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EDITORIAL

Development and social identities

5 With the coming of Indian independence in 1947 (perhaps the epochal moment of
post-colonialism) the advent of the United Nations as the consolidation of the Allies
10 who had won the Second World War, and the desire of the US government to see new
markets opened up through decolonization, development discourse grew in size and
fervor. Starting in 1945, two historic promises were made by established and
emergent governments: to secure the political sovereignty of citizens and their
15 economic welfare. At the end of the Second World War, universal sovereignty
required concerted international action to convince the extant colonial powers
(principally Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Portugal) that the
peoples whom they had enslaved should be given the right of self-determination, with
nationalism a powerful ideology of political mobilization as a supposed precursor to
20 liberation. When this promise was made good, the resulting postcolonial govern-
ments undertook to deliver on the economy. Economic welfare seemed locally
deliverable, via state-based management of supply and demand and the creation of
industries that would substitute imports with domestically produced items. Most
followed capitalism in one country, known as import-substitution industrialization,
25 frequently via state enterprises or on the coat tails of multinational corporations that
established local presences. But postcolonial states suffered underdevelopment
because of their dependent relations with the core, and were unable to grow
economically. Public-private partnerships intervened around the world to destabilize
threats to US economic dominance, via clandestine and overt funding from agencies
30 such as the perversely named National Endowment for Democracy and ‘Economic
Hit Men,’ who tied developing countries to improbable infrastructural investments
and debt regimes.

From the 1950s, the US designated modernity as a complex imbrication of
35 industrial, economic, social, cultural and political development, towards which all
peoples of the world were progressively headed. The founders and husbands of this
discourse were political scientists and economists, mostly associated with US
universities, research institutes, foundations, corporations, and international organi-
zations. Among the premises of this modernity were nationalist fellow feeling and
individual/state sovereignty as habits of thought. The daily prayer called for a
40 ‘modern individual’ who would not fall for the temptations of Marxism-Leninism or
Maoism. Development necessitated displacement of ‘the particularistic norms’ of
tradition by ‘more universalistic’ blends of the modern to help create ‘achievement-
oriented’ societies (Pye, 1965, p. 19).

This narcissism derived from the assumption that the US allowed individual
45 freedom, economic growth, and political expression in an ideal form of nation-
building. This narcissism built on a model of the person to construct a model of
the country, drawing on the two fundamentalist wings of the psy-function:
cognition (supposedly governed by nature) and behavior (presumptively governed

by environment). These concepts derived from Kant's distinctions between the bodily and behavioral sides of experience: the moral and the cognitive separated brain and body even as it linked them, via claims to ethical conduct and national allegiance and the need to generate adherence through custom and critical thought as well as state violence (Kant, 1987; 1991; Miller, 2008).

The most compelling reactions to the psy-function model of development have come from the Global South, for instance through the use of religion in South Asia as a site of resistance to both colonialism and neoliberalism (Chatterjee, 1993). In the words of the great liberation psychologist of Central America, Ignacio Martín-Baró (later murdered by Yanqui-backed assassins): 'there does not first exist a person, who then goes on to become socialized.' Rather, the 'individual becomes an individual, a human person, by virtue of becoming socialized' (1996, p. 69). The raw stuff of human beings, then, is not individuals: people *become* individuals through the discourses and institutions of culture, in an oscillation between the law, economy, and politics, with the psy-function operating as a switching-point between people's proclivities and aptitudes (Foucault, 2006, pp. 58, 190). But this insight has not ruled the day. Instead, rites of passage from traditional societies have been displaced, supplemented, or made purely symbolic in industrial and post-industrial societies by accounts of personhood that dominate social-scientific accounts of identity and continue to inform orthodox development theory. This journal seeks to counter such tendencies.

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