

Studying Development and Explaining Policies

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*ABSTRACT Development is an ideological project. It originated in the need to address the negative consequences of capitalism in metropolitan countries and was integral to the project of imperialism, whose legacy it bears. Development policies and development studies both confound the intention to develop with the process of development. Theorists of development and of state-directed development, and most of their critics, share dualist assumptions. They have been concerned to explain how to modernize backward and rural economies and to transfer resources to create modern industrial economies. They have drawn on and influenced communist, state-led and market-oriented development strategies.*

**1. Introduction**

This paper offers a sociology of development: it takes the idea and practices of development as its subject. It therefore starts with the puzzle of development. What is it that we are studying when we study development? What constitutes a problem as a "development problem"? What makes a policy a "development policy"? Once the question is asked, the answer is obvious: the idea of "development". Development, then, is fundamentally an ideological project.

Different theories of development, and their critiques, share common, dualist assumptions. They are manifested in the numerous practices of development. This brings us to a different puzzle: the mysteries of policies, and the persistent failures of development policies and development projects, which brings into question the relationships between the making of policies, their implementation and their outcomes.

**2. The Idea of Development**

Development, like the state, is a "social fact". It is "general over the whole of a given society, ... independent of its individual manifestations" and "is capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint" (Durkheim, 1982, p. 59). However, as the

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Michael Cowen, a fine scholar, a sharp critic and a good friend. It borrows from his work with Robert Shenton and takes up their ideas. It was originally the keynote lecture, which he chaired, to the 30th anniversary Conference of the Finnish Institute of Development Studies on 4 February 2000. Michael died suddenly and tragically in Helsinki 2 days later. A research grant from the Leverhulme Trust allowed me time to prepare this paper. It has been presented at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford; at Rand Afrikaans and Stellenbosch Universities; and in a revised version as the keynote address to a workshop on Africa in an Age of Globalization at Columbia Teachers Conference on 12 April 2002. I am grateful to Jairus Banaji, Barbara Harriss-White, Scott MacWilliam, Joel Samoff, Tina West, and particularly to Rosa Williams and Roy Williams for advice and critical comments.

late Philip Abrams observed in 1977 of the state (Abrams, 1988), development is not a thing, it is an idea. Our first task is to interrogate this idea and the theories that define it.

In the 1970s, it proved to be rather difficult to treat “development” itself as a problem. Its meaning was so self-evident that it could not be brought into question. It defined both its own practice and the norms for evaluating that practice. “Development” was simply “that which we are all in favour of” (Williams, 1978, p. 925). Even the most incisive critic of the sociology of development, Andre Gunda Frank, turned the concept inside out. Capitalism in Latin America, and by extension elsewhere, had produced not development but underdevelopment (Frank, 1967). “Development”, as a description of an historical process and as a normative goal, remained intact.

Certainly, one could hardly be against it. In 1974, Philip Corrigan, Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile and I submitted to the newly established *Review of African Political Economy* an article which argued against the idea of development and its practice. The referees told us that if we did not like one or other version of development, we should explain what our own concept of development was. To be opposed to the very idea of development was, literally, incredible.

In these post-modern times, things are different. We have all learned to problematize concepts. Development discourse has been deconstructed, most famously in Ferguson's critique of a Canadian-funded development project in highland Lesotho (Ferguson, 1990). Or has it?

## 2.1 *Naming Development*

Names have consequences. They define and legitimize the terms of public debates and carry their assumptions into the framing and implementation of policies. Renaming covers up the continuities of institutional forms and functions. Hence our need to be aware of “keywords”, to find out where they came from and to recognize the baggage they bring with them (Boonzaier & Sharp, 1988, esp. Sharp, 1988, pp. 11-12; cf. Williams, R., 1976).

Development was integral to the ideology and practice of imperialism. Joseph Chamberlain, as Colonial Secretary, called for the development of the “undeveloped estates of the tropics”, a task which was eventually addressed under the Labour Government's Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 (Chamberlain [1895] cited Cowen and Shenton, 1996, p. 269); Cowen & Shenton, 1991). The Department for International Development (DFID), previously the Overseas Development Administration and the Ministry for Overseas Development, is the lineal descendant of the Colonial Office. Missions are, perhaps, the progenitors of the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector, to whose activities they made, and continue to make, a significant practical contribution. As John Peel has shown, the evangelical message of “enlightenment” (Yoruba: *olaju*) opened the way to the “ideology of progress and development” general today among Yoruba of all faiths (Peel, 1978, 2000). Variations on themes of development united evangelists, imperialists, nationalists and the “development community” from the early 19th to the 21st Centuries.

Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton show that the *Doctrines of Development* did not originate in the tasks of ruling Empire. They were designed in 19th Century Europe to address the negative consequences of capitalism, to ensure *Order in Progress*, in the words of Brazil's national motto. Auguste Comte reconciled order with progress intellectually through "love" (Comte, 1875, Vol. 1, p. 257, cited in Cowen & Shenton, 1996, p. 34); "co-operation and community development" in the language of the next century, and vested responsibility for the task in the secular trustees of the new social order.

Cowen and Shenton reveal the essential ambiguity of the notion of "development" in which the process of development and its consequences, positive and negative, are confounded with the intent to bring about development, usually through the practices of the state. The confusion between them has its roots in Comte's *Positive Philosophy*. Comte combined two incompatible conceptions of positivism in ways that continue to inform policies and planning today. The first is the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the empirical study of society and history, and the representation of their findings in mathematical form. The second is to apply the knowledge of experts to devising a proper order of society and find ways of applying scientific knowledge to the promotion of human progress, or, as we might say, governance and development. (Comte, 1875-76; Cowen & Shenton, 1996, p. 29)

The state and its agents working to promote "development"-or those working through non-governmental organisations to promote "another development" (Hettne, 1990)-are, whether they like it or not, acting as the "trustees" of development (Cowen & Shenton, 1996). The combination of immanent process with a historical telos, under the direction (trusteeship?) of the party, was central to the politics of Leninism. The shared assumptions of the doctrines and practices of development have survived the collapse of the communist variant of the Comtean project.

The confusions inherent in the concept of development are replicated in development studies. Are we studying the processes of change to which we give the label "development"? Or are we asking how best we can bring about the goals of "development"? Both sorts of questions may be legitimate, but they are not the same.

## 2.2 *The Meaning of Development in the Old and the New South Africa*

Returning to South Africa in 1991, I found that development discourse had replaced Marxist analysis as the language of the intellectual left, not to mention of policy-makers, old and new. It provided a linguistic bridge across political divisions and out of international isolation. Non-governmental organizations initially popularized the discourse of "empowerment", "co-operation" and "participatory development". Academics and consultants took up the demand that they engage poor people in "participatory rural appraisal".

The apartheid regime had also adapted its language to the times. "Development" was revealingly substituted for the original "Native" in the titles of laws and of institutions such as the South African Development Trust. The retranslation of the Department of Native Affairs reveals changing discursive fashions. In 1958, it became the Bantu Administration Department, then in 1978 the Department of Plural Relations,

followed by the Department of Co-operation and Development from 1979 to 1985. It ended its days in 1992, mired in corruption, as the Department for Development Aid.

The identification of "development" with black people outlasted the late apartheid regime. The Wine Industry Trust (SAWIT), established in 1997 to promote the interests of the industry, is divided into the commercially-oriented Busco and the development-oriented Devco. Whereas Busco promotes exports, research, information and extension services, the task of facilitating entry into the industry of "new" (read black) farmers is a "development" rather than a "business" issue and thus falls under Devco (Vink *et al.*, 2003).

The African National Congress-Congress of South African Trade Unions-South African Communist Party alliance took -from the official name of the World Bank the title of its election manifesto, the Reconstruction and Development Programme, or RDP (African National Congress, 1994). The RDP was then transformed into a White Paper, which defined the agreed policy framework of the Government of National Unity (Republic of South Africa, 1994). It was institutionalized as a ministerial portfolio, responsible for allocating public funds to meet the needs of the "historically disadvantaged".

The RDP failed to spend the money it had claimed from the main line ministries, thus helping to reduce the fiscal surplus and losing funds which foreign aid donors had committed to RDP programmes. It was dissolved and gave way to an internationally more hegemonic discourse, embodied in the name of its orthodox fiscal programme, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (Department of Finance, 1996). Ironically, the inclusion of redistribution was a sign that the government had recognized the need to move away from the African National Congress's (ANC's) earlier commitments to giving priority to redistributing resources to the poor. The goals of "black empowerment" and compensating "historical disadvantage" in the access of individuals to skills, opportunities and positions remain, discursively reconciling the claims of growth and redistribution and displacing issues of class inequalities and class politics (Orkin, 2002). The terms "affirmative action" and "historically disadvantaged" sustain a non-racial vocabulary and distance the ANC from the rival political legacies of Black Consciousness and the Pan-Africanist Congress, while stealing their nationalist clothes. The ambiguities nicely suit the project of "national development".

### 2.3 Dualisms and the State

Dualisms are inherent in the concept of development once it is conceived as the realization of the intention to develop. Development is the means whereby traditional ways of doing things are modernized. Backward societies, or sectors or classes, are transformed into advanced ones. Backwardness is the mark of the countryside, at least until it is transformed by mechanical or biochemical technologies. Peasants are unable to develop, they must be developed.

Nowhere is the dualist vision of development more marked than in the *The ABC of Communism*, written soon after the Bolshevik revolution by Bukharin & Preobrazhenskii (1969), in which socialist industries would provide the instruments for economic and cultural transformation of the backward, peasant economy (cf. Corrigan

*et al.*, 1978). Soviet planners gave priority to the "heavy industrial" combination of hydroelectricity, steel mills and tractor plants over consumer-oriented "light" industry (Nove, 1992). Stalin liquidated both Bukharin and Preobrazhenskii, as well as peasantry as a class. He brought about the deaths of millions of peasants by deportation, forced labour and famine to secure control of the countryside and to build up Soviet industry. His agrarian policies held back rather than promoted Soviet industrial growth (Lewin, 1968; Nove, 1992; Davies, 1980).

Classic texts of wartime and post-war development economics were concerned to find other mechanisms to transfer resources from the agricultural to the industrial sectors. The major debates concerned the ways of doing so and thus the proper role, and limits, of state action in the process. Rosenstein-Rodan (1943) proposed simultaneous investment in light and heavy industry, financed by external credit. Prebisch (1964) identified the problems of agricultural and mineral exporters, who found that global gains in productivity undermined the prices for their commodities but not to the same extent for their industrial imports. Hence the need for structural change, from externally-oriented agricultural production to industrial production for the home market or, more modestly, state investment in infrastructure. Lewis (1954) focused on the transfer of labour from agriculture to industry on the assumption that this would raise its overall productivity.

In his essays on *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Gerschenkron (1962) identified the strategic importance of the state's association with financial and industrial interests in the industrialization of Imperial Germany and Tsarist Russia and in directing investment in the domestic and foreign economies. The "developmental state" was not a purely East Asian invention; though the response of Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the armed imposition of free trade by Commodore Perry in 1854 was an early exemplar. Japan developed its industrial base and naval power before reclaiming control over its tariffs (Lockwood, 1954; cf. Wade, 1990; Robinson & White, 1998). The Civil War secured the Union for "free labour", facilitated tariff protection, railway building and territorial expansion, and opportunities for business with political connections (Beard & Beard, 1947, vol. 2, pp. 5 2-110). Japanese silk and US wheat and mineral exports paid for the import costs of industrial expansion.

Distrust of commerce and particularly of traders of "alien" origin and the experiences of the world depression and of war-time planning disposed colonial officials to favour state planning and regulation. Nationalist politicians and their allies among the local capitalists looked to the state to promote industrial growth, to protect them from foreign competition and to give them access to the resources from which foreigners had excluded them (Hodgkin, 1956). Hence the coalition of Indian industrialists and nationalists in support of the "Nehruist" vision of state development planning outlined in the 1944 Bombay Plan (Watkins, 1985). The state would also be the instrument of the other part of the nationalist project-bringing "development" to the people in such forms as schools, roads, clinics and hospitals. Similarly, the depression of the 1930s convinced industrialists in major Latin American states of the virtues of state intervention and provided a potential pillar for a populist alliance with a nationalist ideological façade. Colonial governments in Africa nationalized the export of

agricultural commodities during and after World War II. These provided revenues and contribution to the post-war reconstruction of the metropolitan economies. Their nationalist successors perpetuated them as a way of securing and allocating state revenues (Bauer, 1954; Deutsch, 1990; Williams, 1985).

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the self-proclaimed World Bank, promoted market-oriented development by lending money to governments for investment in transport, telecommunications and hydroelectric projects. In the 1960s and 1970s, it drew on Indian examples to promote contraceptive and biochemical technologies to provide more food for fewer people (World Bank, 1975, 1989; Williams, 1993). The water-seed-fertilizer-herbicide ("green") revolution has promoted higher yields, to land and labour, of rice, wheat and yellow maize. This process of "heavy agriculturalization" (Harriss-White, 2003) demands large and sustainable supplies of river or groundwater, commercial renewal of the supply of seeds and heavy applications of chemicals. These strategies cannot easily be adapted to African countries, where the World Bank encouraged expensive projects which have made great demands on limited administrative capacities and foreign exchange resources, to the benefit of contractors and consultants, local and foreign (Williams, 1981, 1988).

#### *2.4 Critics of Development*

Developmentalist orthodoxy did not go unchallenged. In the 1950s, Peter Bauer challenged the faith of colonial officials, their nationalist successors and development economists in state intervention. Bauer (1954) drew on historical and empirical evidence rather than colonial and developmentalist stereotypes of "lazy natives" and "backward peasants". He placed more faith in farmers and traders, local and foreign, than in government to make appropriate economic decisions. He argued convincingly against the state regulation of markets, and particularly agricultural markets, whether to stabilize incomes, to improve the barter or income terms of trade, or to tax farmers and promote industrial growth. State regulation encouraged investment in seeking opportunities for the monopoly rents arising from a regime of controls and licences.

These arguments provided the ideological underpinnings for the far-reaching liberalization measures undertaken and imposed as structural adjustment programmes, firstly in Britain and New Zealand, and then in countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. Their implementation required more intensive central control and policing (Corrigan, 2002, p. 141) of fiscal resources and public administration, often implemented in the name and form of "decentralization". They changed the forms but did not eliminate the incidence of private appropriation of state resources (Harriss-White & White, 1996).

Frank's theory of the development of underdevelopment is, from an economic viewpoint, an internal critique of import-substitution industrialization and of dependency theory. Far from reducing dependence on foreign imports, import substitution strategies exacerbated it. In that he was quite right. The greater the industrial development, the more imports cost as a share of the value of outputs. But withdrawing into economic autarchy, as Frank seems to recommend, exacerbates the

problem. Frank claimed that development was greatest when satellite economies were least integrated with metropolitan economies, as in the 1930s (Frank, 1967). This claim overlooks other differences in the conditions, policies and rates of industrial growth of different economies at different times in the 1930s and 1940s. Frank's assertion that capitalism could not develop in Latin America (or Africa, let alone Asia) is hard to sustain in the face of the empirical evidence of economic expansion and improvement in the conditions of many people, though not all, in many countries in the colonial period and after (Warren, 1980).

The retreat in the 1970s to a more orthodox Marxist analysis of articulation of modes of production (Laclau, 1971; Wolpe, 1980) or to the distinction between "formal" and "informal" sectors (ILO, 1975; cf Weeks, 1975) renewed dualist ways of thinking (Palma, 1978). Frank, like Marx & Engels (1960, pp. 110-113), was right to insist that capitalism was global in its dimensions from the outset. Current attacks on globalization turn modernization theory inside out. They dismiss the mutual benefits of trade and elide valid criticisms of the asymmetric power relations of actual capitalist markets (OXFAM, 2002) with rejection of market exchange, and especially production for export, in principle. Bauer and Frank argue from, and for, positions that appear to be diametrically opposed. Their shared virtue is that they reject the dualist assumptions of development theory.

### *2.5 Comparative and Historical Perspectives*

Barrington Moore, Jr took up the themes of Gerschenkron's study of the politics of the Prussian Junkers, in his comparative study of *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Gerschenkron, 1943; Moore, 1966). Its central focus is how the responses of the landed upper classes to the commercialization of agriculture shaped the transitions into industrial societies. It placed agrarian social relations, political revolutions and state power at the centre of its narratives of development.

Moore's analysis read history backwards, from the perspective of the industrially developed world and the great political divisions of the world around the time of World War II. He explicitly assumed that a modern world is a world without peasants (Moore, 1966, pp. 460-1, 474). The capitalist class relations of Prussian agriculture and the political alliances of industrial and agrarian interests in 19th Century Germany had as much in common with England than either Germany had with Japan or England with France, with which Moore pairs them. In all cases, relations between political, agricultural and industrial elites are critical to the emergent political institutions and these alliances are formed and reformed around tariff policies. As Moore's examples show, the division between free trade (UK, Japan) and protectionism (Germany, France, USA) does not coincide with the democratic or dictatorial outcomes of the paths to modernity. Nor do free trade or tariff protection, in themselves, provide a general condition for industrial growth, irrespective of other conditions, national and international.

Moore realized that the "modern world", which defined the state of being developed, is the product of historical changes over the long term. He did not assume that the political alliances and conflicts that produced specific outcomes were inevitable.

His comparisons raised questions of relevance to places beyond those he studied. Historical comparisons should not be closed off. They need to be open-ended. They show how analogies, which are necessarily partial, may enable an account of one case to shed light on another case. They are as important in identifying differences to be explained as in locating similarities. Their contingent character means they cannot answer the questions posed by policy-makers (Williams *et al.*, 1998a).

## *2.6 Modelling and Planning Development*

The commitment of development studies to finding the means to realize policy goals has always tended to promote an orientation to the future and to ordering knowledge along impersonal and calculable lines. Baseline surveys, cost-benefit analyses and statistical models leave little room for archival research and historical interpretation. The more is the pity, given the number of times development projects and policies have predictably repeated the failures of previous ones. Economists have not abandoned history. They have, through the work of the new economic historians, borrowed from history and stylized it. Complex historical processes have been represented through the prism of analytic models, grounded not in historical research but in the axiomatic logic of, for example, property rights and utilitarian calculation. This procedure reads history backwards with a vengeance.

Standardized representations of complex relations, abstracted from their historical and geographical context, enable social scientists to conform to their image of the generalizing procedures of the natural sciences. They may also provide the building blocks that can be used to devise solutions to the problems which policy-makers call on them to solve. Impersonal procedures, which generate finds that claim objective validity, take the politics out of policy. Technical discourse extends claims to scientific expertise to international agencies and to the social scientists who service them. In this way, contemporary developmentalists follow in the footsteps of Saint-Simon and Comte, and of the Bolsheviks in seeking to "replace the government of men by the administration of things" (Taylor, 1975; Nove, 1983, pp. 32-33; Rosen, 1996, pp. 220-222).

Students of development like models, even if they want to shape them in their own ways and in accordance with their varied disciplinary cultures. Models may be statistical, mathematical, or conceptual. Models of development reproduce the confusing duality of explanatory models and normative exemplars.

The virtue of analytic models is their abstraction. They take elements from complex social processes, isolate them conceptually and then recombine them into selective representations of the logic of the relations among them. Their purpose is to enable us to think clearly and to ask questions, not to substitute for empirical descriptions of historical narratives. It is no criticism of a model to state that its assumptions are not empirically realistic. The value of a statistical model may be to identify the limits of explanations. "The purpose of models is not to fit the data, but to sharpen the questions" (Karlin, 1983). Where "rational choice" models fit with observed courses of human action, they redescribe, in abstract form, aspects of our behaviour.



When people do not act in the way in which plausible models of strategies of action suggest they should, the models direct us to ask new questions.

Specific examples of successes, or failures, of projects or policies may be relevant to making sense of the course and outcomes of other initiatives. They can give us reason to recommend similar approaches or to warn against likely disasters. It is risky to construct selective characteristics of one or more examples into a model for others to follow - as in the East Asian model of export-led growth or the Grameen Bank model of lending to the poor. The Kenyan model of land reform was misappropriated to provide a misleading model for land reform in South Africa (Francis & Williams, 1993; Williams, 1996a). Models can provide a vision of what might be possible and how things could be done. They are not technologies, which can be taken out of one context and applied in another.

### *2.7 Crossing Boundaries: The Virtues of the Eclectic*

In the 1970s, development studies combined the intention to understand the world with the aim of changing it. These are confused at our intellectual and political peril. Development studies drew on a variety of arguments and counter-arguments. It was framed within an arena of discourses, whose overlapping assumptions transcended political differences in ways of which the antagonists were not always aware. At its best, it took the whole world as its field of study and did not exempt industrial societies from its enquiries. This encouraged a comparative and historical approach, which was in tension with its ameliorative concerns and orientation to the future.

The greatest strength of development studies was that its subject matter could not easily be confined within the parameters of academic disciplines. The demands of a multidisciplinary approach are severe, requiring at the least literacy in the language and a familiarity with the contested theories of several disciplines. They were not always met. Non-economists rarely achieved numeracy. Parsons and his followers sought to provide an overarching theory that would incorporate all aspects of social systems, within an evolutionary framework (Parsons, 1951, 1966). Marxists claimed to offer a method of analysis that would exclude alternative approaches but which were markedly similar to Parsonian theories in their holistic and evolutionary assumptions (cf. Marx 2000a, 2000c with Marx, 2000b, 2000d). Rational choice theorists seek to dissolve disciplinary divisions and reduce all social explanation to a common protocol, modelled on the utilitarian assumptions of neo-classical economic theory (Coleman, 1990; cf. Green & Shapiro, 1994).

Universal explanations can only be highly abstract. By explaining everything, they can explain nothing. The interpretation of particular events benefits from an eclectic approach, which is sensitive to context and contingency and able to draw critically and imaginatively from various intellectual traditions and analytic approaches.

## **3. The Mysteries of Development Policies**

To argue that we need to separate the study of process of development from the pursuit of the goals of development does not mean that we should not concern ourselves with

policies: with what works and what does not. To the contrary, if we are to contribute to sensible judgements on matters of policy, we need to study the making, implementation and outcomes of development policies.

The collapse amidst great derision of the famous Tanganyikan groundnut project in 1950 did not prevent the launch of a similarly unsuccessful project to produce groundnuts at Mokwa, in Nigeria (Wood, 1950; Coulson, 1977; Baldwin, 1957). This suggested that if one groundnut project might be counted a misfortune, two seemed distinctly careless. The continued repetition of failed projects called for explanation. The study of failed development projects raised wider questions about marketing, exchange rate and fiscal policies, which have had more far-reaching effects on rural producers and on agricultural production than have inappropriate projects.

My initial emphasis was on the assumptions underlying the practices of development—on studying the ideas with which people think (Williams, 1976). This ideological focus clearly needed to be balanced by an investigation into the material interests served, or intended to be served, by irrigation schemes, agricultural development projects, marketing boards or overvalued exchange rates. Projects and resettlement schemes also served political interests, not least the concern of states to find ways of controlling rural people, "capturing" them in the metaphor used by Hyden (1980, 1983). My colleagues and I outlined this triangle of ideological, material and political aspects in introducing a volume of essays on *Rural Development in Tropical Africa* (Heyer *et al.*, 1981). Robert Bates, in explaining *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*, complemented his primary explanations in terms of rational calculations of political and economic interests with reference to the ideas of development economists and to the interests of states in bringing their subjects under their control (Bates, 1991, esp. pp. 3, 7).

Corrigan & Sayer's (1985) analysis of forms of rule in England over a millennium, studies of different African countries by graduate students at Oxford (e.g. Pitcher, 1985; Jones, 1987; Ashforth, 1990; Muthien, 1995; Cravinho, 1995; Dinerman, 1999; Enthoven, 2000; Orkin, 2002) and reading on political, administrative and economic reforms in African countries have brought home to me the continuities of institutional forms. These forms shape and constrain political practices and policy outcomes that operate "behind the backs" of policy-makers (Ferguson, 1990).

### *3.1 Living in Proper Villages*

African governments have sustained many of the colonial laws, policies and programmes that they had previously denounced. They spread them more widely and gave them new life. "Villagization" and "betterment planning" singly or in combination have been particularly hard on rural people.

Governments and armies, faced with resistance in the countryside, have commonly sought to separate rural people from armed combatants by confining them in concentrated and often fortified settlements. Notorious examples include the Spanish in Cuba, the Japanese in China, the British in Malaya and the Americans in Vietnam. African precedents go back to Sir George Grey's strategies to contain the amaXhosa on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, Lord Kitchener's "concentration camps" in the

South African War, the British during the Kenyan Emergency, and the Portuguese and subsequently Frelimo in Mozambique (Peires, 1989, Vail. & White, 1980, p. 299; Lorgen, 1999). It has rarely been effective as a counter-insurgency strategy, which has never stopped governments from adopting it, most recently in Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda (Mthembu-Salter, 2002, pp. 127-128; Rake, 2002, p. 1117; Ofcansky, 2002, p. 797; Palmer, 1999, 2000).

Military motivations were often combined with a civilizing mission, which could also be pursued for its own sake. Agricultural officials in colonial Kenya took advantage of the settlement of Kikuyu into villages during the Emergency to introduce their far-reaching programme of land consolidation and land registration. Colonial firms used "cotton concentrations" to impose cotton cultivation on Mozambican peasants during, and since, colonial rule (Pitcher, 1993, esp. pp. 114-137, 179-202; Cravinho, 1995; Dinerman, 1999). Julius Nyerere told the people of Tanzania in his inaugural address as President in 1962 that "The first and absolutely essential thing to do ... if you want to be able to start using tractors for cultivation, is to begin living in proper villages" (Nyerere, 1966, p. 183). He promoted a policy of bringing people together to form communities in *ujamaa* villages. He subsequently required people to live in planned villages so that the state could reach out to them, provide them with services and promote rural development (Coulson, 1977; McHenry, 1979).

"Betterment planning" was exported from colonial Southern Rhodesia to South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, Malawi, Tanganyika and Kenya. It involves the separation of residence, arable cultivation, stock grazing, woodlands and watercourses. Rural people have to carry out methods of soil conservation, adopt approved methods of cultivation and reduce their stock. It thus requires the reorganization of patterns of settlement, land holding and cultivation, and disruption of the complex social networks embedded in them. In South Africa, those excluded from "betterment villages" were concentrated into "closer settlements". Betterment planning did little, if anything, to improve agricultural production and a great deal to provoke rural resistance and support for nationalist politicians (Beinart, 1984; Throup, 1986; de Wet, 1989, 1994; Hendricks, 1989, 1990; McAllister, 1989; Mager, 1992; Phimister, 1993)

This did not discourage nationalist regimes from taking over these policies. In Zimbabwe, the original land reform programme allocated land to tenants on planned settlements on condition that they abided by cultivation rules. In line with colonial thinking in Kenya and Rhodesia, tenants were expected to be full-time farmers, not engaged in urban employment and abandoning claims to land elsewhere. Officials planned to extend these reforms to communal areas under the auspices of Village Development Councils (Williams, 1982; Alexander, 1994). The same constraints are not placed on the government ministers and their cronies who have taken transfer of large farms. The rules are being revived in plans for managing land appropriated by war-veterans and other beneficiaries of the current land seizures, as if they can be brought within the remit of routine state procedures. The continuities in ideas across generations of officials are embedded in the institutions that employ them and in their routine practices.

### *3.2 Reforming Land in Kenya and South Africa*

Land reforms and agricultural policies in Kenya in the 1960s transferred land to both small-scale and large-scale African farmers and extended the production of tea and coffee for export and the raising of dairy cattle to a broad stratum of African smallholders. This intensified maize production, increased export earnings and raised rural incomes in Central Province and the Rift Valley. These "successes" required that the Kenyan government, with financial aid from Britain, first buy out most settler farmers. They cannot be attributed to the policies devised by colonial planners to register and consolidate land and, later, to transfer land and open markets to a managed hierarchy of large-scale and yeomen farmers. They resulted, in a significant measure, from political pressures for wider redistribution of land and of opportunities to grow high-value crops and from the interests of international trading companies in the production of high-quality tea and coffee (Heyer *et al.*, 1976; Heyer, 1981; Cowen, 1981; Leo, 1984; Francis & Williams, 1993; Francis, 2000, pp. 1-17).

In South Africa, the redistribution of land has not made much headway. Changes that have taken place show surprising continuities with the previous era. In 1993, the World Bank put forward the Kenyan example as a "model" for the transfer of 30% of South Africa's white-owned farms to African smallholders over 5 years, which became a "target" in the ANC's RDP (Binswanger & Deininger, 1993; World Bank, 1993, p. 3; African National Congress, 1994, p. 22; Williams, 1996a). This would, as the 1955 Tomlinson Commission said of its own proposals, have amounted to "a vast resettlement project" (Union of South Africa, 1955, p. 117).

The new government backed away from this grandiose plan. In areas adjacent to the former "native reserves", land reform extends the areas of communal tenure, in that way furthering the consolidation of the former bantustans. State agencies have tended to transfer land to the same stratum of officials and traders that benefited under the bantustan administrations. Restitution of land to dispossessed communities, prospects of access to new land and opportunities to allocate land expose differences of interests by gender, age and status and may generate new conflicts among the beneficiaries of reforms (Cross *et al.*, 1996; Murray, 1996, 1997; Drimie, 2000; James, 2000a, b; Lahiff, 2001; Mokgope, 2001; Ntsebeza, 2001; Wotshela., 2001).

Land transfers are to be market-based, funded by grants to beneficiaries which were originally set at R15 000 (then ~ US\$3400). The Department of Land Affairs initially favoured the transfer of land to Common Property Associations (CPAs) to manage on behalf of the new, or old, land-owning community. The CPA met administrative needs and was the institution to which land could be transferred. It echoed the distrust, which colonial officials and radical intellectuals share, in private property and the vision that shaped *ujamaa* villages in Tanzania. It benefited social entrepreneurs able to speak the language of and gain access to NGOs and the procedures of the Department of Land Affairs and to mobilize the necessary claimants. The small grants and consequent multiplication of beneficiaries tend to lead either to land being underused or to the patterns of "closer settlement" typical of the former bantustans. (Cross *et al.*, 1996; Williams *et al.*, 1998b; McIntosh *et al.*, 1999, pp. v-vi, 12; McIntosh & Vaughan, 2001, pp.227-228).

Recent proposals aim to extend the scope of land transfers by a sliding scale of grants to be matched by the beneficiaries' own contributions (Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs, 2000; Hall & Williams, 2003). They aim to create a hierarchy of farmers who may graduate from one level to another. This reproduces the conceptions of subsistence, master, yeomen and commercial farmers shared by settler regimes in Kenya, Rhodesia and South Africa (Williams, 1996a). There is no lineal path of ascent from one form and scale of earning rural incomes to another.

Laws to reform labour tenancy in South Africa build on 150 years of legislation which has tried with only partial success to abolish the "feudal" institution of labour tenancy in order to transform tenants either into honest land-owning peasants or into wage labourers (Williams, 1996b). Policy-makers failed to understand why, although the terms of the relationship kept getting worse, many rural Africans have preferred tenancy arrangements, which permit them to keep their own stock, a little land and possibly a bag of maize, to a cash wage (Bradford, 1987; Keegan, 1987; Mather, 1997; Schirmer, 1997; McClendon, 2000).

Land reforms have been subject to administrative constraints and small budgets. However, like the RDP, the Department of Land Affairs has spent only part of the money allocated to it and most of that on salaries and compensating urban land claims. As Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) observed of the Economic Development Administration in Oakland in the 1960s, policy commitments and the allocation of funds do not even ensure that money will be spent, let alone realize the intended goals of the policy.

### *3.3 Liberalizing Agricultural Markets in Kenya and South Africa*

Changes in agricultural marketing policies that have taken place since 1994 were the outcome of changes that were already underway before 1990. Maize control in South Africa, as in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, guaranteed settler farmers a single, producer price, protected from import competition. African farmers were excluded from direct access to these benefits in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, though not entirely in Kenya. Price subsidies offset the costs to millers of transport, marketing and higher prices to farmers and enabled the milling companies to dominate the market. After independence, these benefits were extended for small farmers in Kenya and Zimbabwe, which encouraged them to increase their share of maize production dramatically, but the largest benefits of the subsidies always went disproportionately to the wealthiest farmers (Heyer *et al.*, 1976; Kitching, 1980, pp. 109-110; Mosley, 1983; Amin, 1992).

When fiscal constraints led to the withdrawal of price subsidies from the 1980s, producers were left to bear the costs of state marketing, of exporting surplus maize at a loss and of cross-subsidizing transport costs through a single producer price. Well-placed producers and the maize millers, who had consolidated their control of the market under the old regime, now took advantage of the opportunity to cut out the state middleman. Large-scale Kenyan farmers discovered the virtues of the market that they had resisted for so long (Amin, 1992; Williams *et al.*, 1998b).

Wine and brandy markets were statutorily regulated from 1924 to 1997 by a farmers' co-operative, the Ko-operatieve Wijnbouwers Vereniging (KWV). Controls on planting, minimum prices and disposal of surplus wine for distilling and grape juice were the "bedrock of the industry" (Ritzema de la Bat, 1989, p. 24). The system rewarded quantity over quality. In 1978 the industry was reconstructed to allow Distillers Corporation, South African Breweries and the KWV each 30% of Kaapwyn, which controlled over 80% of the country's wine and spirits markets. In the 1980s, cooperative cellars and independent wine producers reduced the dominance of the wine and spirits markets by Kaapwyn (reconstituted in 2000 as Distell) and undermined all three pillars of the system of regulation, which were abandoned between 1992 and 1997. The KWV transformed itself into a company and passed its regulatory functions to the Wine Industry Trust. KWV no longer has privileged access to surplus grape spirits for distilling and fortification of wine and KWV and Distell both confront increased competition for more diverse foreign and local markets (Vink *et al.*, 2003).

The political order that sustained agricultural subsidies and protection and state marketing in South Africa was no longer fiscally viable. The regulatory arrangements abolished themselves. The final stroke was made possible by the political marginalization of the interests of "organized agriculture" to the benefit of local and foreign agro-industrial corporations, who took control from farmers of demutualized grain and dairy co-operatives. Liberal trade policies force African producers to compete in their domestic markets against US and EU export subsidies. The direction of changes in the 1980s and 1990s followed international fashions and the unfolding of their own logic.

### *3.4 Governance and Democracy*

Colonial powers divided up and mapped out their territories and subordinated African polities of quite diverse forms to their rule. They established decentralized forms of territorial administration, into which they incorporated African rulers and political notables as intermediaries within a hierarchy of chiefs (e.g. Crowder & Ikime, 1970; Iliffe, 1979). They required modern forms of government to raise revenues, build roads, regulate commercial transactions, define and protect rights to property, extend public health and education and pay back railway loans.

African governments inherited the institutions through which, and the boundaries within which, they exercise state authority (Mamdani, 1996; Williams, 2002). States have disputed, even by force of arms, their interpretations of the lines drawn by colonial cartographers. Claims made, by armed force, to establish new nations independent of post-colonial states have rested on colonial precedents and boundaries, as in Eritrea, Western Sahara, Southern Sudan, Nigeria (Biafra) and Somalia (Somaliland). States retain the boundaries, official languages and public institutions inherited from their colonial rulers. Those who claim to act in their name retain access to continental and international forums, supplicate for funds and licence access to minerals, fishing and timber, and shipping registers. States retain their responsibility for the unpayable "sovereign" debts they contracted to commercial banks, foreign exporters and governments, and international agencies.

The most effective and stable African governments were single-party states. They were headed by nationalist leaders, often of a venerable age. They pursued a politics of inclusion, assimilating opposition leaders and party into the fold of the ruling party. They repressed those who remained outside the fold or threatened their position from within. They controlled and contained the scope and allocation of political spoils (Allen, 1995; Rich Dorman, 2001). The unconstrained pursuit of spoils often led several states to lose their claim to "exercise a monopoly of the legitimate use of force over [their] territory" (Weber, 1991, p. 89).

All African governments face the same problem as colonial administrations before them. How are they to rule dispersed populations with limited fiscal and administrative resources? They have tended to revert to the same solutions. Colonial district officers and provincial commissioners have been recreated as the key agents of a system of generic territorial administration, accountable to the centre. They in turn need to find *interlocuteurs valables*, intermediaries sufficiently weighty to secure the compliance if not always the co-operation of local populations. Hence the persistence of royal lineages and local notables in the most unlikely places, as Dinerman (1999) has documented for Frelimo, even in its most "revolutionary" years. The reconstruction of a viable system of administration in Ghana and Uganda followed the colonial examples of creating "decentralized" administration by agents of the central government through District or Resistance Councils.

Democratic politics require agreement on the creation of the "non-democratic conditions of democracy": the framework of rules within which political office is contested and public resources are allocated (Williams, 2000). This depends on mutual recognition of shared citizenship (Okonta, 2002), accountability by those in authority (Beckman, 1997) and a commitment to "public reason" (Rawls, 1993, pp. 213-220) to mediate among conflicting interests and address issues of public policy. It fits uneasily with a legacy of authoritarian administration and spoils politics.

International interests and agencies still need African governments to raise revenues, build roads, regulate commercial transactions, define and protect rights to property, implement development projects and take responsibility for sovereign debts. For all the criticisms that international financial agencies have made of the policies and practices of African states, many of which they funded, they have had to operate through African governments. Democracy is valued if it offers a way of establishing the political conditions to implement economic policies, which are directed from without. Hence the concern to combine "structural adjustment" with reform of "governance" (Williams, 1987; World Bank. 1989).

The conventions of state sovereignty and the norms of international politeness rule out the explicit imposition of political conditions. More importantly, to act in accordance with political criteria contradicts the claims of international agencies and consultants to be guided by technical expertise. Consequently, the Saint-Simonian language of governance replaces the study of politics, government or the state.

#### **4. Separating the Making, Implementation and Outcomes of Policies**

How are we to explain development policies, their implementation and their outcomes? Why are the outcomes of policies so often at variance with the intentions of policy-makers? Even when policies succeed, they often do so for reasons that were not envisaged by the policy-makers. How do we account for the ubiquitous continuities in policies from one regime to another?

The instrumental model of policy-making starts from the intentions of policymakers. They have a conception of what they are trying to achieve. This is shaped by the principles they wish to realize and motivated by the interests they serve. Policies are implemented through political and administrative mechanisms. They should conform to the plans of policy-makers but are constrained by the lack of fiscal and administrative capacity and a failure of relevant agencies to co-ordinate their activities towards a common end. They may, therefore, fail to realize the goals of the policies. This approach sees the policy process more or less as an exercise in social engineering. Unfortunately, the bridges are not always built and when they are, they are liable to fall down.

An alternative approach is to consider separately the making of policies, their implementation and their outcomes and not to expect them to have any necessary connection with one another. Then, taking nothing for granted, we should examine the relations within and among them.

#### *4. 1 Policy-making. A Discursive Activity*

Policy-making is primarily a discursive activity. It is engaged in for its own sake, with little immediate regard for the world beyond. It is framed by its own rules and shaped by its characteristic metaphors. Its language is drafted with an eye to the concerns of local and international powerful interests and to enlisting political support. Policies generally have to be specified in ways that embody common procedures, which can be applied generally, across whole countries, irrespective of local and regional differences. They may take their forms from metropolitan precedents and international conventions. Their standardized forms are ill-equipped to manage diverse and complex situations.

If the world is to be managed in practice, it must be ordered conceptually. The uncertainty of the future brings into question our capacity to plan it. Changes must be rendered predictable and multiple contingencies reduced to predictable processes. If we know in which direction things are tending, we can steer them along the appropriate path. Hence the attraction to policy-makers, and their advisers, of evolutionary models of change which, to adapt Comte's language, bring order to progress and make development possible. These ways of thinking tend to shape our interpretations of events, even in the face of evidence suggesting contrary and multiple directions of change.

Governments with radically different ideological stances share underlying assumptions of the need to "modernize" and "develop" societies through the exercise of state policies. This has made it possible for governments to shift rapidly from favouring dirigiste regulation of economic activity and state ownership of property to market liberalization and privatization. One vision of modernity replaces another.



Development speak combines military metaphors with the condescending requirement that its beneficiaries be empowered to participate in the process. Deference has to be paid to the need for "participation" by the "community" and for the empowerment" of the poor, and "especially rural women". At the same time, policies may need to fit in with the requirements of structural adjustment, not only at the macroeconomic level but also in the microrequirements for cost-recovery from users. Skilful policy-makers evidently need to be linguistically adept at reconciling incompatible policy requirements. Effective politicians learn to be multilingual, adapting their discursive strategies to the changing requirements of different audiences.

#### *4.2 Institutional Continuities and Unintended Consequences*

States, and other organizations, must defend the jurisdictions within which their agents exercise authority, both for themselves and in defending institutional interests. The implementation of policies is governed by the forms of the institutions through which they are carried out. These forms define the rules and provide the resources through which those involved pursue their goals and protect their interests. The continuities we observe arise partly from institutional inertia and from a culture of adapting to the way things work. Institutions come into being and learn to carry out certain sorts of tasks. They are ill equipped, irrespective of who staffs them, to turning themselves around to realize quite different aims.

Implicit assumptions, everyday practices and institutional interests are more likely to shape the ways in which policies are implemented than are the declared intentions of policy-makers. Powerful groups find that their plans are refracted through the prisms of institutional arrangements. New governments confront the same problems of establishing their authority and carrying out their routine activities with, at best, much the same organizational equipment as their predecessors. Not surprisingly, they do many of the same things, albeit under different names. Some institutions, such as labour tenancy, continue because they provide a solution, often of a second-best nature, to the needs of contending parties. Attempts to reform them are likely to fail to take effect or to leave those involved worse off than they are already.

Institutions and their agents need to make sense of what they do and thus tend continually to give themselves evidence of the validity of the ideas that define the values and procedures of the institution. They have to adapt to their operating environment and to the everyday practices and discursive forms expected of them. Practical men of affairs often turn out to be slaves of defunct theorists (Keynes, 1973, p. 383). The implementation of policies is likely to be most effective when officials work with established "stakeholders". They are likely to take advantage of changing circumstances to find new ways of pursuing their goals. It may not, therefore, be surprising to find that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

What actually happens results from interactions among different processes. These operate across a multiplicity of periods and spaces, and produce divergent and unforeseen, or even unforeseeable, chains of consequences. Policy interventions are but one of many processes at work. Their outcomes will depend on the impact of other activities, the ways in which people respond to all these changes, and the ways in which

these interactions generate new dynamics. Different groups will seek to shape the processes by which policies are designed and implemented to advance, or defend, their interests. Coalitions of interests are often partial and temporary. Their actions are guided by imperfect knowledge and uncertain expectations. The one thing we can reasonably predict is that things will not turn out as we expect.

### *4.3 Policy-oriented Research and Research into Policy*

Policy planning starts by postulating a desired state of affairs and then working back to the present. This procedure assumes a degree of control over the environment that is likely to be lacking. It also depends on an ability to get "participants" or "beneficiaries" to act in accordance with policies, which is unrealistic and sits uneasily with any commitments to "participation" and "empowerment".

Policy-makers construct imaginative scenarios and write scripts for the actors to perform. The imagined subjects have defined roles, to which people may respond to take advantage of the opportunities they offer. Social entrepreneurs invoke and even construct communities to conform to the expectations and requirements, and values, organizational forms and gender composition, of the scripts imagined by the policymakers. Participants seek to secure their own ends by conforming to the expectations of policy-makers in the same way as applicants for research funds learn to do. In this way, policy-makers extend their discourse to "stakeholders", but without shaping their actions accordingly.

Policy-makers and public institutions create or incorporate structures of patronage and clientage. These link international charities and/or national governments to "nongovernmental organizations" through to "community-based organizations" (Kathina Juma, 2000). Each claims to act, or even to speak, for those below them, but is accountable, for funds received and spent, to those above them. There are many scripts but few voices.

Policy-oriented research typically starts from the wrong end. A better way is to look at "really existing" policy processes, to study the historical processes in which policymakers, private interests and public officials interact to produce outcomes that are often at variance with the intentions of any of them. This will not produce a coherent and planned programme of action directed towards achieving clearly defined goals. Despite their rational form and the statistical apparatus they typically incorporate, such programmes tend to owe more to the imagination than to practical knowledge. Rather than imitate the "formally rational" procedures of economic planning, we should learn from the exploratory work of ethnographers and the "interpretive understandings" of historians (Weber, 1978, pp. 85-86, 4-13). The empirical study and interpretation of past and contemporary policies, their implementation and outcomes might allow those who are responsible for making and implementing policies to make better judgements as to which courses of action to follow.

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