisms see Hoogvelt (1982).
  4. For a useful discussion see Peet (1980) and Brewer (1980).
  5. Many rural development projects in the 1960s and 1970s were begun on the basis of the idea that the peasants involved would produce in a capitalist manner. Using the concept of peasant mode of production it was shown that peasants had their own form of logic to connect the production factors of land, labour and capital.
  6. The term unequal exchange was especially elaborated upon in that period by Arghiri Emmanuel in his book *Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade*, London, 1972.
  7. See Brenner (1977) and Larrain (1989).
  8. A disarticulated economic system is described by Amin using a refinement (as far as I know derived from the Polish economist Kalecki) of the distinction that Marx made between Departments I and II of the economy: Ia – capital goods, Ib – raw materials, IIa – mass consumer goods, IIb – luxury consumer goods.
- In the core, economic development is the result of the relation between Departments Ia and IIa. The periphery, on the other hand, is characterised by the occurrence of Departments Ib (export of raw materials) and IIb, which cannot result in independent economic development. Amin argues that this disarticulation of the economy is maintained by the changing coalitions within elite circles.
9. In contrast to the 1970s (Hettne 1990), when Southern scholars published their share on development theories, it seems that from the 1980s onwards publications on the crisis and new directions of development theories have been almost hegemonically controlled by Northern scholars (the present volume hardly excepted).

This is not to say that these publications, by definition, represent a Eurocentric view on the current status of development theory. Eurocentrism, in this case, is a state of mind, a political-philosophical view on the problem of development and underdevelopment; in other words it is not *per se* an attitude determined by geographic location.

Still, it is worthwhile to elaborate briefly on the 'silence from the South' on the impasse in development theory. With some exceptions (e.g., Soja 1989, Raji Kothari publishing in the Indian journal *Alternatives*), the attention of

Southern scholars in the 1980s shifted from an abstract approach to the problem of underdevelopment to more pragmatic issues. The worsening economic crisis (heightened by the debt burden) on the one hand, and political changes (i.e., transition to democracy) on the other, induced Southern scholars to concentrate their research on issues such as the role of social movements (especially women's organisations) and of NGOs in the democratisation process, the acceleration in environmental degradation, the economic consequences of structural adjustment policies, etc.

Many of these publications have been of great importance to those who are currently trying to manoeuvre development theories on a more abstract level out of their impasse.

10. Regarding the distinction between circulationists and productionists, see note 3 above.
11. Booth accuses the *dependentistas* of a tautological argument because underdevelopment was defined in terms of the degree of dependence, while at the same time dependency was cited as the cause of underdevelopment. Corbridge also criticises the tendency (particularly of advocates of the modes of production concept) to present auto-referential evidence, such as: if a pre-capitalist mode of production survives contact with the dominating capitalist mode of production, then this was obviously so because it was functional for capitalism. If the pre-capitalist mode of production disappears, it was obviously not functional.
12. Although Booth does not mention the 'bluff concepts' in the modernisation theory, it is worth mentioning at least one: the 'trickle-down' mechanism. To activate economic growth, one must concentrate capital spatially and economically, which at first results in increasing geographical and social inequality. This polarisation, however, is reversed in the last instance by a 'trickle-down' mechanism from the most dynamic sectors and regions to the periphery. In many developing countries this critical turning-point is far from being reached. Rather there is increasing regional and social polarisation.
13. Sklair provides the following definitions of metatheory, theory and empirical research. Metatheory is 'a set of assumptions about the constituent parts of the world and about the possibility of knowledge about them'. A metatheory can therefore not be tested empirically, but can give rise to the development of testable theories. A theory, then, is 'a set of propositions derived directly or indirectly from a metatheory not logically incompatible with it'. Successful testing of a theory gives the related metatheory greater plausibility. Empirical research, finally, is the 'practice of manufacturing explanations and predictions about real objects ... guided by the abstractions of the theory and its hypotheses ...'
14. The concept of reification refers to the tendency to interpret abstract notions (e.g., ideal types) as existing in real life. See Taylor (1979) for a thorough criticism of the way Parsons considered his ideal typical approach, based on

Tönnies and Weber, as universally applicable in analysing social and political transformation processes.

15. Mouzelis (1988: 39) argues that '... neglect of the political – as a major, if not the major, base for explaining the varied capitalist trajectories in the Third World – constitutes the Achilles heel of all development theory'.
16. Marx distinguished two economic sectors, called Department I and II, producing respectively capital goods and consumer goods. Both types of goods are sold in both Departments, giving rise to a set of particular economic relations within and between the two basic economic sectors. This set of relations, when expressed in economic symbols, is called a reproduction scheme which determines the dynamic in the reproduction of the capitalist system.
17. Lipietz hereby refers to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus'. It seems to me, however, that Lipietz in his description of mode of regulation also adopted elements which in Bourdieu fall under the concept of 'doxa' (the unmentioned).
18. Fordism is characterised by mass production, consumption of standardised goods, a significant growth of labour productivity because of a Taylorist division between managers and labourers, and finally, an important role of the Keynesian welfare-state.
19. National states can, for instance, build tariff walls to stimulate the process of national industrialisation. Multinationals can circumvent tariff walls by producing in the country itself, resulting in a new international division of labour. The national state and the MNOs differ in this in the nature of their project. For criticism of Lipietz's emphasis on the autonomy of the state see McMichael and Myhre (1991).
20. With peripheral Fordism, Lipietz refers to the Newly Industrialised Countries such as South Korea, Mexico and Brazil.
21. The 'doctrine of domicile' has three aspects. First, it refers to the nature of the ideology of the modern bourgeoisie, which tends to shape its interest in terms of moral values which have a wide societal base. The second aspect refers to the operation of the transcorporative oligopoly. This entails making mutual price agreements, market regulation, etc. Here, as well, there is an ideological component, because the TNCs are of the opinion that their operations are in the general interest. The last aspect concerns the internal organisation of a TNC, whereby the authors stress not so much the economic element, as the ideological motivation of the staff of the TNC in the developing country. In particular, they point to the legitimising of relations between the company and society. For further elaboration of these aspects see Stander and Becker (1990).
22. Becker and Sklar go one step further when they raise the question of whether it shows misplaced optimism to expect that this form of communication could contribute to world peace, because it transcends national and ideological antagonisms. In short, the transnational corporation as channel for international brotherhood!

23. The post-imperialist emphasis on national and international bourgeoisie reminds one of the concept of 'Strategische Gruppen' (strategic groups) developed by the German authors Evers and Schiel (1988).
24. Foreign investments in the mining sector are much more dependent on the national political and economic climate than investments in other sectors. The transnational mining corporation, for instance, is tied to specific locations and is thus rather dependent on the state for providing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure. In other words, if the profits of these TNCs come under threat, they will first try within the national political arena to avert this threat. Withdrawal of investments is, after all, accompanied by large-scale capital loss.
25. This criticism is illustrated by the type of theoretical sources which inspired Becker and Sklar: political theories of modern enterprises, and class analyses of political power in Third World countries.
26. Thus the zero-growth option has more supporters in the polluted, Western consumer societies than in the developing countries. Although many developing countries also have serious environmental problems, economic growth is usually given the highest priority.
27. In many publications the terms post-modernity and post-modernism are often used interchangeably. For an attempt to distinguish these terms (as well as 'modernity' and 'modernism') see Boyne and Rattansi (1990: chapter 1).
28. The 'representation crisis' is a central notion in post-modernism. An interesting expansion is Derrida's concept of logocentrism. This concept suggests that people tend to think in binomial categories, where one of the categories (usually the first) is seen as homogeneous and unproblematic in contrast to the second category. Examples of logocentric categorisations are: North and South, Man and Woman, White and Black. In connection with this it is important to point to the importance of post-colonialism, a 'school' connected to post-modernism. While post-modernism generally points to a misrepresentation of 'the Other', post-colonialism specifically expands on this for the history of Western ethnocentric representations of 'the Other' in the Third World; see Edward Said (1978).
29. Thus Riccardo Petrella (1989) mockingly talks of 'Japan Inc.' and 'L'Enterprise France'.
30. For criticism of post-industrialism and post-Fordism, see (among others) Albertsen (1988), Rose (1991), Callinicos (1989 and in Boyne and Rattansi 1990) and Clarke (1991).
31. See Christopher Norris, 'Lost in the Funhouse: Baudrillard and the Politics of Post-modernism', in Boyne and Rattansi (1990, pp. 119-53).
32. For further arguments see Schuurman in this volume.
33. In the remainder of his article Lummis tries to support his thesis that 'economic development' is a fraudulent, ethnocentric and anti-democratic concept.
34. For a general discussion of development theories and post-modernism see

- Slater (1991). For a post-modern interpretation of the neighbourhood organisations in Latin America, see Friedmann (1989).
35. In Latin America many social movements find their origin in the military dictatorships of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s, a period in which governments left low-income groups to their own devices.
36. For an introduction to Giddens's structuration theory see Cohen (1989) and McLennan (1989). A sharp attack on Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism has been delivered by Norman Geras in *New Left Review* (1987, 1988).
37. Buttel and McMichael employ the notions of *explanandum* and *explanans* to indicate, respectively, the material and formal object.
38. Michael Edwards (this volume) adopts a radically opposite view.

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## 2

Development Research:  
From Impasse to a New Agenda

by David Booth

## Introduction

Ten years ago it was widely accepted that social research and theorising about development had reached some kind of impasse. Interesting and valuable work was still being done but in many areas of enquiry there had been disappointingly little cumulative advance along the lines mapped out during the 1970s. Initially stimulating theoretical debates, most of them originating within or on the fringes of the Marxist tradition, had run into the sand, bequeathing few if any guidelines for a continuing research programme. Crucial real-world questions were not being addressed and the gulf between academic enquiry and the various spheres of development policy and practice seemed to have widened. Some practitioners were beginning to express serious doubts about the 'relevance' of academic development studies.

Today, the state of the social development field by no means justifies complacency; yet the heavy atmosphere of intellectual stagnation and self-imposed insulation from practical issues that was so prevalent in the early 1980s does seem to have cleared. Not only is fresh and exciting work being carried out at a variety of levels and on a host of different topics, but the convergences of style and perspective are sufficiently striking to justify the notion of a new research agenda.

Identifying what it is that effectively distinguishes that agenda is no easy matter, given the variety of substantive concerns and cross-cutting intellectual influences that have played a role in its emergence. One thing, however, is obviously and importantly new: the interest shown at all levels, and in relation to the whole gamut of substantive problems, in the investigation of diversity – and hence the illumination of choice – in development. Whereas formerly influential theories ignored – more or less deliberately – the complex diversity of the real world of development, the styles of research that have come into prominence since the early 1980s take as their central task explaining significant variations in patterns of development in different local, national and regional settings.