



# Spaces of postdevelopment

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**Abstract:** This paper reviews writings about postdevelopment. It argues that critical scrutiny of the contemporary reconfiguring of postcolonial sovereignties provides a productive route to rethink the geographies of development and postdevelopment. The relationship of development narratives to reconfigurations of imperialism and postcolonialism produces a complex geography of development and postdevelopment that defies neat summary, but which demands more sustained attention to the interactions of enclosure, boundaries and subjectivities.

**Key words:** Bandung, boundaries, geopolitics, postdevelopment, sovereignty.

## I Introduction

In order to understand the developer's tragedy, we must judge his vision of the world not only by what it sees – by the immense new horizons it opens up for mankind – but also by what it does not see: what human realities it refuses to look at, what potentialities it cannot bear to face. (Berman, 1982: 68)

In early 2006, the Dubai state outbid a company linked to the Singaporean state to purchase P&O (Peninsula and Orient), the venerable British-controlled shipping and port company once seen as binding the sinews of the British Empire. The purchase of such a former key imperial company by a postcolonial state (that had arisen in what was once a minor colonial outpost) is symptomatic of deeper shifts in the global geography of accumulation and power, and the map of 'development'. This paper considers some of these

shifts and maps in the context of new economic and political configurations, including imperial ones.

At a moment when imperialism has come more to the fore in both critical and conservative literatures about globalization, the meanings and configurations of development and sovereignty are also undergoing flux. For example, amid the swirling sets of concepts and ideas in Hardt and Negri's (2000) much-debated account of these configurations in *Empire* are an elaboration of some older arguments about capitalism and states. In short, they argue that sovereignty – in the forms that it has been and continues to be practised – is capitalist. In other words, the practice of sovereignty is inherently caught up with the logics and operation of markets, money, business and capitalist accumulation. While there is much else to quibble with in *Empire*, this

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analysis of sovereignty (which echoes a long tradition of critical theorization and recent work by Arif Dirlik, 1997, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, 2000), demands engagement. In particular, it raises multifaceted questions about how contemporary economic and political dynamics are being mediated through changing discourses and practices of development.

This paper will reconsider these (and related) questions and in the process engage with changing theorizations of development, prising out some of the spatialities that they signal. Beyond those sketched here, there are many more geographies that might also be investigated when the changing spatial configurations of development are considered. Moreover, significant debates continue about development on other analytical tracks which must remain largely outside the scope of this paper. These include the extent to which 'globalization' is reducing or exacerbating poverty and inequality at a variety of scales (Wade, 2004; Kenny, 2005), the roles of nongovernmental organizations (Carapico, 2000; Mercer, 2002; Bebbington, 2004; Townsend *et al.*, 2004; Bryant, 2005; Bebbington and Kotahri, 2006; Clark and Themudo, 2006; Mcfarlane, 2006), the wider determinants of growth (Rodríguez-Clare, 2005; Sindzingre, 2005), rethinking culture and development (Radcliffe, 2006), development as rights and freedoms (Corbridge, 2002; Sen, 2000), and – echoing twentieth-century debates in geography (Power and Sidaway, 2004) – the relative importance of environmental constraints and conditions in shaping economic and social development (Woods, 2004; Sachs, 2005). This review should therefore be read as a stimulus to further conversations, rather than as a comprehensive or definitive survey.

The paper first makes a selective review of existing theorizations of and writings about postdevelopment (section II). Section III then explores the restructurings of the nexus of relations between practices and discourses of sovereignty and development, focusing on

and contextualizing designations of 'graduated sovereignty' and 'offshoreness'. The paper therefore comprises two transects through literatures on postdevelopment, the first (section II) reviewing the meanings of postdevelopment stances and the second (section III) the political and economic conditions that are reworking the relations between development and sovereignty on the ground. To this end, section II maps a variety of spaces produced by the relative waning of national projects of development and the emergent tendency (in their place) for bounded spaces and nodes and zones. The conclusions (section IV) sketch some further critical agendas through foregrounding the intersections of postcolonialism, imperialism, postdevelopment and security.

## **II The development of postdevelopment**

Postdevelopment (or similar vocabulary such as post-development,<sup>1</sup> and antidevelopment) usually signify a critique of the epistemological categories, hierarchies and assumptions of development discourses. This is the critical sense of postdevelopment that Saunders (2002a: 24) signals when she claims: 'Postdevelopment is not a distinct spatial region constituted through a self-conscious postdevelopmental mode of life . . . [it is] currently limited to a form of criticism or deconstructive practice that is just beginning to emerge.'

In the past decade or so, a series of books and papers have appeared proclaiming such 'post' or 'anti' development orientations. Among the best known of these is *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the Third World*. In this, the Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar (1995: 24, my italics) argues that, after 1945 'The political and economic order coded by the tale of three worlds and development rests on a traffic of *meanings* that mapped new domains of being'. Within these meanings, colonial discourses of race, progress and civilization were reworked into the language of development. Examining

this, Fouad Makki (2004) points out that, given the challenges to formal colonialism and the attendant reworking of assumptions and categories attributed to 'race':

The opposition between 'civilized' and 'primitive', which had been intrinsic to justifying colonization at the height of imperial incorporation, was no longer viable . . . 'Development' was in this respect crucial in reconfiguring the global identity of ex-colonies in a way that was incorporative and universalistic yet still hierarchical. (Makki, 2004: 155)

Sivaramakrishnan and Agarwal (2003) note how, while there is controversy about the genealogy of development (compare Esteva, 1992, on development's post-1945 reformulation with Berman, 1982, Cowen and Shenton, 1996, and others, tracing it to eighteenth-century political economy):

Development, in its various guises, has surely been the most powerful influence structuring social and economic transformations in the non-Western world in this [twentieth] century . . . The rhetoric around it helped legitimate colonial consolidation in the 1930s and 1940s. (Sivaramakrishnan and Agarwal, 2003: 2-3)

Development later became a contested term, linked to national liberation (and revolutionary) projects. In the guise of modernization theory, on the other hand, it was amenable to US-led strategies for the former European colonies. Modernization may long have been, in Kothari and Minogue's (2002: 7) terms, the 'metatheory of development', but in turn 'development' itself became what Ferguson (1990: xiii) described as one of the 'central organizing concepts' of the age. Ferguson goes on to examine how development is performed in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho and finds that:

the 'development' apparatus in Lesotho is not a machine for eliminating poverty that is incidentally involved with the state bureaucracy; it is a machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power, which incidentally takes 'poverty' as its point of entry. (Ferguson, 1990: xiii)

Development thus produces particular landscapes; territories of 'development space'. In Bonata and Protevi's (2004) words:

Development practitioners see the need to make examples out of certain landscapes, to fashion them into facsimiles-in-miniature of what the global development machine can achieve. A development organization's territory thus takes on certain strong qualitative differences from 'normal' (disorganized) landscapes, and effects in a certain way an iconographic space. New colourful signs point to development icons: outhouses . . . meeting places . . . clinics . . . bridges, irrigation systems. Donor names and amounts . . . for each icon are often printed right on the sign. (Bonata and Protevi, 2004: 180)

Postdevelopment writing therefore critiques western notions and assumptions of superiority and expertise that are seen to very often accompany development interventions and aid. Megoran (2005), for example, foregrounds such critique through satire, parodying western 'knowledge' and assumed superiority on matters of development, transformation and progress. In related terms, Jones (2000) points to how Europe and North America have forms of poverty, power and exclusion which elsewhere (in Asia, Africa or Latin America) would be designated as symptoms of underdevelopment. The environmental costs associated with development are also the subjects of extensive critique. This includes a radical ecology literature, for example the work of Shiva (1993), that is highly critical of the assumptions and claims of much development. The political economy of fast food, agro-business and the spread of the western diet (especially fast food) have also been criticized as maladies of development (Crister, 2003). In such accounts and in many case studies, reviews and readers (eg, Sachs, 1992; Shiva, 1993; Crush, 1995; Rahnama and Bawtree, 1997; Simon, 1997; Gupta, 1998; Power, 1998; Li, 1999; Mitchell, 2002; Schech and Haggis, 2002; Yapa, 2002; Curry, 2003; *Third World Quarterly* special issue, 2004; Bello *et al.*, 2005; Brennan, 2005; Jackson, 2005), experiences and representations of

development are interpreted as a particular vision and intervention, and therefore as a regime of knowledge, truth and power that is not necessarily empowering or rewarding for many of those on the receiving end. These constitute a repertoire around motifs of progress, order and modernity. Development is interpreted as an ensemble of knowledge, interventions and narratives (in other words, a discourse) that are also powers to intervene, transform and rule.

Summing up these diverse literatures, Hart (2001) notes how:

The term 'post-Development' has come to encompass a wide array of writings, ranging from those with explicitly Foucauldian ambitions to those that embody a visceral reaction to modernity, but also including adherents of radical democracy, post-Marxism, ecofeminism, and various other positions. (Hart, 2001: 654)

Some of these writings may therefore be more sceptical or critical of development as a project (and the ideology of 'developmentalism') than others, but all seek to problematize its assumptions and claims. In this, however, they belong to a longer tradition of critique. Therefore, although the conceptual languages of poststructuralism, and sometimes feminism and postcolonialism, may be relatively novel, to a considerable extent postdevelopment critiques represent reformulations of scepticisms about (and alternative conceptions of) development that have been evident for a long time. Some sceptics have therefore argued that postdevelopment critique is not really beyond, outside or subsequent to development discourses. After all, either without adopting or predating the vocabulary of postdevelopment, a series of studies published in the late 1980s and 1990s sought to narrate the complex trajectory of development debates and the presence of relatively diverse traditions within them (eg, Larrain, 1989; Brohman, 1996; Leys, 1996; Martinussen, 1997). According to Kiely (1999), postdevelopment is merely the latest version of a set of criticisms that have

long been evident *within* critical writings and thinking about development. Similarly, Aguilar (2005: 28) argues that 'some elements of postdevelopment echo narratives of self-reliance and populism and community development from the 1960s and 1970s'.

Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, what Gavin Kitching (1982) summarized as the 'populist tradition', ideas of self-reliance and fulfilling 'basic needs' (from the Russian *Narodniks* to Julius Nyerere's and other conceptions of African Socialism) have been critical of many of the conventional claims of development; particularly when the latter takes the forms of industrialization and urbanization. Mainstream development institutions, such as the World Bank, have adopted (or perhaps co-opted) elements of such critiques, while retaining the commitment to and basic assumptions of development discourse (Mawdsley and Rigg, 2002; 2003). In more oppositional terms, the broad dissemination of *dependencia* ideas from Latin America, including Islamicist variants bolstered by the influential writings of Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1982) on 'Westoxification' (*Gharbzadegi*; originally published in Persian in 1962), was about questioning the terms of development as envisaged in western discourses of modernization; what Slater (1993: 419) characterized as 'the South theorizing back'. The expansion of references to 'sustainable', 'bottom-up' and 'basic needs' development in the 1970s and 1980s was also part of an increasingly reflexive critique of mainstream development assumptions and practices.

In the light of such complexity, historians are now also exploring how forms of development associated with the templates of 'modernization theory' were modified and adapted (Latham, 2000; Engerman *et al.*, 2003; Gilman, 2003). Latham (2000) notes how, for those aspiring to development in Latin America, Africa and Asia, this American paradigm of modernization:

became the subject of intense debate, negotiation, and division, a discourse in which meanings, goals, and values were redefined in a

wide variety of specific historical experiences and political contexts. Although Americans frequently understood modernization as a matter of empirical truth and claimed the authority to define its parameters, elites in the 'developing areas' interrogated its categories and selectively appropriated its ideals to suit their own diverse needs and purposes. (Latham, 2000: 3)

This sense of heterogeneity within development narratives and diversity of local practices also leads some to return to 'alternative development' as a more useful conceptualization than postdevelopment (Pieterse, 2000; Haggis and Schech, 2002). Similarly, for Nustad (2001), Curry (2003), Gibson-Graham (2005), Radcliffe (2005) and Radcliffe and Laurie (2006), postdevelopment should go beyond critique, to explore and emphasize alternatives. In Gibson-Graham's (2005) terms:

The challenge of postdevelopment is not to give up on development, not to see all development practice – past, present and future, in wealthy and poor countries – as tainted, failed, retrograde, as though there were something necessarily problematic and destructive about deliberate attempts to increase social wellbeing through economic intervention; as though there were a space of purity beyond or outside development that we could access through renunciation. The challenge is to imagine and practice development differently. (Gibson-Graham, 2005: 6)

Others have pointed to the ways that development discourses are actively subverted by local agents, who are often far from the passive victims that might be implied by some strains of the postdevelopment literature (Delcore, 2004), or have noted how much of the material on postdevelopment ignores the sense of possibility and record of positive material transformations associated with development (Corbridge, 1998; Rigg, 2003), 'especially by those who take its undoubted benefits for granted' (Peet and Hartwick, 1999: 2). These debates about postdevelopment, which have only been sampled here, seem set to continue and disturb what Bernstein (2005: 135) describes as 'today's

universe of development discourses and interventions'. Their backdrop comprises shifts in the relations between postcolonial sovereignty and the trajectory of development. Section III of the paper focuses on these.

### **III Sovereignty/development/geopolitics: reworking the nexus**

Development matters. It has been one of the organizing principles and key goals of much human endeavour in the twentieth century. As the literatures detailed in section II show, development has proven influential partly because it is so highly adaptive and contingent. Inevitably, twentieth-century academic geography became caught up in debates about and analyses of development. In the 1960s and into the 1970s, geographers mapped what was seen as the diffusion of development and by the 1980s, registering a shift of terms, they described the evolution of the geography of underdevelopment. Over 30 years ago, Harold Brookfield (1975) was arguing that a geographical perspective – sensitive attention to spaces, places and flows – would enhance critical conceptualizations of what he termed 'interdependent development'. Eighteen years later (and beginning to register some of the critical postdevelopment critiques detailed in section II), David Slater (1993: 433) argued that 'future theorizations of development need to give greater priority to the challenge of geopolitics'. More recently, Mark Berger (2004a: 3) notes how 'The connection between the changing global political economy, the universalization and transformation of the nation-state system and vicissitudes of theories of development is an important but neglected area of study'.

Berger's book (focused on these issues in Asia) and Slater's (2004) subsequent examination of *Geopolitics and the post-colonial* (focused on Latin America) both provide significant contributions to charting reconfigurations of development. With these reconfigurations in mind, this section considers what such greater priority to the geopolitics

of development might amount to in contemporary conditions.

For much of the twentieth century, development was predominantly conceptualized as a national project of becoming. In its more radical variants, this was tied up with 'national liberation' struggles. Either way, it rested on a broad homology of territory and economy. Thus, while development might have been understood as a universal process, it was through national paths that it would be realized. In recent decades, this coupling of nation and development has become less stable. The apparent crisis of national development in many postcolonial states (fractured by insurgencies, national disarticulation and the breakdown of hegemonic national projects) is one aspect of this. But the partial unravelling of national development is much wider; embodied in subtly reworked articulations between territory, accumulation/development and sovereignty.

### 1 *The decline of Third Worldism*

Although it may have some colonial roots, the rise and dissemination of development as a discourse and set of actions was closely tied up with a formative moment in the development of postcolonial sovereignties. This moment – roughly the 1950s and 1960s for most of the postcolonial world (though with early twentieth-century antecedents in Latin America) – has been largely superseded. In part, this is about the decline of third-world socialisms and the waning of the wave of national liberation struggles and their embodiment in nationalist and *etatist* polities. Today their reverberations continue, in Hugo Chavez's Venezuela and Evo Morales's Bolivia, for example, and in the form of the World Social Forum and associated movements, organizations<sup>2</sup> and mobilizations. For at least a decade, however, third-world socialisms had seemed to embody the broad global future. Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (*The wretched of the earth*), published in 1961 against the backdrop of the struggle in Algeria, the Bandung ('Afro-Asian solidarity')

conference of 1956, the rise of Nasserism in the Arab world, the Cuban revolution and the widening battles in Vietnam, Namibia, Rhodesia, South Africa and the Portuguese colonies, served as their distillation:

becoming an international bestseller and making Fanon the most famous spokesman of a Third Worldism which held that the future of socialism – or even of the world – was no longer in the hands of the proletariat of the industrialized countries, but in those of the dispossessed wretched of the earth. (Macey, 2000: 6)

This moment was given fresh impetus by the revolutions of the 1970s, especially those in Indochina, the former Portuguese territories in Africa, Nicaragua and a emergence of a range of other Marxist-influenced regimes, such as Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Yemen and Benin. But these now appear more as a *dénouement* than a vanguard. Indochina was soon embroiled in national and ideological fractures and the Maoists (in the form of the ultranationalist Khmer Rouge) in Cambodia proved even more disastrous at implementing self-reliance and socialist transformation than had their backers in Beijing.<sup>3</sup> Like the Afghan revolution in 1978, domestic resistance and Washington's determination to halt or derail the tide of revolution soon beleaguered those in Angola, Mozambique and Nicaragua. Moreover, by the early 1980s, the revolutionary/Third Worldist<sup>4</sup> moment was being overshadowed by the increased stress on markets and competitiveness. The attendant rise of neoliberal strategies (greatly reinforced by the debt crisis of the early 1980s) coincided with the eclipse of national liberation and revolutionary struggles. Thus Scott (1999) notes how 'the altered political-cognitive context produced by the collapse of Soviet-style communism and the resurgence of neoliberalism' are part of what redefines postcolonial sovereignty:

A generation (in some instances more, in some rather less) into political sovereignty, what also defines this present is the collapse of the great experiments with socialism that characterised

what Samir Amin, in his intellectual memoir, has called the Bandung era . . . Roughly 1955–1975 – from the Bandung Conference to the call by the non-aligned movement and the group of 77 for a new international economic order – this was a period of extraordinary global change and confrontational political realignment. In it, the only recently constituted ‘Third World’ became the site of intense debates regarding options for ‘development’ and the early ‘Bandung regimes’ as Amin calls them (Nehru’s India, Nasser’s Egypt, Sukarno’s Indonesia, Nkrumah’s Ghana) the stage for arguments [about the prospects for socialism and development]. (Scott, 1999: 43)

The 1970s had seen selective radicalizations of the Bandung project associated with social revolutions and Marxist regimes, as in Afghanistan, Mozambique, South Yemen, Grenada, Nicaragua and Vietnam for example. But even where ‘development’ was being overseen and directed by right-wing (and virulently anti-communist) governments post-colonial states still operated in the shadow of the Bandung moment. Therefore, despite accommodation and alliances with multinational capital, the notion of national development took centre-stage in such contexts as Lee Kuan Yew’s Singapore, Mahathir Mohamad’s Malaysia, Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee’s South Korea, Suharto’s Indonesia, Marcos’s Philippines, Hassan’s Morocco and Bourguiba’s Tunisia, the Shah’s Iran, and Brazil and Turkey under their successive military regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. In these, and those others (such the Burnham’s Guyana, Assad’s Syria, Siad Barre’s Somalia, Senghor’s regime in Senegal, Sékou Touré’s in Guinea, or Modibo Keita’s in Mali) where the discourse of Third Worldism or sometimes of Arab (or African) socialism remained more of a reference point, national development was seen as a key rationale and source of legitimacy. The material conditions (in terms of infrastructure, economic output or standards of living) sometimes declined (Ferguson, 1999, writing of the Zambian case, calls this ‘abjection’; the sense of being ‘pushed out’ of the benefits of the global

economy and ‘development’), but even in such cases, the *rhetorical* centrality of national development survived relatively intact. Burma provides a striking example. From 1962, Ne Win’s regime was rhetorically committed to a supposedly self-reliant national development strategy, even while social and infrastructural conditions deteriorated dramatically. After 1988, the new military regime first termed itself the ‘State Law and Order Restoration Council’, before adopting the title ‘State Peace and Development Council’ in 1997. These regimes have all sold Burma’s natural resources to the highest bidder, established casinos in border towns and sought (with limited success) to recapture swathes of the national territory from insurgent movements. Throughout, however, ‘national development’ remained the stated aim and rationale.

Undoubtedly then, national development undoubtedly remains significant to the political horizon for much of Africa, Asia and the Americas. However, ‘development’s’ terms of reference and frames are also being substantially reconfigured. In Scott’s (1999) terms:

The point is that in a quite remarkable sea change the Bandung Era has passed. The 1980s witnessed its eclipse. The Bandung experiments have collapsed, partly under the weight of World Bank ‘structural adjustment’ programs, but all within the terms of a new alignment of global forces that have removed them from the field of possible contemporary options. (Scott, 1999: 144)

## 2 *Graduated sovereignties and offshore spaces*

Among those charting how and where shifts in the modes and meanings of development relate to similar reconfigurations of postcolonial sovereignty, Aihwa Ong (2000; 2004) proposes that sovereignty appears progressively more variegated or graduated. According to Ong (2000):

In the course of interactions with global markets and regulatory agencies, so-called Asian tiger countries like Malaysia and Indonesia have created new economic possibilities, social

spaces and political constellations, which in turn condition their further actions. The shifting relations between market, state and society have resulted in the state's flexible experimentations with sovereignty. Graduated sovereignty refers to a) the different modes of governing segments of the population who relate to or do not relate to global markets; and b) the different mixes of legal compromises and controls tailored to the requirements of special production zones. (Ong, 2000: 55)

While coined with reference to southeast Asia (where Ong claims that responses to the Asian financial crisis heightened graduation in that the market-orientated agenda signified different things, strengthening state power and protections in certain areas but not in others), this concept is more widely epitomized in the bounded free trade zone. Lawson (2002) has explored similar graduations in Ecuador, as has Park (2005) in South Korea, and Bunnell and Coe (2005) revisit the Malaysian case which provided Ong's point of departure. All these authors want to think about sovereignty in terms of subjects inhabiting a series of bounded and enclaved spaces; subjects shaped through and (sometimes and selectively) moving across boundaries. Graduated sovereignty is not therefore only about new boundaries *per se*, but is a complex and uneven experience of selective boundary crossings, subjectivities and exclusions. Graduated sovereignty has a long vintage in export processing zones (EPZs), first promoted in the 1950s by USAID and since pursued (with varying levels of success) extensively in east and southeast Asia, the Middle East, the Americas and the Caribbean (Moore, 2005). The increased number, range and scope of EPZs lead Robinson (2003) to argue that:

processes of uneven accumulation are unfolding in accordance with a social and not a national logic, and that we may rethink development not as a national process, in which it 'develops' as a nation, but in terms of developed, underdeveloped, and intermediate population groups occupying contradictory or unstable locations in a transnational environment. (Robinson, 2003: 326)

Three decades ago, the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1979) had written of *The shared space* (originally published in French in 1975 as *L'espace partagé*) identifying dualistic circuits of the urban economy during the 1970s in Latin American, African and Asian cities. However, what Robinson, Lawson and Ong now seek to describe is less a dualistic shared space than a variegated zonal capitalism; a recasting of uneven development in which the nexus of accumulation and sovereignty is reconstituted around formally differentiated and bounded zones. Thus, what Armstrong and McGee (1985) once designated as *Theatres of accumulation* (namely, the cities of the South) or Santos's dualistic *espace partagé* are supplemented by graduated and increasingly bounded spaces, notably the free trade or special economic zone and industrial estate plugged directly into global production networks. In turn, the tendencies to the exclusive (and frequently gated) tourist enclaves (and residential communities) are manifestations of these phenomena (Bunnell *et al.*, 2006). In a case study of such graduations (and attendant reboundings) in the 'Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore Growth Triangle' (a formal agreement between the city state of Singapore incorporating proximate zones in Indonesia and Malaysia), Sparke *et al.* (2004: 496) point to 'a veritable efflorescence of boundary drawing', whereby enclaved landscapes of tourism, factory production and unruly spaces occupied by migrants and squatters are juxtaposed in the Indonesian side of the triangle, and movement across the boundaries of the three states is relatively open for capital and for some human subjects (tourists and investors), but tightly regulated for others (Indonesian workers and migrants). Similarly, Cunningham and Heyman (2004) point to the political-economic processes by which people, nature, commodities and knowledge are bounded, emplaced, and allowed or forced to move. Wee and Jayasuriya (2002) describe what they term as 'new fault-lines' that run across the zonal capitalisms, developmental states



and postcolonial imaginaries evident in southeast Asia. The special economic zones, administrative regions and development zones within the People's Republic of China are also examples of variegated spaces of regulation, accumulation and mobility (Cartier, 2001; Ngai, 2005; Wei and Leung, 2005; Yang, 2005). In all these cases, boundaries and the production of differential mobilities are sharply expressed.

Others have focused on rather different spaces of accumulation: those of 'offshore' financial centres (OFCs); epitomized in the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands or Panama (Hudson, 1998; Warf, 2002). Hudson (2000) argues that this phenomenon arises from the foundations of sovereignty itself. Thus the genealogy of sovereignty reveals it to be related to the parallel enclosure and partition of space that is property. This permits different modes of sovereignty (akin to different forms of property, such as leasehold, rental, freehold, use rights versus exchange rights, and so on). Hudson (2000: 269) therefore distinguishes between 'legal' and 'fiscal' sovereignty, noting that: 'Offshore states are still sovereign states but they have chosen to temper their fiscal powers by creating spaces with relatively low levels of regulation and tax.'

At the same time, OFCs construct other boundaries, behind the financial firewalls that allow relative secrecy for investors. While more nuanced analysis and categories may be needed to comprehend the combined and uneven relationships between legal and fiscal territorializations and the way they relate to the construction of boundaries (Donaghy and Clarke, 2003a; 2003b; Palen, 2003), the scale of such flows means that OFCs may still extract a surplus – or their dominant ruling fractions may participate in the private benefits that accrue. Maurer (2001: 496) thus describes OFCs as engaged in 'a strategic "hacking" ' into 'the network of telecommunications, politics and global capital'. While the rise of OFCs has been especially evident over the last 20 years or so, a parallel emerges between offshoreness and the dynamics of

longer-established rentier states. This merits further critical scrutiny.

### 3 *Offshoreness in the mirror of rentier states*

This notion of rentier states was elaborated in the 1970s to refer to emergence of petrodollar-rich states that derived an income predominantly from revenues generated by the operation of foreign companies (albeit sometimes in joint ventures with national companies) involved in resource extraction. In other words, the primary sources of state revenues are rents (such as those derived from permitting oil companies access to the resources) rather than from a surplus generated by productive activity or commerce. In Hazem Beblawi's (1990) terms:

The Arab oil states represent, it has been said, the example par excellence of rentier states. With oil exports' revenues, the Arab oil states depend on external rent. Oil revenues represent more than 90 per cent of budget revenues, 95 per cent or more of exports. Also, only a small fraction of the population is involved in the generation of oil revenues, the rest being engaged in the use of oil wealth. (Beblawi, 1990: 89)

The spectacular accumulation and infrastructural 'development' enabled by the rentier state (resting at it does on the operations of foreign oligopolies) also tended to create a distinctive set of socio-spatial hierarchies, enclaves and zones:

social and economic interests are organized in such a manner as to capture a good slice of government rent. Citizenship becomes a source of economic benefit. Different layers of beneficiaries of government rent are thus created, giving rise, in their turn, to new layers of beneficiaries. The whole economy is arranged as a hierarchy of layers of rentiers with the state or government at the top of the pyramid, acting as the ultimate support of all other rentiers in the economy. (Beblawi, 1990: 89)

While the classic rentiers of Saudi Arabia, Brunei and Kuwait have since been joined by some neo-rentier regimes such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, Equatorial Guinea and Angola, other long-established rentier states,

notably Dubai and (albeit to a lesser extent) Bahrain and Qatar, have subsequently recycled rent into developmentalist accumulation strategies, facilitating financial centres, tourism industries and airlines. This blurs analytical categories, and none could function without a network of foreign firms, advisors and business interests.<sup>5</sup> Other forms of rentier-sovereigns have since emerged, at a variety of scales, whereby authorities and communities are able to extract 'rents' from transnational mining companies operating in their territories (Baldacchino, 1993; Ballard and Banks, 2003; Tsing, 2003; Duffy, 2005). Some, most notoriously Nauru (in Micronesia), have collapsed in the wake of the exhaustion of the resource (in Nauru's case phosphates from guano) and the appropriation of rents by corrupt agencies. More widely, the rentier phenomenon (and its geographies of conspicuous consumption, boom and bust, corruption, enclosure and exclusion) frequently rests on what Chabal and Daloz (1999) term *Disorder as a political instrument*, or in Nordstrom's (2004) terms the *Shadows of war* that enable 'entrepreneurs of instability' (Reyntjens, 2005). This has been most evident in contexts such as the diamond-fields of Sierra Leone, or the diamond, tantalite<sup>6</sup> and other mineral resources of Congo-Kinshasa, where the wider security and services collapse, but entrenched elites of rentiers and their local compradors are able to reproduce their power, wealth and external connectivity (Sidaway, 2003; Omasombo, 2005). While acknowledging its variability in scale and extent, and its roots in the colonial states, Chabal and Daloz (1999) thus argue that:

At the macro-sociological level, what is occurring in Africa is the negation of the Western type of development. As far as (political) actors are concerned, however, this type of behaviour may well turn out to be most eminently rational. In other, plainer, words it is possible for a country's economy to fall into ruin, for development to be insignificant, while at the same time the members of a large number of (informal) networks continue

substantially to enrich themselves. It may even be true that economic failure is in this respect at least more 'profitable' for many than 'development'. (Chabal and Daloz, 1999)

There are, of course, many other patterns of exchange and reciprocity whereby people survive and make a living and it remains important to recognize the diversity of African trajectories, lives and development conditions rather than reduce these to a singular narrative of state failure (Sidaway, 2003; Andreasson, 2005).

Moreover, rentier-extraction capitalism takes a variety of other forms elsewhere. Writing about economic and social trajectories in the northern Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia and Peru), Vellinga (2004) notes how these are shaped by a variant of 'production-speculation' capitalism, historically around mineral extraction but now increasingly dominated by commercialized coca production and cocaine trafficking. The growth of this narco-capitalism has roots in the economic crisis of the region in the 1980s and the relative collapse of national development models, economic 'informalization' and the relatively weak legitimacy of state institutions. In the most extreme case of Colombia, this has been folded into a long-standing class and ideological struggle, expressed in widespread violence, reprisals, insurgency and counter-insurgency. For Colombia, Restrepo (2004) describes the result as a 'fragmentation of space'; zones of generalized insecurity, barricaded and securitized places co-exist and proliferate, with close connections (via chains of narcotic smuggling and multiple financial and commodity and military flows) to the United States and Europe. Rodgers (2005; 2006) describes similar tendencies in urban Nicaragua, albeit related to Central America's role as a transshipment point, rather than as a significant source of narcotics. As elsewhere in Latin America, 'new processes of exclusion and differentiation, especially in urban areas' (2005: 1) result in an increasingly 'fragmented archipelago' of physically isolated

'fortified enclaves' expressing an ideal of separation from the insecurity outside. However:

In urban Nicaragua, the phenomenon has arguably gone further than simply enclaves . . . Partly because of the small size of the Managua elite, what has emerged . . . is a 'fortified network', which has been constituted through the selective and purposeful construction of high speed roads connecting the spaces of the elites within the city: their homes, offices, clubs, bars, restaurants, shopping malls and the international airport. (Rodgers, 2005: 1)

The poor are excluded from these networks, by private security and by fast roads, which are dangerous for pedestrians and cruised by expensive 4×4 cars/SUVs<sup>7</sup> that hardly need to stop (instead of intersections, roundabouts keep the cars moving, reducing the risk of car-jacking) as they move through the fortified elite network, in a 'disembedding' of the city (Rodgers, 2005: 11). Within this, the local state has also been restructured, so that the President's office determines the infrastructural priorities (overwhelmingly those of the elite, such as the fast roads), and the municipality (which had broader social functions) is politically (and literally) outmanoeuvred. After decades of war and the pulverization of the Sandinistas' short-lived national-revolutionary economic project, followed by the (re)imposition of a liberal economic policy (privatization, commoditization and 'adjustment') and the reassertion of elite privilege, contemporary urban Nicaragua registers enhanced socio-spatial polarization, and a juxtaposition of conspicuous consumption, poverty, corruption and *narco-trafficantes*:

The process of 'disembedding' of the city has not only separated an autonomous 'layer' of the metropolis for the rich, but has created large 'zones of exclusion' where the impoverished city masses attempt to survive through whatever means they can. (Rodgers, 2005: 11)

Boundaries are being multiplied and selectively reworked, both reinforced and differentiated. In other words, development is increasingly

expressed in a heterogeneous and disparate array of interlaced and bounded spaces and projects defying easy categorization.

#### **IV Conclusions: the futures of postdevelopment**

This paper has argued that development retains significant power to shape national imaginations and strategies. However, ever more superimposed on national narratives and schemes (reworking their roles) are sub- and transnational spaces, nodes and networks, marked by a variety of fractures and boundary practices. Moreover it is quite possible for some national narratives to persist and remain influential while co-existing with others. Such co-existence or rather combination (and complexity) is arguably characteristic of all contemporary rescalings (Mansfield, 2005). The paper has argued however that there is a shift of emphasis towards new inscriptions of (post)development, involving categories and articulations of citizens and subjects and places and spaces of accumulation, inclusion and exclusion. These overlay and are entangled with heterogeneous post-colonial and neocolonial conditions.

The trajectory of Iraq (once a self-proclaimed showcase of 'national development' under the Baathist regime, based on authoritarian patronage and rentier incomes) might be read as symptomatic of these articulations and entanglements. The 'Green Zone' in occupied Baghdad becomes an epitome (indeed an extreme case) of graduated sovereignty. In his 29 March 2004 'Postcard from Baghdad', *The New Yorker's* correspondent John Lee Anderson describes a country of barricaded<sup>8</sup> zones. He writes from the fortified Palestine Hotel:

with its views of the Tigris and, on the other side of the river, the big Presidential complex, which is now occupied by the Coalition Provisional Authority, in what is called the Green Zone . . . During the past year, hundreds of foreigners – journalists, entrepreneurs, the paramilitary representatives of private security firms – have made their way to Iraq. (Anderson, 2004: 39)

Foreign corporations have been looking for rich pickings. However, Iraq has also become much more dangerous for those who are visibly foreigners (and many Iraqis associated with them) and, as a result, rigid demarcations are evident:

Many foreigners are starting to move out of the little family hotels that seemed so charming, and others are giving up on the comfortable and civilized neighbourhood houses they were renting. The Palestine, with its reinforced-concrete perimeter walls, razor wire, armed guards, and bomb-sniffing dogs, is getting crowded. (Anderson, 2004: 39)

While development and security discourses became more connected in diverse sites through the 1990s (Duffield, 2001), security and development discourses unite here, where both are predominantly defined as compliance with Washington's strategies plus the capacity for transnational corporate profits and access to resources (Harvey, 2003; Le Billon, 2005). Perhaps Iraq therefore embodies something of a new postdevelopment world marked by sharply divided zones of differential sovereign power, prisons, contractors, speeding armoured vehicles, privateers, compradors and insurgents (Chatterjee, 2004; Parenti, 2004; Bjork and Jones, 2005). Though anticipated and paralleled in the barriers, barricades and ongoing blockades around and across the Palestinian territories (Weizman, 2004; Falah, 2005), it bears remembering that such a world bears a resemblance to the epoch that preceded 'national development': that of colonial cantons, *entrepôts*, plantations,<sup>9</sup> enclaves, lands and peoples 'beyond the Pale'. And therefore, if, after Hardt and Negri (2000: xi), 'Empire is materializing before our very eyes', we might find it coalescing around bounded reinscriptions of development. A critical task for those engaged in the mapping (and counter-mappings) of such reinscriptions therefore lies in teasing out the historical and geographical continuities, similarities and differences.

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This paper is dedicated to the memory of Antonio de Figueiredo (1929–2006): journalist and activist who campaigned for the liberation of Portugal's African colonies and who both inspired and assisted with my research in Lusophone Africa and Portugal in the 1990s (see Obituary by Jonathan Steele published in the *Guardian*, 12 December 2006, p. 32).

### **Notes**

1. Post-development (and post-colonialism) are sometimes written with a hyphen. For Jencks (1989: 14), writing about the post-modern, the presence of the hyphen emphasizes what he terms a 'double-coding'; a subtle relationship to the modern, rather than a simple opposition. As should become clear, the stylistic convenience of writing postdevelopment unhyphenated here should not be seen as negating comparable subtleties.
2. For example, on 1 June 2006, over 70 European NGOs placed an advertisement in the *Financial Times* accusing the European Union trade commissioner of pursuing an 'anti-development agenda in the WTO trade talks'. For details, see [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press\\_releases/europe\\_unites\\_to\\_condemn\\_m\\_01062006.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/europe_unites_to_condemn_m_01062006.html). In their terms, 'anti-development' amounts to a failing to put the interests of the poor and developing

- countries first; a very different use of the term to those articulating a 'postdevelopment' style of critique.
3. See Becker (1996) for an indictment of Maoism's dramatic failures to provide the basic conditions for survival in the 1950s and 1960s.
  4. The rise and fall of Third Worldism, as a radical collective vision of development and associated ideas of dependency and de-linking, was charted by Chaliand (1977). Since then, the tendencies he sketched have become much more marked, so that recent surveys can chart the rise and *demise* of Third Worldism (Berger, 2004b).
  5. See Perkins (2004) for an exposé based on based on 40 years employment within a US-based development consultancy.
  6. Used for the production of capacitors, found in all cellular telephones and laptop computers.
  7. While such tendencies are most pronounced in the South, Don Mitchell (2005) describes an 'SUV model of citizenship' whereby the interests of enclosed, encapsulated *individuals* are promoted over the construction of an engaged *public* in the USA.
  8. Lurking in the background here – as it was throughout the twentieth-century trajectory of development – is 'race'. Until comparatively recently, what Gilroy (2000: 11) terms 'the idea of "race"' has been neglected in critical studies of development (for some pointers, see White, 2002; Goudge, 2003; Kothari, 2006; Duffield, 2006). However, as Jones (2005) details, Bandung and early Third Worldism articulated with 'race' debates in the colonial metropolises, setting alarm bells ringing among the conservative establishments in Washington, DC, Paris, London and Lisbon.
  9. See Beckford (1999) (the first edition of which was published in 1972) on the plantation as an archetypal space of underdevelopment.

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