Journal of International Relations and Development (2020) 23:924–946
https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-019-00173-9

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Development for whom? Beyond the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy

Felipe Antunes de Oliveira[1]

Published online: 9 April 2019

Abstract

The developed/underdeveloped dichotomy is the starting point of mainstream theories of development. Based on a theoretical framework inherited from modernisation theories, they represent development as the process through which productive structures in the Global South are transformed following the footsteps of the Global North. Dependency theories productively challenged this linear conception of development, but failed to provide a consistent alternative because of their incapacity to move beyond the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy. In this article, I claim that Trotsky's concept of uneven and combined development finally indicates a way to think of development beyond the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy. Through analogies with the work of the Dutch artist M. C. Escher, I contrast the concept of uneven and combined development with competing views of development to show both that it makes better sense of particular development trajectories and that it offers a better theoretical base for political action. By stressing the necessarily perspectived character of development, the concept of uneven and combined development makes it possible to ask a crucial question often overlooked: development for whom?

Keywords Dependency theory · Development studies · Escher · Trotsky · Uneven and combined development

Development for whom?

Development is a matter of perspective. Material changes in productive structures are far from socially neutral. They emerge from social relations—in their intra- and inter-societal forms—and they reshuffle class and international relations as a consequence. The black-and-white opposition between development and underdevelopment, therefore, often conceals more than it reveals. Instead of assessing particular countries' successes or failures according to a predefined standard of development, the critical question to be asked is: development for whom?

✉ Felipe Antunes de Oliveira
F.antunes-de-oliveira@sussex.ac.uk

[1] University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

This question is overlooked by mainstream economic theories of development. Largely based on a linear view of development inherited from modernisation theory, they end up reinforcing a Eurocentric world-historic view. Development is perceived as the undisputed goal of each and every country. Even when some form of international competition is recognised, the ultimate presupposition is that 'underdeveloped' nations can catch-up with 'developed' nations by adopting the right set of policies. The fact that the overwhelming majority of nations have so far failed to do so is dismissed as their own fault—a discourse sometimes seasoned with thinly disguised doses of racism and cultural colonialism.

Genealogies of the concept of development have convincingly revealed its problematic origins in the modern idea of progress (Nisbet 1969; Wallerstein 1984; Escobar 1995; Rist 2002). Contemporary post-development authors rightfully emphasise the epistemological violence involved in the representation of two thirds of humanity as 'underdeveloped' (Esteva 1992). For Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Western promises of modernity—among which are 'progress, and the sharing of progress'—have been converted 'into an ideology that legitimizes subordination to Western Imperialism'. As a consequence, 'social groups that use these systems to support their own autonomous paths of development have been humiliated' (de Sousa Santos 2007, p. xviii).

Yet, the contemporary intellectual denunciation of development seems insufficient to touch the hearts of the editors of the World Development Report, reduce the expectation around the Millennium Development Goals, stop the constitution of the BRIC's New Development Bank and convince social movements claiming for variegated forms of development. At least since the US President Truman pledged to foster 'the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas' (1949), development has become a global obsession. Winning an election in Brazil, India, Nigeria or indeed any other self-perceived 'underdeveloped' or 'developing' country is impossible without making repeated promises of development. A myriad of public policies are justified in terms of development. Momentous choices are made, directly affecting the lives of millions of people, all in the name of development.

There is a double reason for the resilience of development, contradicting its declared death prematurely announced by post-development writers in the 1990s (Rahnema and Bawtree 1997). Firstly, some concept of development is needed to make sense of material change. What differentiates historical narratives from a random juxtaposition of facts is precisely some idea of development—be it implicit or explicit. Secondly, problematic as it is, the idea of development catalyses the legitimate desire for a better life (de Vries 2007). In itself, the aspiration for positive change should not be rejected or repressed; on the contrary, it is a pre-condition for the conscious transformation of exploitative social relations. Therefore, the concept of development fills in a real epistemological and political gap. It does not suffice to repeal it, as post-development authors very convincingly do at a theoretical level (Sachs 1992; Escobar 1992, 1995; Rist 2002; Ziai 2007). The challenge is to replace it.

Here is the theoretical-political[1] conundrum I address in this article: on the one hand, some concept of development is fundamental to make sense of material transformations and inform counter-hegemonic struggles; on the other hand, the

[1] By defining it as 'theoretical-political' problem, I take Kees Van der Pijl's point that 'the quest for a new society' shall be recovered as 'a criterion for relevance in social science' (Van Der Pijl 2001, p. 380). De Sousa Santos (2007, p. xviii) also makes a similar claim.

development/underdevelopment opposition is in itself inseparable from the Eurocentric epistemological imperialism which negates agency and legitimate knowledge to subordinated social groups.

Is it possible to imagine a concept of development that overcomes that dichotomy? The core idea that must be captured by such a concept is the notion of radically perspectived material change. For, there can be no doubt that material reality is dynamic. Organised social groups can bring about substantial transformation in the relations within and across societies. Positive change is certainly possible. Nevertheless, what counts as positive change? Indeed, what may appear as a positive change from a certain social perspective can feel much different from another. A renewed attention to the multiplicity of legitimate social perspectives can dissolve the putative materiality of the dichotomy between development/underdevelopment into a complex and interactive reality filled with potentially contradictory claims for development. In a nutshell, development is what different social groups make of it.

In the present article, I shall argue that such a concept of development can be derived from the idea of uneven and combined development, originally coined by Trotsky (1906/1986, 1931/2011, 1932/2008). 'Born in struggle'—as required in emancipatory epistemologies of the south (de Sousa Santos 2014)—Trotsky's concept of development defied the canonical Marxism of his time, opposed the stagiest thesis that a liberal revolution was a necessary pre-condition for the socialist revolution, and finally clashed with the Stalinist doctrine of socialism in a single country. In the process, Trotsky provided a better understanding of historical events (the Russian Revolution) and showed new possibilities for struggle from below.

The recent rediscovery of Trotsky's ideas in the fields of International Relations and International Historical Sociology (Rosenberg 2006, 2013a, b; Matin 2013a, b; Anievas and Nişancıoğlu 2015, among others) has brought the concept of uneven and combined development to its most radical consequences. Originally presented as relevant for countries of 'the second, third or tenth cultural class' (Trotsky 1932/2008, p. 5), the intrinsic unevenness of any development process—and the consequent material combination resulting from that fact—can actually be analysed in relation to any society. Because every social structure is uneven and combined, the opposition developed/underdeveloped is radically undermined. In its place, inter- and intra-societal struggles for development emerge.

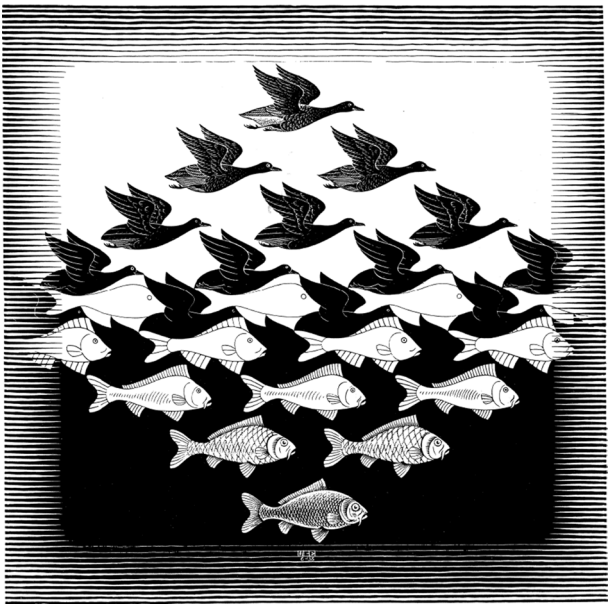
In Development Studies—an academic field particularly divided by different and not always reconcilable understandings of development—the theoretical and political potentials of the concept of uneven and combined development are still largely unexplored (Makki 2015; Selwyn 2014 are pioneering examples). This article is intended as a contribution to that field. My argumentative strategy is to contrast the concept of uneven and combined development with competing views of development in order to show both that it makes better sense of historical change and that it offers a powerful theoretical base for political action.

Methodologically, the contrast between different views of development is carried out through analogies to three graphic works by the Dutch artist/mathematician M. C. Escher. The monochromatic work of Escher captures some aspects that I claim are central to different conceptions of development: the dramatic opposition between developed/underdeveloped, the mosaic-like idea of a totally filled plane, and the role

of contrasting perspectives in organising the apprehension of dynamic multiplicities. The analogical reasoning followed here is inspired by Boaventura de Sousa Santos' call for renewed methodologies (de Sousa Santos 1988).[2] Escher himself often turned to the music of J. S. Bach in order to find the spark of creativity his imagination required to start a new picture (Escher 1982, p. 172). May his own work help us find the creativity necessary to grasp the elusive idea of development.

The remainder of the article unfolds as follows: in the next section, I use the graphic work 'Sky and Water I' (1938) to represent contemporary views on development that explicitly or implicitly draw on modernisation theory's presuppositions. In the following section, I turn to dependency theories, a valuable and often underestimated early attempt to radically reframe development theory. Here I use the woodcut 'Plane Filling II' (1957) to represent dependency itself, including the fixed and unresolved opposition between development and underdevelopment. The lithograph 'Relativity' (1953) is then used to represent uneven and combined development, as it accurately depicts different perspectives on ascension and descent. Finally, the argument is wrapped up in the conclusion.

Flying geese and sinking fishes: stagiest views of development



M. C. Escher's 'Sky and Water I' (1938, 435 × 439 mm) © 2018 The M. C. Escher Company—The Netherlands. All rights reserved. https://www.mcescher.com

[2] For Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1988, p. 63), 'the post-modern science is declaredly analogical, knowing the things it knows worst through the things it knows best'. According to that perspective, analogies are much more than mere illustrations. They have the power to illuminate our understanding of things that defy our capacity of representation. The power of analogies will become clear in the fifth section of this text, particularly regarding the concept of 'pluriverse'.

In the woodcut 'Sky and Water I' (1938), we can see a sequence of fish and geese. Two different directionalities are immediately identifiable. If the graphic work is read from the left to the right, fish and geese appear to be going in the same direction. If the picture is read from the bottom to the top, however, the fish appear to be losing their forms, thereby allowing the geese to take off. The animals in the higher and lower extremities are better defined, while the shapes become increasingly intertwined towards the centre, in a tense and somewhat confusing contrast. The whole point of the artwork seems to be emphasising the dualities fish/goose; water/sky; black/white. As explained by Escher, 'the idea of a duality such as air and water can be expressed in a picture by starting from a plane-filling design of birds and fish; the birds are "water" for the fish and the fish are "air" for the birds' (Escher 1982, p. 170).

Exactly because the artwork is premised on a duality, even if it is read as a process of transformation, the background dichotomy is not dissolved. There is a marked qualitative difference between the geese flying in the bright sky and the fish sinking in the dark waters. Furthermore, the sky is not fully taken up by geese; there is space for future take-offs. A second picture in which all the water is transformed into geese, making the fish disappear against the empty background of the sky, is perfectly imaginable. The goose at the top appears to have come out of the water first. Its detailed figure shows a model for the subsequent five rows of birds—the last one barely identifiable among the school of fish.

Development economists' poor imaginations often reduce development to an ascending line—normally showing a positive relation between some aggregate form of wealth measurement (per capita GDP is favourite) and time, considered in its absolute form as the passing of years. The following example was taken from Daron Acemoglu's book (2009, p. 13), but similar graphic representations of development are to be found in almost every mainstream book on development economics (Fig. 1).

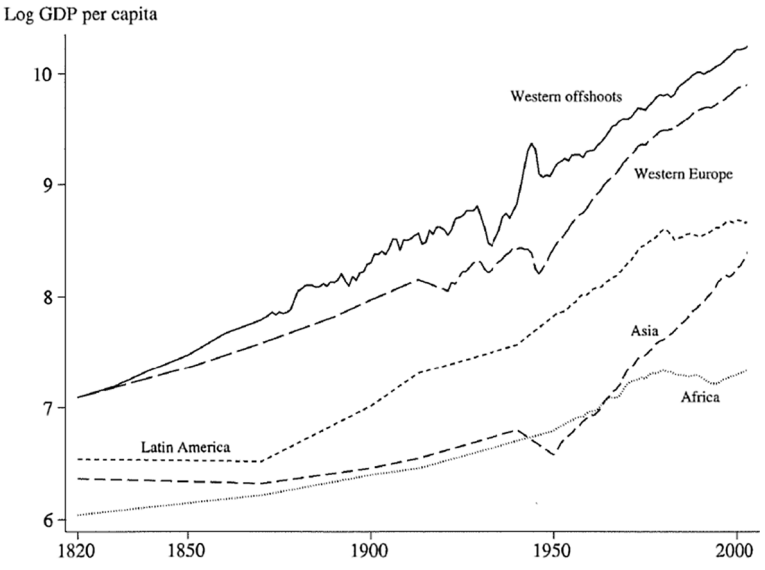


Fig. 1 Source: Acemoglu (2009, p. 13)

The simple point they are trying to make could also (and most beautifully) be represented by Escher's 'Sky and Water I'. Development is an ascending process, through which countries lose their old, underdeveloped, abyssal form and become increasingly like those that came out of the darkness first. Typically, the top goose is England, followed in the nineteenth century by other European countries, Japan and the US. In the twentieth century, a number of newly industrialised countries appeared, although many of them are still stuck in less-defined forms, be it because of their imperfect institutions, or because of their putative incompetence or corruption. In the end, however, it is perfectly possible that all countries will get their institutions and their policies right and finally take off. After all, 'in the long run, countries' progress is primarily dependent on their own efforts rather than on the international environment' (Williamson 2004, p. 197). As optimistically remarked by a Nobel Prize winner

> The task of less developed countries today is in some ways easier than that which faced Europe and the United States as they industrialized in the nineteenth century: they simply have to catch up, rather than forge into unknown territory. (Stiglitz 2007, p. 30)

Simply 'catch-up'! How complicated can this be? The road to development is already paved. This linear perspective is famously schematised in Rostow's 'Stages of Economic Growth' (1959). Development is the process through which countries pass from an idealised condition of 'underdeveloped' or 'developing' to another idealised condition, namely, 'developed'. Outdated as it may sound, these ideas still lurk behind much of the contemporary economic development literature. Of course, nobody claims that Rostow got the actual stages of growth right—although the expression 'take-off' referred to the kick-start of the development process remains in current use. The influential Millenium Project Report, for instance, claims for a 'big push' in aid-related investments to break poverty trap, allowing economic growth to 'take off in a self-sustained manner' (UNDP 2005).[3]

Rostow's inductive method—which tries to infer from 'successful' development experiences the path to be universally followed—is widely replicated in a much more 'scientific' fashion. Impressive examples come from empiric literature on economic growth (Barro 1991; Barro and Sala-I-Martin 1995). Building on the work of Solow (1956) and Swan (1956), contemporary writers define formalised relations between growth and a set of variables. After empirically testing their models running regressions with the help of massive statistical databases, they claim to have 'identified a substantial number of variables that are partially correlated with the rate of economic growth' (Sala-I-Martin 1997, p. 178). The 'results' of the 'two million' regressions run by Sala-I-Martin show, among other things, that being close to the equator, as well as being in Latin America, is negatively correlated to growth. Conversely, the number of years as an open economy appears to be positively correlated to growth (ibid, p. 181).

[3] I thank an anonymous reviewer at *JIRD* for calling my attention to the use of the term 'take off' in that context.

Even more nuanced, qualitative studies presuppose and reinforce a similarly problematic view of development. Atul Kohli's (2004) in-depth analysis of South Korea, Brazil, India and Nigeria, for instance, finds that the relative 'success' of the first country can be explained by a certain pattern of state intervention. It is not hard to see the similarities between his representation of development and Escher's graph(ic work) presented at the beginning of this section: South Korea figures at the top among its fellow flying geese, Brazil and India in the middle, with their confusing shapes, Nigeria at the bottom, lost in the darkness of corruption, clientelism and unproductiveness. The argument is clear enough for policymakers across the global South: the South Korean experience is to be emulated, if possible, with the addition of democracy.

The strong denunciation of the Washington Consensus that emerged in the last decade (Stiglitz 2007; Serra and Stiglitz 2008; Chang 2002) is essentially a disagreement about the form through which development is to be achieved—more state activism, less market fundamentalism—not an attempt to redefine the concept of development itself. At their best, therefore, mainstream economic development theories appear as a generous promise of universal convergence at high standards of income and consumption, a win–win game in which poor nations climb up the ladder of development (Sachs 2006, p. 51). Even if developed countries try to kick away the ladder (Chang 2002), developing countries can still resist and claim their moral right to preserve key state capabilities conducive to capital accumulation.

The epistemological and political shortcomings of the concept of development adopted in much of the economic development literature have been identified from different standpoints. To start with, it the concept relies on problematic neoclassical economics presuppositions and methods to assess economic growth (Shaikh 2016; Smith 2012). As famously argued by Amartya Sen, development should not be primarily measured in terms of GDP; instead, it should enhance people's capabilities to 'lead the kind of lives that we have reason to value' (Sen 2000, p. 285). The material ecological limits of development understood as never-ending increase in consumption standards are now evident (Raworth 2017). Furthermore, as convincingly claimed by Naila Kabeer (1994) and Kalpana Wilson (2013), mainstream economic development literature fails to acknowledge properly the crucial role gender and race play in the development process.

These and many other laudable efforts to build theoretical alternatives to mainstream economic understandings of development recognise that development cannot be reduced to the elusive promise of capitalist catch-up. In this sense, they implicitly abide by the foundational ontological premise that development must be defined in relation to competing social perspectives. As I will argue in the fourth section, Trotsky's concept of uneven and combined development explicitly incorporates that ontological premise, providing a coherent re-grounding of development itself.

The mosaic of the word development—dependency theories revisited

M. C. Escher's 'Plane Filling II' (1957, 315 × 370 mm) © 2018 The M. C. Escher Company—The Netherlands. All rights reserved. https://www.mcescher.com

The woodcut 'Plane Filling II' (1957) is an intriguing composition, in which forty bizarre figures mutually determine each other's shapes. Although some similarities can be found and an overall opposition between white and black figures can be discerned, all characters are different. The graphic work as a whole apparently has no background, no space is left empty. No new character can enter the picture, unless as a partition of the already existing figures. Furthermore, no directionality is self-evident. Each character is looking at (and apparently pushing towards) a different direction. Nevertheless, despite being seemingly alive, they cannot go anywhere. Because the shape of one character is determined by its neighbours, whose shape, in turn, is determined by their own neighbours, changes in the shape of one unity affect the whole system. In other words, 'Plane Filling II' depicts an interdependent system, instead of a sequence of stages.

A careful look at the graphic work reveals that not all characters seem to be equally upset by their current positions. The peaceful, meditative man in the centre is apparently not troubled by the half-human beast trying to push him with its head; the white devil on the right border is confidently stepping in the picture, while the feathered monster on the left has a malignant smile on his face. Contrastingly, the white donkey next to it really seems to be trying to escape its uncomfortable position and the fish-tailed dragon on top of the kangaroo is ready to bite anything that

moves. Nothing moves, though, as nothing can move. The units are perfectly determined by the system, either it changes as a whole or it does not change at all.

The consciousness of the limits the international capitalist system casts on the development prospects of underdeveloped or 'peripheral' countries is the starting point of dependency theories.[4] Born in Latin America out of—and in critical opposition to—the pioneering developmentalist researches of the ECLAC,[5] dependency theories became popular in the 1960s in the context of two interrelated historical circumstances. Firstly, there was a disappointment with the early results of post-war development cooperation, announced by President Truman and better exemplified in the Alliance for Progress. Notwithstanding the US' repeated promises of support for capitalist development, the strategic choice to prioritise the reconstruction of Western Europe prompted a sense of injustice among its Latin American allies. With the expressive growth experienced by Europe and the US itself during the golden age of capital expansion in the post-war years (Hobsbawm 1995), it was difficult to avoid the perception that Latin America was not only failing to catch-up, but was actually lagging behind once more, despite the recent industrialisation of its biggest countries. The supposedly dynamic game of development seemed rigged, as everything was changing only to be exactly the same. Just like in Escher's 'Plane Filling II', the place of each country in the world capitalist system appeared to be determined from the start.

Secondly, in 1959, an unexpected revolution triggered by a handful of idealist guerrillas took over one of the Latin American countries with the closest historical ties to the US, where the scarce development possibilities appeared to be the most determined by the dynamics of the US economy (Bambirra 1974). The Cuban Revolution reclaimed the agency of subaltern classes, dramatically proving that the stagiest strategy of subjecting the fight for socialist revolution to the previous development of capitalist productive relations—a perspective embraced by many Latin American communist parties—was essentially wrong. Because capitalist development never fully materialises in dependent countries, the socialist revolution could not wait for the full development of capitalism.

Inspired by these circumstances, a number of critical Latin American sociologists and economists set out to map the condition of dependency and the systemic constraints to development imposed by a subordinated insertion into global capitalism, whose origins were to be ultimately found in colonial times. Most of dependency theories' rich literature was originally written in Spanish and Portuguese, although it came to be popularised in the English-speaking world by the work of Gunder Frank, a German economist trained at the University of Chicago. One of Frank's merits is placing the dependency perspective in relation to international mainstream development

[4] Under the label of dependency theories many different ideas are loosely reunited, therefore I prefer referring to them in the plural. For a comprehensive bibliography on dependency theories put together by one of its most important names, see dos Santos (1998).

[5] The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 1948, under the leadership of the Argentine economist Raul Prebisch, soon becoming the home of Latin American Developmentalism. Key texts of different generations of ECLAC economists were republished in a two-volume collection organised by Bielschowsky (2000). For an overview of ECLAC and dependency theories, including the tense but fruitful relations between the two schools, see Kay (2010).

theories of his time, particularly the modernisation scheme of Rostow, but also the heterodox development ideas of Galbraith and Myrdal (Frank 1970). For Frank, the stagiest perspective of modernisation theory mistook 'underdevelopment' for 'undevelopment', wrongly portraying the contemporary situation of underdeveloped countries as if they were in a previous stage of capitalist development (Frank 1969).

Against this perspective, Frank argues that development and underdevelopment are differentiated results of the expansion of the capitalist system. Therefore, the 'present underdevelopment of Latin America is the result of its centuries-long participation in the process of world capitalist development' (Frank 1969, p. 7). As a conclusion, the only hope for development in dependent countries would be through radical social change, as captured in the title of Frank's book *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (1969).

Frank popularised and synthesised ideas that are fully developed by other dependency theorists, most notably dos Santos (1969, 1970), Marini (1973/2009), and Bambirra (1974, 1978, 2012). Among the merits of this tradition is the clear identification of an 'international and internal structure which leads to […] underdevelopment' (dos Santos 1970, p. 231). Contrary to the idea that a set of wise economic policies could eventually raise countries out of underdevelopment, dependency theories portray development insightfully as a function of class and international relations. Nevertheless, exactly because development and underdevelopment are ultimately determined by the dynamics of world capitalism, dependency theories cannot account for cases of seemingly successful national capitalist development. For the underdogs, development means moving *out* of capitalism. But what about cases in which the transformation of the parts did not challenge the system? What about development *within* capitalism?

This theoretical limitation became evident in the 1970s, as rapid economic growth in peripheral countries—notably in East Asia, but also in Brazil and Mexico—apparently gave reason to stagiest views of development. Instead of being a mosaic of conflicting monsters, world development seemed to be better captured by a directional picture of gradual transformation, as in Escher's 'Sky and Water I'; after all, some geese were finally coming out of the water. The debate about the existence of necessary constraints to capitalist development in peripheral economies came to mark the culmination of dependency theories, dividing this tradition into two irreconcilable sides—with both providing unsatisfactory answers to that problem.

The best expression of the split in the dependency field was the bitter controversy opposing Serra and Cardoso (1978) and Marini (1978) in the pages of the *Mexican Review of Sociology*. Eventually sliding to personal attacks, Serra and Cardoso accuse Marini of 'economic reductionism', as his concepts of 'super-exploitation' and 'sub-imperialism'—seen as necessary traces of peripheral capitalist economies—leave no room for the 'creativity of history' expressed in the actual class struggle. For Serra and Cardoso, conversely, instead of being by definition economically impossible, the capitalist development process in peripheral countries could be positively influenced by the correct definition of 'allied field' in the class struggle, i.e., by progressive class alliances (Serra and Cardoso 1978, p. 53).

Marini, on the other hand, provides a consistent historical materialist analysis based on the labour theory of value to reaffirm the key tenets of Marxist dependency theory, previously presented in his influential book *Dialectics of Dependency*

(Marini 1973/2009). According to him, fundamental differences in the way the working class is exploited in central economies and in peripheral countries create insurmountable difficulties for the appearance of dynamic internal markets in the periphery, thereby reproducing dependency overtime.[6] Super-exploitation of labour (labour being paid below its reproduction cost) and sub-imperialism (subordinated expansion of capitals led by the militaristic states) would therefore be necessary 'monstrous' traits of capitalist development in peripheral countries. For Marini, by denying that the condition of underdevelopment could only be overcome by a complete social revolution, Serra and Cardoso were actually playing the game of the national bourgeoisies and reasserting the false promises of national developmentalism,[7] against which dependency theories rose in the first place.

Although fascinating in itself and pregnant with theoretical insights, the debate led to a dead end. Neither Serra and Cardoso nor Marini could offer convincing alternative concepts of development. Serra and Cardoso were right in criticising Marini's incapacity to explain capitalist development in peripheral countries except as a lifeless reflex of the dynamics of central economies. Marini was right and incredibly prescient in denouncing Serra and Cardoso's solution as a step back to stagiest, elitist views of development.[8]

More recent works coming from the dependency and the world-system analysis tradition suffer from the same limitations. Even when change over the *longue durée* is explicitly incorporated, as in Giovanni Arrighi's account of different hegemonic cycles (Arrighi and Silver 1999; Arrighi 2009), the overarching global logic of capital expansion governs history in such a way that the place of each country in the system is

[6] Marini's argument relies on Marx's distinction between relative and absolute surplus value. While the former is based on a reduction of the relative value of labour, by pushing down the value of the working class' consumption goods (i.e. its reproduction cost), the latter is based on an increase in the absolute exploitation of labour, via increasing working hours, or intensification of work in regular working hours. In both cases, capitalists extract surplus value from the production process, but in the first case, the side effect is the creation of a dynamic mass consumption market for the working class, while the latter leads to a continued depression of internal markets in peripheral countries due to low salaries, sometimes below the cost of reproduction of labour itself (super-exploitation). Furthermore, these two forms of surplus extraction complement one another, as the extraction of relative surplus value in central economies requires the continued reduction of the value of consumption goods produced elsewhere.

[7] '[T]oday, the new ideologists of the Brazilian bourgeoisie [Serra and Cardoso] find themselves obliged to retake this tradition [developmentalism] and try to give credibility to a Brazilian capitalist development in an American or European fashion. In a nutshell, we are facing a neodevelopmentalism, still ashamed of itself, but that will soon lose its inhibitions' (Marini 1978, p. 102–103). This is the first academic use of the term 'neodevelopmentalism', which would become popular three decades later in reference to post-neoliberal governments in Latin America (Antunes de Oliveira 2018).

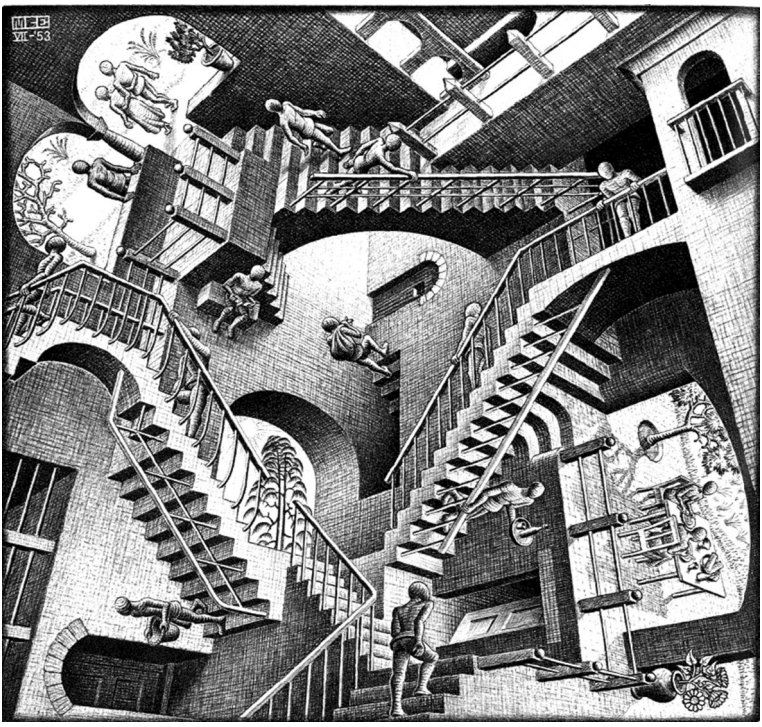
[8] Cardoso's final retreat to an unquestionably developmentalist theoretical position is clear in texts published in the 1990s, in which he dismisses the thesis that peripheral countries would necessarily develop in 'distorted' ways: 'Today we know that it is not true. Countries which were able to manage their economies sensibly to the transformation of modes of production within capitalism, as well as to social issues, have had more favourable trajectories than others. The case of the Asian Tigers is well-known. What remained of "determinism" in the dependency theory, maybe a Marxist trait—and I always criticized determinism—certainly must be fundamentally reformulated' (Cardoso 1995, p. 151). His practice as President actually reveals an even more drastic stepping back, including alliances with traditional oligarchies and the full-scale embrace of neoliberal policies. As summarised by Perry Anderson, '[i]n pursuit of office Cardoso had sacrificed not only his early convictions, which were Marxist and socialist, but over time his intellectual standards' (Anderson 2016).

necessarily determined. Although nations may shift places from time to time, particularly during systemic crises, little space is left for diverging development trajectories.

During an early moment in his career, Escher believed he had found a way of creating a picture without a background, by filling in the entire plane with recognisable figures, as in 'Plane Filling II'. Later, he was convinced that this was not really possible, because the eye cannot capture at the same time all the individual figures in a given picture. As a result, the viewer inevitably chooses some figure to focus on, relegating the others to a subjectively constructed background (Escher 1982, p. 158). A similar thing has happened with both sides of the dependency debate. In the complex reality of peripheral development, productive structures appear to be at the same time in rapid transformation, while not changing substantively at all. By focusing on just one aspect of this contradiction and relegating the other to the background, the analyst misses the whole picture.

But how can the mosaic of world development be apprehended in its totality? In analogy to Escher's reasoning, I am convinced that it cannot. There is, however, a concept of development that indicates a way of approaching the overwhelmingly differentiated yet interconnected multiplicity of world history systematically. I shall now turn to this.

Where is the top of the stairway? Uneven and combined development



M. C. Escher's 'Relativity' (1953, 277 × 292 mm) © 2018 The M. C. Escher Company—The Netherlands. All rights reserved. https://www.mcescher.com

In the lithograph 'Relativity' (1953), we can see a system of stairs. At first glance, three main stairways dominate the picture, forming an inverted triangle at its centre. It takes no more than one second to find many other stairs—some shorter, some longer, some apparently coming from or going to nowhere, others leading to pleasant and sunny plateaus, where food is served. All the stairs start and finish at different points, no convergence is suggested. The stairs do not lead to the same place, yet they are placed in relation to each other. To complicate matters, the stairways to the left and to the right of the big plant behind the arch are actually two-folded. How are we supposed to know which of the two sides is the right one? Where is the top of the stairs? Where is the top of the picture, anyway?

The stairs are but one of the two key elements in this lithograph. They form the setting against which the action happens. The second element, essential to give meaning to this setting, are the people. Escher depicts similar, but different kinds of people. Some are working, as is the case of the person going downstairs with a bottle on a tray. Some may be doing something illegal, as in the case of the person walking up the dark stairs with a suspicious bag. The couple in the top left corner appear to be simply wandering in a garden, while the person next to the window in the top right corner is quietly watching those below him. The artist seems to be representing a simple idea, captured in the very title of this artwork. The top of each stairway is essentially a relative place. It is to be defined in relation to the people, in reference to someone.

The dynamic non-convergence suggested in 'Relativity' contrasts with the linearity of 'Sky and Water I' and the frozen tension of 'Plane Filling II'. While, as I have argued, 'Sky and Water I' can be taken as a representation of regular, linear processes of material change, and 'Plane Filling II' captures the interdependent nature of world development, the idea of change and interdependence that Escher invites us to imagine in 'Relativity' is qualitatively different. The stairs are interconnected and each of them obviously has a top and a bottom, but the picture is deliberately made to be completed by the viewer's eye—more precisely, by her choice of perspective.

This is, I claim, the core idea captured in the concept of uneven and combined development. Development is uneven, in the double sense that creates and reinforces material differences *within* and *across* societies. Furthermore, development is combined in a double sense as well, because productive structures in each society change in relation to foreign pressures and opportunities, resulting in amalgamated forms that can be witnessed in any society at any particular time. As a consequence, there is no univocal form of development that should be universally desired. Development for some could mean underdevelopment for others—in the same way that the top of the stairs in Escher's 'Relativity' depends on which character the viewer chooses to take as reference.

The perspective of development just described derives from the theoretical and historical work of Trotsky (1906/1986, 1931/2011, 1932/2008), the revolutionary leader who played a key role in the Russian Revolution prior to the ascension of Stalin and also one of the most creative and prolific Marxist writers of the twentieth century. It originally appeared as part of a theoretical-political solution to the lack of

a consistent concept of development in historical materialism, which generated difficulties similar to those previously identified in linear views of development.[9]

In fact, in Marx's writings, different concepts of development are to be found. As noticed by Wallerstein, 'like all great thinkers, there was the Marx who was the prisoner of his social location and the Marx, the genius, who could on occasion see from a wider vantage point. The former Marx generalized from British history. The latter Marx is the one who has inspired a critical conceptual framework of social reality' (Wallerstein 1984, p. 393). Accordingly, in passages such as the much quoted introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx explicitly announces a stagiest scheme of social evolution going from the 'Asiatic' to the 'modern bourgeois' modes of production, concluding that inevitable contradictions in the latter would bring about its own destruction (Marx 1859/2010, p. 263). In the preface to the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx is once again clear when alluding to the 'iron laws' of capitalist production: 'the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future' (Marx 1867/2010, p. 9).

Although some authors are quick in conflating this economically deterministic view of development with Marxism *tout court* (Nisbet 1969; Landes 1998), other perspectives of development also appear in Marx's own works. Michael Löwy (2010) remarks that, when analysing the political conjuncture in specific countries, such as Spain, Germany and Russia, Marx often realises that in concrete cases the national bourgeoisie may be unable to accomplish the revolutionary task expected from it, resting on the workers' shoulders the only hope for successful revolutionary uprisings. Supported by an extensive and careful reading of Marx's published and unpublished works, Lucia Pradella argues that the theory of value in Marx explains systematic differences in development trajectories among societies, partially anticipating Marini's historical materialist dependency theory (2015, p. 152). Ben Selwyn highlights Marx's calls for the emancipation of the working class as a form of labour-centred development, inasmuch as 'Marx argued for the need to create an alternative political economic system organized to achieve maximum collective and individual fulfilment, based on the "absolute working out of [her] creative potentialities", where "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"' (Selwyn 2014, p. 207).

Today, linear views of development are largely rejected by most Marxist authors. In the first eary decades of the twentieth century, nevertheless, stagiest interpretations of Marx were dominant. In that context, the socialist revolutionary attempts in Russia—a mainly agrarian absolutist monarchy full of feudal vestiges—seemed a complete material impossibility. Against this perspective, Trotsky's critique of linear views of development appeared for the first time in the pamphlet *Results and Prospects*, published in the aftermath of the failed 1905 revolution:

[9] The lack of a consistent concept of development in Marx can be seen as a consequence of the lack of theorisation of 'the international' in classical sociology (Rosenberg 2006; Makki 2015). No consistent concept of development is possible without a proper theorisation of international relations, as the relational character of development is missed.

> Is it true that, in Russia, the weakness of capitalist liberalism inevitably means the weakness of the labour movement? Is it true, for Russia, that there cannot be an independent labour movement until the bourgeoisie has conquered power? It is sufficient merely to put these questions to see what a hopeless formalism lies concealed beneath the attempt to convert an historically-relative remark of Marx's into a supra-historical axiom. (Trotsky 1906/1986, p. 64)

Although not explicitly formulated in a concept of development yet, Trotsky's perception that material changes in Russian productive structures unevenly affected different classes is clear enough. Instead of creating an increasingly powerful bourgeoisie, the recent industrialisation of Russia gave birth to a small but highly self-conscious working class—at the same time as reinforcing Russian absolutism *vis-à-vis* its external enemies. The insights of *Results and Prospects* would be expanded into a 'systematic, coherent and rigorous' (Löwy 2010, p. 85) theory of the dynamic of social revolutions in backward countries in *The Permanent Revolution*, published in exile twenty-five years later, amidst Trotsky's controversy with Stalin regarding the (im)possibility of socialism in one single country. Building on his previous texts, the best formulation of Trotsky's concept of development appeared in the *History of the Russian Revolution*, when the author applied his theoretical framework to explain how the Russian Revolution succeeded despite Russia's general backwardness:

> The laws of history have nothing in common with pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness, thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development*—by which we mean a drawing together of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class. (Trotsky 1932/2008, p. 5)

Unevenness and combination—the two key features of development—are clearly spelt out in this paragraph. Taking them into account, Trotsky is able to take a decisive step out of the 'pedantic schematism' of linear views of development. Societies were not expected to follow a clear and predetermined road towards development anymore. The necessarily interactive nature of development allowed for 'leaps' and resulted in mixed forms of development.

Is Trotsky's theoretical innovation—the uncovering of the inherently uneven and combined character of development—sufficient to redefine the concept of development in a way that overcomes the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy? Apparently not, one could say. Indeed, in the very same paragraph of the *History of the Russian Revolution* where he challenges linear views of development, Trotsky makes arguably Eurocentric references to 'backward' cultures and the 'cultural class' of countries. The overarching notion of an unfolding Western modernity necessarily spreading through the globe remains unchallenged. Sooner or later—with or without

leaps and whips of 'external necessity'—capitalism would end up creating a world after its own image. In the end, Trotsky's 'law' of uneven and combined development would only replace one pre-determined view of history for another—perhaps more complex, but not less deterministic or Eurocentric.

Two different versions of this critique have been proposed by contemporary authors, sceptical about the renewed interest the concept of uneven and combined development is attracting, particularly in the fields of international relations and international historical sociology.[10] The law-like character of uneven and combined development was quickly picked out by Teschke (2014), who takes issue with its conception as a 'causal and transhistorical IR theory'. According to him, the focus on an overarching logic of development empties agency, rendering uneven and combined development incapable of providing concrete historical explanations. '[S]ince the theoretical premises of UCD—development, unevenness, combination—are explicitly evacuated of social agency and socio-historical content, it cannot, despite its stated objective of explaining interactive change over time, account for change, unevenness, and differences.' (Teschke 2014, p. 33) Because of its lack of specificity and its disregard to agency, uneven and combined development 'is fundamentally barred from explaining not only social change, but development itself—not to mention non-development and de-development' (ibid.). Ashman (2009), Davidson (2009), Kiely (2012) and Rioux (2014) make similar points, taking issue particularly with the conception of uneven and combined development as a trans-historic law and its application to pre-capitalist inter-societal dynamics.

Another version of essentially the same critique was proposed recently by decolonial authors (Blaney and Tickner 2017a). Instead of directly criticising the law-like or trans-historic character of uneven and combined development, they aimed at the very concept of development, perceived as irremediably Eurocentric. For Blaney and Tickner, 'UCD remains grounded in an ontology of development.' Exactly because of the centrality of 'development', UCD necessarily fails to effectively account for multiplicity, as 'development is part of the colonial/capitalist political and economic grammar and knowledge production central to and constitutive of cultural encounters as moments of violence in which alternative ontologies (or worlds) are subordinated or destroyed'. Hence, UCD explicit negation of a linear logic of

[10] The concept of uneven and combined development—now under the acronym UCD—was revisited and reappropriated by Justin Rosenberg as the cornerstone of an alternative perspective to the neorealist paradigm in international relations. Neorealism, as it is widely accepted, confines geopolitical and sociological phenomena into two different and incommensurable realms, thereby divorcing international relations from other social sciences (Waltz 1979). Drawing on UCD, Rosenberg found a simple yet ingenious way around this theoretical problem. Avoiding the standard Marxist procedure of reducing inter-societal relations to simple expressions of the class struggle—which would represent not a real bridging between geopolitical and sociological phenomena but the subordination of the first to the second—the author finds in the principle of unevenness, understood as 'the most general law of the historical process', the sociological origin of political multiplicity. Hence, international relations can be understood sociologically as the uneven and combined development of multiple societies in permanent interaction. In Rosenberg's words: 'the international, quite simply, […] is nothing other than the highest expression of uneven and combined development. This is its sociological definition' (Rosenberg 2006, p. 328). After Rosenberg's pioneering work, a number of writers have been exploring the potentialities of UCD. Outstanding examples include Matin (2013a), Morton (2013), Anievas (2011), Anievas and Matin (2016).

development would not be enough: '[t]he ladder of development may be tipped a bit, but not brought down' (Blaney and Tickner 2017a, p. 74).

Although certainly valuable as pre-emptive efforts to avoid the enshrining of uneven and combined development as yet another version of a-historical Western laws of history, these critiques miss the point by not taking into account the full consequences of Trotsky's ideas. In fairness, these consequences were not clear in Trotsky's own writings and were obfuscated by the author's outdated choice of words. Nevertheless, the contemporary literature is starting to unleash the full theoretical and political potential of Trotsky's revolutionary concept of development.

To start with, the law-like character of uneven and combined development have been largely exaggerated by Teschke. Instead of a necessary causal law, capable of predicting concrete developmental outcomes, uneven and combined development is better understood as a *concept* of development, i.e., a definition of what development is. Of course, concepts can also be seen as 'laws', in the rather limited sense that they rule what shall be included under their representation. As such, uneven and combined development can be captured by the following formula: development is always uneven and combined. Or, in other words, material transformation in productive structures always happen in relation to external pressures and opportunities, resulting in differentiated gains and losses for different social groups.

These apparently law-like formulations, however, are purely analytical. They just spell out what was already presupposed under the concept of development. No material prediction can be made solely based on the concept of development, just like no prediction can be made based on any concept on its own. Nevertheless, exploring alternative understandings of key concepts—like development, production or class, to mention just a few—helps to craft better historical narratives and to frame political action. The point of a conceptual definition is exactly shedding light on the constitutive parts of the concept under analysis, directing the attention to crucial aspects that have been previously ignored. In this sense, the sentence 'development is uneven and combined' belongs to the same category as E. P. Thomson's claim that 'classes' are 'formed in the process of conflict and struggle' (Wood 1982, p. 47). They are both general conceptual definitions of what shall be understood as 'classes' or 'development'. Classes are that thing that arise from conflict and struggle; development is that thing that arises from unevenness and combination.

If development can be defined as the outcome of unevenness and combination, then the concrete historical expressions of development go much beyond the particular form observed in the so-called 'developed' countries. Here is the exact point where the dichotomy developed/underdeveloped is dissolved by Trotsky's insight. No wonder uneven and combined development cannot account for 'non-development' or 'de-development' (Teschke 2014, p. 33). When uneven and combined development is brought to its full consequences, it becomes clear that there are no such things. The negation of absolute forms of development logically implies the negation of absolute forms of 'non-development'. Instead, a radically perspectived notion of development admits variegated forms of development, involving gains and losses for different social groups. What appears as development from one perspective is actually underdevelopment from another—just like the top of the stairs

in Escher's picture may be in different places, depending on who is taken as a reference.

It shall now be clear that Blaney and Tickner underestimate the role of multiplicity in uneven and combined development. Since unevenness is inscribed in the very definition of development, not only there are potentially many ways to achieve 'development', but, much more radically, different peoples and social groups can create many alternative 'developments'. In other words, uneven and combined development is not about 'tipping' the ladder of development (Blaney and Tickner 2017a, p. 74)—rather, it is about imagining multiple, non-converging stairs, as represented in Escher's 'Relativity'.

The mind-boggling vision of the totality depicted by the artist—inaccessible to any of the people actually represented in the picture—can be taken as a glimpse into the 'pluriverse' evoked by Blaney and Tickner as an alternative to the universe of colonial modernity (Blaney and Tickner 2017a, b). As noticed by Rosenberg (2017), the very fact that Blaney and Tickner refer to the pluriverse in the singular—as in 'a pluriverse'—indicates that some form of unity is still presupposed over the overwhelming multiplicity of human social existence. Indeed, the stairs of development are multiple, but they are placed in relation to each other, forming a whole that can only be intuited through an extraordinary act of imagination. Even though we, concrete historical people, with our inevitable positionalities, can never fully access the totality of the pluriverse, imagining it is paramount if any form of fruitful exchange between societies and cultures is possible. The concept of uneven and combined development offers exactly this kind of grand imagination, allowing us to grasp 'the human world as simultaneously multiple and yet—by virtue of its interconnections—making up a single whole' (Rosenberg 2017, p. 98).

In as much as all development is uneven and combined, the very rise of capitalist modernity must be understood as an expression of uneven and combined development. The mammoth challenge of rewriting the history of the rise of the West from an uneven and combined perspective was recently met by Anievas and Nisancioglu in their landmark book *How the West Came to Rule* (2015). As an alternative to Wallerstein's world-system analysis and Brenner's political Marxist thesis, the authors reclaim the agency of extra-European sources of the breakthrough of capitalism in Western Europe and the subsequent 'Great Divergence' between the West and the rest of the world. Anievas and Nisancioglu's book is an outstanding example of how the concept of uneven and combined development can be used fruitfully to inform historical narratives that empty the clear-cut dichotomy of development and backwardness. As the authors show, the developmental trajectory of each society—both in the centre and in the periphery—can be analysed in terms of their relations with other societies, always resulting in mixed and amalgamated social formations.

In a nutshell, the contemporary formulation of the concept of uneven and combined development offers a useful alternative to unidirectional views of development, calling into question the dichotomy developed/underdeveloped. Instead of a linear, stagiest and Eurocentric perspective of development—which impels global South countries to emulate the capitalist institutions of the global North in the hope of one day becoming 'developed'—we can devise a concept of development capable of apprehending differentiated social change within and across societies.

As in Escher's 'Relativity', the first step to making sense of the seemingly contradictory global picture of development is embracing a perspective. The working and the ruling classes—to mention only one of the most visible opposed material perspectives—see the top of the stairway in quite different places. The real challenge for oppressed people—be their oppression defined in terms of class, race, gender, nationality or any other form—is, therefore, not reaching the top of the stairs per se, as if development were unproblematically defined. The challenge is reaching the top of the stairs according to a *self-defined* perspective. Hence, the radically perspectived view that emerges from the concept of uneven and combined development allows for different struggles for emancipation to also claim the character of struggles for development.

The original example of a successful struggle informed by an uneven and combined perspective of development has just completed hundred years. During the Russian Revolution of October 1917, the Bolsheviks refused the guidance of the weak national bourgeoisie, took into their own hands the leadership of the movement and accomplished a thoughtful transformation of the Russian state (Trotsky 1932/2008). Anti-colonial uprisings reveal a similar refusal to abide by the guidance of top-down views of development imposed by colonialist countries and the international bureaucracy of development agencies. 'Come, comrades, the European game is finally over,' wrote Franz Fanon. 'We can do anything today provided we do not ape Europe, provided we are not obsessed with catching-up with Europe.' (Fanon 2004, p. 236). For Fanon's empowering call of emancipation to make sense, differentiated developmental trajectories must be possible.

A contemporary example of the potential of radically perspectived views of development to inform emancipatory social struggles from below can be found in the new political discourse emerging within the post-developmentalist left in Brazil (Antunes de Oliveira 2018). Refusing the classical developmentalist conflation between growth and development, the real priorities of historically oppressed social groups are brought to the centre of the political priorities. Guilherme Boulos, the young leader of the homeless workers movement puts it clearly in a recent interview:

> The development model cannot aim only at economic growth. Some people believe that making the GDP grow by 5% a year is the solution for all problems. It is not like that. The period when Brazil had the highest economic growth rates in its recent history—in the last 50 years—was the economic miracle of the military dictatorship. It was a period of deep income concentration, of environmental degradation, of bulldozing indigenous and *quilombola* [slave-descendant] populations. This is not the model that we want. We want growth with income distribution, environmental sustainability, and respect to our peoples (Boulos 2018).

Instead of a denial of development, this political statement explicitly calls into question the established economic development wisdom and reframes development according to the perspective of specific social groups. The concept of uneven and combined development represents the theoretical and ontological expression of insurgent, bottom-up development discourses such as these.

Conclusion: development beyond the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy

Across the global South, the political consequences of development strategies based on simplistic, linear concept of development are ever renewed calls for sacrifices directed towards oppressed social groups. Low salaries, long working days, poor social protection, job insecurity and even violent, direct instances of dispossession are justified as transient side-effects of capitalist modernity. Guaranteeing favourable conditions for capital accumulation is considered paramount to development. The sacrifices of today will pay off when development finally arrives, development economists say. Unfortunately, they forget to specify for whom this development will be. The other side of the same coin are unsatisfactory historical narratives of development trajectories, which always blame transient and circumstantial events for the permanent underachievement of peripheral countries.

In this article, I have argued that it is possible to imagine alternative concepts of development. Dependency theories have represented the world capitalist system as a mosaic where nations mutually determine their development possibilities. As a consequence, the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries is expected to be permanently reproduced. Although insightful as a critique to mainstream development theories, this perspective has limited explanatory and horizons, failing to account for cases of material transformation within capitalism and to inform struggles against concrete cases of exploitation.

The recent reframing of Trotsky's concept of uneven and combined development opens up promising new ways to analyse historical cases of development, leading to new forms of intervention in social disputes. Because development is never even, the very direction of development—involving the definition of specific development goals—is open to contestation from below. The powerful banner of development—for too long monopolised by national modernising elites—can finally be democratised.

Acknowledgements I would like to thank the participants of the Cornell-Sussex Development Workshop for comments on an early version of this paper. I offer my special thanks to Dr Louise Wise and Professors Justin Rosenberg, Ben Selwyn and Fouad Makki.

References

Acemoglu, Daron. 2009. *Introduction to Modern Economic Growth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Anderson, Perry (2016) 'Crisis in Brazil', *London Review of Books*, 21 April.

Anievas, Alexander. 2011. Capital, States, and Conflict : International Political Economy and Crisis, 1914–1945, PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge. http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.609603. Accessed 26 Feb 2019.

Anievas, Alexander, and Kamran Matin. 2016. *Historical Sociology and World History*. London: Rli.

Anievas, Alexander, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu. 2015. *How the West came to rule: the geopolitical origins of capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Antunes de Oliveira, Felipe (2018) The Dilemmas of the Brazilian Left. *Monthly Review Online*, July.

Arrighi, Giovanni. 2009. *The Long Twentieth Century: Money*. Power and the Origins of Our Time, London: Verso.
Arrighi, Giovanni, and Beverly Silver. 1999. *Chaos and Governance in The Modern World System*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Ashman, Sam. 2009. Capitalism, Uneven and Combined Development and the Transhistoric. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22 (1): 29–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570802683896.
Bambirra, Vania. 2012. *O Capitalismo Dependente Latino-Americano [Dependent Latin American Capitalism]*. Florianópolis: Insular.
Bambirra, Vania. 1978. *Teoría de La Dependencia – Una Anticrítica [Dependency Theory – An Anti-Critique]*. Mexico DF: ERA.
Bambirra, Vania. 1974. *La Revolución Cubana: una interpretación [The Cuban Revolution: An Interpretation]*. Mexico, DF: Nuestro Tiempo.
Barro, Robert J. 1991. Economic Growth in a Cross Section of Countries. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 106 (2): 407–443. https://doi.org/10.2307/2937943.
Barro, Robert J., and Xavier Sala-I-Martin. 1995. *Economic Growth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Bielschowsky, Ricardo (ed.). 2000. *Cinqüenta Anos de Pensamento na CEPAL [Fifty Years of ECLAC Thought]*. Rio de Janeiro: Record.
Blaney, David L., and Arlene B. Tickner. 2017. International Relations in the Prison of Colonial Modernity. *International Relations* 31 (1): 71–75.
Blaney, David L., and Arlene B. Tickner. 2017. Worlding, Ontological Politics and the Possibility of a Decolonial IR. *Millennium* 45 (3): 293–311. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829817702446.
Boulos, Guilherme. 2018. Interviewed by *Isto É* Magazine., 19 June, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzA5Tz6vHLs. Accessed 26 Feb 2019.
Cardoso, Fernando H. 1995. Desenvolvimento: O Mais Políticos Dos Temas Econômicos. *Revista de Economia Política* 15 (4): 148–155.
Chang, Ha-Joon. 2002. *Kicking Away the Ladder?: Economic Development in Historical Perspective*. London: Anthem World Economics, Anthem.
Davidson, Neil. 2009. Putting the Nation Back into 'the International". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22 (1): 9–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570802683920.
De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. 1988. Um Discurso Sobre as Ciências Na Transição Para Uma Ciência Pós-Moderna [A Speach About Sciences in the Transition to a Pós-Modern Science]. *Estudos Avançados* 2 (2): 46–71. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-40141988000200007.
De Sousa Santos, Boaventura (ed.). 2007. *Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon*. London and New York: Verso.
De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. 2014. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. London: Routledge.
De Vries, Pieter. 2007. Don't Compromise Your Desire for Development! A Lacanian/Deleuzian Rethinking of the Anti-Politics Machine. *Third World Quarterly* 28 (1): 25–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590601081765.
Dos Santos, Theotonio. 1998. Por Uma Bibliografia Sobre a Teoria Da Dependência [For a Bibliography of Dependency Theory]. *Estudos Avançados* 12 (33): 137–146. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-40141998000200010.
Dos Santos, Theotonio. 1970. The Structure of Dependence. *American Economic Review* 60 (2): 231–236.
Dos Santos, Theotonio. 1969. *Socialismo o fascismo: dilema latinoamericano [Socialism or Fascism: the Latin American Dilema]*. Santiago: Ediciones Prensa Latinoamericana.
Escher, M.C. 1982. *Escher: With a Complete Catalogue of the Graphic Works*. London: Thames and Hudson.
Escobar, Arturo. 1995. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Escobar, Arturo. 1992. Imagining a post-development era? Critical thought, development and social movements. *Social Text* 31/32 (January): 20–56. https://doi.org/10.2307/466217.
Esteva, Gustavo. 1992. Development. In *The Development Dictionary*, ed. Wolfgang Sachs, 1–23. London: Zed.
Fanon, Frantz. 2004. *The Wretched of the Earth*, edited by Richard Philcox, New York: Grove Press.
Frank, Andre Gunder. 1970. The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Even Heretics Remain Bound by Traditional Thought. *Economic and Political Weekly* 5 (29/31): 1177–1184.

Frank, André Gunder. 1969. *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution: Essays on the Development of Underdevelopment and the Immediate Enemy*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
Hobsbawm, Eric. 1995. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*. London: Abacus.
Kabeer, Naila. 1994. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. London: Verso.
Kay, Cristóbal. 2010. *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*, Routledge Library Editions, Development, London: Routledge.
Kiely, Ray. 2012. Spatial Hierarchy And/Or Contemporary Geopolitics: What Can and Can't Uneven and Combined Development Explain? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 25 (2): 231–248. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2012.678299.
Kohli, Atul. 2004. *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
Landes, David S. 1998. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are so Rich and Some so Poor*. New York: W.W. Norton.
Löwy, Michael. 2010. *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution*. Chicago: Haymarket Book.
Makki, Fouad. 2015. Reframing Development Theory: The Significance of the Idea of Uneven and Combined Development. *Theory and Society* 44 (5): 471–497. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-015-9252-9.
Marini, Ruy Mauro. 1973/2009. 'Dialética de la Dependencia', in Carlos Eduardo Martins, ed., *América latina, dependencia y globalización*, second revised edition: 107–151. Pensamiento crítico latinoamericano, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Ed.
Marini, Ruy Mauro. 1978. Las Razones Del Neodesarrollismo (Respuesta a F. H. Cardoso Y J. Serra). *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 40 (January): 57–106. https://doi.org/10.2307/3539683.
Marx, Karl. 1859/2010. 'Preface', *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in: *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Volume 29*: 261–265. London: Lawrence & Wishart Electric Book. http://www.hekmatist.com/Marx%20Engles/Marx%20&%20Engels%20Collected%20Works%20Volume%2029_%20M%20-%20Karl%20Marx.pdf.
Marx, Karl. 1867/2010. 'Preface', *Kapital*, in: *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Volume 35*: 7–11. London: Lawrence & Wishart Electric Book. http://www.hekmatist.com/Marx%20Engles/Marx%20&%20Engels%20Collected%20Works%20Volume%2035_%20K%20-%20Karl%20Marx.pdf.
Matin, Kamran. 2013a. *Recasting Iranian Modernity: International Relations and Social Change*. London: Iranian Studies, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
Matin, Kamran. 2013. Redeeming the Universal: Postcolonialism and the Inner Life of Eurocentrism. *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (2): 353–377. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066111425263.
Morton, Adam David. 2013. *Revolution and State in Modern Mexico: The Political Economy of Uneven Development*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
Nisbet, Robert A. 1969. *Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Pradella, Lucia. 2015. *Globalization and the Critique of Political Economy: New Insights from Marx's Writings, Routledge Frontiers of Political Economy 192*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
Rahnema, Majid, and Victoria Bawtree (eds.). 1997. *The Post-Development Reader*. London: Zed Books.
Raworth, Kate. 2017. *Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. London: Chelsea Green Publishing.
Rioux, Sébastien. 2014. Mind the (Theoretical) Gap: On the Poverty of International Relations Theorising of Uneven and Combined Development. *Global Society*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2014.983047.
Rist, Gilbert. 2002. *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*. London: Zed.
Rosenberg, Justin. 2017. The Elusive International. *International Relations* 31 (1): 90–103. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117817691353.
Rosenberg, Justin. 2013. Kenneth Waltz and Leon Trotsky: Anarchy in the Mirror of Uneven and Combined Development. *International Politics* 50 (2): 183–230. https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2013.6.
Rosenberg, Justin. 2013. The "philosophical Premises" of Uneven and Combined Development. *Review of International Studies* 39 (3): 569–597. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210512000381.
Rosenberg, Justin. 2006. Why Is There No International Historical Sociology? *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (3): 307–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066106067345.
Rostow, W.W. 1959. The Stages of Economic Growth. *Economic History Review, New Series* 12 (1): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.2307/2591077.

Sachs, Jeffrey. 2006. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York and London: Penguin.
Sachs, Wolfgang. 1992. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed.
Sala-I-Martin, Xavier X. 1997. I Just Ran Two Million Regressions. *American Economic Review* 87 (2): 178.
Selwyn, Benjamin. 2014. *The Global Development Crisis*. London: Polity Press.
Sen, Amartya. 2000. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf.
Serra, José, and Fernando H. Cardoso. 1978. Las Desventuras de La Dialéctica de La Dependencia. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 40 (January): 9–55. https://doi.org/10.2307/3539682.
Serra, Narcís, and Joseph E. Stiglitz. 2008. *The Washington Consensus Reconsidered: Towards a New Global Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Shaikh, Anwar. 2016. *Capitalism: Competition, conflict, crises*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Smith, John. 2012. The GDP Illusion. *Monthly Review* 64 (3): 86–102.
Solow, Robert M. 1956. A Contribution to the Theory of Economic Growth. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 70 (1): 65–94. https://doi.org/10.2307/1884513.
Stiglitz, Joseph E. 2007. *Making Globalization Work: The next Steps to Global Justice*. London: Penguin.
Swan, T.W. 1956. Economic Growth and Capital Accumulation. *Economic Record* 32 (2): 334–361. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4932.1956.tb00434.x.
Teschke, Benno. 2014. 'IR Theory. *Historical Materialism, and the False Promise of International Historical Sociology', Spectrum: Journal of Global Studies* 6 (1): 1–66.
Trotsky, Leon. 1906/1986. *Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects*. New York: Pathfinder Press.
Trotsky, Leon. 1931/2011. *The Permanent Revolution, translated by Max Schachtman*. Kapaau, Hawaii: Gutenberg Publishers.
Trotsky, Leon. 1932/2008. *History of the Russian Revolution*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
Truman, Harry. 1949. Inaugural Address. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13282. Accessed 26 Feb 2019.
UNDP. 2005. *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*. London and Sterling: Earthscan.
Van Der Pijl, Kees. 2001. Restoring the Radical Imagination in Political Economy. *New Political Economy* 6 (3): 380–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13563460126897.
Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1984. The Development of the Concept of Development. *Sociological Theory* 2 (January): 102–116. https://doi.org/10.2307/223344.
Williamson, John. 2004. The Strange History of the Washington Consensus. *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics* 27 (2): 195–206.
Wilson, Kalpana. 2013. *Race, Racism and Development: Interrogating History, Discourse and Practice*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
Wood, Ellen Meiksins. 1982. The Politics of Theory and the Concept of Class: E. P. Thompson and His Critics. *Studies in Political Economy* 9: 45–75.
Ziai, Aram (ed.). 2007. *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Felipe Antunes de Oliveira is a Research Associate at the University of Sussex. His previous publications appeared in The Monthly Review, Globalizations and Latin American Perspectives. Although he is a Brazilian Civil Servant, his views do not reflect the official position of the Brazilian Government.