



The End of Development, or a New Beginning?

The developmental state may have represented the last avatar of the traditional model of state-led capitalist development. That is not to say the state has everywhere retreated from the economy. By the end of the twentieth century, populism—driven by popular dissatisfaction with the neoclassical model of development—was making a comeback in many countries, most particularly in Latin America. But populism has seldom been a development model. It is more a style of politics that marries an existing model of development to strategies of redistribution. And populist governments largely have—in their economic policies, and often belying their rhetoric—adhered fairly closely to the neoclassical model of development.

Consensus demands criticism, though. Keynesianism did not long enjoy its ascendancy before neoclassical economics reasserted itself in the postwar period. In the case of the ascendancy of neoclassical economics, the developmental-state critique has largely run its course, as maintained in the previous chapter. However, a new critique has emerged. Originating at the margins of development thought around the time of the end of communism, it has since risen sharply in popularity, and now is starting to be discussed in the mainstream. This is postdevelopment thought.

Development studies had arguably remained one of the last bastions of modernism in the social sciences. While theorists differed over the means of attaining the goal of development, there was little dispute over its content and desirability. Development was understood to mean rising living standards, which would manifest themselves in rising incomes (growth), which in turn would translate into improved health, nutrition,

education, and personal autonomy (development). Theorists might have differed over whether they preferred to measure levels of development by using the statistics of the World Bank, which focus on economic indicators, or the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, which factors in social indicators. But virtually all agreed that development was objectively verifiable and desirable.

■ The Emergence of Postdevelopment Thought

In the past two decades, though, there has been an efflorescence of literature that contests the very meaning of development. Applying the lessons of poststructuralism, this school proposes that development is itself an arbitrary concept rooted in a meta-narrative that, in turn, reflects the interests of its practitioners. It is proposed that the goal of improving living standards leans on arbitrary and unjustified claims as to the desirability of the goal. This, in turn, is rooted in something of a tautology: people seek development because it is desirable, and we know it is desirable because people seek it.

In fact, the postdevelopment theorists maintain, the goal of development is intimately linked to modernization, which for them entails the extension of the control of the Western world and its nationalist allies in the developing countries. To this end, development projects have as their principal aim the incorporation of previously autonomous communities within the networks of power of the nation-state (itself the archetype and driver of modernity since at least the time of G. W. F. Hegel), in order to consolidate the power of modernizing elites. Any improvements in living standards that follow from these projects are epiphenomenal, even accidental, to the principal goal of building hegemony.

Postdevelopment thought began as a series of discrete innovations emerging from varied intellectual traditions, albeit mostly on the left. However, the most important of the opening salvos would arguably have been James Ferguson's *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*,¹ Wolfgang Sachs's *The Development Dictionary*,² Arturo Escobar's *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*,³ and among Marxists, perhaps Stuart Corbridge's "Post-Marxism and Development Studies: Beyond the Impasse."⁴ Also influential, if outside the postdevelopment camp, was M. P. Cowen and R. W. Shenton's *Doctrines of Development*,⁵ for the argument it made that development is a process of control.

Yet while poststructural theory has played an essential role in the elaboration of postdevelopment thought, the rise to prominence of the latter also reflects broader trends of concern to development theorists. In particular, the emergence of the antiglobalization movement in the 1990s and the attendant critique of globalization have come to preoccupy development theorists, particularly in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. If the Asian crisis enabled the triumph of neoclassical economic policies in the former heartland of developmental states, in East and Southeast Asia, it also signaled the eclipse of neoclassical economic theory in academic circles. The text on the Asian crisis that many see as having dealt the fatal blow to neoclassical orthodoxy—and that certainly provoked a vigorous response from the spokesmen of that orthodoxy—is probably Joseph Stiglitz's *Globalization and Its Discontents*.⁶

Stiglitz, who might now represent the mainstream of non-neoclassical development thought, rejects neoclassical remedies but clearly has no objection to either globalization or development. However, the antiglobalization movement has tended to conflate neoliberalism, globalization, and development. It is thus inclined to question the whole development project, which it sees as destructive of traditional societies and natural environments. Married as it is to media-savvy activists in both the developed and underdeveloped worlds,⁷ the antiglobalization movement, which boomed in the years after the Asian crisis, calls for a reassertion of local autonomy in the face of what it sees as the homogenizing and essentially neocolonial tendencies of globalization. The fact that these activists are not always themselves of the soil they claim to represent is not lost on some development theorists, who point to the ambiguities in the portrayal of popular resistance to neocolonialism and Western hegemony. After all, much development thought was not imposed on the developing world by the developed world, but rather emerged from the former.⁸ Structuralism, one recalls from earlier chapters, emerged in no small part from Latin American academics. And while *etatisme* was influenced by Western intellectual trends, it was essentially Turkish in its generation. Equally, much of the resistance to development now comes not from "traditional areas," but from urban activists in the first world.

Nevertheless, the vision of a fragmented if networked world so dear to the antiglobalizers⁹ resembles the prescription of postdevelopment thought: a repudiation of meta-narratives and an emphasis on the particular. Accordingly, the idea that there can, or should, be one model of development is rejected. In that way, the modern-traditional dichotomy that lies, in one form or another, at the heart of virtually all development

thought is turned on its head. Local resistance to modernization and development is now reinterpreted as the product of liberating impulses that reject the encroaching hegemony of state-based and capitalist elites.

Postdevelopment thought makes some interesting and provocative claims, to be sure. In particular, the thesis that development does not necessarily represent an amelioration of living standards, but rather the incorporation of previously informal economies into the networks of commodity circulation, poses a challenge to development thought that deserves to be addressed. A simple illustration will help. In a household in which the mother stays at home, cooking and cleaning for the family, the children may have the luxury of eating home-baked pies. Suppose, however, that the mother decides to go to work, and thereby enters the formal work force. She now earns a salary and pays taxes. And, eager that her children not forgo any privileges as a result of her new activity, she stops on the way home to buy her family pies in the neighborhood bakery. Because she is earning an income, official statistics record the economy as having grown. Because she pays taxes, the state's revenues—not to mention its ability to track her life and movement—are augmented. But as far as her children are concerned, at the end of the day they are still eating a pie; the only difference is that it may seem to them to be one of inferior quality. Thus, what is undeniably progress for the state may be a step backward for a small segment of society, in this case the lives of the children stuck with inferior pies.

Aggregate data sometimes reflect this simple illustration. Using figures for per capita income, for example, there is no doubt that inclusion in the North American Free Trade Area has brought real benefits to Mexico. Once other variables are factored in, though, such as increased job insecurity and added work effort, the net benefits become more ambiguous.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, rereading the meaning of development by factoring unpaid female labor into national accounts became an important goal of the 1994 United Nations Women's Conference. In short, the net welfare gains of, say, producing food for the market versus producing food for oneself may be negligible. But because the latter is monetized, it registers as an improvement in living standard according to the terms set by development discourse.

Hence, the postdevelopment theorists suggest, human improvement is not the real goal of development. Human control and domination is. It is true that drawing more and more people into the formal sector is essential to the nation-state's consolidation of its authority over its territory. In Jamaica, for instance, roughly half of economic activity is now calculated to take place outside the formal sector.¹¹ This means that the

government's tax base lies well beneath its potential. Accordingly, the resources available to the state to impose itself on the population, whether in financing its security forces or providing services and patronage benefits in those inner-city communities where the informal sector is most established, are constrained.

This results in a vicious cycle whereby the state's weakened authority becomes self-reinforcing. In Jamaica, the ascendant drug gangs frequently exploit their ties to the informal sector to evade state control. Informal traders, for example, are sometimes used to launder money: given drug earnings to buy goods from prescribed suppliers abroad, from whom they get a discount, these small entrepreneurs not only assist drug gangs in foiling the police, but also obtain discounted goods, which make them more competitive with retailers in the formal sector. This, therefore, puts further pressure on the formal sector, making it difficult for established (and taxpaying) businesses to remain in operation. The police thus devote a good deal of energy to clamping down and harassing informal businesses, which only earns them further enmity in the inner-city communities in which the drug gangs have established themselves.

Nevertheless, one must be wary of romanticizing these constant efforts at evasion by the informal sector as instances of popular resistance to elite hegemony. They are that; but this does not mean that the victory in resistance amounts to the triumph of some form of popular sovereignty. Instead, what is happening is that the state is being forced into retreat by the emergent hegemony—at least in inner-city Kingston—of the drug gangs. These gangs, in turn, can prove every bit as oppressive as the most brutal dictator when their authority is challenged on their own turf.

It is this sort of reality that has led many if not most development theorists to remain wary of postdevelopment thought. It is a non sequitur that resistance to the hegemony of the state, or global capitalism, or the developmentalist project, is necessarily a resistance to domination and oppression. As Tom Brass argues in his critique of postdevelopment thought, resistance to authority may be a progressive struggle; but it may also be just old-fashioned resistance to change.¹² An older generation of Marxists still maintains that tradition should seldom be defended in favor of modernity. As Karl Marx himself noted,¹³ whatever the depredations of modernization, the oppression of tradition and its ruling classes frequently surpassed those of the new order. A similar reasoning lies at the heart of Jürgen Habermas's critique of postmodernism,¹⁴ in which he detects a close resemblance between postmodernism and neo-conservatism.¹⁵ It is a reasoning that explains much of the discomfort

that development theorists feel when faced with postdevelopment thought.

Beyond this, many scholars complain that postdevelopment authors, in order to give their theory cogency, must deliberately overlook the apparently evident fruits of development. Over the past couple of generations, for instance, life expectancy in the third world has nearly doubled.¹⁶ Equally, the charge that can be leveled at any postmodern thought, that its rejection of essentialism rests itself on an essentialist claim—namely, that all truth is constructed and arbitrary—has already been thrown at postdevelopment thought.¹⁷ Nor is one of the ironies of postdevelopment thought lost on critics: while it celebrates the resistance of non-Western societies to Western domination, postdevelopment thought remains nonetheless thoroughly Western in its intellectual origins and central claims (particularly its stress on subjectivity).¹⁸

■ Postdevelopment in Practice

However, perhaps the greatest anxiety that development theorists have with respect to postdevelopment thought concerns its practicality. For development studies remains one of the most practical of disciplines, most of its scholars being concerned in some way with producing analyses with feasible applications. In a discipline that by necessity has therefore remained pragmatic, it remains to be seen whether postdevelopment theory can offer us anything more than an exciting new way of looking at the world. The fatal flaw in postdevelopment thought, its critics maintain, is that it opposes more effectively than it proposes.

It may be, of course, that postdevelopment theory needs to offer no alternatives to development theory. Since it rejects the sort of meta-narratives that produce development theorizing in the first place, it can merely celebrate a world in which a multiplicity of “voices” are allowed to contend.¹⁹ Yet that is probably true only in theory. In practice, it seems more likely that, to the extent that postdevelopment theorists sit out the development debate in a refusal to recognize its legitimacy, the orthodox theorists they so decry will continue to shape policy unmolested by the canting of a few radical intellectuals.²⁰

Dilemmas of Development

Development abounds with philosophical dilemmas. In his critique of the arrogance of development discourse, J. K. Gibson-Graham quotes

Oskar Spate, who in turn referred to a statement made back in 1918 by Lord Montagu about the “pathetic contentment” of the Indian village. Décades later, at the height of the era of modernization, Spate would conclude that the village, while still pathetic, was “contented less and less”; and this, he went on to say, was “as it should be.”²¹

Why would a scholar of development take pleasure in the fact that the way of life for poor people was becoming less contented? Inadvertently or not, Spate was hitting on a truism in the history of development. In the early stages of modernization, during the phase referred to by Marx as primitive accumulation, when savings rates are forcibly raised and populations are dislocated as social relations are ruptured and industrialization leads to rapid urbanization, living standards for all but a minority of the population drop. Yet over the long term, rising rates of productivity translate into higher living standards, manifested in greater longevity, literacy, and purchasing power.

The contentment is therefore pathetic to the modernist because it represents a resignation to a tradition-bound stagnation. It is the ignorance born of bliss. Yet the postmodernist can legitimately say that it is contentment nonetheless, and that only an imperialist mentality can justify the forcible “liberation” of people from tradition in order to deliver the fruits of modernity.

As contemporary studies reveal, it is only a partial explanation for poverty to say that it simply represents the failure of development, and that what is therefore needed is more development. That may, in fact, be a non sequitur. It is not clear that the worst poverty is felt in areas that have yet to be developed. Rather, there is evidence that it is worst in areas that have experienced a development that is, as yet, incomplete. For instance, in the early stages of development, out-migration to booming cities can leave remaining rural populations more vulnerable to poverty,²² a feature that has characterized China’s recent economic surge. One could indict development as easily as the absence of development for this unhappy state of affairs.

Be that as it may, decades ago Michael Lipton cautioned against romanticism in development studies by saying that when presented with a choice, poor people almost invariably prefer modern goods and services to traditional ones.²³ Part of the strength in the neoclassical critique of an earlier generation of leftist development theorizing was its empirical research demonstrating the apparently universal effectiveness of income incentives, something P. T. Bauer used as the basis for his withering critique of dependency theory (see Chapter 4). Certainly, there is no shortage of critics of postdevelopment theory who argue that it, too, may be

infected with traces of romanticism that blind it to some of the realities it confronts. For example, in his study of local assertions of power in oil-producing regions of Nigeria, Michael Watts expressed skepticism that they are truly an alternative to global capitalist hegemony. He pointed out that the construction of indigeneity by Ken Saro-Wiwa's Ogoni movement was greatly assisted when "indigeneity as a political category garnered international support in the last part of the twentieth century."²⁴

However, while the initial response of mainstream development theorists to postdevelopment thought was skepticism and even outright repudiation, in recent years the critique has been treated more sympathetically. This is because development theorists and practitioners have begun trying to use postdevelopment to generate new policy prescriptions.

Development and Contentment

Let us backpedal to the matter of the factors behind human contentment. It may be instructive to note what we do know about human psychology in assessing the claims of neoclassical theorists—who still dominate policymaking—with respect to the human yearning for development, alluded to above. And on the face of it, the "poor but happy" contentment decried by Lord Montagu is, to some degree, a romantic invention. Despite the persistence of doubters,²⁵ there is now quite a lot of evidence that rising incomes lead to rising contentment. Therefore, given that development's central goal is to raise incomes, there is a *prima facie* case for development.

But the relationship between income and contentment is more complex than its most ardent proponents sometimes depict. Richard Easterlin, one of the leading students in the field, concludes that the relationship applies only at an individual level. This is to say that individual contentment rises when individual income rises relative to the economy as a whole. In contrast, there is no evidence that when a country's aggregate income rises, its aggregate level of human satisfaction will follow. Moreover, the income-happiness nexus apparently has limits: as income rises, the incremental gains in contentment gradually diminish as expectations begin to rise as well.²⁶ The income-happiness relationship seems most evident at lower incomes,²⁷ before new stimuli are converted into habits, which themselves add little incremental pleasure.²⁸

Not only does this serve as a useful tonic to the unbounded celebration of development's capacity, but perhaps more importantly it recen-

ters the individual in the development process. An important contribution of postdevelopment thought has been to expose the bureaucratic and depersonalizing tendencies in development practice, and to reassert the rights of individuals, communities, and cultures not to be sacrificed carelessly in the pursuit of development. The exigencies of development, such as the need for capital accumulation and profound economic restructuring, demand some sacrifice. Nevertheless, it may be possible to craft development policies that give individuals and communities a greater say in the sacrifices they will be asked to make.

Mindful of this, some development theorists have begun investigating the possibilities of decentralized and participatory development, some finding the reassertion of local control in the antiglobalization movement itself: by resisting the spread of genetically engineered crops or protecting local rights to intellectual property, local organizations are emerging in Mesoamerica that will resist the uniform tendencies of globalization.²⁹ Indeed, some scholars discern the roots of the antiglobalization movement in such a fusion of local resistance with some of the critical theory that emerged from academic circles in the 1970s.³⁰ Local reactions, combined with the writings of international scholars, drew the attention of international environmentalists to the downside of the mega-projects once favored by development agencies (and still, for example, employed in China, at tremendous social and environmental cost), putting such projects on the agendas of first-world countries.

Of course, the goal of integrating local communities into development planning is hardly peculiar to postdevelopment theory. As we saw earlier in the book, neoclassical economists and development practitioners have for years been promoting decentralization as a means to make development more effective. What distinguishes the prescriptions for decentralized development as influenced by postdevelopment thought is the insistence of participation not only of local people, but also of their *knowledge*.³¹ Indeed, some sanguine theorists who employ postdevelopment theory without perhaps considering themselves its exponents see this happening anyhow: market penetration can enable people to realize capitalist goals that nonetheless contribute to their improved well-being,³² while development projects are often transformed and appropriated by local citizens.³³

However, it is interesting that the effort to use postdevelopment theory to craft alternative approaches to development seems not to come from within the ranks of postdevelopment theorists. Postdevelopment theorists still remain suspicious of anything that smacks of development. They tend not to be sanguine about participatory development,

seeing it as a way to depoliticize development and integrate people more effectively into development projects.³⁴ Meanwhile, reports from the field on experiments in participatory development have drawn attention to some of the challenges involved in trying to realize it. One pair of scholars, looking at a Nigerian case study, pointed out that while it might be desirable to preserve the community spirit in development, it was “declining by the day.”³⁵ Nor have experiments in participatory development always taken adequate stock of the existing power relations at the local level: what is seen as empowering communities may, after all, merely strengthen the hand of local ruling groups.³⁶ But there is a danger in such critiques of sliding into the very essentialism that postdevelopment thought criticizes in development studies: one that redefines every success in development as a failure, every failure as a victory, and every penetration by the market as a consolidation of capitalist hegemony rather than as something that might be sought by ordinary people.³⁷

The Failure of Development

Indeed, for those in the field, it is sometimes hard to see how failures of development can be seen as victories. One could be provocative and say that hand-wringing about development and postdevelopment is moot anyway. It is becoming increasingly likely that in many of the world’s poorest societies, the development models of old are inapplicable today simply because states lack the capacity to realize them—if ever they possessed it. As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, some international relations theorists have begun talking of a new medievalism, which they posit is replacing the era of the nation-state presumed by all traditional development models. It is suggested that with the weakening of states attendant on globalization, combined with the reassertion of power by subnational units like region-states and municipalities on the one hand, and the emergence of transnational bodies like the European Union and the North American Free Trade Area on the other, citizens are developing loyalties to a plethora of new agencies. From international nongovernmental organizations to drug gangs, transnational networks and corporations, and regionalist and ethnic movements, this fragmentation of power, some suggest, heralds the beginning of a new age that will more closely resemble early medieval western Europe than the state system to which we have grown accustomed.³⁸ The capacity for states to engineer the sort of development envisioned by traditional development models is obviously in doubt.

Such a neomedievalism, if it is a reality or at least if it eventually becomes one, might approach the sort of postmodern world envisioned by postdevelopment theorists. If so, this emergent subschool of international relations might merit closer scrutiny by development theorists. For their prognoses are frequently less sanguine than the visions of postdevelopment theorists. At the most extreme, the neomedievalists find parallels in the collapse of the Roman Empire, which gave way not to a democratic flourishing but to the Dark Ages seen in some parts of early medieval Europe.³⁹ But even sanguine neomedievalists, who see opportunities for greater participation, caution that there are risks of a democratic deficit in a world in which territory has become less salient to political and economic organization.⁴⁰

What does seem likely, though, is that profound changes in state capacity over the past couple of decades—as structural adjustment programs and fiscal crises have removed many of the levers traditionally available to state elites—have preempted much of the academic debate in development studies. It looks increasingly clear that the development models that evolved in the early post–World War II period, and that arguably framed the development debate for the next half century, are probably now becoming increasingly impractical. New forms of economic organization that favor small, flexible, networked units of production that can be globally integrated; rapid transformations in information technology that have accelerated time-space compression; the growth of transnational criminal and terror networks that command resources estimated to be in the hundreds of billions of dollars; and the growing assertiveness of international nongovernmental organizations in the face of states that have sometimes grown dependent on their resources—such forces are ushering in a postmodern world as effectively as postdevelopment discourse could ever hope to do.

The Start of Consensus?

At the end of the day, an uninformed observer, beholding for the first time the popular debate over globalization as well as the academic discussion of postdevelopment theory, could be forgiven for concluding that two parallel universes coexist. One side celebrates the triumph of modernity and the spread of development to ever more corners of the globe. Along the way, millions are being lifted out of the bondage of poverty and oppression, and are being given choices and freedoms never before dreamed imaginable. The other side argues that development is a

failed project that has plunged millions into poverty while destroying cultures, genetic diversity, and individual autonomy. Surely the two cannot both be correct?

Yet each side can marshal evidence for its case. On the one hand, China—with its rapid growth, rising incomes, urbanization, and industrial expansion—stands as a stark reminder that modernization remains alive and well. India offers much of the same. Globally, the incidence of poverty is down, longevity is rising, and freedom continues expanding across the globe.⁴¹ Interstate conflict is declining, and has been doing so steadily for years.⁴²

On the other hand, nobody can question the brutal and dehumanizing way that development has been engineered, especially in China. Planetary pollution appears to be worsening, and in so doing is apparently prompting global warming (a discussion that will be taken up at length in the next chapter). If the share of poor people on the planet has decreased, their absolute numbers have risen.⁴³ Interstate conflict may be down, but it is apparently being replaced by intrastate conflict: the privatization of violence, which has seen the proliferation of private militias, gangs, and paramilitary forces, is injecting a new insecurity into global politics.⁴⁴ Finally, if average incomes are rising across the globe, the gains of growth have apparently been unevenly distributed, with some growing rich faster than others.⁴⁵ This has given existing conflicts an even sharper edge in some places.⁴⁶

Those who see development as the often painful transition to the greater prosperity that underpins human contentment—and they are quick to point to the links between rising incomes and contentment—find vindication in the statistics. Those who see it as a dehumanizing campaign by states to control citizens' lives—pointing to the deep ambiguities in the data linking prosperity to happiness—feel just as vindicated. Development's success and failure appear thus to go together. To borrow the metaphor of the original dependency theorists, development and postdevelopment are arguably two sides of the same coin. Modernity's advance and retreat may be intimately connected to one another, though not in the spatial sense that dependency theorists once assumed (namely that development in one part of the globe had as its direct consequence underdevelopment in another). Rather, development is advancing on many fronts around the world, and retreating on others; and the two seem to be connected in a nexus born of the latest wave of globalization. Modernity's advance is prompting, in some places, the appearance of a postmodern world order that in turn bears resemblance to a premodern world order.

More properly, the triumph of modernity is promoting a new medievalism in some places. So, for example, China's headlong and dramatically successful plunge into the global age is destroying the less competitive manufacturing sectors of many countries. To cite the case of Fiji as just one instance, the disappearance of the textiles industry has driven many Fijians into the informal economy, which often slides into criminality. A similar dynamic has been highlighted in the case of another small island economy, Jamaica. There, the retreat of the state in the midst of fiscal austerity has encouraged a thriving entrepreneurialism. If poor Jamaicans are coping, nonetheless they are turning their backs on the state, evading police controls on their activities, and avoiding their taxes.⁴⁷

■ The Debate over Modernity

This may be a case of reality mirroring art, or more properly, philosophy. One could make a case that the debate over postdevelopment represents, in part, the Western imagination's attempt to come to grips with these contrary tendencies embedded in the modern age. It reflects a binary that has lain at the heart of Western modernity from its dawn: modernity versus the romantic revolt against the perceived crisis of modernity, a dualism that has persisted to the present day.⁴⁸ On one side stand the modernists. They proudly point to the achievements that faith in progress and its attendant institutions—the sovereign nation-state; industry; science, technology, and reason; equality; and a rejection of tradition—have brought to the world. On the other side stand modernity's rebels. They reject it as a failed project whose principal task has been to enslave humans and turn them into the cogs in a vast, industrial wheel. To them, evidence of modernity's failure—or crisis, in their often-used terminology—abounds: world wars, genocides made possible by the modern tools of science and bureaucracy, the specter of nuclear annihilation, individual alienation, and lives of mindless monotony and homogeneity.

In Western intellectual history, the rebellion against modernity has usually given rise to two intellectual responses. The first is a retreat into premodern tradition. It is not merely religious fundamentalists who seek to overturn modernity and return to a golden age (which, modernist critics are quick to point out, is usually itself a modern construction). Leo Strauss and his intellectual progeny sought to reclaim a rationality that was timeless, though many, like Eric Voegelin, found the boundaries between religious faith and their beloved rationality often blurred

(rather, it would seem, as the elderly Immanuel Kant slid into mysticism when he came up against questions his reasoning could not resolve). The second response is a purported embrace of the challenges produced by modernity's failure, and a move into a postmodern age. In this vision, one is to renounce the arbitrary meta-narratives that inform all narratives, doing away with "universals" like reason and enabling people to determine truth in myriad ways.

In practice, though, the distinctions between what one may call fundamentalist and postmodern responses to the crisis of modernity are often less than their proponents would claim. One sees this in the way the philosophizing of Friedrich Nietzsche, often said to be the godfather of postmodernity, has provided succor to postmoderns and fundamentalists alike. The former see his declaration that God is dead, and that man enjoys full creative power, as liberating; the latter see his warning that God's death will lead to anarchy, and to a world in which the many live for the glory of the few, as the restoration of the feudalism of past ages: what came to be known—apparently to Nietzsche's delight⁴⁹—as aristocratic radicalism. The overlap between pre- and postmodernity is not absent from postdevelopment thought itself: while celebrating freedom, postdevelopment theorists also have a higher regard for local, premodern traditions (and recognize the dilemmas that arise when those traditions jeopardize the freedoms they so cherish).

So it goes in much of the third world, where a good deal of the debate over postdevelopment seems arcane and remote. Those who are helping to orchestrate the emergence of a postmodern world arguably have limited interest in the sort of development envisioned by postdevelopment theorists. The practitioners of the new medievalism seem more concerned with naked power than with asserting the rights of the communities they govern. Moreover, it is probably not accidental that in the terrain these new "statelets" control, fundamentalism often thrives, taking advantage of the power vacuum to assert a violent meaning for citizens who feel themselves betrayed by modernity.⁵⁰

All the while, those who contest globalization, and who seem to be the scions of an emerging postmodern left, often seem intent on trying to save the world for modernity once they are in office. Leaders in Latin America, which experienced a sweeping shift to the left at the turn of the twenty-first century, bringing to power such traditional leftists as Evo Morales, do not in fact seek to implement much in the way of a postdevelopment future. Instead, they seem most often intent on consolidating the power of the state in order to engineer development plans that, at most, are more equitable than the orthodox strategies they chal-

lunge in coming to power. Several populist leaders have actually retained neoliberal policies, while reinjecting nationalism and populist rhetoric into their political programs. And while the informal sectors spawned by neoliberal fragmentation of the economy have appeared to provide for their support bases, these governments have often seemed intent on reestablishing the hold of the state over the economy.⁵¹

The degree to which such efforts to reestablish the state's hold over society will succeed remains to be seen. Challenges abound and, as argued in the previous chapter, the era of strong state-led development—of the sort once employed in East Asia—may continue to recede into the past. Globalization has apparently had differential impacts on developed and developing societies, arguably strengthening states in the former while weakening them in the latter.⁵² Moreover, international trade negotiations have placed limits on the activities of developing states, limits that, in the judgment of one noted theorist of the developmental state, have made it increasingly difficult if not impossible for them to use this model.⁵³ This “new constitutionalism” has imposed clear limits on state authority—and by extension, on democracy—by “roping off” private property and individual rights and freedoms; meanwhile, fiscal and monetary conventions—closely monitored not only by the major multilateral financial institutions but also by private agents such as bond-rating agencies—have imposed clear limits on governmental authority, while trade agreements have created bodies that can actually withdraw government powers from their signatories.⁵⁴

There results what one scholar has called the “privatization of norm-making capacities and the enactment of these norms in the public domain.”⁵⁵ Yet while this may manifest itself in the form of state retreat, particularly in developing countries, more than just that is involved. At the extreme, in developing countries, state retreat can culminate in so-called state failure, in which case development—and especially state-led development—becomes a remote possibility. Yet cases of genuine state failure are relatively rare.⁵⁶ More likely what we are seeing is something akin to the aforementioned new medievalism. National and global, state and nonstate actors are not always mutually exclusive, especially when it comes to ministries of finance, central banks, and the increasingly specialized technical regulatory agencies—for instance, those that manage telecommunications or competition policy.⁵⁷ Gray areas also exist, in which state actors cooperate in dubious but essential ways with non-state actors in order to enforce the state's control: policing in many third-world cities often creates an overlay of police above and criminal gangs below, but the two cooperate and even interpenetrate.⁵⁸

■ Conclusion

Needless to say, this emergent political order is being contested. On one front, as mentioned above, some countries are witnessing the resurgence of populist movements that purport to impose limits on globalization and to restore some of the control over space that they have lost. This may amount to a return—possibly a last stand?—of what James Scott has called, critically, “high modernism”: the effort by postcolonial states to establish firm control over their peoples and territories in order to implement—if need be, by force—their conceptions of progress and modernization.⁵⁹

But other forms of contestation, such as what exists in the loosely organized anti- or alterglobalization movements, are already shifting the plane from the national level to the global. Postmodern in structure, and sometimes in aims as well, this movement has arguably provoked a modernist reaction of a new sort, embodied in the UN’s Millennium Development Goals or the WTO’s prodevelopment Doha round of trade negotiations.

This, then, is the greatly changed context in which development studies finds itself. A discipline that emerged in the early post–World War II period, arguably at the peak of Scott’s high modernism, development studies always took for granted the existence of national economies and nation-states. Much has changed since. Accordingly, those who take an interest in development are being challenged to conceive new strategies of development. Postdevelopment challenged us to rethink development altogether. But maybe those in the field of development studies who remain modernists at heart can find a way not to throw the baby out with the bathwater, to retain modernism while abandoning high modernism, and to study the tactics but not the strategy of postdevelopment.

This, arguably, is the new consensus emerging in development studies. Bodies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which were once ardent proponents of the neoclassical model, have come to the realization that development that does not improve the lives of poor people will only provoke resistance and crisis.⁶⁰ To a substantial degree, individuals have become the focus of development studies once again. The enthusiastic reception given to a book like Amartya Sen’s *Development as Freedom*⁶¹ testifies to the desire for theorists and practitioners of development to shift the focus of their discipline to people. The intellectual resistance provided by postdevelopment thought, and the political resistance of the antiglobalization movement, can be thanked for putting the discipline’s agenda back where it belongs. But just as Otto

von Bismarck responded to the threat of socialism in the nineteenth century by creating the modern world's first welfare state, pleasing workers but infuriating Marxists, whose critique of capitalism thereby began to lose sting, so too will mainstream development thought likely absorb the lessons of postdevelopment thought without absorbing many of its recommendations. That will undoubtedly annoy postdevelopment theorists. But in the long run, it will probably do more to benefit poor people around the world.

Notes

An earlier version of this chapter appeared as a three-part series of articles in *Progress in Development Studies*.

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2. Wolfgang Sachs, *The Development Dictionary* (London: Zed, 1992).

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5. M. P. Cowen and R. W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (London: Routledge, 1996).

6. Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton, 2002).

7. Clifford Bob, "Merchants of Morality," *Foreign Policy* (March–April 2002): 36–45.

8. Marc Edelman, *Peasants Against Globalization: Rural Social Movements in Costa Rica* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

9. See Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (New York: Picador, 2002).

10. Michael A. Kouparitsas, "A Dynamic Macroeconomic Analysis of NAFTA," *Economic Perspectives* (January 1997): 14–35. See also Stephen C. Smith, "NAFTA and Beyond: Impact on Mexico and Latin America," in *Case Studies in Economic Development*, 3rd ed., by Stephen C. Smith (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 2003).

11. Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Informal Sector Study for Jamaica Final Report* (Kingston, 2002).

12. Tom Brass, "Old Conservatism in 'New' Clothes," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 22 (1995): 516–540. See also Steven Robins, "Whose Modernity? Indigenous Modernities and Land Claims After Apartheid," *Development and Change* 34,2 (2003): 265–285.

13. See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1934).

14. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, translated by Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1985).

15. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "After Post-Development," *Third World Quarterly* 21,2 (2000): 175–191, which traces the lineage of postdevelopment thought not to the radical left from which it claims parentage, but to neoclassical theory.

16. Pieterse, "After Post-Development."

17. Ray Kiely, "The Last Refuge of the Noble Savage? A Critical Reassessment of Post-Development Theory," *European Journal of Development Research* 11,1 (June 1999): 30–55.

18. N. Shanmugaratnam, "Encountering Post-Development and the End of the Third World," *Forum for Development Studies* 2 (1997): 329–339.

19. See K. Nustad, "Development: The Devil We Know?" *Third World Quarterly* 22 (2001): 479–490.

20. See, for example, Michael Watts, "Development and Governmentality," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24,1 (2003): 6–34.

21. J. K. Gibson-Graham, "Area Studies After Poststructuralism," *Environment and Planning* 36 (2004): 405–419.

22. Kate Bird, David Hulme, Karen Moore, and Andrew Shepherd, *Chronic Poverty and Remote Rural Areas*, Working Paper no. 13 (Birmingham: Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2001).

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24. Watts, "Development and Governmentality."

25. See, for example, Robert E. Lane, *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

26. Richard A. Easterlin, "Income and Happiness: Towards a Unified Theory," *Economic Journal* 111 (July 2001): 465–484.

27. M. Argyle, "Causes and Correlates of Happiness," in *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, edited by D. Kahneman, E. Diener, and N. Schwarz (New York: Russell Sage, 1999).

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29. Noah J. Toly, "Globalization and the Capitalization of Nature: A Political Ecology of Biodiversity in Mesoamerica," *Bulletin of Science, Technology, & Society* 24,1 (2004): 47–54.

30. Robin Broad and Zahara Hecksher, "Before Seattle: The Historical Roots of the Current Movement Against Corporate-Led Globalisation," *Third World Quarterly* 24,4 (2003): 713–728.

31. Eleanor Sanderson and Sara Kindon, "Progress in Participatory Development: Opening up the Possibility of Knowledge Through Progressive Participation," *Progress in Development Studies* 4,2 (2004): 114–126. See also Jessica Matthews, "Power Shift," *Foreign Affairs* 76,1 (1997): 50–66.

32. Gibson-Graham, "Area Studies After Poststructuralism."

33. Nustad, "Development."

34. Glyn Williams, "Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power, and (Re)Politicization," *Third World Quarterly* 25,3 (2004): 557–578; Trevor Parfitt, "The Ambiguity of Participation: A Qualified Defence of Participatory Development," *Third World Quarterly* 25,3 (2004): 537–556.

35. Adetoye Faniyan and Thompson Adeboyejo, "The Challenge of the Participatory Approach to Rural Poverty Alleviation: The Example of Olugbena Group of Villages, Ewekoro, Ogun State, Nigeria," *Africa Development* 29,3 (2004): 70–83.

36. This, of course, is not necessarily the fault of postdevelopment theorists, who blame it on an inadequate application of a radical politics. See, for instance, Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, "Relocating Participation Within a Radical Politics of Development," *Development and Change* 36,2 (2005): 237–262.

37. See, for example, Gibson-Graham, "Area Studies After Poststructuralism."

38. For a discussion, see John Rapley, "The New Middle Ages," *Foreign Affairs* 85,3 (May–June): 95–103.

39. For an instance of such pessimism, see Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth* (New York: Random House, 1996).

40. See, for example, Jan Zielonka, "How New Enlarged Borders Will Reshape the European Union," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39,3 (September 2001): 507–536; and Matthews, "Power Shift."

41. See Freedom House, "Human Rights Day 2006: Despite Progress, Abuses Continue Across Globe," press release, 8 December 2006.

42. Monty G. Marshall, "Global Trends in Violent Conflict," in *Peace and Conflict 2005*, edited by Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr (College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, Department of Government and Politics, 2005); Gerald Schneider et al., eds., *Globalization and Armed Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

43. For a discussion, see John Rapley, "Globalization, Inequality, and Insecurity," in *Security and Development: Critical Connections*, edited by Michael Lund, Necla Tschirgi, and Francesco Mancini (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

44. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Trends in Crime and Justice* (Vienna: United Nations, 2006).

45. See John Rapley, "Convergence: Myths and Realities," *Progress in Development Studies* 1,4 (2001): 295–308.

46. Marshall, "Global Trends in Violent Conflict."

47. A 2002 study found that nearly half the Jamaican economy now lay outside the government's tax net. See Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Informal Sector Study for Jamaica Final Report*.

48. See, for example, Ted V. McAllister, *Revolt Against Modernity: Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and the Search for a Postliberal Order* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000).

49. Santaniello Weaver, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 203n.

50. For more, see Rapley, "The New Middle Ages," pp. 95–103.

51. David Leaman, "Changing Faces of Populism in Latin America: Masks, Makeovers, and Enduring Features," *Latin American Research Review* 39,3 (October 2004): 312–326.

52. Maria Gritsch, "The Nation-State and Economic Globalization: Soft Geo-Politics and Increased State Autonomy?" *Review of International Political*

Economy 12,1 (February 2005): 1–25; Nita Rudra, “Globalization and the Decline of the Welfare State in Less-Developed Countries,” *International Organization* 56,2 (Spring 2002): 411–445.

53. Robert Hunter Wade, “What Strategies Are Viable for Developing Countries Today? The World Trade Organization and the Shrinking of Development Space,” *Review of International Political Economy* 10,4 (November 2003): 621–644.

54. Stephen Gill, “Constitutionalizing Inequality and the Clash of Globalizations,” *International Studies Review* 4,2 (2002): 47–66.

55. Saskia Sassen, “The State and Globalization,” *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 5,2 (2003): 241–248.

56. Robert I. Rotberg compiles an inventory of seven failed and one collapsed state for the 1990s in “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators,” in *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2003).

57. Sassen, “The State and Globalization.”

58. Desmond Enrique Arias, “The Dynamics of Criminal Governance: Networks and Social Order in Rio de Janeiro,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38,2 (2006): 293–325; John Rapley, “Jamaica: Negotiating Law and Order with the Dons,” *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 37,2 (September–October 2003): 25–29.

59. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

60. See, for example, the World Bank report *Global Economic Prospects 2004: Realizing the Development Promise of the Doha Agenda* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2003), p. xviii, which maintains that development must henceforth take place in a context in which complementary propoor policies are in place. See also Ziya Öniş and Fikret Şenses, “Rethinking the Emerging Post-Washington Consensus,” *Development and Change* 36,2 (2005): 263–290. It is also worth adding that the World Trade Organization has been forced to acknowledge the neglect of developing countries that characterized the 1990s, turning the current Doha round into the so-called development round.

61. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor, 2000).