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DRAFT

Democratizing Development

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Introduction

Democratization and development are both forward-looking concepts. That is to say, they refer to processes of cumulative social change that can result in future political and economic outcomes that are qualitatively different from (and superior to) present conditions. As such both concepts are necessarily long-term, dynamic, and macro-historical in scope. They also both express a normative standpoint. (It would not make sense to classify as “development” a transformation to a state of affairs that was judged qualitatively inferior to its starting point). Indeed, from a genealogical perspective they are both offshoots of the western/enlightenment ideal of progress. In an earlier phase of social science theorising they were both subsumed under the umbrella discourse of “modernisation”. But as political science and economics subsequently became more professionalised and differentiated democratization and development were isolated in separate analytical compartments, and efforts were made to strip both of them of their historical and subjective connotations. They were both isolated, objectified, dissolved into measurable proxies and separated from their ethical foundations. Such analytical procedures were initially a healthy antidote to the ideological distortions and teleological biases implicit in much classical discussion of “progress” and more recently of “modernization”, but the antidote produced its own harmful “side effects”. Since the end of the Cold War efforts have been made by the UNDP and others to reconcile the requirements of contemporary social science methodology with the holistic characteristics of these concepts, and to bring the discourses of democracy and development back into contact with each other, while restoring their energising value commitments. This chapter is a further effort in that direction. But the key assumption here is that there is no easy reconciliation of theoretically incompatible positions, and that a successful approach involved a return to first principles. So the thrust of this chapter is to “reculer pour mieux sauter”.

At the most abstract level both democracy and development can be conceptualised so broadly that they converge into a single image of the good society. This is the dominant western image of progress in the post-Cold War world, the “true and only heaven” recently dissected by Christopher Lasch.¹ Even after the Soviet collapse it is by no means the only available image of the good society, but it is the only universal image. The remaining alternatives are either theocratic (confined to true believers), or in some way particularist (confined to particular localities, ethnicities, nationalities, or culture groups). Those with the most secure access to this good society seem increasingly preoccupied with its insecurities and insufficiencies, and they have some sound reasons for their concern. But the proportion of total population living in so-called “industrial” countries has fallen from 31% in 1960 to

¹ See Lasch (1991).

22% in 1992, and the proportion living in OECD countries has fallen from 21% to 15% over the same period.² Many OECD citizens (probably an increasing proportion) lack full and secure access to the benefits of the western good society, and the great majority of non-OECD inhabitants have only the most nominal and precarious claims to the socio-political status of modern citizenship.

This paper reflects on the inter-relationships between two key components of the secularised liberal image of the “good society” – political democracy and economic development. These two components can be detached from their theoretical moorings, narrowly defined in order to reduce the overlap between them, and then represented by simplified empirical proxies (electoral competition and alternation, GDP per capita, etc.), which can then be tested for association and co-variance. Recently there has been something of a growth industry in this type of investigation, although the insights generated may seem meagre, considering the efforts expended.³ If we search for patterns of association between democracy and economic development in the post-Cold War World, our samples will be heavily weighted towards a particular *kind* of democracy, and a currently fashionable notion of economic development. It by no means follows that either pre-1989 or 21st century variants of democracy will be associated in the same way with economic development, as understood in earlier (or perhaps in later) periods. Ahistorical “objective” indicators of democracy and development can, of course, be constructed without reference to such contextual meanings. Thus, on standard indicators Chile was as much a democracy in 1940 and in 1970 as in 1990, even though what this signified in terms of social representation and development objectives was radically different in each case. Similarly, over *some* periods and on *some* aggregate indicators Botswana can be bracketed with Singapore (and why not Saudi Arabia?) as exceptionally successful instances of economic development, without regard for the extreme dissimilarities of socio-political structure, and of collective beliefs and aspirations, which separate them. But this chapter seeks to identify lines of interaction between democracy and development rather than to generate purportedly objective correlations. For that purpose it is important to specify the context, meaning, and sub-types of the categories involved. This paper attempts to provide a corrective to the ahistorical and reductionist tendencies in such studies, by re-connecting each of the two key categories within their respective theoretical and historical contexts. The intention is to restore a sense of perspective to our judgements about the immediate present, and to re-establish the reflexivity latent in our notions, both of political democracy and of economic development.

² See UNDP(1994: 201)

³ One recent review surveys 46 studies and rejects the hypothesis that political democracy is negatively associated with economic development. It identified education, investment, and “governance”, as potential bearers of a positive association. See Campos (1994)

Although these two concepts share some common assumptions they have distinctive roots and associations and can be analysed in isolation from each other. However, I will conclude the paper with some suggestions about how they may proceed to converge.

The Long Durée

The idea of political democracy has a history that is long, chequered, and rather precisely known. Indeed several recent scholarly analyses have claimed, without unreasonable distortion, that the 2,500th anniversary of its creation by Cleisthenes fell due in 1993.⁴ During the course of that long period diverse embodiments of the idea have been claimed in a wide range of settings. Thus, political democracy has been thought compatible with a slave-based economy, not only in antiquity but also in the New World (this was the Washington consensus until 1st January 1863). Over the centuries it has been variously identified with urbanism and literacy, with the settlement of new lands (and annual Icelandic parliament was initiated in 930 A.D.); with constitutional monarchy, with republicanism; with some forms of European imperial conquest (e.g. the extension of the “Westminster system”), and with some forms of resistance to imperial rule; with Christianity, and with secular liberalism; and, in our lifetimes, both with the relentless advance of socialism, and equally with the inevitable hegemony of capitalism.

For most of this long period educated opinion has been hostile to, or fearful of, political democracy (often equated with mob-rule, or the triumph of mediocrity. After the (mostly failed) democratic revolutions of 1848, however a new synthesis of political, constitutionalism combined with economic liberalism began to pave the way towards a more conservative variant of “democracy”. The concept has been associated with a variety of different social experiments across time and space, each of which needs to be duly contextualised. For example, a good case can be made that for about half a century after 1870 across South America a certain (“oligarchical”) variant of civilian constitutional rule was quite strongly associated with a model of export-oriented development based on the exchange of various primary products for imported capital goods (notably railways, ports, telegraphs, etc.). This was not “democracy” in the abstract (indeed it contained quite a few features that would seem distinctly undemocratic to the modern eye), and the associated model of development was neither of universal validity nor of permanent duration (it entered into crisis as the internal combustion engine displaced the train, and Britain lost her ascendancy). So we

⁴ The chequered legacy of the Greek tradition is emphasised in Orlando Patterson (1991), which stresses the paradoxical role of slavery. For the evolution of democracy as a political ideal, which originated from a practical expedient, see John Dunn (1992). For the state of contemporary classical scholarship see Osborne (1994). For the history of anti-democratic sentiment in western civilization, see Tolbert Roberts (1994).

must be attentive to the boundary conditions limiting the co-existence of this particular type of democracy and this distinctive process of development. Nevertheless within such spatial and temporal limits we can pursue some quite significant hypotheses concerning, if not causation in the strong sense, then at least recurrent patterns of connectedness and elective affinity. My impression is that foreign bankers, merchants and investors consistently demanded sanctity of contract and predictability of government. Both civilian constitutionalism and export-oriented growth were organised largely in response to that functional requirement. Assuming this interpretation can withstand scrutiny, we would have identified one important type of linkage between a particular variant of political order, and a specific episode in history of economic development. This would be a useful story to bear in mind when investigating the association between other variants of “democracy” and alternative development strategies in different periods of time or in other parts of the world. But any attempt to turn it into a general law, or to bracket this type of experience with say, that of the peasant-based electoral regimes of interwar Europe, and their strategies of economic nationalism, would be misconceived in principle and disinformative in practice. At least from the late nineteenth century onwards the notion of democracy has been appropriated by western establishments and largely deradicalised, a process which reached its culmination during the Cold War, when efforts were made to assimilate nearly all the broad spectrum of anti-communist regimes into the “democratic” camp, to the exclusion of more “neutral”, or unreliable, regimes (even those displaying considerably greater degrees of political openness). Now, in the absence of a Soviet alternative, which could try to rival western pretensions to universalism and modernity, the ideal of political democracy can claim the nominal allegiance of all the West, and perhaps much of the rest as well.⁵ But if its chequered and subversive history is forgotten it becomes a deracinated ideal, a procedural formality, even an irrelevance to those still in search of that elusive goal of the good society.

The idea of economic development is more recent, and its history is less well studied. Of course the reality of economic development can be traced back far before classical Greece, but the idea could not be elaborated until pre-market beliefs about such matters as the fixity of wants and the existence of a “just price” had been superseded. In the European tradition the idea that wants were in principle unlimited, and the related idea that relative prices should reflect relative scarcities (in relation to unlimited wants) seem not to have displaced pre-market beliefs until well after the Reformation. Before that the Catholic monopoly on higher

⁵ Allegiance to an ideal can be called nominal when it is only honoured at no cost. Even in the post-Cold War world those favouring political democracy could face some quite demanding tests of their allegiance, however – in Algeria, for example; or in Chechnya; Israel or even in advanced democracies caught up in panics about terrorism and insecurity.

learning and morality blacked the emergence of modern economic reasoning⁶ (and pre-Christian classical teachings also rested on the same pre-market assumptions, so that in place of the modern idea of economic development the Greeks and Romans though in terms of historical cycles of growth and decay). It is probably anglocentric of me to date comparative and reflexive thinking about economic development to the Scottish enlightenment, and to take Hume, Ferguson and, above all, Smith as the founding authors in this tradition, but even if we shifted to their counterparts in continental Europe (Cantillon, Quesnay, Turgot, etc.) we would still start somewhere in the Enlightenment Age since it was only then that economics and the economy became established as a distinct and separate subject and system.⁷ Compared to the 2,500 year debate on democracy, our ideas about economic development stretch back no more than one tenth as long.

The two central assertions about economic development in the Wealth of Nations are that “the division of labour is the great cause of the increase of public opulence”, and that the prime component of this division is commercial exchange between town and country (“the exchange of rude for manufactured produce”), which produces gains that are “mutual and reciprocal”. Savings are required to accumulate the capital needed to finance such transactions. Although these twin contentions yielded powerful insights into processes of economic differentiation which were already perceptible in Europe, and which could be extended across the globe, they fell far short of a comprehensive or universally applicable account of economic development. Indeed, Smith still retained the notion that there must eventually be some upper limit to “the degree of opulence” attainable by any particular country – a limit set by its factor endowments, and by the prospect that rising prosperity would stimulate population growth until income per capita stabilized. He also regarded agricultural improvement as in some sense the bedrock of economic prosperity (indeed he almost followed Quesnay in the view that real – i.e. durable – wealth is in land) and he was not as alert as he might have been at the first stirrings of technological revolution in British industry (notably in cotton).⁸

Thus, economic development was early on associated with the modernization of agriculture and the rise of towns. Then (starting with Malthus) it was linked to the growth of

⁶ In Max Weber’s account “The ethos of the classical economic morality is summed up in the old judgement passed on the merchant *...homo mercator vix aut numquam potest Deo placere*, he may conduct himself without sin but cannot be pleasing to God. This proposition was valid down to the 15th century, and the first attempt to modify it slowly matured in Florence.” (Weber 1961: 262).

⁷ See Dumont (1973) and Rothschild (2001).

⁸ W. W. Rostow (1990) gives as much space to Hume as to Smith, although the former was mainly interested in the mutual gains from regional and international comparative advantage. Rostow’s large volume may be faulted for what Richard Rorty has labelled “doxography” (“The real trouble with doxography is that it is a half-hearted attempt to tell a new story of intellectual progress by describing all texts in terms of recent discoveries”), but it does contain a rather thorough and systematic comparison of most major growth theorists prior to his own work.

effective demand, perhaps promoted through public works (rather than to savings), and to introduction of labour-saving machinery in industry rather than to the modernization of agriculture. It became associated with industrialization after the middle of the nineteenth century, as the notion of continuous, rather than episodic, technical progress in manufacturing came to the fore. In due course this led to concern with the diffusion of technological dynamism from leading industrial nations to those seeking to “catch up”. This opened the way to the idea that the economic development of latecomers might require a higher degree of public policy co-ordination and state intervention than had seemed appropriate to the founders of political economy. The rise of Keynesian economics reinforced the prestige of macro-economics and of economic planning, thus creating a temporarily favourable environment for the establishment of a distinctive sub-discipline of “development economics” after the Second World War. During the first half of the Cold War period, Hirschman is surely right to emphasise the importance of the Marshall Plan as a major impetus and source of encouragement to our nascent sub-discipline.⁹ That, of course, reflected the Cold War requirement that economic development should take a form that would strengthen the west against the Soviet bloc. Indeed, both the spread of democracy and the pursuit of economic development in the so-called “Third World” were heavily conditioned by the over-riding requirements of bi-polar conflict. This affects both the substantive content of the two categories, and the interactions between them. From the 1960s on development economics became increasingly divided over (or detached from) Cold War polarities, a stance which may have initially boosted its prestige, but which eventually contributed to its problems. Hirschman prefers to emphasise a related, but somewhat different source of political vulnerability – what he calls the “development disasters” which followed decolonisation in the 1960s. According to his view, when development theorists found that “the promotion of economic growth entailed not infrequently a sequence of events involving serious retrogression in those other areas, including the wholesale loss of civil and human rights, the easy self-confidence that our sub-discipline exuded in the early stages was impaired”.¹⁰ In other words, the un- or democratic practices that many Third World governments came to justify in the name of economic development demoralised a sub-discipline that had been

⁹ He notes that development economics emerged in very unusual, and as it turned out, temporary circumstances in England and the US (not the developing countries themselves) after 1945. These included the discredit of orthodox economics deriving from the depression of the 1930s, and the arrival of international Keynesianism, in the form of the Harrod-Domar growth model, with its implication of an enhanced role for the state in promoting late industrialisers. He concludes by suggestion that the founders of development economics displayed a paternalist, perhaps even somewhat contemptuous, attitude towards developing countries, when they assumed that problems of backwardness could be so easily overcome by the adoption of development planning. This presumed that such societies were governed only by *interests*, and had no *passions*.

¹⁰ Hirschman(1981: 21)

rooted in western liberal assumptions about the nature of social progress. But by the 1970s, in Hirschman's words "the old liveliness is no longer there.... new ideas are ever harder to come by.... and the field is not adequately reproducing itself".¹¹ This judgement foreshadowed the upsurge of what may loosely be labelled "neo-liberal" perspectives on economic development in the 1980s, under which economic development became associated with "getting prices right" by reinforcing international market disciplines and by strengthening private property rights.

One solution to this problem was to retreat into more technical work on the efficient allocation of resources, and another was to switch from concern with "growth" to concern with "basic needs". The former rested on the illusion that "by confining itself to smaller, highly technical problems, development economics could carry on regardless of political cataclysms", and the latter dissolved "the hitherto unique maximum of development economics (income per capita)" into "a variety of partial objectives, each requiring consultation with different experts". Both solutions struck Hirschman in 1980 as cop-outs from the basic goal – all-round emancipation from backwardness. He concluded that "the challenge posed by dismal politics must be met rather than avoided or evaded. By now it has become quite clear that this cannot be done by development economics alone".¹²

In the aftermath of decolonization (a process largely overlooked in Hirschman's brief survey, although it was surely central to the tale he told) there was deep uncertainty over the credentials of western development theorists as critics of Third World political repression. "Post-colonial guilt" on the left combined with Cold War realpolitik on the right to insulate debates over economic development from concern with the issues of political democracy. Until the end of the Cold War the international financial institutions explicitly underscored this insulation by stressing that their charters precluded them from interfering with the internal political affairs of member states. "Development" became a supposedly apolitical goal, to be achieved through technical means, whereas "democracy" was classed as a matter of domestic choice or subjective preference not to be imposed (or even materially encouraged) from without. It is hard to find a better illustration of the social construction of an is/ought dichotomy.

With the end of the Cold War, and the rise of a post-colonial generation no longer hung up over the struggle for national sovereignty, but instead missing the freedoms that were lost during state formation, the international context has radically changed. The "democratization of development" cannot be placed back on the agenda, to accompany the

¹¹ See Hirschman(1981: 1)

¹² Hirschman (1981: 22-23)

development of democratization. Development studies can and should no longer “avoid or evade” the “challenge of dismal politics”.

Democratizing Development

Reviewing classical debates on “democracy” and “development”, and considering the ways in which these categories have been adjusted to new contexts over time, leads to the conclusion that in the twenty-first century what we understand by “development” could very well incorporate some very considerable elements drawn from democratic theory. Likewise, our future conceptions of “democracy” appropriately understood and updated, could quite properly include much that has recently been studied within the limiting confines of the sub-discipline of “economic development”. When the application of knowledge, rather than mechanical power, provides the main key to economic prosperity the most effective producers can be expected to set a high standard of demand for citizenship rights and governmental accountability. When a central task of modern democratic government is to secure informed assent to complex public choices in the ears of economic management, our conception of “development” can hardly continue to omit consideration of the social acceptability and legitimacy of the policies to be selected. It is in this area of convergence between notions of “democracy” and “development” that the best future of development studies lies.¹³

As indicated by this thumbnail sketch, economic development like democracy, has already appeared in many different guises, and has at different points been identified with a wide range of apparently somewhat incompatible partners. Viewed from this *longue durée* perspective it would be surprising if either of these have suddenly become constants, or have shed the capacity to mutate and accommodate to unforeseen contexts. It would therefore be surprising if either had become so fixed and inflexible as to block out convergence with the other. Seen from this historical perspective recent identifications of democracy with capitalism, and of economic development with market liberalization, are more likely to prove liaisons of convenience rather than ultimate identities. But as we have seen, the content of both concepts have varied over time, so any effort either to separate or to reconcile them must start by addressing the definitional and conceptual issues.

If democracy is understood as meaning no more than the holding of competitive elections, and the consequent alternation in government of rival parties in accordance with the changing preferences of the electors, then the spread of democracy may have little bearing on social development outcomes. Similarly, if economic development is understood as essentially

¹³ Partha Dasgupta’s recent attempt at grand political economy in the Smithian tradition confirms that reintegration of the “moral sentiments” into economics need not involve sentimentality or loss of analytical rigour. Following Sen, his focus is on “well-being” (understood to include income, health, liberty, and literacy) rather than economic growth (Sen 1995).

consisting of a high and sustained rate of economic growth, perhaps accompanied by some social emergency funds and some targeting of benefits to the very poor, then the choice between establishing a democracy or maintaining an authoritarian regime may be more clearly linked to the *style* of social development than to its *level*. At this level of abstraction it is possible to think of interconnections between democracy and development that could be supportive, and of others that could be obstructive, but neither type of linkage looks particularly compelling. Overall the null hypothesis would seem as plausible as any. The procedural minimum version of democracy need not carry much implications for social development; and the growth-first version of economic development leaves it open to doubt whether democracy or authoritarian rule produces better social development outcomes.

But during the 1990s the conviction has grown that democracy and development are more intimately interconnected and more positively associated than this. Cross country data sets have been scrutinized to test for association (with somewhat mixed results).¹⁴ Various democracy-related phrases – “participation”, “civil society”, “empowerment”, - have assumed increasing prominence among the goals of development pursued by international donors. As more developing countries have adopted at least the outward appearance of democratic political practices the traditional ldc lobby opposed to linking democracy with development has weakened. The majority of developing countries can now hope to benefit if developmental assistance carries democratic conditionality, and the donor countries are increasingly inclined to associate democracy with social development and therefore attach such conditions to their aid.

If this shift in beliefs and practices to prove more than just a passing fashion it will have to be accompanied by a re-conceptualization of both democracy and development. Indeed it seems that just such a debate may be getting underway in both of the relevant scholarly communities. Social development provides the key point of intersection between the separate academic discourses of democratization and economic development. To the extent that these discourses converge social policies and citizenship entitlements will move from the margins to the centre of attention in these scholarly communities. The UNDP’s

¹⁴ Not too much illumination on the links between democracy and development can be expected from data sets that include dozens of “failed” or “near failed” states, and that count countries the size of India and China as single units to be compared with Dominica, and Fiji. Of the 174 states classified in the Human Development Report 2000 perhaps as many as one quarter are so recent and insecure that the question of survival dominates public policy, pushing tasks of political and economic development into the background. A few not-so-new states are also in this position. Although this refers to around a quarter of existing so-called “developing” states, only a much smaller proportion of the total population of these countries are involved, since the list includes hardly any of the heavily populated nations. But if we consider, say, Timor (then still treated as within Indonesia) or Tibet (within China) or Kashmir (within India) it is immediately apparent that there are highly populated regions within various of even the best established of “Third World” states where the over-riding concerns of contemporary public policy are almost as primordial as in comprehensively “failed states” such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Georgia, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Zaire, etc.

cumulative work on “human development” has generated an extensive empirical database backed by considerable theoretical groundwork designed to shift public policy priorities in this direction where both democracy and prosperity are valued as proxies for human freedom.¹⁵ But, it is one thing to shift the focus of attention, and quite another to integrate the new objects of study into a coherent and operational analytical framework. The “rights” discourse underlying the “human development” perspective tends to reject trade offs or sequencing strategies that would involve prioritising some claims over others. The World Bank’s *World Development Report 2000/2001* makes an uncomfortable attempt to reconcile this human development perspective with the Bank’s more traditional emphasis on results-oriented strategic choices. Thus it concedes that “democracy is intrinsically valuable for human well-being as a manifestation of human freedom. Political freedoms have enormous impact on the lives and capabilities of citizens”. But, perhaps mindful of earlier World Bank enthusiasms for some undemocratic regimes, this *prise de position* is quickly counterbalanced by reference to the record of “a few notably development-oriented countries, such as the Republic of Korea, before they became pluralist democracies”. (A tactful veil is drawn over those developmental-oriented countries, such as China, which still express no intention of following such a path). “Democracy – both representative and participatory – is a good in itself”. (This formulation presumably enables the Bank to commend some regimes that do not allow competitive multi-party elections). “But democratic political processes alone are not enough to ensure that poverty reduction is taken as a key priority in society’s efforts”.¹⁶ (So despite the intrinsic value of democracy, this language of priorities leaves open the possibility not only that something more may be needed to reduce poverty, but that something different may work better). Given the need for such intellectual contortions it may be all too tempting for the mainstream development agencies to maintain an established framework, with some “add on” references to social development, environmental sustainability, gender balance, or political empowerment, that sound encouraging but that do not disturb core assumptions or modes of analysis. Notwithstanding any discursive shift towards integrating democracy and development at the analytical level, when it comes to policy-making and goal setting the democratic component tends to shine by its absence. Thus the UN’s Millennium Development Goals for 2015 include global targets for income, education, demography, and

¹⁵ “Human development is the process of enlarging people’s choices by expanding human functionings and capabilities....Capabilities reflect the freedom to achieve functionings. In that sense human development is freedom”. Income levels are only one component of human development and are taken into account as a surrogate for the human choices permitted by a decent standard of living (when accompanied by health and knowledge). (UNDP 2000: 17)

¹⁶ See World Bank (2001: 112-113).

sustainable development (all costed and quantified), but no political goals.¹⁷ Similarly, advocates of democratic conditionality are often inclined to focus solely on political variables and may be tempted to treat social welfare as an optional extra.

The old mainstream policy framework has a clear rationale. If resources are to be allocated between countries in a manner that rewards “good performance”, then the criteria for ranking and evaluating performance need to be explicit and verifiable. In fact it is not that easy to distinguish precisely between authoritarian and democratic regimes, or between countries pursuing sustainable growth policies and those on sub-optimal paths. But at least on the old narrow definitions of democracy and development there is an established tradition of measurement and a conventional literature of causal explanation. But if our conception of democracy is broadened to include such fuzzy notions as “empowerment”, or if the focus on economic growth is diluted by the importation of more imprecise and perhaps culturally bounded elements of social development as citizen rights, then the criteria for judging performance may become unmanageably complex, and perhaps arbitrary. There is, indeed, plenty of evidence that in the past undemocratic regimes have attempted to conceal their deficiencies by invoking their supposedly superior systems of political participation and social integration. Similarly, governments that were not willing to pursue sound economic growth policies have sheltered behind the excuse that they must protect irreversible social conquests. Given such antecedents, defenders of the old framework can make a respectable case for their position. Merely talking about participation and social welfare gives no guarantee of improvements in performance. They continue to argue that citizenship entitlements and social development programmes can only be “added on” provided economic rationality and “good government” are first respected.

However, this established framework confronts mounting difficulties, both practical and political. On the practical side, for a regime to be classified as a “democratic” is normally to receive a positive evaluation, not just a neutral descriptive designation. Advantages, prestige, and self-respect flow from such labelling or speech acts. Likewise, for an economic policy to be designated an example of economic development is also beneficial. In both cases political leaders strive to secure favourable endorsements, and to avoid or deflect negative

¹⁷ The central target is to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (i.e. on a purchase power parity income of less than one dollar a day) by 2015. The other six goals serve essentially to buttress the durability of this advance. The package adds up to what is intended to be an incontrovertible and unifying objective – minimum goals, but ones that are agreed, attainable, and would make a real difference. Nevertheless, from a democratic perspective there is much to debate here. The international decision-making process is highly opaque, and it is far from clear who would be held responsible if the targets were missed. The targets themselves also merit discussion. Can any freedoms be suspended in order to accelerate their fulfilment? If halving extreme poverty is attainable, why wait until 2015? Why only halve the proportion? Are the rich to pay, or the only slightly less poor?

labelling. So debate about which precise instances fit within the broad and blurry categories of “democracy” and “development” can easily become politicised. The same applies to propositions involving the linkages between the two. Indeed, on a strong view we may be dealing with “essentially contested” concepts, and with a discourse about their inter-relationship that in considerable degree reflects these underlying struggles for power. The recent establishment of a range of independent and standardised annual tabulations covering the entire world (such as HDI, the Freedom House Yearbook of Freedom, Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index etc.) provides an important corrective to previous excesses of subjectivism, but it does not dispense with the need for informed personal and collective judgement not only in the interpretation of the rankings, but also in deciding whether to accept their relative evaluations.¹⁸

Other practical difficulties include:

- i) with the spread of democracy comes mounting demands for decentralization and the devolution of public policies to more local levels of government.
- ii) Similarly, with the spread of market-based systems of competition and allocation comes a shift in the locus of economic power away from the government agencies hitherto either charged with implementing optimal growth policies.
- iii) Moreover, where social development has been allowed to falter, perhaps through omissions arising from too narrow a conception of “good performance”, the evidence has mounted that such omissions easily produce negative feedback that can eventually destabilize procedural democracy and/or disrupt “sound” growth strategies.

Practical considerations of this kind, reinforced by the political preferences of a growing number of both donor and recipient governments, have driven defenders of the old framework to make concessions, and even to dilute the clarity of their initial core convictions. Conventional “billiard ball” models of causation, and totemic quantitative indicators of macro-performance no longer inspire quite the same deference as in an earlier period of technocratic self-confidence, but nor have they been dethroned either. Those who favour the incorporation of “softer” styles of explanation and evaluation have yet to develop generally accepted alternative approaches.

¹⁸ I scrutinized the 1994 HDI index to assess whether its inter-country rankings coincided with my subjective impressions of countries I have studied. It struck me as questionable whether Cuba and Sri Lanka should be ranked virtually equal (at 89 and 90 respectively). In 2000 the ranking is Cuba 56, Sri Lanka 84. I also doubted the huge gap between Barbados (20) and Grenada (78). In 2000 they appear much closer at 30 and 54 respectively.

It should be possible to move beyond this state of affairs, and to reconceptualize both democracy and development in a manner that would provide a superior and integrated analytical framework and perhaps even a more democratic policy rationale. The UNDP's Human Development Report, UNRISD's Visible Hands Taking Responsibility for Social Development, and related academic initiatives indicates that the search for a substitute framework is well underway although as yet the results remain incipient. Freedom of expression and association provides some offset to the risks of man-made famines and other preventable "natural" disasters. Citizens with voting rights can exercise some leverage over public policy priorities, and may prefer clean drinking water to pharaonic dams and suchlike mega-projects. If social development elicits local ownership and citizen participation it may constrain wasteful arms expenditure and tilt international relations towards co-operation rather than conflict. The traditional separation between politics and economics, both narrowly conceived, has obstructed investigation of such potential linkages (forgetting what Gunnar Myrdal had once taught us about "cumulative and circular" causation in development studies).

Some New Directions for Research

It may be possible to "democratize development", but if so there are no short cuts or easy add ons. It will be necessary to return to first principles for the reconceptualizations that are required, and it will also be necessary to reconsider some basic questions of method. As a first step we would have to "*reculer pour mieux sauter*". Thereafter it would seem critical to identify a cluster of relatively specific and empirically researchable topics and issues where a more integrated view of developmental democracy is likely to yield particularly distinctive and productive insights. A promising cluster would be found in some aspects of social policy, particularly as it arises in a subset of relatively stable and well institutionalised new democracies.

The first principles in question are very broad, and can be outlined quite concisely. As already indicated above, democratization and development can both be viewed as long-term, open-ended processes of social constitution. Understood in such terms it becomes possible to reconceptulise them as not just contingently or instrumentally associated. Indeed, they may be mutually constitutive, (derived from a unitary conception of human rights, human freedom, and of self-realization). The "elective affinity" between them may be traced to a common foundation of dialogue, deliberation, and consent. But if we follow line of reasoning we have to absorb the implications of open-endedness. There is no universal and measurable end-point, at which democratization ends and development is completed. The goals of democratic development remain subject to revision and perfection by future

generations of citizens, they may vary over time and space. Just as the development and democratization of the USA was not finally accomplished either in 1787, or in 1865, or in 1965, so also the developmental democracies of Brazil, India, Mexico and indeed the United Kingdom will remain under construction over future generations.

These are obviously complex and controversial tasks of reconceptualization that must be elaborated more fully elsewhere. Moving beyond this quite abstract level of theorising, one could seek to identify some relatively concrete historical experiences and areas of public policy where such a perspective may generate otherwise unavailable insights. My concern is both with isolating topics suitable for comparative empirical enquiry and with highlighting methods of investigation appropriate to this theoretical perspective. For illustrative purposes here are four relevant topics of personal interest to me:

- i) the western hemisphere regional experience of almost universal political democracy accompanied by often extreme and typically unchanging levels of inequality and social injustice;
- ii) within this regionwide framework, one could undertake some “paired comparisons” of national variation (e.g. between Costa Rica and Nicaragua or the Dominican Republic and Haiti) or Argentina and Chile;
- iii) since this perspective directs attention to long-term holistic processes one might also examine a single national experience over several generations (Bolivia could be chosen for this purpose);
- iv) but we should also disaggregate and examine key areas of public policy where the linkage between citizenship and distribute outcomes is of particular relevance (e.g. citizenship and water rights, citizenship and public security). Such topics for comparative research invite reflection on methodological issues as well.

Otherwise, insensitive (“brutalist”) criteria of classification can only obstruct the detection of such patterns of association as are worth extracting from the data. Consider two extreme examples of troubling “real life situations” which could easily escape detection under a brutalist either/or system of classification using simple-minded indicators. In order to judge whether a regime which denies political and civil rights to women, and requires them to take the veil, can under any circumstances be classified as “democratic”, we are surely required to consider from first principles the range and boundaries of the concept of democracy. Similarly, when considering whether “economic development” applies, for example, to a situation of very high per capita consumption financed by oil revenues, where most of the productive work is undertaken by immigrants lacking citizenship rights. More typical borderline cases would be less extreme, but more common. Thus, a consideration number of Islamic states test the universality of our standard conception of “democracy”, and the current

controversy over the “Asian model” challenges some core western assumptions concerning “development”.

Both the UNDP index and the Freedom House ratings make use of a series of partial indicators which are then aggregated according to an arbitrary formula in order to produce monotone country rankings. Depending on the issues being analysed, and the conceptual framework of the enquiry, it may be more appropriate to work with the disaggregated series, or to combine them according to a different formula. For example, the UNDP’s educational attainment index could be of special interest both to those working with a “human capital” model of development and to those who view “civil society” as the core element in any long-term process of democratization. Alternative conceptions of democracy and development might privilege other variables.

Sensitivity to the historical variability and contextual nuances associated with these two categories can help us to interrogate the comparative data discursively, “democratic”, and what sub-classifications (if any) we should admit within that category. The same applies to which economic processes we should designate as instances of “development”. These judgements ought to be defended (and if necessary revised) in the lights of rational debate. They are not purely subjective. But we cannot evade the need to defend our choices of social categories, and our labelling procedures, by sheltering behind externally given “objective” numerical indicators. For example, if we opt for GDP per capita as our yardstick of “economic development”, then we have to defend the consequence that Brunei scores seven times higher than Cuba (a large differential would also exist if we used rates of change rather than absolute levels). Equally, if we accept the Freedom House ratings we commit ourselves to the proposition that Brunei and Cuba are very similarly placed in terms of political freedom (12 and 13 respectively, compared to a bottom score of 14). To me personally both these comparisons seem problematic, obscuring more than they illuminate about the two countries. I do not have much confidence in aggregate statistical tests of association, which rely on raw data of this calibre.

To make a solid and convincing comparative judgement about the status of either “democracy” or “development” in these (or indeed in any) countries requires a definite familiarity with each case, together with a well-grounded attention to the boundaries and nuances of the categories employed. The more countries under consideration the less the detail of each case affects the overall conclusion, it can be argued, but even so a responsible judgement requires conscientious consideration of each instance (as can be demonstrated by considering how each of us is likely to view the exercise as a whole if our particular country is egregiously misclassified). Therefore, countries about which the investigator is

insufficiently familiar should be investigated with extra diligence, or excluded from the comparison on the grounds that the bad data would otherwise swamp the good.

So what techniques are appropriate for assessing long-term holistic change in a single country? How should regional and paired comparisons be structured to address such issues? Do our standard methods of sampling and data collection permit adequate analysis of citizenship issues in such critical areas of public policy as water privatisation and the provision of community policing? Where causal chains are long and multiple, and where outcomes depend upon socially constructed perceptions of complex categories, too much insistence on necessary connection and mechanical causation is likely to confuse and mislead. Other, more historical and contextual (narrative or “configurative”) methods of judgement and interpretation may help to correct such deficiencies, or at least usefully supplement standard social science procedures of objectification (such as elaboration of decontextualized quantitative indicators). If we are serious in regarding both democratization and development as normatively desired interactive processes founded on participation and consent, then we need to give due weight to methods of interpretation that take into account the understandings of the parties involved. Many developmental disasters have arisen from the past failure of donors and policymakers to attend to their discursive dimension, and some democratic regimes (e.g. Argentina at the time of this writing) seem to have fallen victim to the same insulation from social reality. Thus the case for methodological eclecticism in this field is not just an arid footnote from within academia. It arises as a necessary consequence of the reconceptualizations currently in progress and as a required response to the exigencies of realistic policymaking.

Conclusion

This brief *tour de horizon* of the scope for reconciling democratization and development has indicated some potentially worthwhile topics and some innovative approaches. But at least four big analytical questions still need to be resolved. First, how are developmental priorities to be established, and reconciled, once the traditional criterion of growth maximization had been relaxed? Second, how is good performance to be compared, evaluated, and rewarded if a variety of somewhat competing and partially subjective long-term goals are to become the centrepiece of a new drive for integrated “social development”? Third, since on any realistic definition long-term democratic and social development provokes resistance and conflict, and is therefore prone to periodic interruption and even reversal, how is such turbulence to be interpreted and (possibly) managed? (If managed, by whom, answerable to what constituency?) Finally, since even on the most optimistic of assumptions about the pace of progress, most new democracies will for generations to come continue to include large

numbers of poor citizens whose urgent social policy needs can at best only gradually be addressed, how can democratization and social development be stabilized in the intervening decades?

Merely to list these questions is sufficient to demonstrate the scale of the task required before an integrated new analytical framework can fully substitute for the old dichotomy. Here are a few suggestions, some more robustly established than others. First, on the establishment of developmental priorities, in principle the answer must lie with the newly enfranchised citizens of these developmental democracies. No doubt they will periodically misread the available alternatives, and will make policy mistakes. But as democratization proceeds “ownership” of the development process is bound to pass from the specialized agencies and peak ministries towards the local authorities and societies directly and permanently affected. (Admittedly this assertion rests on a view of democratization as a long-term cumulative process of social learning, rather than just as a one-off shift in the rules of governing elite circulation). Second, on the evaluation of social development performance, international comparative indicators will remain indispensable, and will have to be further refined. But on an integrated view of development all evaluations will need increasingly to take account of the expectations and perceptions of the citizens in question. That too follows from the idea that democratic development requires local “ownership”.

Third, the realities of conflict and non-linearity in long-term processes of social development pose a severe analytical challenge that cannot be resolved purely by invoking democratic authority. Local ownership cannot be absolute. It must be qualified by respect for the opinions and experiences of others including experts and distant donors. Social development in a liberalized international system must be cosmopolitan, and constrained within an agreed framework of basic rights and values. On this view an integrated approach will require co-operation and co-responsibility across international and indeed inter-continental boundaries. A social catastrophe in say Afghanistan or Albania can jeopardize both democracy and development far afield and to the opposite extremes of the alphabet. Recently there has been a some progress in generating norms of conduct for managing such conflicts and reversals, but the challenge to the existing framework of international assumptions remain acute.

Finally, at the domestic level, the management techniques needed to contain frustration while gradually diminishing the backlog of legitimate and unmet citizen demands can easily jar with both the standard operating procedures of the development agencies and with the impersonal logic of the market economy. Once democracy is understood as more than a simple mechanism of elite circulation, politics regains its status as an autonomous sphere of social action with its own messy logic, and awkward outcomes. UNRISD is right to refer to the “visible hands” that will then “take responsibility for social development”, but

more analysis is needed to distinguish the legitimate exercise of democratic authority from the old vices of mismanagement from behind a veil of good intentions. Once development is understood as a process of social construction and not just of growth maximization, then local creativity and experimentation can be celebrated. But here too lurk the dangers of distortion and manipulation. A strong analytical framework, grounded on solid international consensus and backed by the widely accepted lessons of experience, will be required if such experiments are to be more than cosmetic “add ons” to development, and are not to prove costly “subtractions from” conventional growth.

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