

The lexicon of development: a quantitative history of the language of development studies¹

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to examine the history of the language of development studies in order to elucidate the nature of its terminology. The history of the principal terms of development studies (economic/sustainable/human development, Third World, and North/[Global] South) is examined by way of a quantitative study of the frequency of the usage of these terms during the twentieth century based on a dataset of millions of digitised books made available by Google Books. The author argues that the results of the study provide empirical support to the claim that the language of development studies is an historical-ideological construction which is embedded in the structure of the world economy.

Keywords: development studies, language, ngrams.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es examinar la historia del lenguaje de los estudios del desarrollo para explicar la naturaleza de su terminología. La historia de los principales términos de los estudios del desarrollo (desarrollo económico/sostenible/humano, Tercer Mundo y Norte/Sur [Global]) se examina a través del estudio cuantitativo de la frecuencia del uso de esos términos durante el siglo xx. El estudio se apoya en una base de datos de millones de libros digitalizados facilitada por Google Books. El autor sostiene que los resultados del estudio proporcionan apoyo empírico al argumento que el lenguaje de los estudios del desarrollo es una construcción histórico-ideológica que forma parte de la estructura de la economía mundial.

Palabras clave: teoría del desarrollo, lenguaje, ngrams.

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1 Introduction

«Words are instruments that people are free to adapt to any use,
provided they make clear their intentions.»

Claude Lévi-Strauss, quoted in Braudel (1987: 3).

Language is commonly understood to consist of two elements: the grammar, which defines the rules that regulate the structure of sentences, and the lexicon, which consists of the words used in these sentences. Research into the relation between these two elements suggests that lexicon and grammar develop synchronously; the evolution of these forms evinces a reciprocal and non-linear logic rather than a linear process of «developmental ordering». Grammar and lexicon are viewed not as separate elements, but rather as two parts of a «unified system» (Hollich et al 2000; Dixon and Marchman 2007). Shifting to the realm of social theory, the relation between the lexicon and grammar provides a useful analogy for the relation between ideas and institutional structure in human society. My objective here is to examine the nature of the relation between these elements by way of the application of quantitative methodology to the study of a specific aspect of contemporary social consciousness: the language of development studies. Specifically, the study focuses on what has been labelled the lexicon of development theory (Cornwall 2007): the terms that are used to convey the principal ideas of this body of knowledge.

At the heart of this analysis is an old observation: that social consciousness and social being are two elements of a unified whole, a totality, each element being conditioned by the other. This has been a key element of Marxist, critical and institutionalist theory. In Marxist terms, this argument is commonly known as the «base-superstructure» theory, derived from the preface to Karl Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859). The complex inter-relation between social consciousness and the social relations of production was a theme developed in subsequent Marxist studies (Lukács 1968; Gramsci 1971; Williams 1973; Harvey 2010). These ideas were also reflected in other traditions of social theory, perhaps most notably in institutionalist theory. In an early work by one of the forefathers of the institutionalist tradition, Thorstein Veblen (1899) analysed the relation between what he called «conspicuous consumption», culture and the underlying socio-economic institutions. The spirit of this analysis was continued in the work of other institutionalist theorists (North 2005; Hodgson 2006). Various authors in related traditions of the social sciences such as Critical Studies (Habermas 1984; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002) and International Relations (Wendt 1987) have made similar observations. These authors all share in common a number of premises. They all

emphasise the relation between institutional structure and ideas. They all emphasise the importance of the historical contextualisation of this relation (a foundational element of Marx's historical materialism). And they all emphasise its ideological nature. With a few exceptions (Williams 1958; Harvey 1989) these hypotheses have remained largely theoretical, lacking empirical (especially quantitative) confirmation. This study has been undertaken partly to fill this gap. By ascertaining the frequency of usage of these terms in the literature over the long-run, I aim to provide empirical support to the claim that the language of development studies is an historical-ideological construction that is embedded in the structure of the world economy.

The second part of this essay introduces the lexicon and provides a brief overview of some of the dominant definitions of these terms. The third part provides a brief history of the lexicon with the intention of highlighting the key historical events associated with these terms. I then review some of the principal criticisms of the lexicon and consider the validity of these criticisms. The final part draws some conclusions from the quantitative examination of the lexicon.

1.1. A note regarding methodology

The quantitative part of this study uses excerpts of the dataset of the Google Books Ngram Viewer (available from <http://books.google.com/ngrams/datasets>). I have taken the raw data for English 1-grams and 2-grams dated 20120701, and determined the frequency of usage of the terms examined here from this data (the terms are: economic/sustainable/human development, underdeveloped/developing countries, Third World, global south, globalization, emerging economies). The results are displayed in the figures in section 3. The Y axis of each figure shows the frequency of usage, effectively the total number of times the term appears in the sample divided by the total number of ngrams. This approach suffers from two principal problems. Firstly, the data are not complete; the dataset represents only six per cent of books published (approximately 8,116,746) (Lin et al 2012). These books, however, include the principle works of the social sciences, and therefore this sample is adequate for the purposes of gaining a general idea of the historical usage trends of the terms examined here. Secondly, the data after the year 2000 may reflect changes in the corpus compositions resulting from the creation of Google Books in the year 2004 and therefore may not be completely representative of actual usage trends (Michel et al 2011). The results for the years 2000-2008 must therefore be scrutinised with this in mind.

A word about the selection of the terms used in this study. I have included a group of terms that I believe to be representative

of the lexicon of development. However this selection is by no means definitive. As this study argues, the lexicon is historical and thus subject to change alongside the evolution of contemporary social consciousness and social being. For methodological purposes, however, it is necessary to restrict the size of the sample used here. As mentioned, the data include all words within the n-gram corpus. Searching within this corpus detects all uses of a specific term, including those used outside of the context of development studies. The selection of the terms used in the sample is therefore made in an effort to minimise the risk of the inclusion of unrepresentative or anachronistic uses. For example, the word development (or the individual adjectives developed, developing, and underdeveloped) is not included due to its frequent use in unrelated contexts (such as the natural sciences). The inclusion of terms such as *economic* development, or developed/developing/underdeveloped *countries*, however, while still containing a margin of error, lessens this risk of misrepresentation.

2 The Nature of the Lexicon

In any scientific endeavour, concreteness is essential. Progress cannot be made unless theoretical bases are well defined and general consensus is attained regarding fundamental concepts. In the spirit of concreteness, therefore, here I revise a number of the most commonly used definitions of the terms of the lexicon.

The principal term of the lexicon of development is most obviously development. Included in this category are the associated adjectives developed, developing, and underdeveloped. A survey of the general social scientific use of the term development demonstrates that there is no general agreed-upon definition in any of the literatures of any of the disciplines of the social sciences. There are, however, a number of general tendencies that can be grouped into three definitions, as follows (adapted from Sumner and Tribe 2008):

1. Development as process: this implies structural change, transformation, evolution, sometimes referred to as immanent development (Cowen and Shenton 1998; Morse 2008). This tendency generally views development from a long-run historical perspective, and is associated with Marxist, institutionalist, and neoclassical approaches to economic history. While the normative conclusion regarding the nature of change (as good or bad) differs among the literatures, the focus on historical socio-economic structural change is shared.

2. Development as activity: this implies the programmatic application of «development policy», whether defined strictly in terms of economic growth or more holistically (for example, the Millennium Development Goals), to specific socio-economic problems; also referred to as intentional or interventionist development (Cowen and Shenton 1998; Morse 2008) or development as practice (Thomas 2000). This definition differs from that of process in the sense that it focuses on the specific outcomes of change and is largely associated with the principal international organisations (including the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], and the World Bank). This tendency is instrumental by nature, and therefore presupposes a set of normative conclusions that are universalised and objectified in a number of empirically measurable indicators.
3. Development as discourse: in a sense the anti-thesis of the definitions of development as process and activity; rejects the use of the term in an objective sense and implies that development is a «Western» ideological construction that has been institutionalised. This tendency is generally associated with «post-» interpretation, whether «post-modernist», «post-colonial», or «post-development». Generally emphasis is placed on the normative nature of the term and the rejection of the neutrality claims of many practitioners and theorists.

As will be discussed below, economic development, as one of the principal derivations of development, was used in the first two senses. During the last half of the twentieth century, however, it almost exclusively became associated with economic growth. It was during this same period that a pair of variations sprouted from the contested terrain of development. The first of these offshoots was sustainable development. This term was brought into common parlance by the publication of the *World Conservation Strategy*. Perhaps the most cited definition of sustainable development was that used by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Report: «Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs» (WCED 1987).

The second, and presently somewhat hegemonic, offshoot was human development. Unlike its generic form development, the definition of human development has remained consistent over time (Alkire 2010), perhaps due to the influential work of Amartya Sen and the institutionalisation of his definition in the *Human Development Reports* of the UNDP. This definition conceptualised human development in terms of process and activity. In Sen's *Develop-*

ment as Freedom, process was not defined in terms of societal structural change, but rather as «... the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy» (Sen 1999: 36). The expansion of freedom was defined as both the means and the end of development; the means being a set of interrelated instrumental freedoms including political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security (Ibid: 38). The definition of freedom in an instrumental sense allowed for the establishment of a set of indicators which could be applied to socio-economic statistical data; development as activity. This approach was institutionalised in the methodology of the *Human Development Reports*. Human development was defined as a process: «Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices... these choices can be infinite and change over time» (UNDP 1990: 10), that was measurable by way of the application of four indicators (life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, and gross national income per capita) to «three dimensions» (health, education, and living standards). Both variations on the theme of development —sustainable and human— were combined in the *Human Development Report* of 2011, which defined sustainable human development as «the expansion of the substantive freedoms of people today while making reasonable efforts to avoid seriously compromising those of future generations» (UNDP 2011: 18).

The next category, born out of the irreconcilable tensions between capitalist and communist ideologies, split the world in three. This division included the First, Second, and Third Worlds. The definition of the term Third World, which most occupies our attention here, actually has two separate, but frequently interwoven, connotations which are related to the condition of the other two Worlds: a) the Third World as non-alignment, and b) the Third World as poverty. The first connotation, the Third World as non-alignment, was a product of the Cold War. During this period the countries of the Third World were defined as those, such as India, Indonesia, and Egypt, which did not align themselves politically with either side of the capitalist/communist divide. This definition reflected the original use of the term, commonly attributed to Alfred Sauvy (Wolf-Phillips 1987), who used it in allusion to the Third Estate (Tiers Etat). Sauvy, writing in 1952 in *L'Observateur*, argued that «Car enfin, ce Tiers Monde ignoré, exploité, méprisé comme le Tiers Etat, veut, lui aussi, être quelque chose» (Sauvy 1986 [1952]: 83). The second connotation, the Third World as poverty, became increasingly dominant during the process of decolonisation and independence during the 1960s and 1970s. The fall of the Soviet Union immediately transformed the first connotation, the Third World as non-alignment, into an anachronism. Yet the second connotation remained.

Finally, the geographical division between North and South largely replaced the three worlds after the disappearance of the East and the apparent ideological victory of the West. Like the Third World, the term South has two connotations that are frequently included in the same definition: *a*) poverty and *b*) geography. Albert O. Hirschman, in his *Strategy of Economic Development* (1958), brought the dichotomy into academic parlance, defining the North and South purely in terms of economic growth. This connotation was also evident in the definition of North and South put forward by the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (ICIDI, also known as the Brandt Commission) in its publication *North-South: A Programme for Survival* almost a decade before the fall of the Soviet Union: «... in general terms, and although neither is a uniform or permanent grouping, "North" and "South" are broadly synonymous with "rich" and "poor", "developed" and "developing"» (ICIDI 1980: 22-23). In the report the term Third World was also used interchangeably with South, equating both concepts with poverty. Around the time of the fall of the Soviet Union, the South Commission defined the South in terms of poverty, using three of the principal categories of the lexicon almost in the same breath: «Together the *developing* countries... are often called the *Third World*. We refer to them as the *South*... While most of the people of the North are affluent, most of the people of the *South* are *poor*...» (South Commission 1990: 1; my emphasis). The nature of the second connotation, geography, was quite simple albeit somewhat imperfect, as Rafael Reuveny and William Thompson (2007: 557) observed: «If one places the North Pole at the top of one's globe, most less developed states are located in the south of most of the more developed and affluent states». The 2004 UNDP Report *Forging the Global South*, which contributed to the lexicalisation of the term global south, combined these two connotations: «The use of the term "South" to refer to developing countries collectively... rests on the fact that all of the world's industrially developed countries (with the exception of Australia and New Zealand) lie to the north of its developing countries...» (UNDP 2004: 2).

As this brief revision shows, concreteness is not a precise descriptor for the nature of the definitions of these terms. Concreteness of definition, however, is not the principal point of my focus. In order to obtain a true understanding of the real significance of the lexicon of development, one must examine the history of each of these terms and investigate how they have come to occupy such a central role in the language of the social sciences.

3 The History of the Lexicon

The history of the lexicon of development in the twentieth century is closely related to the history of the institutional structure of the world economy. As the institutions that underlay production, consumption, and exchange evolved so too did the vocabulary that we used to describe these institutions. It is therefore pertinent for us to briefly analyse not only the semantic history of each of these terms, but also the surrounding socio-economic context.

It is instructive to bisect the evolution of the concept of development in the social sciences during the twentieth century into two periods, 1900-1949 and 1949 onwards. As can be seen in figure 1, the first period corresponds with the slow rise of the idea of economic development. During this period economic development was not commonly equated with growth as frequently as it would be after the Second World War, but rather it still reflected the nineteenth century conception of development in the sense of changes in the economic institutions of societies. The idea of development as process flows through many of the works of this period. Joseph Schumpeter was key here: the English translation of his *Theory of Economic Development* was published in 1934. For Schumpeter, economic development was the long-run process of historical change whereby «Every concrete process of development finally rests upon preceding development... Every process of development creates the prerequisites for the following» (1934: 64). Unlike many theorists of the second half of the twentieth century, Schumpeter did not equate economic growth with development, but rather merely as «changes in data» (Ibid: 63). Scholars of the early-twentieth century institutional mould such as Veblen, Clarence Ayres, and John Commons also thought in terms of evolution or structural change. As James Street (1987: 1861) observed, the institutionalist approach to development perceived it «... as a complex cultural process rather than as a stable system of counterbalancing forces regulated by a fluid and self-adjusting market mechanism». Furthermore, as Arndt (1981: 460) also observed, in many instances economic development was frequently equated with mineral or primary resource exploitation, as in the case of British colonial policy, which took the form of the Colonial Development Act of 1929. In these cases, development was clearly defined as an activity.

These two conceptions, development as a process of socio-economic change and development as the exploitation of colonial resources, reflected the state of social consciousness at the time. The world economy was in a period of expansion, centred around *Pax Britannica*, the rapid growth of the colonial system, and the exportation of capital principally from Western European countries (Great Britain, France, and Germany) and the United States to their colonies from around 1880 onwards (Makki 2004: 151-154). Social science,

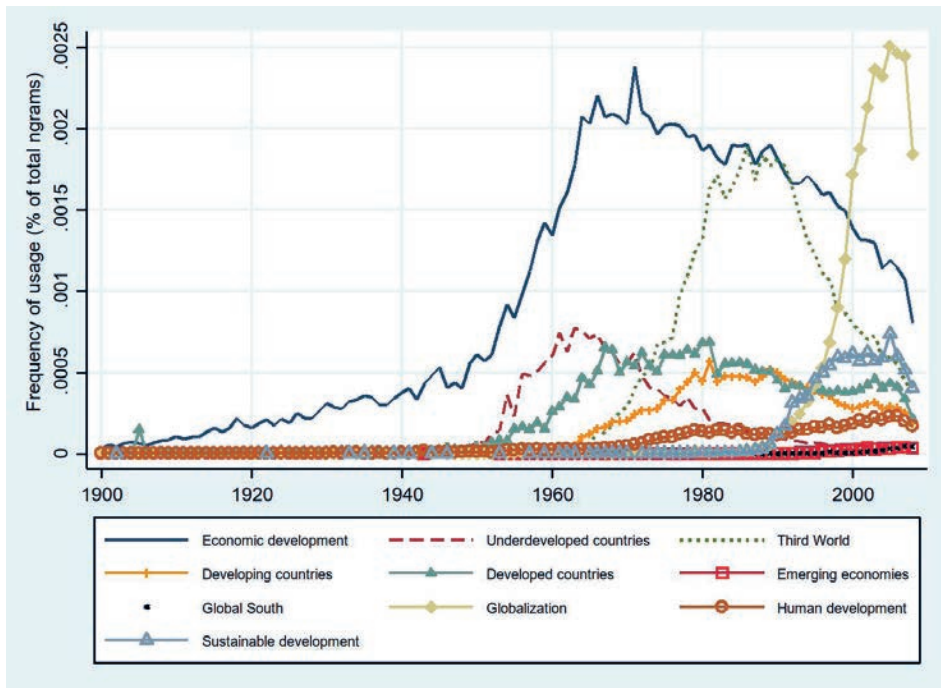


Figure 1
The frequency of the usage of the terms of the lexicon of development, 1900-2008
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer.

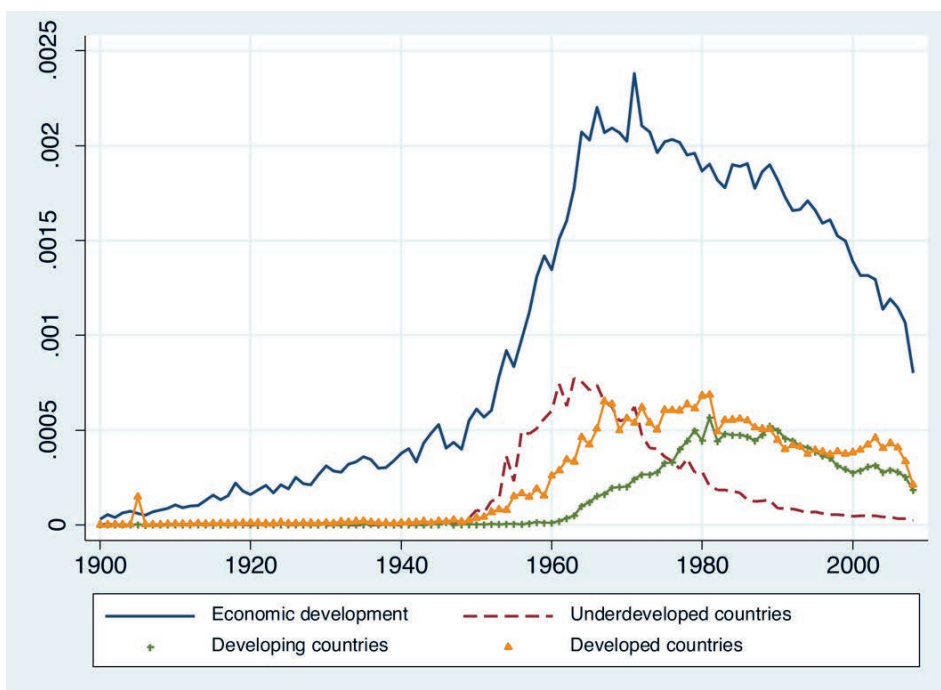


Figure 2
The frequency of usage of economic development, underdeveloped / developing / developed countries, 1900-2008
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer.

almost purely Eurocentric in nature both geographically and ideologically, was theoretically introverted, focusing principally on the United States and Europe. When it did choose to cast an eye outwards, it reflected the economic interests of the colonies and not the societies burdened by the colonial imposition. While the colonies were to be «developed» for their resources, they were not yet considered «underdeveloped».

As figure 1 shows, other than economic development, the terms of the lexicon were virtually non-existent until the middle of the century. The second period, however, from 1949 onwards, is notable for its dynamism. This period was characterised by three processes: *a)* the emergence of the United States in the world economy, *b)* the process of decolonisation and the emergence of new economies, and *c)* the Cold War. As can be seen in figure 2, the use of the terms economic development and underdeveloped countries rose quite dramatically from around 1950 onwards. This is largely attributable to United States President Harry Truman's inauguration speech of 1949 that ushered these terms into common parlance. During his speech, Truman remarked «... we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas... Such new economic developments must be devised and controlled to benefit the peoples of the areas in which they are established» (cited in Rist 2008: 71). The message of Truman's speech was clear: the economic development of the underdeveloped countries of the world was important for the geostrategic interests of the United States and the battle against the «false philosophy of communism». In this sense, development came to signify escaping from the condition of underdevelopment; the programmatic application of «industrial and scientific techniques» to the alleviation of poverty (note, but only for «the free peoples of the world»); thus, development as activity. Indeed, on the eve of the second half of the twentieth century, the United States was in a unique position to undertake such a task after the devastation of the Second World War. It emerged from the war a dominant power in economic and political terms. Given the power of this position, Truman's mere utterance of the word underdeveloped was enough to incorporate it into the lexicon.

The process of decolonisation that followed the Second World War radically altered the world economy. For those who actively and critically utilised the lexicon —principally academics and policy makers in the United States and Western Europe— the process of decolonisation and its impact on the world economy inspired a wave of lexicalisation. Words had to be mined. Given the ideological sway of the competition —the Soviet Union— the nature of the economies of the newly independent countries required a non-Marxist explanation, a theory of development that was also translatable into a programmatic activity. President Truman's condition of underdevelop-

ment required a causal explanation, and a practical remedy that complemented the struggle against Communism.

This circumstance produced a strain of thought that came to be labelled modernisation theory. The basic supposition of modernisation theory was based upon a binary distinction between tradition and modernity (Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1978: 537-540). Walt Whitman Rostow's five stages of growth model represented perhaps the most definitive attempt to provide a «Non-Communist Manifesto» for the developmental plans of Truman's underdeveloped countries: «It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one of five categories: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption» (1969: 4). This was development as activity: as Rostow observed «In surveying now the broad contours of each stage-of-growth, we are examining, then, not merely the sectoral structure of economies, as they transformed themselves for growth, and grew; we are also examining a succession of strategic choices made by various societies concerning the disposition of their resources, which include but transcend the income- and price-elasticities of demand» (Ibid: 15). These «strategic choices» would appear in the form of policy responses grounded in the best ways to increase economic growth—whether through import substitution industrialisation or export orientated commercial policies—using the economic history of the United States and Western Europe as a road map. An important aspect of this was the recognition of the «capital constraint» to growth; that is, the absence of adequate amounts of domestic and foreign savings to provide sufficient investment and accelerate economic growth. Malfunctioning or nonexistent domestic capital markets would require transfers of foreign capital (provided under certain criteria), which would theoretically move a country along the linear stages of growth model towards its own age of high mass-consumption. However, such a planned investment strategy would not emerge on its own; this would require a type of Marshall Plan for the underdeveloped countries, an idea that manifested itself in the institutionalisation of foreign aid programs on a massive and multilateral scale during the next few decades (Todaro and Smith 2008: 113-114).

Of course the consciousness of the world economy embodied in modernisation theory, although dominant, was not completely shared. A number of critiques of modernisation began to emerge from the disciplines of the social sciences, although these critiques, especially those associated with what came to be labelled dependency theory, demonstrated an implicit, almost subconscious, acceptance of the lexicon of development (Andre Gunder Frank's [1969] oft-quoted «development of underdevelopment» being a classic example). The idea of development as process still lingered in some minds, although this approach had fallen out of fashion to

a certain degree due to the growing dominance of positivist methodology in the social sciences. Gunnar Myrdal, for example, defined development as «...the movement upward of the entire social system...» a process which, instead of focusing solely on economic growth, concerned a myriad of endogenous and exogenous factors subject to «... *circular causation*, implying that if one changes, others will change in response, and those secondary changes in their turn cause new changes all around, and so forth. The conditions and their changes are thus *interdependent*...» (1974: 730, emphasis in original). As can be seen in figure 2, around 1960 the term developing began to rise and by the mid-1970s became the adjective of choice, largely replacing underdeveloped which declined gradually over the next few decades, an instance of what Myrdal (1968: 16) referred to as «diplomacy by terminology».

Growing consciousness inspired cosmetic institutional change. International organisations and local development agencies were created to assist and undertake the activities of development. Educational institutions began to adopt the lexicon, and development studies soon emerged as an academic discipline in its own right (Sumner 2006). The interaction between policymaking and knowledge production centres provided for the professionalisation and institutionalisation of development. Key elements of this process, as Arturo Escobar (1988: 431) observed, included «The training of Third World students at U.S. and European universities, international advising (such as the World Bank missions), and the socialization of professionals into the empirical social science model in Third World universities...». Generally, this was the professionalisation and institutionalisation of development as activity. This process operated simultaneously on a multilateral, bilateral, and nongovernmental level. The United Nation's First Development Decade (1961-1970) exemplified this institutionalisation on the multilateral level, with the creation of some of the most important international organisations founded on the principle of development as activity: the OECD in 1961, the Development Assistance Committee in 1961, and its Development Centre in 1962; the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1962; the Research Institute for Social Development in 1963, which sought to devise a set of indicators for the concept of «social development»; the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964; and the UNDP in 1965 which, 25 years later, would produce the *Human Development Reports* and champion the ideal indicators of development, the Millennium Development Goals. During the next few decades many governments created agencies for international development which allocated «aid» on a bilateral basis, including the United States Agency for International Development in 1961, the Ministry of Overseas Development of the United Kingdom in 1964, the Canadian International Development Agency in 1968, and the Australian Agency for International Development in 1974. This period also

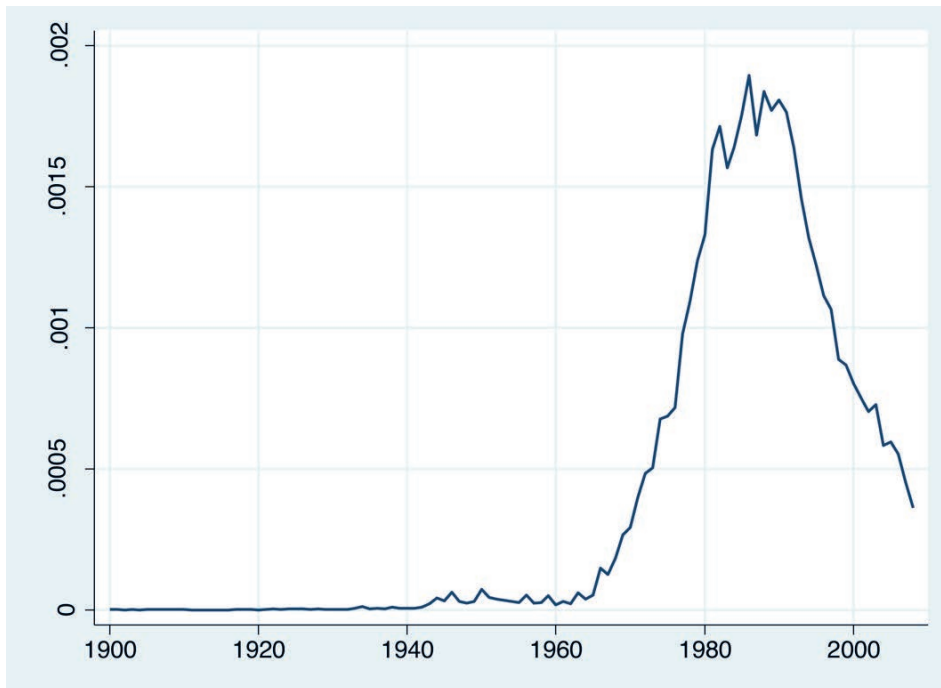


Figure 3
The frequency of usage of the Third World, 1900-2008
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer.

spanned the rapid growth of the number of international nongovernmental organisations focusing on issues of development, which grew from 427 in 1940 to 2,296 in 1970 (Iriye 1999: 428). Meanwhile, the term economic development rode the wave of post-war accumulation: during the period 1950 to 1973, the economies of the OECD averaged a growth rate of 4.9 percent, tapered in 1973 by the oil crisis (Maddison 1989: 32). As can be seen in figure 2, the frequency of the usage of the term roughly corresponds to this growth pattern.

This dynamic period also encompassed the life-cycle of the three-world paradigm. As mentioned previously, the coining of this concept has been attributed to Sauvy, who first utilised the term in an article («Trois mondes, une planète») in *L'Observateur* in 1952. Although invented and initially applied by scholars in Western Europe, during the period of decolonisation the term was co-opted by groups in the newly independent countries (Prashad 2007). As can be seen in figure 3, the use of the term rose dramatically during the period 1960-1990, before declining sharply after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. By 2008 its usage had almost declined to 1970 levels. This co-optation of the term reflected one connotation of the definition specified above, non-alignment. This became clear for the first time during the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955, which brought together a small group of countries with the intention of creating a neutral political bloc that stood between the capitalist and communist powers. During the Conference Indian Prime

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru captured the essence of non-alignment when he declared «We do not agree with the communist teachings, we do not agree with the anti-communist teachings, because they are both based on wrong principles» (Page 2003: 1036), although such rhetoric was smoothed out in the final declaration of the Conference to a call for the «Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country» by the «big powers» (Westad 2005: 102). This idea of non-alignment was further consolidated in 1961 by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries in Belgrade, in which 25 countries expressly defined themselves as «Non-Aligned» and, in the final declaration of the conference, explicitly rejected the premises of the Cold War. The Group of 77, formed in 1964 at the first UNCTAD, observed in a joint declaration that «The developing countries regard their own unity, the unity of the seventy-five, as the outstanding feature of this Conference. This unity has sprung out of the fact that facing the basic problems of development they have a common interest in a new policy for international trade and development» (Sauvant 1981: 2). The Declaration of the Establishment of a New International Economic Order adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations ten years later, noted that «The developing world has become a powerful factor that makes its influence felt in all fields of international activity» (United Nations 1974). It is important to note that, while expressing terms of solidarity and non-alignment, none of these statements explicitly utilised the term Third World. The association between the idea of non-alignment and the Third World was principally an academic tendency, as captured in works such as Mario Rossi's *The Third World: the unaligned countries and the world revolution* (1963) and Peter Willetts' *The Non-aligned Movement: the origins of a Third World Alliance* (1978). During this period the term also carried the connotation of poverty. Peter Worsley's *The Third World* (1964) vaguely defined the term as excluding «the Communist countries» and «Euro-America». John Goldthorpe, in his *The Sociology of the Third World* (1975: 1), observed that «If the affluent industrial countries of the modern world are grouped into those of the "West" and "East", capitalist and communist, then the poor countries constitute a "Third World"». Paul Bairoch, in his work *The Economic Development of the Third World since 1900* (1975), used the terms less-developed, developing, underdeveloped, and non-industrialized synonymously with the Third World. The fall of the Soviet Union triggered the rapid decline of the usage of the term in the sense of non-alignment, although it continued in a diminished form in regards to its second connotation of poverty.

The disappearance of the Second World produced a shift in consciousness towards geographic poles. The North and South emerged as a replacement for the First and Third worlds, respectively. Yet these terms did not emerge out of nowhere; as mentioned above,

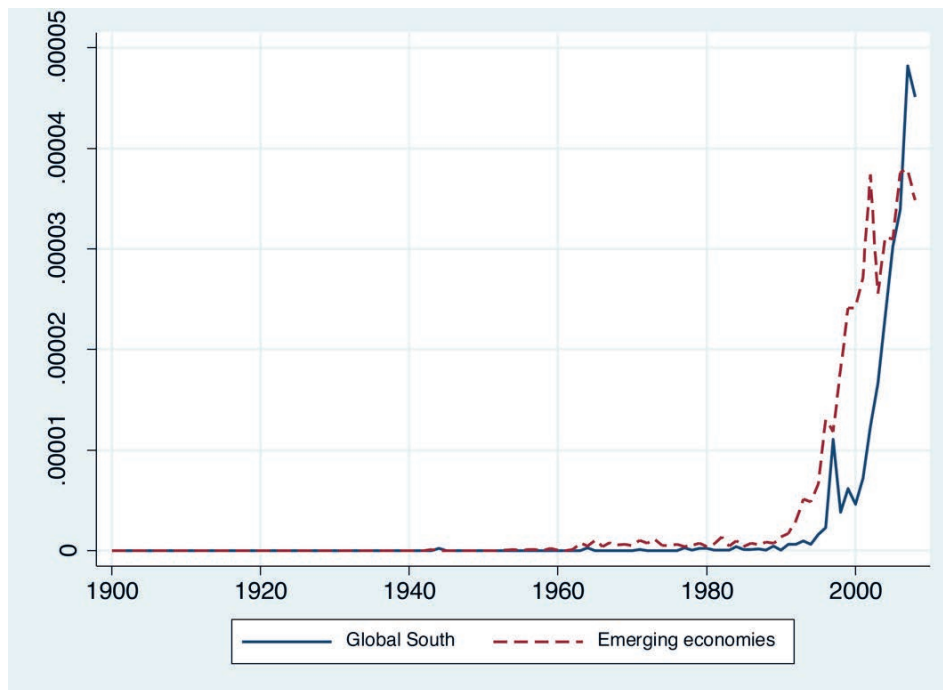


Figure 4

The frequency of usage of the terms global south, emerging economies, 1900-2008

Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer.

the North/South terminology was brought into parlance much earlier than the fall of the Soviet Union. The ICIDI Report *North-South* emerged in an environment of economic crisis and changing ideological practice. From around the time of the 1973 oil crisis onwards, the countries of the OECD suffered from dragging stagflation at best, recession at worst, and a changing of guard was apparent: the election of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain and Paul Volcker to the US Federal Reserve in 1979, and Ronald Reagan to the White House in 1980. The Latin American debt crisis, triggered by Volcker's aggressive attempts to lower inflation in the US, was imminent. In this context, the ICIDI promoted «profound changes... in international relations, particularly international economic relations» (ICIDI 1980: 7-8). Although enjoying a high level of publicity, in such an economic and political climate the Report essentially fell on deaf ears; as an update of the report in 2001 observed, «Two decades later, the international community has not responded to these proposals in any meaningful way» (Quilligan 2001: 1). The Report, however, did have the effect of incorporating the terms into public discourse. When the Second World disappeared, the terminology was ready for exploitation.

The term global south is a relatively recent addition to the lexicon. As Arif Dirlik (2007: 13) observed, the addition of the word global «... suggests some relationship to the discourse of globalization that was on the emergence in the 1990s». Indeed, as can be seen in figure 4, the use of the term global south is positively

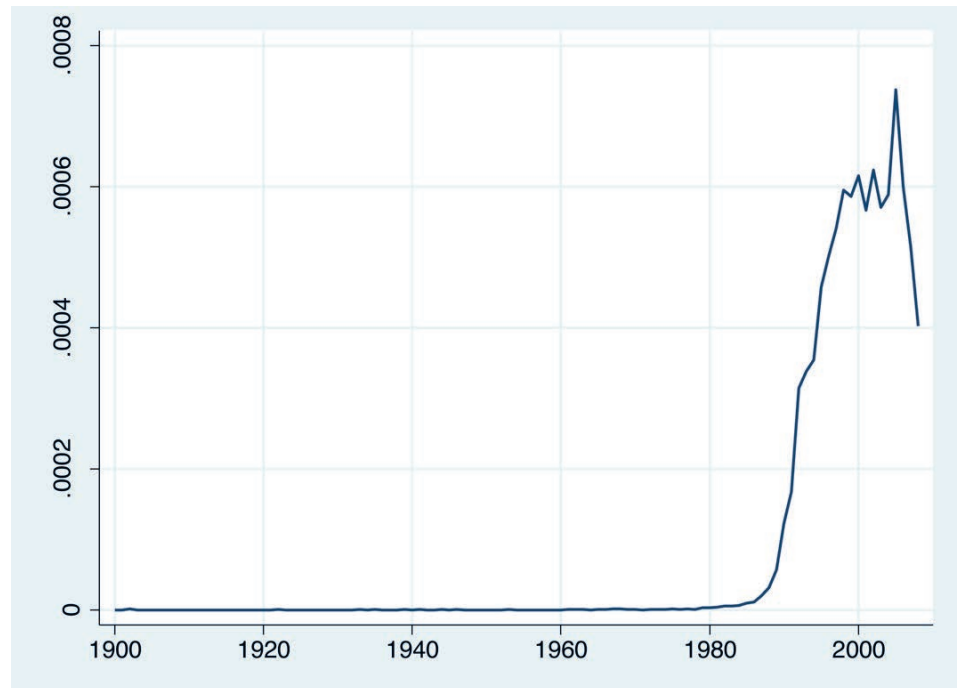


Figure 5
The frequency of usage of the term sustainable development, 1900-2008
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

correlated with the increasing use of the term globalization, shown in figure 1. The principal characteristics of what has been labelled globalization will be discussed below, but in the context of the term global south it is pertinent to mention one interesting tendency: the increase of technical cooperation between countries outside of the OECD, commonly referred to as «South-South» cooperation. This trend has its roots in the non-aligned movement and the Group of 77 previously discussed in the context of the Third World, as well as the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in 1978, which, following an earlier resolution by the General Assembly in 1974 regarding «the establishment of a special unit within the United Nations Development Programme to promote technical cooperation among developing countries...» adopted a comprehensive plan of action regarding technical cooperation between countries known as the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The term was institutionalised in 2003 following the General Assembly's decision to make the nineteenth of December the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation. This was further consolidated in 2004 when the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries became the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. In the same year the UNDP promoted the term in its report *Forging A Global South*. Towards the end of the 1990s, as the results of neoliberal policies began to become apparent in many countries, specifically the rapid increase of income inequality, a number of responses to «globalization» emerged of which the World Social Forum in 2001 was key. Like the term Third World be-

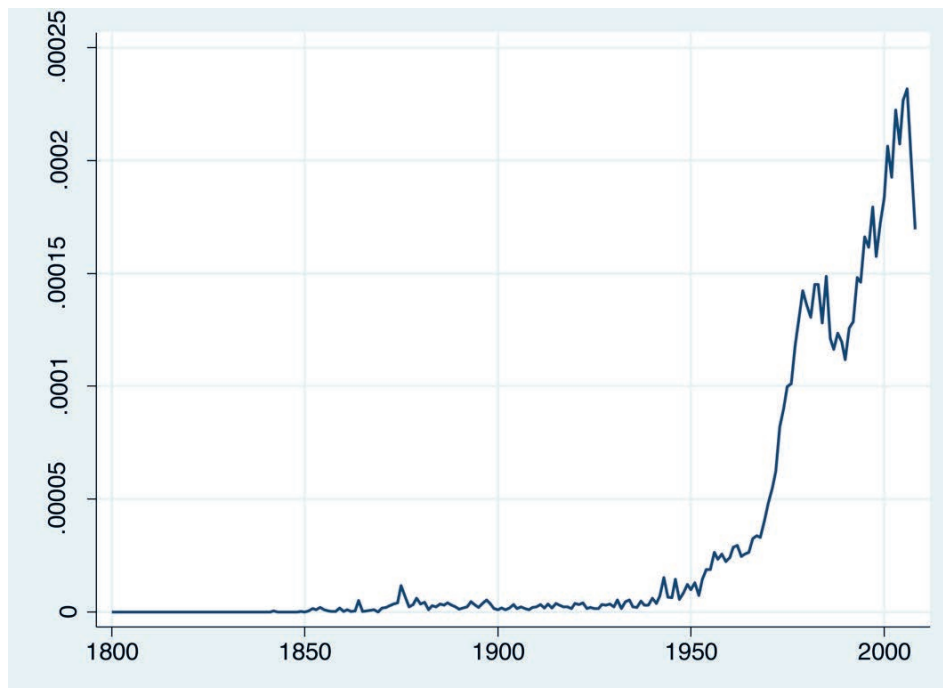


Figure 6
The frequency of usage of the term human development, 1800-2008
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer.

fore it, global south was co-opted by «anti-» and «alter-globalization» grassroots movements as a sign of solidarity against the spread of neoliberal policy, especially in those countries outside of the OECD.

Meanwhile, new forms sprouted from the stagnant concept of development. Of course, these forms did not appear out of nowhere: both cases, sustainable and human development, had been present to a lesser degree or articulated in other ways since the nineteenth century. As can be seen in figure 5, the use of the term sustainable development rose rapidly after 1980, presumably sparked by the publication of the *World Conservation Strategy* that explicitly employed the term. The environmental effects of the high growth rates of the post-war period became apparent as the world economy sank into stagnation in the early 1970s. Average growth rates in the countries of the OECD decreased from 4.9 to 2.4 per cent during the period 1973 to 1987 (Maddison 1989: 32). The most striking product of this period was *The Limits to Growth* (1972), a report commissioned by the Club of Rome and compiled by a small group of scientists, which argued that «If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years» (Meadows et al 1972: 24). This viewpoint was reflected in the *World Conservation Strategy* of 1980, one of the first documents to explicitly use the term sustainable development,

which argued that «For development to be sustainable it must take account of social and ecological factors, as well as economic ones...» (IUCN 1980: 18). This theme was carried further by the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission, which provided perhaps the most widely recognised definition of sustainable development (as outlined in section 2). The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, commonly known as the Earth Summit, did much to bring the term into common parlance. Five years later, the Convention on Climate Change was expanded to include the Kyoto Protocol, which aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to achieve its «ultimate objective» of sustainable development.

As can be seen in figure 6, the term human development was present in the literature since the nineteenth century, although its meaning took different forms. Regardless of the nature of these differences, human development was always articulated in terms of a process. The emergence of economic development and its dominance during much of the twentieth century resulted in the relatively limited use of the term until the publication of the first *Human Development Report* in 1990. The rebirth of human development was principally associated with the influential work of Sen, although important contributions were also made by scholars such as Paul Streeten, Sudhir Anand, and Mahbub ul Haq. This work represented a sustained critique of the concept of economic development and its prioritisation of accumulation and conceptualised human development in terms of process and activity. This conception of human development was institutionalised by the UNDP in the *Human Development Report*, first published in 1990, and the corresponding Human Development Index. The aegis of this more holistic approach to development was reached at the turn of the century. The Millennium Summit and the accompanying Millennium Declaration, declared development to be a universal right, and the General Assembly committed itself to making this right «... a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want» (United Nations 2000: 4). The general objective was to be achieved by way of the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals, perhaps the ultimate articulation of development as activity. This included eight Goals, divided into 21 «targets», each operationalised by a set of indicators.

The end of history, coupled with a far-reaching technological revolution (Castells 1996) and a neoliberal counter-revolution (Harvey 2005), universalised the capitalist economic system. Globalization co-opted much of the lexicon (as exemplified by the term global south). As can be seen in figure 1, the term globalization rose swiftly to a position of dominance in less than a decade, alongside the equally swift fall in the use of Third World, economic development, and developing and underdeveloped countries. Development as activity became a neoliberal affair, and many of the international de-

developmental organisations, most notably the World Bank, pursued the institutionalisation of a common set of neoliberal policy prescriptions, including the deregulation of capital and labour markets, the privatisation of strategic industries and services, and the slimming of the functions of the state (Toussaint 2008). Coupled with an information technology revolution, which contributed to the improvement of technological productivity and the reduction of communications costs, and the multilateral reduction of barriers to international trade and the costs associated with the movement of commodities and people, this restructuring of the world economy resulted in the relocation of productive activities to low cost (i.e. wage, taxation) areas and the transnationalisation of productive activities, as well as the rapid increase of financial speculation in the previously hegemonic centres of accumulation (New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt). Another important by-product of this shift was the geographical diversification of the principal centres of accumulation, the «emerging economies» (see figure 4) of the 2000s, of which the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries are notable examples. These changes have driven the rise of the term globalization that has provided a usefully vacant vessel for social scientists. Like development, the term globalization is contested; there exists no consensual definition, and unacknowledged value judgements tend to persevere over precise scientific analysis. However the term, although it embodies some of the concepts discussed here, lies outside of the lexicon of development studies and therefore has not been included here.

4 The Critique of the Lexicon

Of course, universal acceptance is never a reality. The social consciousness embodied in the lexicon reflected the contradictory condition of social being in the capitalist economic system. So while the lexicon of development was professionalised and institutionalised the world over, many people began to question, criticise, and in some cases utterly reject it. The nature of these criticisms, however, was never homogeneous, and spanned the whole width of the ideological spectrum. Here we will review the principal criticisms of the lexicon.

The first general criticism focuses on the lack of consensus regarding the definition of most of these terms. As previously mentioned, although there exist dominant definitions (for example, the WCED's definition of sustainable development, or the *Human Development Report's* definition of human development), these definitions remain contested. In most cases, the dominant definitions are the product of ideological compromises, the result being a vague, catch-all quality that is open to interpretation. In reference to sus-

tainable development, John Robinson (2004: 373) observed «One of the most striking characteristics of the term sustainable development is that it means so many different things to so many different people and organisations», it is, in Sharachchandra Lélé's (1991: 607) words, «... a fashionable phrase that everybody pays homage to but nobody comes to define»; for Sidney Mintz (1976: 377), «The "Third World"... seems to mean all things to all persons, which is precisely why it seems to me to be a term worse than useless». Such vagueness leads to the risk of co-optation of the terms for political or ideological purposes. Dudley Seers provided an early insight into this problem when he observed that most definitions of development were imprecise and implicitly based on «value judgments»: «"Development" is inevitably treated as a normative concept, as almost a synonym for improvement. To pretend otherwise is just to hide one's value judgments» (Seers 1969: 2). Gilbert Rist reflected this view when he observed that the principal flaw of most definitions of development was «... that they are based upon the way in which one person (or set of persons) pictures the ideal conditions of existence» (Rist 2008: 19).

Although the recognition of the innate subjectivity of the lexicon is important, it is pertinent to question whether this recognition renders useless the attempt to settle upon a set of universal conditions or value judgements which might form a consensual definition of development. In the tradition of development studies, most authors believe not. Sen observed, for example, that while the social scientist's definition of development «... depends inescapably on the notion of what things are valuable to promote», he also observed that it might be possible to achieve a certain degree of objectivity regarding certain «universal» principals through the emergence of «... a fair degree of consensus on what is to be valued and how» (Sen 1988: 20-21). This perspective was to be reflected in subsequent debates regarding the inclusion of «subjective welfare» as an indicator of human development (Martín and Noval 2012). Of course, in the contemporary context, there are various requirements (food and to a lesser extent clothing and shelter) that are universal. Outside of these requirements, however, the elements of development are prioritised according to the normative disposition of the author. Indeed, concretion of the definition in terms of those elements that constitute development always tends towards its redundancy. This is perhaps best observed in regard to the critiques of the reductionism of the Human Development Index, as Stephen Morse (2004: 18) observed «...if the index has to be disaggregated to be truly informative, than why aggregate in the first place?» Thus we observe a situation in which one author can speak of development and mean one thing (for example Seers (1969) spoke principally of poverty, unemployment, and equality) while another author can employ the term and mean something else entirely (in Sen's (1999) case, the expansion of a set of «instrumental free-

doms»: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security; or in the case of the World Bank's 1000+ World Development Indicators, practically every conceivable and measurable socio-economic phenomenon). With this recognition of the impossibility of definitional neutrality and therefore universal consensus, does it not make more (scientific) sense to speak in terms of the elements which constitute each definition, instead of hiding these elements behind the obscure curtain of the lexicon? As Mintz (1976: 378) observed when discussing the Third World, «As soon as the slightest effort is made to analyze the nature of poverty, rurality, and agriculture in any specific nation or colony, labels like Third World must be replaced by a genuine respect for particularity, for history, and for the understanding of the specific relationships by which any such country's growth has been defined by external power and internal response».

Rather than merely reflecting the value judgements of individual authors, some critics contend that the sway of the lexicon is even more extensive: it reflects the active diffusion and institutionalisation of Western ideological suppositions. Wolfgang Sachs (1992: 4), for example, argued that development effectively entailed the «... Westernization of the world», resulting in the loss of cultural diversity, greater social polarisation and income inequality. Rist (2004: 59; emphasis in original) observed, «What passes today for the truth of the history of humankind (that is, progressive access of every nation to the benefits of "development") *is actually based upon the way in which Western society... has conceptualized its relationship to the past and the future*». This conceptualisation explicitly positioned Western European and North American societies as the apogee of civilisation (as developed countries, the First World, or the North) and the end of history. What's more, as Escobar (1991: 676) argued, these terms have «... functioned as a mechanism of power for the production and management of the Third World... through the systematic elaboration of forms of knowledge concerning all aspects of importance in the life of Third World societies, and... the creation of corresponding fields of intervention». This «production» and «management» «ascribes social roles and rules of action within international society» (Eckl and Weber 2007: 7), deletes history, and homogenises the nature of a large part of the world's population (Berger 1994: 270) whilst reifying the territorial unit of the nation-state (Wolfe 1996: 63). Furthermore, as development as activity is pushed to centre stage, the technocrat and externally manufactured solutions are given precedence over local knowledge and participation (Edwards 1989). Thus the lexicon is subsumed within the global logic of capitalism, and used to «manage» the contradictions inherent within this economic system by «... disguising the way in which modern inequality and immiseration are a product of global social relations» (Weber 2004: 201).

This claim is thrown back at those who speak in categorical terms about the supposed ideological imperialism of the Western «development project» by counter-critics who point out that there is no such thing as a unified development project. Given the innate subjectivity of the definitions of these terms, it is clear that such definitions can be as ideologically heterogeneous as the authors who produce them. In fact some authors argue that «the development discourse is more critical and reflexive than its critics allow...» (Corbridge 1998: 145), and that «... debate, dissension, contestation and negotiation have been ever-present, both on the ground in particular localities and among the numerous official and unofficial agencies engaged in development work» (Simon 1997: 184). Furthermore, some authors contend that these critics do not recognise that a lack of consensus may be a positive thing that generates debate and allows for open interpretation (Robinson 2004: 374). However, while it is true that many critics make sweeping, generalising claims regarding the use (and meaning) of the lexicon, this observation does not change the issue of value judgements and the redundancy of most of these terms when broken into their constituent elements. In this case, heterogeneity only leads to a multiplicity of value judgements, not to a consensus regarding definition. Furthermore, such a critique overlooks what perhaps is a more important issue: the universalised (and universalising) nature of the lexicon of development studies. Indeed, many critiques—including, ironically enough, some which are self-referentially «post-modernist»—internalise certain parts of the lexicon while rejecting others. So for Escobar (1988, 1991), Third World is given preference over development; for Dirlik (2007), the Third World is inadequate but the Global South is acceptable. Moreover, as Jan Pieterse (2000: 178) argued, «... the South also owns development»: dependency theory, liberation theory, post-colonial theory, and regional variations of Marxism (a classic example being Che Guevara's speech at the UNCTAD in 1964: «On Development») have all internalised the lexicon to a certain degree. The lexicon, therefore, transcends both ideological and geographical particularities.

Another important critique has focused on the link between the various definitions of the terms of the lexicon and capital accumulation (Haque 1999; Banerjee 2003; Fernando 2003). This critique emphasises the perception that the lexicon reifies capital accumulation even when it attempts to discount its importance. Much of the theoretical work on development cannot be removed from the denominator of capital accumulation; economic growth is implicitly assumed as being the baseline for all else. The first point of the international strategy for the First United Nations Development Decade, for instance, declared it necessary «... to accelerate progress towards self-sustaining growth» (United Nations 1961), while subsequent strategies focused on ambitious (and eventually unrealised) growth goals (six per cent in 1971, seven per cent in 1981

and 1991 (United Nations 1971, 1981, 1991)). This is also true for the offshoots of development, sustainable and human development. For example, the WCED's definition of sustainable development insisted that a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustainable development is economic growth: «Meeting essential needs depends in part on achieving full growth potential, and sustainable development clearly requires economic growth in places where such needs are not being met...» (WCED 1987). The first *Human Development Report* in 1990 observed «GNP growth is treated here as being a necessary but not sufficient condition for human development» (UNDP 1990: 11). These observations clearly imply that without accumulation there can be no reduction in poverty or unemployment, no expansion of instrumental freedoms; without accumulation there can be no growth, no progress, no development—economic, sustainable, human, or otherwise. As Subhabrata Banerjee (2003: 153) observed, «Rather than reshaping markets and production processes to fit the logic of nature, sustainable development uses the logic of markets and capitalist accumulation to determine the future of nature». The use of the lexicon, in most respects, presupposes the sustainability of this process, that at no point will it break down due to social or environmental factors, that the potential for endless capital accumulation is a realistic assumption. This baseline assumption, like the very definition of development, is contested by Marxists and non-Marxists alike. It is becoming increasingly evident that the three per cent compound growth rate which most governments assume as a target for accumulation is unsustainable in terms of the impact on the natural environment as well as the social tensions which such growth generates (Meadows et al 1972; Harvey 2010). Terms such as sustainable and human development are therefore inherently contradictory because they are generated from and serve to justify a system based upon continued environmental and social exploitation. In such a light, these terms only serve to obstruct the achievement of a common understanding of the logic of capitalism and the articulation of truly sustainable and equitable alternatives.

Finally, there is the observation that almost a century of development as activity has not resulted in any great improvement for a large portion of the world's population (Esteva 1992; Matthews 2004). Indeed, it is a common characteristic of each Development Strategy of the United Nations Development Decades to lament the failure of the previous decade. The Development Strategy of the Second Development Decade observed that, despite the launching of the First Development Decade, «... the level of living of countless millions of people in the developing part of the world is still pitifully low» (United Nations 1970: 40). The Third Development Strategy acknowledged that «The goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade remain largely unfulfilled» (United Nations 1980: 106). The

Fourth Development Strategy opened with the statement «The goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade were for the most part unattained» (United Nations 1990: 125). This perceived failure of development policy produced two critiques which occupied opposite ends of the ideological spectrum. The first was the neoliberal critique, which principally focused on the economics of development, arguing that market-led growth should be given preference over state-led growth (Lal 1983). The second was the «post-development» critique, which argued that this perceived failure warranted the complete rejection of the idea of development (Sachs 1992; Tucker 1999). The counter-critics responded with the observation that such perspectives ignored the achievements of many development programmes. David Simon (1997: 185) argued that «... the very tangible achievements of many “development” programmes... are often over-looked or ignored». Furthermore, such critiques failed to offer practical alternatives. When discussed, these usually involved vague calls for «alternatives to development» and «neoliberal globalisation», although concrete proposals, including empirical case studies, are largely absent from this literature. As Piers Blaikie (2000: 1039) observed, sometimes these omissions are deliberate, «by which postmodern writers on development signal that it is inconsistent or inconceivable that they should represent others in any new world». Indeed, it is true that an element of extreme cultural relativism runs through many of these critiques (Kiely 1999: 41-43). Like reformist critiques, however, this relativism only serves to divert attention from the global nature of the logic of the lexicon and the capitalist system.

5 Conclusions

The aim of this essay has been to examine the history of the language of development studies in order to elucidate the nature of its terminology. I have focused here on economic development (and its associated adjectives underdeveloped, developing, and developed), sustainable development, human development, Third World, and North and (Global) South. I have also briefly examined the nature of the criticisms of these terms and some of the associated counter-criticisms. The principal theoretical insight that this study offers is that its results provide tentative confirmation of the hypotheses put forward (in different terms) by Marxist and institutionalist theorists. It provides empirical evidence of a reciprocal relationship between the base and the superstructure, between institutional structure and agency, between social being and social consciousness. I have shown that the use of certain terms has risen and fallen according to changes in the world economy, and vice

versa. The results of the quantitative analysis of the frequency of the usage of these terms and the qualitative study of their (principally twentieth century) history permits me to arrive at the following conclusions:

1: The lexicon of development studies is directly related to the nature of the world economy. Clearly, the results confirm this conclusion. I have shown that the changes in the frequency of usage of these terms are correlated with events or processes that have affected the world economy. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the case of the Third World. This term emerged as the result of a cleavage in the capitalist economic system (the Cold War), gained traction during the process of decolonisation, and began its descent after the fall of the Soviet Union. Of course this is nothing new: such a narrative reflects the general stylised «facts» regarding the nature of the usage of the term. The results here merely empirically confirm this narrative. The rapid rise of the term globalization during the period of neoliberal restructuring is another notable case.

Two points deserve special emphasis here. Firstly, it is important to emphasise the reciprocal nature of this relationship. As critical, Marxist, and institutionalist theorists have argued, we must disregard the unidirectional deterministic conception that «base» determines «superstructure» or that «structure» determines «agency». This reciprocal relationship is exemplified by the institutionalisation of human development. Secondly, it is important to emphasise the reciprocal nature of the relation between the terms. This is highlighted by the negative correlation in the frequency of usage of the term economic development and its offshoots, sustainable and human development, which indicates that the former was partly replaced by the latter during the 1990s and 2000s.

2: The lexicon of development studies is an historical-ideological construction. This is a logical corollary of the preceding conclusion: if the lexicon is related to the nature of the world economy, then it must reflect a particular «moment» in its history and the corresponding ideological trend. These terms have not existed forever, nor have they been consistently defined over the years, nor have they remained ideologically homogeneous. They have emerged and their definitions have changed according to specific historical and ideological circumstances. The sharp increase in the frequency of the usage of these terms after 1949 indicates that the lexicon of development was a mid-to-late twentieth century phenomenon. Despite this, the terms have been generalised to the point that they «... take on the appearance of timeless, eter-

nal categories valid for all social formations» (Lukács 1968: 9). This has been noted for human development, which existed long before the UNDP monopolised its meaning. However this is perhaps best demonstrated by the case of economic development that, prior to 1949, was principally conceptualised in terms of a process of long-run structural change and largely ideologically heterogeneous. Truman's inauguration speech in 1949, which is correlated with the rapid rise of the frequency of usage of the term, imbued the term with another meaning (as activity), introduced its flip side (underdevelopment), and added an ideological connotation (anti-communism). Development as activity was soon embedded in many of the economic institutions of the world economy, including the key international organisations.

Together these conclusions highlight the nature of the lexicon of development. It is an historical-ideological construction embedded in the structure of the world economy. It is, therefore, both a product and producer of the capitalist system; that is, it has emerged from and perpetuates this system. This is perhaps most noticeable when one regards the emphasis which most definitions place upon capital accumulation as being the baseline (a necessary but not sufficient condition) for development (however it is defined). Given the recognition that endless accumulation is not possible (for social and environmental reasons) and the normative assumption that an economic system based on exploitation is undesirable, it follows that any type of convention that serves to perpetuate that system should be rejected.

There is a second, although perhaps less critical, reason why I believe the lexicon should be rejected. The historical contextualisation of the lexicon demonstrates that it does not even reflect the contemporary nature of capitalism. Clearly this is the result of the attempted application of twentieth century descriptors to twenty-first century phenomena. As I have observed, the contemporary nature of the capitalist system is quite different to that which existed 60 years ago when these terms were first gaining traction in the vocabulary of the social sciences. One is thus confronted with an intellectual hangover of sorts; while the underlying structure of the world economy has changed, the descriptive terminology has not. Terms like Third World, North and (Global) South, developed, developing, and underdeveloped, only serve to prevent a clear understanding of the global nature of capitalism and its complex spatial characteristics in the contemporary context. They are outmoded, outdated, and unrepresentative. They are riddled with frequently unquestioned ideological suppositions. And, due to this inherently historical and ideological nature, these terms cannot be used as empirically measurable variables in social science research.

The key normative conclusion of this study is that efforts to transcend the capitalist system must recognise the reciprocal nature of social consciousness and social being. The historical contextualisation of the lexicon of development studies demonstrates the power that words and descriptive terminology can have over the nature of human thought and action. The rethink of the institutional structure that regulates social relations, therefore, should go hand in hand with the rethink of the language of the social sciences. The lexicon will remain redundant until it is redefined to reflect the reality of the social being which it purports to describe. Furthermore, any attempt to change the institutional structure of society will remain ineffective so long as it internalises the lexicon. As Marx (1970 [1844]: 138) observed, «It is not enough that thought strive to actualize itself; actuality must itself strive towards thought». The redefinition of the lexicon should therefore be an important aspect of a strategy towards a more equitable economic system.

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