

Historical and Philosophical Development of Development Sociology

Lucky Osaretin Odi¹

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Growing number of scholars in sociology has come to terms that sociology, like everything else, is a product of particular historical conditions. As there is sociology of everything. You can turn on your sociological eye no matter where you are or what you are doing, taking for example, the latent reasoning usually adopted by sociologist in viewing issues as against some others who ignorantly engage in manifest deductions. Being a sociologist means never having to be bored, considering the whole gamut of issues it concerns itself with on daily basis. Sociologists engage extensively in questions linked to the causes and consequences of development, and their findings often entail surprising policy implications and mitigations. The consensus among leading development studies scholars accepts the era of modern development as commonly deemed to have commenced with the inauguration speech of Harry S. Truman in 1949. In Point Four of his speech, with reference to Latin America and other poor nations, he said that “for the first time in history, humanity possess (ed) the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people”(Rist). Development studies has since taken greater interest in lessons of past development experiences of Western nations, human security, people-oriented approach to understanding and addressing global security threat, implications of inequality to insecurity and effect of insecurity in one region on global security. This paper is of the view that the vision and mission of development sociology arising from the historical and philosophical standpoint is imminent for a proper grasp of the discipline’s orientations by legend and budding scholars in development studies.

Keywords: Developing nations, western nations, inequalities, globalization, approaches.

Introduction

Theoretically, sociology can accommodate a range of theoretical perspective within its borders without losing its center. The fact that it now contains a larger and more heterogeneous constellation of practitioners and ideas than in the past need not constitute a disaster. Instead, it represents an incredibly important opportunity. What drew me to sociology in the first place was its ability to hold it all together, to maintain a creative tension among diverse theoretical and empirical approaches in order to investigate important questions from a distinctly sociological perspective. I like the combination of the spirit of early sociology in going after difficult questions combined with the theoretical and methodological sophistication of sociology as a mature discipline (Collins 1998).

Similar to 1885 gentleman’s agreement engaged in by European powers who carved up the globe so as not to engage in warfare against one another and to ensure a more efficient rule for all, academic disciplines had long ago colonized knowledge. A maturing imperialism that carved the world up into colonial empires ruled by a handful of nation states provided a political organization that worked well with global capitalism. Structural changes of this magnitude created all sorts of new questions. From the activist viewpoint, the judgment on other sociologists’ work tends to be “if you’re not part of the solution you’re part of the problem”. From the point of view of the voyager with the sociological eye, the activist is just someone who has already made up his or her mind and is no longer open to seeing anything new (Collins 1998).

Sociology, like everything else, is a product of particular historical conditions. But I also believe we have hit upon a distinctive intellectual activity. Its appeal is strong enough to keep it alive, whatever its name will be in the future and whatever happens to the surrounding institutional forms. The lure of

¹ Email: odialucko@yahoo.com

this activity is what drew many of us into sociology. One becomes hooked on being a sociologist. The activity is this: It is looking at the world around us, the immediate world you and I live in, through the sociological eye. There is sociology of everything. You can turn on your sociological eye no matter where you are or what you are doing. There is literally nothing you can't see in a fresh way if you turn your sociological eye to it. Being a sociologist means never to have to be bored, (Collins 1998). The author added that it is as if the disciplines were all feeling different parts of an elephant and each declaring that it has the "true" picture of the elephant. Ironically, sociology has the pieces within its slippery borders to generate a more complex view of the elephant than its head or its tail, but does not yet realize its own competence to do so.

It has been argued that in contemporary sociology, the study of development does not enjoy the institutional recognition as a sub-field of the discipline; nor does sociology offer a coherent theoretical framework or set of methods for the analysis of developmental processes. However, sociologists engage extensively in questions linked to the causes and consequences of development, and their findings often entail surprising policy implications. In historical perspective, the study of development has been a core theme of sociology. The works of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim --the nineteenth-century founders of sociology-- all centered around the puzzle of how to describe and explain the transformation from agrarian to complex, industrialized societies in Western Europe between the 17th and the 19th century. In this sense, the discipline emerged out of the interest in understanding economic, social, and political processes today labeled as "development" (Rao and Walton 2004). Development in a sociological context by Oberle (1972 as cited in Odia, 2015) is a process or set of processes characterized by (a) the consequences of general sustained economic growth, and (b) sets of natural, human, technological, cultural, financial, and organizational conditions". To him, two questions will help expedite the utility of this definition: (i) Development for whom?... who is paying the costs and who is receiving the benefits? And (ii) what is the simultaneous or sequential mix, balance, or combination of conditions which is associated with the structural change or changes which have occurred?

Human society has evolved overtime from Slavery, Feudalism, Capitalism, Socialism, colonialism, through neo-colonialism, to the globalized world of today. Through much of the 1980s, the annual Third World debt service has been about 6.5 percent of its GNP. Even German war reparations in the 1920s only averaged 2 percent and rose to 3.5 percent in 1929-31, before they contributed to the rise of Hitler, who abrogated them (1987, 1988a). In my reading of history, this drain is not new, but has always increased somewhere in the South during each (Kondratieff B phase) economic crisis in the North (for some evidence see 1978 a and b). The result is not development, but the development of underdevelopment. This time it is with disinvestment in productive infrastructure and human capital and with the loss of competitiveness on the world market. As already observed above therefore, another result is that economic growth = development has practically disappeared from all but the most academic discussions. In the real world, the order of the day has become only economic or debt crisis management instead (Chew and Denmark 1996). This paper examine the history and philosophy of development sociology, taking into cognizance the intellectual contributions of scholars from varying perspectives on trends of progress and development in regions of the world with emphasis on development in third world nations.

Development Studies

During the cold war, the modernization theory and development theory developed in the west as a result of their economic, political, social, and cultural response to the management of former colonial territories. Western scholars and practitioners of international politics hoped to theorize ideas and then create policies based on these ideas that would cause newly independent colonies to change into politically developed sovereign nation – states (Weber 2005). However, most of the theories were from the United States, and they were not interested in Third World countries achieving development by any model. They wanted those countries to develop through liberal processes of politics, economics, and socialization; that is to say, they wanted them to follow the western liberal capitalist example of so-called "First World state". Therefore, the modernization and development tradition

consciously originated as a Western (mostly U.S.) alternative to the Marxist and neo-Marxist strategies promoted by the "second world states" like the Soviet Union (Weber 2005).

Development studies, is a multidisciplinary branch of social science which address issues of concern to developing countries. It has historically placed a particular focus on issues related to social and economic development, and its relevance may therefore extended to communities regions outside of the developing world. The emergence of development studies as an academic discipline in the second half of the twentieth century is in large part due to increasing concern about economic prospects for the third world after decolonization. In the immediate post-war period, development economics, a branch of economics, arose out of previous studies in colonial economics. Development studies arose as a result of this, initially aiming to integrate ideas of politics and economics. Since then, it has become an increasingly inter- and multi-disciplinary subject, encompassing a variety of social scientific fields (Abbott 2003). In recent years the use of political economy analysis- the application of the analytical techniques of economics- to try and assess and explain political and social factors that either enhance or limit development has become increasingly widespread as a way explaining the success or failure of reform processes. The era of modern development is commonly deemed to have commenced with the inauguration speech of Harry S. Truman in 1949. In Point Four of his speech, with reference to Latin America and other poor nations, he said that "for the first time in history, humanity possess(ed) the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people"(Rist). Development studies has since taken interest in lessons of past development experiences of Western nations, human security, people-oriented approach to understanding and addressing global security threat, implications of inequality to insecurity and effect of insecurity in one region on global security. To understand the tread of development studies is to appreciate same as enunciated when H.W. Arndt (1987: 162-3) who wrote thus:

Are we then to conclude that Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Gunnar Myrdal and Peter Bauer, all proponents of material progress, must be regarded as "Right" and A. G. Frank, Dudley Seers, the Ayatollah Khomeini, and the pope as "Left"? Or is it the other way around? Clearly there is something wrong, certainly in relation to economic development as a policy objective, with these labels. The 1000 delegate 1988 congress of the International Society for Development in New Delhi was dominated by the theme of crisis. There was a sensation of total bankruptcy in development policy, thinking, theory and ideology, indeed of development tout court:

There emerged a strong and recurrent theme: We are at the end of an era and need to look beyond development to the survival strategies of the people if we want to understand what is really happening in the Third World (Development Forum, July-August 1988, p. 1).

My study of the world economy in crisis increasingly included the socialist countries. I had already seen the beginnings of the reincorporation of the socialist countries in the capitalist world economy in 1972 (reprinted in Frank 1981a). I analyzed the rapid progress of this process in detail in 1976 under the title "Long Live Transideological Enterprise! The Socialist of Economies in the Capitalist International Division of Labor and West-East-South Political Economic Relations" (Frank 1977 and Frank 1980 chapter 4). I argued that the "Socialist Second World" occupied an intermediate position in this division of labor between the industrialized "First World" and the underdeveloped "Third World." However, I still did not see clearly enough that the "import led growth" in the East European socialist NICs was essentially the same as "export led growth" in the capitalist NICs. The former export to import, and the latter import to export. Almost all amassed foreign and domestic debts. The difference has been that NIC growth in Eastern Europe has been less successful than in East Asia. The latter now out competes the East Europeans in the world market and wants to invade their own domestic ones too. However, export led growth has been about equally unsuccessful in the also indebted South America (Frank 1991). Yet alongside the much heralded failure of "really existing socialism" in the East, nobody seems to see the same failure of "really existing capitalism" in the South. (These are compared in Frank 1990c and 1990d). All things considered, the East European model was still politically less repressive and inequitable (except partially in Rumania) than in the successful

EastAsian and the unsuccessful South American capitalist NIC areas. Moreover, in 1989 Jeanne Kirkpatrick turned out to be wrong: The "totalitarian" countries in the East changed more than the "authoritarian" ones in the South. Looking ahead, proposals to resolve the debt crisis in both abound. However, hardly anyone ever asks how to make the South American and East European NICs competitive against the East Asian ones and others. The debt service has made the former lose out in technological and other competition on the world market. These and other recent reflections on the world economic crisis and its political implications were collected together in Spanish in Frank (1988a). In English, no one was interested.

A book review of Gunnar Myrdal's three-volume study of South Asia, particularly India: The research efforts necessitated a lengthy manuscript in order to encompass the developmental economics and politics of poverty in contemporary South Asia. The framework within which the study is developed consists of (1) the analysis methodology, a summary of reasons for the institutional approach, and a statement of values; (2) a history of South Asia; (3) the economic characteristics of the region; (4) political economy and government performance. In general, it would appear that the Asian drama that Gunnar Myrdal has analyzed is a tragedy because men can foresee the consequences of their predicament and have at hand the resources and ideas with which to forestall them, yet they will not. The book is a course in the developmental economics and politics of poverty in South Asia, and students of the subject are indebted to Prof. Myrdal however much they may disagree with his conclusions.

Focus of Development Sociology

If anthropology was the child of imperialism and colonialism (Gough 1968, Asad 1975), then new development thinking was the child of neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism. It developed as an instrument of the new postwar American hegemony. American ambitions extended over the ex-colonial world in the South and against both the real old Western colonialism and the perceived threat of new Eastern colonialism and imperialism. At the end of World War II, the 'newly emerging' 'young nations' - like millenarian China and India! - came of post semi/colonial age. Simultaneously and not independently, the United States ascended to neo-imperial hegemony. That is when development studies came into their own, and the new development ideology swept the world (Chew and Denmark 1996).

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory, the dominant approach in the sociological study of development during the 1950s and 1960s, conceived the development trajectories of Western European societies as an idealized model. The central theoretical problem became how to replicate the shift from traditional to modern society in countries lacking similar economic progress, social structures, cultural institutions, and personality types. Modernization theory combined insights from classical evolutionary, structural-functional, and diffusion theories to explain this transition (Eisenstadt 1970; Smelser 1966). Parson's (1937; 1951) synthesis of Durkheim's functionalism and Weber's work on the role of culture and ideas in society was particularly influential in providing an explanatory basis for the origins of development: Societies develop through a set of evolutionary stages; societies are self-regulated entities with the impulse for social change coming from within them; social differentiation is introduced through the discovery or acquisition of modern norms and values. In this sense, modernization theory identified traditional, "pre-modern" cultural values guiding action as the crucial barrier to entering the stage of a developed society (Inkeles and Smith 1974; Lerner 1958; Lerner 1968; Rostow 1960). Development action based on modernization theory envisioned the diffusion of modern values through education and technology transfers to non-western elites (Leys 1996 also see Rao and Walton 2004).

Dependency and World Systems Approaches

During the 1960s, dependency theory (Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Dos Santos 1971; Frank 1967) and world-system theory (Chase-Dunn 1998; Chirot and Hall 1982; Wallerstein 1974) emerged as competing approaches to development and successfully challenged modernization theory (Portes 1976; Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1978). These new theories highlight the importance of colonial

legacies, imperialism, and neocolonial exploitation in explaining the contemporary underdevelopment of Third World countries. In place of culture and consensus, the analytical focus of dependency and world-system approaches centers around economic and political structures and conflicting interest groups. Rather than seeking explanations for underdevelopment in the functioning of internal institutions, these theories give causal priority to relationships of domination-subordination between "core" countries and the "periphery" (Galtung 1972). Dependency theorists rejected the notion that increased contact between core and periphery would foster the diffusion of modern values and argued instead that increased external contact would produce the "development of underdevelopment" (Frank 1967) because of the persistence of asymmetrical economic exchange relations between periphery and the more powerful center (Dos Santos 1971; Hechter 1975). On the level of development policy, dependency theorists suggested the reduction of links to the metropolis and the introduction of "autocentric" economic growth.

Globalization and Development

In the recent decade the concept of "globalization" has gained popularity among sociologists. In the broadest sense, globalization refers to expanding worldwide flows of goods, persons, symbols, ideas, ideologies, and capital, entailing a "time-space compression"(Harvey 1989) of lived experience. Studying the economic domain of globalization, scholars argue that transnational corporations increasingly organize their production in "global commodity chains"(Gereffi 1994; Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994) spanning across a variety of social and institutional settings (Reich 1991; Castells 1997). The position of a nation-state or a region in such a production network becomes a dominant force in shaping socio-economic outcomes, such as labor conditions (Bonacich and al. 1994) or structures of inequality (Castells 1997; Sassen 1988; Sassen 1990). However, sociological research also emphasizes the persistent importance of the domestic political and social patterns and local cultural practices and traditions in mediating the effects of global economic flows (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993; Saxenian 1994).

Further, sociologists have focused on the formation of a "global culture," that involves ontological assumptions, cognitive scripts and prescriptions for action with a worldwide reach (Boli and Thomas 1999; Meyer et al. 1997; Thomas et al. 1987). For many authors, the rapid growth of mass media penetration and cheap high-speed communication promote the homogenizing cultural construction of freely choosing, pleasure-seeking individual consumers around the globe (Barber 1995; Featherstone 1990; Ritzer 1993). Others argue that global culture rather propels cultural differentiation and diversity by diffusing principles of cultural relativism and cultural authenticity (Boli and Thomas 1999; Hannerz 1996). Local cultures adopt global symbols to specific local contexts and are thereby themselves constantly modified (Appadurai 1990; Appadurai 1996; Hall 1991). As these contrasting positions reflect, the debate remains largely unsettled of whether cultural globalization is harmful or beneficial to development as empowerment of individuals and societies (Rao and Walton 2004).

In the political domain, sociological research has scrutinized the common assertion that states are doomed actors in a globalizing world. Findings illustrate that the state remains of critical importance, even as it is transformed in processes of globalization (Brenner 1999; Sassen 1996; Sassen 1998). The state continues to shape economic outcomes on the domestic and local level by promoting global competitiveness and by adapting institutions and policies that accommodate global capital flows. Research on migration illustrates this tension between the local and the global arguing that transnational communities of migrants channel the flow of social, economic, and cultural resources across national boundaries, thereby impacting development trajectories (Basch, Schiller and Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Guarnizo 2001; Portes 1996; Pries 2001). The policy implications of this approach are to focus on local context and institutions for cushioning the effects of global economic flows (Rao and Walton 2004).

Globalization and Social Change

Jike and Esiri (2005) opined that globalization involves multidimensional outlook that spars economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental activities. Nilmot (1985) refers to social change "as an alteration in the source or organization of society or its component part overtime".

Social change refers to any significant alteration over time in behaviour patterns and cultural values and norms. By “significant” alteration, sociologists mean changes yielding profound social consequences. Examples of significant social changes having long-term effects include the industrial revolution, the abolition of slavery, and the feminist movement.

Globalization has become the defining process of the present age. While the opportunities and benefits of this process have been stressed by its proponents and supporters, recently there has been increasing disillusionment among many policy-makers in the south, analysts and academics, as well as the community of non-governments (NGOs) in both the South and the North. The failure of the Seattle Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 1999 is a signal of this disillusionment (Khor 2005).

The most important aspects of economic globalization are the breaking down of national economic barriers; the international spread of trade, financial and production activities, and the growing power of transnational corporations and international financial institutions in these processes. While economic globalization is a very uneven process, with increased trade and investment being focused in a few countries, almost all countries are greatly affected by this process. For example, a low-income country may account for only a minuscule part of world trade, but changes in demand for or prices of its export commodities or a policy of rapidly reducing its import duties can have a major economic and social effect on that country. That country may have a marginal role in world trade, but world trade has a major effect on it, perhaps a far larger effect than it has on some of the developed economies (Khor, 2005).

The idea of one world development (as is) received an unexpected helping hand from the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at the United Nations on December 7, 1988:

The existence of any 'closed' societies is hardly possible today. That is why we need a radical revision of views on the sum total of the problems of international cooperation as the most essential component of universal security. The world economy is becoming a single organism, outside which no state can develop normally, regardless of the social system it might belong to or the economic level it has reached.... (Gorbachev 1988).

Critic of Globalization

The reasons for the changing perception of and attitude towards globalization are many. Many of the important factors are the lack of tangible benefits to most developing countries from opening their economies, despite the well-publicized claims of export and income gains; the economic losses and social dislocation that are being caused to many developing countries by rapid financial and trade liberalization; the growing inequalities of wealth and opportunities arising from globalization; and the perception that environmental, social and cultural problems have been made worse by the workings of the global free-market economy (Khor 2005).

New Comparative Institutionalism

Since the late 1970s and 1980s sociologists have increasingly used features from both modernization and dependency approaches in combination with methodological insights from European comparative historical analysis (Gerschenkron 1962; Moore 1966; Polanyi 1944). An eclectic set of studies emerged, their common ground being the concern for the critical role of institutions in the process of development. This new comparative institutionalism takes both, the structural position of states within the global political economy and domestic politics seriously, and focuses on the interplay between these two dimensions (Paige 1975; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992; Stephens 1979; Waldner 1999). Scholars aim for explaining distinct patterns of development across countries and time through careful historical comparisons rather than reducing history to a unilinear process, either of dependent capital accumulation or cultural diffusion. One major explanatory framework -building on Marxist class analysis- takes the relative strength of dominant and subordinate classes and varying class alliances as a variable for explaining economic growth or political regime trajectories (Brenner 1976; Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985; Heller 1999; Katznelson and Zolberg 1986; O'Donnell 1973; Thompson 1963). Based on Weberian ideas, the new comparative institutionalism emphasizes

the critical role of the state's capacities and its autonomy vis-a-vis civil society in impacting development outcomes (Becker 1983; Goodwin 2001; Katzenstein 1985; Mahoney 2001; Mann 1986; Skocpol 1979; Waldner 1999). Most studies in this tradition are located on the level of the nation-state. The new comparative institutionalism cautions development policy to be grounded in historical context. This approach also challenges the idea that markets alone are efficient remedies for leveraging underdevelopment and emphasizes the importance of institutional structures such as the state (Rao and Walton 2004).

Conclusion

The similarity between the two 'dualisms' is only apparent. According to the old dualism, sectors or regions were supposedly separate. That is, they supposedly existed without past or present exploitation between them before 'modernization' would join them happily ever after. Moreover, this separate dual existence was seen within countries. I correctly denied all these propositions. In the new dualism, the separation comes after the contact and often after exploitation. The lemon is discarded after squeezing it dry. Thus, this new dualism is the result of the process of social and technological evolution, which others call 'development.' I myself seem to have come full circle from prioritizing determinant economic, to social, to political back to the determinant economic factors in development. However, now I see them in world economic development (Chew and Denmark 1996). This paper is of the view that history and philosophy of development sociology remain a process which would continually be built upon as trends in development evolve in the various regions of the world.

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