

Social Sciences and the Next Development Agenda¹

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Thandika Mkandawire, UNRISD, Geneva

I am deeply honoured by the invitation to deliver the keynote address in honour of the late Professor Guy Mhone.

Guy was a man of wide ranging intellectual interests. It is therefore difficult to identify a topic that would really capture the intellectual reach of the man. I have therefore chosen to confine my speech to issues that have been close to my own intellectual preoccupation during the few years and all of which I know were close to Guy's heart. There are issues of development, democracy and social equity. All these issues point to the centrality of interdisciplinarity in the development agenda.

Ever since their modern invention, the social sciences have had to deal with at least four aspects of change. The first and most basic of these has been the process of biological and social reproduction. The second has been the concern over what Adam Smith called the "wealth of nations". The third has been the question of the distribution of such wealth and its translation into life chances of individuals and different social categories. The fourth has stemmed from the fact that progress has always been Janus-faced, in a sense something of a Faustian bargain, whose "creative destruction" has brought forth both the positive and darker sides of a disruptive process in terms of the security of people's livelihoods, and the sense of their bearings, inducing societies to seek ways of protecting individuals or communities from the ravages of change and attaining some modicum of social peace. Successful management of social change has taken on all these tasks, although the weight given to each of them has differed between countries and, within each country, from period to period.

I will be arguing that the social sciences once again need to focus their attention on the "wealth of nations": how it is accumulated, how it is distributed, and who decides both the rate and pattern of accumulation.

¹ The speech draws heavily on a speech delivered at the SSNSA Conference –, Johannesburg 27th September 2006,

Demise of developmentalism

Let me start with the rise and fall of development studies and the need to “bring development back in”, because its demise was emblematic of shifts in development studies in general. In the early post–World War II period, “Development” was a “Big Idea” and, not surprisingly, it attracted the attention of many fine minds. The sobriquets used to describe it—“The Take-Off”, “The Great Ascent”, Mao’s “Great Leap Forward”, are all suggestive of the immensity of the task and the breadth of the vision informing it. Around this task there emerged intellectual ideas that sought to help the design of strategies of development. The ideas drew from a wide range of intellectual sources—history, geography, sociology, psychology, economics, etc. They also had a close affinity with paradigms guiding policies in the North. Up until the 1970s, problems of welfare and unemployment in the developed countries, and those of poverty and underdevelopment in the developing ones, were interpreted through the lenses of Keynesian economics and “development economics”, respectively. Although there was little in common between the actual analytical content of Keynesian doctrine and that of development economics, the two approaches shared critical views of neoclassical economic theory and the related acceptance of state intervention. They also had in common the understanding that the economy described by neoclassical economists was a “special case”, and there were many other economies that could be “stylized” by entirely different initial conditions, historical trajectories and models because they were characterized by different structural features. Furthermore, they shared the view that the state could play an important role in addressing these structural features, which often resulted in “market failures”. It is perhaps not surprising that the neoclassical “counter-revolution” and the ascendancy of monetarism in the advanced industrial countries led to the rejection of development economics in the developing countries.

Side-by-side with development economics, various other disciplines of the social sciences were studying processes of social change in the name of “modernization”. Much has been said about the Eurocentric vision of these approaches, about the teleological and linear view of history they advanced, about their being harnessed to the imperial designs of the countries of the North and producing what Claude Ake referred to as “social science as imperialism”. Much of this is valid. But what I wish to focus on is their acceptance of the vision of change and “catch up” which resonated in the post-colonial political and social agenda.

The first proximate cause of the decline of development studies as a policy and academic concern was the oil crisis, “stagflation” and subsequent indebtedness of the developing countries that severely

put to test the models and the theories that had underpinned their welfare and development policies. For two decades, starting from the beginning of the mid-1970s, the status of development studies in both academia and policy circles was not the most enviable. The titles of some of the articles published in the 1970s and 1980s clearly suggest that all was not well with the discipline: “In Praise of Development Economics” (Thirwall, A.P 1978), “The Birth, Life and Death of Development Economics” (Seers, Dudley 1979), “The Rise and Decline of Development Economics” (Hirschmann, Albert O 1981), “The Poverty of Development Economics (Lal, Deepak 1983).

Similar assaults were visited on other areas of development. Here too the titles of books and articles suggest a similar angst and sense of decline: *The Rise and Fall of Development Theories Beyond the Impasse: New Directions in Development* (Schuurman 1993); *Development Betrayed: The End of Progress and a Coevolutionary Revisioning of the Future* (Noorgard 1994); *The Post-Development Reader* (Rahnema and Bawtree 1997); *After the Third World? History, Destiny and the Fate of Third Worldism* (Berger 2004); *Spectres of the Third World: Global Modernity and the End of the Three Worlds.* (Dirlik 2004).

Among political scientists, the “new political economy” informing the “new policy agenda” was much less sanguine about the political actors, seeing them as largely self-serving rent-seekers. This challenged the whole notion of a benevolent “developmental state” that selflessly oversaw the progress of the nation. “Modernization theories” also re-emerged, but now in a more polemic tone, especially with respect to Africa. The characterisation of Africa social structure and political culture as too mired in clientelistic and particularistic relations suggested that development was a long way from coming to Africa.. Everything that was anti-developmental was simply evidence of how Africa works.

Aside from the attribution of the causes of the crises of the 1970s and 1980s to policy failures, and the ideological ascendance of neoliberalism in leading OECD countries and financial institutions, the demise of development economics had a lot to do with a widely accepted interpretation of the development experience of the post-war period. Up until 1997, the spectacular economic performance of the East Asian countries stood out sharply against the poor performance of most countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and the transition economies. As with all successes, the East Asian experience provoked many claims of paternity. The “counter-revolution” of neoclassical economics claimed that the irrefutable success was evidence of the wisdom of relying on market forces. In contrast, the “lost decades” of much of Africa and Latin America were blamed on “development planning”, which distorted prices and led to slower growth. quite incongruously the experiences of the quintessential developmental states were evoked as evidence against development economics and developmentalism *tout court*.

The success of East Asia was further used to lend support to two propositions (i) the advantage of export orientation over import substitution policies, and (ii) the importance of “getting prices right” by relying on markets. From these two propositions, it was concluded rather incongruously that the way forward was via a reduced role for the state and greater market liberalization. Such an interpretation put paid to the whole notion of developmental states and the whole idea of “catching up” as something involving a purposeful and strategic deployment of societal resources and energies. Developmental states and the interventionism they practiced were anathema to the dominant ideologies associated with the political shifts that brought neoliberal parties to power in the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom in the 1980s.

As a consequence, the beleaguered discipline of development economics was hounded out of economics departments, development finance institutions and the academic literature. The “pioneers” of development economics were forced into a defensive posture, fending off accusations that they had provided the intellectual basis for *dirigisme*, which had failed, and had downplayed the role of the market. In the other disciplines, development studies was relegated (at best) to comparative or area studies, or specialized institutes of development much like institutes of tropical medicine.

Ideological shifts

The triumph of neoliberalism in the advanced capitalist countries, the fall of “actually existing socialisms” and the exhaustion of the nationalist movements led to subtle and not-so-subtle shifts in ideologies

In the wake of the collapse of the social pacts forged in the early years of independence, the 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of new movements that were deeply sceptical about such sweeping projects as “nation-building” and “development”, which had been used to justify gross violation of human rights and growing inequality. In addition, the effects of the highly mediatized human disasters of the 1970s and 1980s attracted more and more aid money and attention. Not surprisingly, many new international solidarity movements or transnational civil society networks and their local counterparts were more inclined to support “grassroots” activities. They were engaged in projects or micro-level activities to empower social groups or directly address problems of poverty at that level. With their attention thus fixed on the livelihood strategies of individual households or communities, they did not consider the larger developmental context of their activities. In many ways, these “microsocietal logics” lowered our collective ambitions, shifting the aim towards reducing the vulnerability of the poor to the vagaries of nature and markets, and to the stabilization of their incomes.

One other ideological shift—more audible in academic circles than in the general political arena—was linked to the critique of “modernism”. Theories of post-modernism, post-colonialism and post-developmentalism challenged the three core pillars of development studies, namely, the assumption that there was such a thing as the “Third World” or “developing world”, the unconditional faith in progress, and the validity of the nation-state as both the engine of growth and development and the basic unit of analysis. These new approaches, which celebrated diversity, attacked development for its insensitivity to social, cultural and local concerns.

To this school of thought, development—along with “modernization”, for example— was simply “metanarrative” which were essentially an idealization of the notion of “progress”. “Development” was reduced to “discourse” that conferred directionality to processes that were complex, unpredictable and chaotic. It was accused of being excessively normative and anachronistic, an authoritarian ruse used by the elite to assume ascendancy. This view never really caught on in wider African intellectual circles. There are many reasons for this, not the least being an uncanny synchrony between the market offensive against strategic thinking about the future and the celebration of the present by this new assault on development.

A more recent argument against developmental thinking was the discourse on globalization, which tended to suggest that the only viable strategy consisted in opening up to global markets. The arguments were that both the erosion of the state’s fiscal capacity and capital mobility made the “developmental state” and the corpus of thinking underpinning its emergence *passé*. While the past autarkic and interventionist policies may have been a justified response to the protectionist policies of the North and the structural problems of trade, economic liberalization and improvements in communication and transport undermined those arguments. The Spartan, or rather Taliban, certainty of the ascendant neoliberalism as to what was required for economic growth left no room for specialized knowledge of problems of development. Mrs. Thatcher’s strident “There is no alternative” was echoed in international financial organizations with a standardized set of policies applicable to all economies.

The inherent problem of developmentalism

But these factors were not sufficient to account for the demise of development. There were certain features in the development experience that made it so easy to attack and marginalize. Even though, in light of the wretched experience with adjustment, the pre-adjustment period now looks like some kind of “Golden Age” both in terms of economic growth and some important social indicators, it was fraught with problems that made it vulnerable to external assault.

The first of these was the celebrated structural dependency of most economies described by such writers as Samir Amin, Justinian Rweyemamu and Bade Onimode, to name only a few. The economic crisis of the 1970s, whose proximate causes were the “oil crisis” and the dramatic rise of interest rates in the United States, threw many development efforts off course. To deal with the crisis many countries sought support from the Bretton Woods institutions. This has only reinforced this dependence. Paradoxically the “death of Dependence” was pronounced precisely when developing economies were being subjected to greater economic domination than ever in the post-colonial period.

Growing authoritarian rule

The second problem was the authoritarian turn taken by many of the quintessential developmental states. Authoritarian ideologies insinuated themselves into the very marrow of development studies and this explains why, for a long time, issues of democracy were marginal except perhaps as an end state of the process of modernization.

For many years, the literature on development and democracy has been profoundly influenced by Seymour Lipset’s seminal work and his observation that ‘the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy’ (Lipset 1981). This position was supported by a slew of historical and empirical studies establishing either that most liberal democracies were in fact developed countries, or that they had become democracies only after crossing a certain development threshold. Another literature went further and suggested that democracy would be inimical to economic development because there was a negative relationship between measures of democracy and economic growth. Or as one leading development economics textbook categorically stated, “political economy of development...poses a cruel choice between rapid (self-sustained) expansion and democratic processes” (Bhagwati 1966: 204). Taming the “revolution of rising expectations” required, among other things, restraining the democratic impulses or simply installing regimes that would be “strong” enough to ride roughshod over the myopic desires of the citizenry for instant gratification.

Outside the Latin American literature which problematized the “developmental states” by stressing their “bureaucratic authoritarian” features and the socially exclusive nature of their policies, the “developmental state” literature rarely talked about problems of democratization and human rights. Much of the literature on Asian developmental states tended to consider their authoritarian character as simply one aspect of “the autonomy of the state”, which was somehow made bearable by its

“embeddedness” and its spectacular success in development. The African literature focused on how to make authoritarian regimes stronger and more developmental. Indeed, the high economic growth rates achieved by authoritarian regimes were used to support the view that suspension of human rights was the price one had to pay in the process of development.

Development, so the argument went, entails traversing a vale of tears of inequality, forced savings and discipline which would be best guided by strong governments. Such strength was often interpreted to mean authoritarian rule. The “developmentalist” state thus emerged as the architect of the future through its plans, as arbitrator of social conflicts, protector of the nation-state and, generally, as a blessing on society. But even in this context of “modernization”, democratization never completely disappeared from view. Modernization predicted that the social change (education, urbanization, unionization, professionalization, etc.) that follows industrialization would produce a chain reaction that would lead, in turn, to more open, participatory politics. But one had to wait for this linear process to unfold. The major premise was that development required a long-term vision and sacrifices that would be thwarted by the myopic promises made by politicians in a democracy. It was necessary to have strong governments that would steer the development process unencumbered by the clamour of democratic politics and its tendency to sway to the short-term whims of voters.

The top-down approach of authoritarianism and the disconnect between states and citizens eventually became problematic for many people. In my view, it is the undemocratic character of the policy-making process explains some of the strident criticism of post-independence developmentalism. Such authoritarianism might have been tolerable where economies were growing, as happened in the East Asian context. Indeed, many authoritarian regimes based their claims of legitimacy on good economic performance. The “oil crisis” of the late 1970s discredited both the failed model and inflexibility of authoritarian rule associated with it. Many new democracies quickly embraced neoliberal economic policies on grounds that there was a natural ideological affinity between neoliberalism and democracy, Chile’s experience notwithstanding.

Growing inequality

Another case against developmentalism was the failure to adequately address the processes of social exclusion and the growing inequality induced by the development strategies of the time. In many countries, including those that had done reasonably well on the economic growth front, large sections of the population remained marginalized as the gains from economic growth were captured by a few. These inequalities were sanctioned by the dominant hypothesis of economic development and growth which suggested that things would get worse before they got better, formalized in the so-called

“Kuznet’s Hypothesis”. In addition it was argued that unequal income distribution was good for growth as it left the surplus in the hands of those most likely to invest, given their relatively lower propensity to consume than the poor. Here too it was argued that growing inequality was an inevitable phase in the process of development, an aspect of the “vale of tears” that poor countries would have to traverse on their way to modernity.

The new phase

The failure of the “Washington consensus” that underpinned the structural adjustment programmes of the Bretton Woods institutions, the political mobilization for democratization, and the political salience of poverty and inequality clearly point to the need to bring development back in. Growth rates in the era of liberalization were almost everywhere lower than in the “developmentalist era”. In addition, the persistence of poverty even in countries that were hailed as “good performers” by the BWIs clearly suggested that the framework was not enough to address issues of development, structural change and poverty. The Washington consensus had become a subject of derision even its own temples. There were even intimations that policies didn’t matter after all. It was institutions (Rodrik, Subramanian, and Trebbi 2004) or “good governance” or even geography (Sachs 2003) that ruled. Calls from within the BWIs themselves for “going beyond the Washington consensus”, “second generation reforms”, and “reinvigorating the state’s capability” all point to the need to return to the kind of “development” that has been argued for by a wide range of scholars and institutions. Indeed, the ingredients of the World Bank’s “comprehensive development frameworks” are reminiscent of the “development planning” associated with development economics (and this has been used by some to claim that the Bank is going socialist).

There is a growing interest in equity issues evidenced by the resurgence of various populist and social democratic movements in Latin America and by the publication of four international reports, including one by the World Bank (UNDP 2006; United Nations 2006; UNRISD 2005; World Bank 2006). This reawakened interest in equity and poverty brings to the forefront the “social question” that has preoccupied thinkers about social transformation ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution. However, despite all these calls for a rethink, there is currently no programmatic intellectual effort in that direction. Instead what we see is a senseless proliferation of unrelated objectives to be pursued within a not-so-obvious strategic framework. The mission creep that led the World Bank to so stretch its mandate as to cover democratization, social capital, religion, etc. has not made things easier. Nor has the multiplicity of actors and stakeholders helped much. And for all the admission that the model had failed, heavily indebted countries are still subjected to its deflationary conditionalities if they

are to access debt relief while they take on this broad and unwieldy agenda, with the bizarre result that foreign exchanged acquired through debt relief is lying idle in central banks!

In any case, with respect to Africa at least, “development” is being watered down to poverty reduction, and social policy’s narrow concern is social protection without the transformative attributes that have been so central to successful development. And so although poverty is now discussed in the context of governance, economic growth, stabilization and security, there appears to be no coherent and consistent framework that ties these together in a developmental way. Yet there are a number of ways to do this. Here, I can briefly discuss only some of them.

First, contemporary poverty reduction policies draw little from the ideas, theories or experiences that informed recent successful cases of poverty eradication, such as those in “late industrializers” like the Nordic countries and the more recent cases of the East Asian “developmental states”. If current poverty reduction approaches have any historical antecedents at all, they resemble features of the Poor Laws under the Anglo-Saxon model—not a remarkably successful way of rapidly combating poverty.

Second, current approaches often ignore the causes of poverty, and consequently do not follow through the causal sequence. They are focused on measuring things that people lack, to the detriment of understanding why they lack them. Consequently, not much is said about such aspects as mutually self-reinforcing vertical and horizontal inequalities, and the impact of the orthodox macroeconomic policies on these, or the inequality effects of market forces.

Third, while they recognize the importance of the relationship between economic and social policy, they are usually silent about the macroeconomic policy and growth strategy to be pursued in tandem with the “poverty alleviation” social policy. Indeed even the recent World Development Report, *Equity and Development* (World Bank, 2006), which recognizes that “equity” is an important component of poverty eradication, does not examine, in any depth, the implications of this analysis for macroeconomic policies.

This leads to a fourth reason for concern, namely that “participation”, which is so central to current poverty reduction strategies, is focused on process rather than substance. The PRSP process, for example, basically builds on empowerment at the micro level and disempowerment or exclusion at the macro level. This it does through various practices, such as limiting the agenda, selectively leaving out social actors (such as unions) likely to make claims that have significant macro-level effects, and through the right of veto that is built into these processes. And yet, although poverty is often lived at

the micro level, its reproduction, intensification or amelioration depends crucially on macro-level policies that, through omission or commission, are intended to address macro-level problems.

Finally, the narrow focus on “poverty” may actually be misleading, and may be a reflection of the demise of developmental thinking and the residual role assigned to social policy, which is seen as merely an instrument for correcting some of the negative outcomes of macroeconomic policies. One well-known fact is that policies that have the greatest impact on poverty are not necessarily the most narrowly pro-poor, targeted ones. Indeed, in many cases the focus on “pro-poor” policies has diverted attention from the most broad-based and sustainable policies against poverty. Economic growth, structural transformation, investment in human capital and social inclusion have been the key ingredients of successful poverty alleviation programmes.

Bridging the literature

This brings me back to the three fundamental questions on the development agenda, beyond the vexatious and unresolved “national question” that has preoccupied the minds of social scientists for much of the last half century and that has been brought into sharper focus by the process of globalization – the civil, social and economic rights questions. A linear reading of Western history suggests a sequential line-up of these questions, as was raised by T.H. Marshall’s sequencing of civil, political and social rights in the industrial countries (Marshall 1950). And much of “modernization” was premised on such sequencing. In our case, we will have to proceed simultaneously on all fronts. This is both the advantage and burden of being “latecomers”.

This suggests that research on development should be structured in a manner that would address these issues (whose interconnections are often merely given perfunctory recognition). We need to bring together theories and techniques from all relevant disciplines and study areas to produce social science approaches appropriately structured for the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, the problems of democratic transitions and those of social protection and social inclusion. Obviously such an endeavour demands a multidisciplinary approach—but even more, it demands a historically grounded political economy approach.

There is still a striking disjuncture among various areas of concern, and fields of research, all of which claim to address issues of human equality and agency. Those who study developmental states are only marginally concerned with issues of democratization. There is thus a vast literature on “developmental states” that says very little about democratization, except perhaps to point out to the oddity of “democratic developmental states”. indeed, for some such a proposition was almost an

oxymoron (Leftwich 1996a;b) and only now is the developmentalist literature come coming to terms with “democratic developmentalism”. (Mkandawire 1995;Sklar 1996;White 1998).

Researchers working on democratization in the developing countries have often operated from the political development perspective that in turn has, until quite recently, been anchored to the beleaguered field of “area studies”. Those coming from “development anthropology” have generally been preoccupied with questions of micro-level “participation” and have generally eschewed the macro-level issues of democratization and thus paid little attention to the actors, actions and power relations involved in the developmental projects. There are now many political scientists in Africa working on the politics of development from the prism of “good governance” which is as good a research stopper as any.

This “good governance” approach to democratization, tethered as it is to a neoliberal agenda, has little to say about “development states. It definitely does not integrate distributive issues at the core of its concerns. Now if the remit of democratic governance is a broad one, including equity and growth, then we have to address the question of whether in such a context the reduction of the state to Smithian “night watchman” makes political sense. Democracy contests the hollowing out of the state. Both the social demands for improved welfare and the material exigencies of such demands need something more than what the regulatory state can provide, and therefore require the state to play a more developmental role.

In addition, on the assumption that economic crisis was the result of excessive demands on the state by organized interest groups, much of the theorizing about politics tended to lean towards the establishment of institutional arrangements that would circumscribe the reach of democratic institutions. In the more extreme versions of this account, the rise of neoliberal authoritarian regimes was attributed to the “non-governability of civil society and social movements”, the implication being that social movements should moderate their demands so as not to overload the political system. Not surprisingly, the new democracies have been at great pains to establish that they too can “impose” discipline and can implement orthodox policies just as well, if not better. What has not been adequately considered is whether such circumscription of democratic governance is indeed good for democracy itself. Policy-making that hollows democratic policies can undermine democracy itself.

Furthermore, the literature on democratic transitions and consolidation, while acknowledging the importance of material conditions, says very little about what democratic practices and capabilities can be brought to bear on development. We are only now beginning to examine how the intrinsic properties of democracy can facilitate development. One reason why the current concern with

democratization fails to incorporate concerns for social justice and welfare is the view that democracy should be confined to formal institutional and procedural aspects of justice and the supporting view that democracy and social justice are separate concepts, with democracy confined solely to political equality. This is in sharp contrast to the view that distribution of economic resources is a defining characteristic of democratic rule and that equity enhances the quality of democracy. Although in many cases social policy is reduced to cushioning the effects of adjustment, it generally has a broad explicit or implicit mandate which has serious implications for the quality of democracy. Indeed, the question raised with respect to the “quality” of democracy has had to do not only with its institutional reach, and but also with the substantive outcomes of the politics it engenders. The literature on “quality of democracy” and the gender critique of democracy provide a useful framework for making the links between democratization and social policy.

The literature of “developmental states” is replete with arguments that welfare initiatives have played an important role in consolidating the power of authoritarian regimes. In contrast, there is very little work on how social policies might play similar roles in democratic transitions and consolidation, and how this can be done without undermining the developmental efforts of new democracies. Equality was posited as simply one of the enabling “initial conditions” often imposed by some exogenous force. One should recall the strongly held view that growing inequality might be inevitable, if not necessary, in the process of development. Not surprisingly, in the “developmental state” literature, equality was posited as simply one of the enabling “initial conditions” often imposed by some exogenous force. There was much less interest in the study of growing inequality in developmental states over time, or how chosen development paths could ensure the virtuous cycles of increasing equality and growth.

One consequence of this approach to equality is that the literature on development does not connect with that of welfare regimes spawned by the seminal work of Esping-Anderson (Esping-Andersen 1990). I am personally persuaded that this literature has insights that are highly relevant to our condition. There have been at least four objections to drawing on this literature in the context of development. The first one is an essentially linear view of history which suggests that the welfare states can only occur at much higher levels of development than most present less developed countries find themselves in. This is very much reminiscent of the arguments about democracy and development. Just as in the one extreme it was argued “people can’t eat democracy”, the argument on welfare policies is that “one can’t distribute nothing”. Much of this literature has remained outside development studies because of the often implicit view that the current condition of the developed countries provides little that is of use to developing countries. “Welfare regimes” are simply viewed as the culmination of the

development of capitalist economies—a product of the “logic of industrialism” or modernization. The functionalist version of this argument was that industrialization and its attendant social processes (urbanization, destruction of traditional protective systems, wage labour, etc.) coupled with demographic shifts would necessitate a number of social measures that would eventually accumulate into full-fledged welfare states as economies grew.

Such a static view of welfare states has led to the mistaken view that the theoretical insights of the welfare regime literature are of little relevance to developing countries. If, however, we understand that the institutionalization of the welfare state was a long-term historical process, we immediately see the relevance of that literature to the developmental arena. In this historical view, social policy is not a passive logical consequence of modernization and industrialization but rather plays a transformative and constitutive role in the process of development, shaping both the course and pace of development. More significantly, this also explains the fact that many “late industrializers” have introduced social policies at much earlier stages than did the pioneer industrializers. The late industrializers did this both to address some of the problems that emerged with the structural transformations entailed by industrialization, the so-called “social question” and to harness the transformative potential of social policies (Mkandawire, Thandika 2005; Pierson, Christopher 2004; Vartiainen, Juhana 2004).

The point is not that the current developed countries are the future of the developing countries, as Marx and Rowstow would suggest, but that there are a lot of common features or “problems” that these societies must address if only because they are capitalist economies and live in the same time and space, albeit with different levels of per capita incomes. A number of problems that seemed exclusively developmental now impinge on the developed countries as well. Thus globalization and the quest for competitiveness have aroused interest in the “productivist” features of the “productivist social development regime”. The call for a “social investment welfare state” is a case in point. In the developing countries there is growing interest in “developmental welfare states”, and hitherto authoritarian developmental states have had to rethink their welfare regimes in the light of democratization processes that are tending to push these states towards the “European” model.

Concluding remarks

Development

In the past it was widely assumed and accepted that the means for development would be different from the ends of development, that countries would have to traverse the vale of tears of authoritarian rule, inequality and social exclusion. In such a view both democracy and equity constituted

end states of the development process and could not be part of the process itself. But it seems to me that the *real* challenge of development policy is how to promote the *ends* of democracy, development and social inclusion with the *means* of democracy, equity and social inclusion.

The concepts of human development and human rights share an underlying universalistic vision of the human being as an agent. The concern for both human development and democracy is premised on the notion of agency, which, in turn, builds on the capabilities of agents – both as individuals and collectives - and suggests the importance of social policy and social mobilization for enhancing those capabilities. The aspect of agency and intention as central to development has raised the question, “Who is developing whom?” Who is entrusted with the task of development by whom, and with what degree of autonomy and accountability? What patterns of development strengthen democratic rule and what institution of democratic governance enable democratic politics to grasp fundamental issues of developmental policy?

An immediate implication is the need for a truly interdisciplinary agenda based not on a watering down of the specialized knowledge of each discipline, but a creative exploitation of the intellectual synergies to address the deep problems of our continent and our respective countries.

The current state of intellectual disarray and with the “Market Taliban” on the run, or at least in retreat, offers us a rare opportunity to take the lead in thinking the continent out of its current predicament and in pushing ahead the agenda of liberation that has inspired some of our best people. I hope this conference will contribute to the challenging intellectual endeavour.

I thank you for your attention.

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