

POL201Y1: Politics of Development

Lecture 8:

Critical development theory

Post-development

Review

Recap

- Poverty
- Development
- Explanations of development (and lack thereof):
 - Modernization
 - Neoliberalism
 - Geography
 - History
 - Dependency / underdevelopment and world-systems
 - Institutionalism
- All these theories / explanations are predicated on the assumption of the validity of the concept and practice of development

Critical (development) theory

- Critical theory:
 - Frankfurt School
 - Critique of modernity and dominant ideologies, intended to “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them”
 - Horkheimer, Max. 1982. *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: Continuum.
- Critical development theory:
 - Munck: “Those approaches which explain what is wrong with the current social order, identif[y] the agents for social change and provide practical goals for social transformation”
 - Munck, Ronaldo. 2010. “Critical Development Theory: Results and Prospects.” *Migración Y Desarrollo* 14: 33–53.

Critical development theory: components (according to Schuurman)

- Reflexivity: multiple possible forms of society
- Transdisciplinarity
- Subversiveness: challenges to accepted ideas, ideologies, policies, etc.
- “Knowledge is power”
- Decentring: perspectives not only from the epicentre but also from the so-called margins.
- Effort to uncover historic processes that link the various elements of a particular social reality without falling into the trap of reductionism
- Skepticism towards empiricism, i.e. the distinction between facts and values
 - Schuurman, Frans J. 2009. “Critical Development Theory: Moving out of the Twilight Zone.” *Third World Quarterly* 30 (5): 831–48.

Critical development theory: perspectives

- Dependency / underdevelopment
- Environmentalism
- Feminism
- Cultural turn → postmodernism

Postmodernism

- Social reality as the product of social, historical, and political discourse
- Context-dependent and socially constructed nature of knowledge and truth

Postmodernism in development theory

- Said: “All the energies poured into critical theory [...] have avoided the major, I would say determining, political horizon of modern Western culture, namely imperialism.”
 - Said, Edward. 1995. “Secular interpretations: the geographical element, and the methodology of imperialism.” In G. Prakash (ed.). *After Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 21-39.
- Postcolonialism
- Post-development

Postcolonialism

- Focus on cultural legacy of colonialism / imperialism
- Said:
 - “My contention is that without examining *Orientalism as a discourse* one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.
Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism.
[...]
The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony.”
 - Said, Edward. 2003 (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

Post-development

- Key proponents: Arturo Escobar, James Ferguson, Majid Rahnema, Gilbert Rist, Wolfgang Sachs
- No integrated 'post-development theory'
- Development as “a historical construct that provides a space in which poor countries are known, specified, and intervened upon” or a paradigm through which the 'underdevelopment' of the 'Third World' or 'global South' is discursively constructed and the dominance of the 'global North' is maintained
 - Escobar, Arturo. 1995. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 45.
- Repudiation of development as a Eurocentric discourse and an imperial project

Development according to Rahnema

- “Discovery of poverty” after World War II
- Transformation of the poor into the assisted
- Globalization of poverty and construction of two-thirds of the world as poor
 - Rahnema, Majid. 1991. *Global Poverty: A Pauperizing Myth*. Montreal: Intercultural Institute of Montreal.

Development according to Escobar

- Problematization of poverty after World War II (re. Rahnema) →
- Invention of development
- Social life as a technical problem →
- “Creation of an institutional field from which discourses are produced, recorded, stabilized, modified, and put into circulation”
- Inhabitants of the global South as ‘docile bodies’ (Foucault) subjected “to an infinite variety of interventions, to more encompassing forms of power and systems of control”

Development according to Ferguson

- Institutions of development as ‘anti-politics machine’ that depoliticizes “everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power”
 - Ferguson, James . 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development”, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. xiv-xv.

Contributions of post-development

- Recognition of unequal relations of power
- The influence of entrenched social and political interests in development practice
- Insights into the role of ideas

Problems with post-development

- North-South binary:
 - Post-development displays a “reverse Orientalism which turns all people from non-western cultures into a generalized ‘subaltern’ that is then used to flog an equally generalized ‘West’”
 - Kiely, Ray. 1999. “The Last Refuge of the Noble Savage? A Critical Assessment of Post-Development Theory.” *The European Journal of Development Research* 11 (June): 47.
 - Global/evil vs. local/noble →
- Romanticization of tradition
- Structuralism: development discourse as the work of nebulous and ill-defined forces
- Linear (teleological?) temporality: the very term ‘post-development’ suggests an implicit acceptance of the linearity of time as an organizing principle

Problems with post-development

- Tendentiousness and ideological fervour:
 - Development requires the acceptance of “massive impoverishment, of selling Third World resources to the most convenient bidder, of degrading [the Third World’s] physical and human ecologies, of killing and torturing, of condemning ... indigenous populations to near extinction”
 - Escobar 1995: 52.
- Vagueness of ‘alternatives to modernity’
- Conflation of development with modernization
 - Partly based on:
 - Kiely, Ray. 1999. “The Last Refuge of the Noble Savage? A Critical Assessment of Post-Development Theory.” *The European Journal of Development Research* 11 (June): 30–55.
 - Lehmann, David. 1997. “An Opportunity Lost: Escobar’s Deconstruction of Development.” *The Journal of Development Studies* 33 (4): 568–78.

Term test

- 20% of the course grade
- 13 June
- Based on sections 1 (key concepts) and 2 (theories/explanations) of the course
- Essay:
 - 60%
 - Answer one of three essay questions
- Multiple-choice questions:
 - 40%
 - 20 questions

Review

- Poverty:
 - Definition
 - Approaches
 - Poverty vs. illbeing
 - Prevalence of poverty
 - Measurement: poverty headcount ratio, poverty gap, MDI
 - Trends
- Inequality:
 - Theories
 - Prevalence
 - Trends

Review

- Development:
 - Definitions
 - Aspects
 - Dimensions: immanent process vs. intentional practice
 - Development industry (re. its critique by post-development scholars)

Review

- Explaining development:
 - Modernization theory:
 - The concept of modernization
 - Modernization process
 - Impact
 - Neoliberalism:
 - Definition
 - Neoliberalism vs. neoclassical economics
 - Purpose
 - Impact

Review

- Explaining development:
 - Geography and endowments:
 - Agricultural / animal production potential
 - Demographics
 - Disease
 - Access to trade / transport barriers
 - Geography and institutions
 - History:
 - Importance of history
 - Colonialism and imperialism
 - Causes and impacts of colonialism / imperialism

Review

- Explaining development:
 - Dependency / underdevelopment and world-systems theory:
 - Definitions
 - Structure of the international system
 - Approaches
 - Impact
 - Institutions and institutionalism:
 - Definitions
 - Types
 - Functions
 - Institutionalization and institutional emergence
 - Efficiency?

Review

- Reforming development: critical development theory
- Rejecting development: post-development

Evaluating the theories / explanations of development

	Modernization	Neoliberalism	Geographic determinism	Dependency	Institutionalism	Critical development	Post-development	Capabilities
Universalistic	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Normative	Yes	Yes	No (usually)	Yes	No (caveat)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Structural / deterministic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (usually)	Yes	Yes (debatable)	No
Binary-based	Yes	No (caveat)	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Nation-state-centric	Yes	Complicated	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Economy-centric	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Dynamic / historical	No	No	No	Ish	Depends	Depends	Unclear	No
Teleological	Yes	Yes	Kind of	Ish	No	No	Arguably	No
Recognition of power	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tool of power	Yes	Yes	No	No	No (debatable)	No	No	No
Eurocentric	Yes	Yes	No (debatable)	Arguably	No (debatable)	No (debatable)	No (debatable)	No (debatable)
Influential (outside academia)	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Empirical	No	No	Yes (within academia)	No	Yes	No	No	No

Practice questions

- Multiple choice:
 - The concept of development is:
 - Elusive
 - Complex
 - Unambiguous
 - Contested
 - According to Amartya Sen, among the sources of unfreedom are:
 - Poverty
 - Economic opportunities
 - Social deprivation
 - Intolerance

Practice questions

- Multiple choice:
 - According to Francis Fukuyama, developed countries have the following institutions:
 - Strong rule of law
 - Competent state
 - Vibrant civic life
 - Democratic accountability
 - According to the Kuznets hypothesis, over time inequality trend approximates the shape of:
 - U-shaped curve
 - Inverted U-shaped curve
 - Short-run average variable cost curve
 - Short-run average total cost curve

Practice questions

- Multiple choice:
 - According to W.W. Rostow, a traditional society is:
 - Agricultural
 - Hierarchical
 - Centralized
 - Landowner-dominated
 - Geographic conditions that affect development through institutions include:
 - Agricultural productivity
 - Disease environment
 - Distance from transport corridors
 - Race

Practice questions

- Multiple choice:
 - By 1550, European colonial powers had colonized:
 - Meso-America
 - Cuba
 - India
 - Philippines
 - The claim that over the long term, the price of primary commodities declines relative to the price of manufactured products was articulated by:
 - Lerner
 - Baran
 - Prebisch
 - Frank

Practice questions

- Essay:
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of modernization theory and neoliberalism?
 - In what ways do history and geography affect development?
 - Compare and contrast modernization and dependency / underdevelopment theories.