Afropolitan Journals

ISSN: 3027-1932 www.afropolitanjournals.com

Poverty, Development and Hunger in a Global Age

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DOI: *https://doi.org/10.62154/ajhcer.2024.016.010431*

Abstract

This paper opines that the issues of poverty, development, and hunger have become increasingly prominent since the end of World War II. It stresses that in the early phase, this occurred as decolonization failed to bring about economic and social progress in what was then portrayed as the Third World, at the same time that industrially advanced Western countries were experiencing historically unprecedented levels of economic growth. As global economic disparities widened, some argued that colonialism had given way to 'neocolonialism', political domination having been replaced by more subtle but no less effective economic domination. Others heralded the emergence of a 'North–South divide'. This paper emphasizes that in this context, bodies as different as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on the one hand, and a host of development Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and activist groups on the other, came to view the task of reducing the gap between rich countries and poor countries as amoral imperative. However, the paper stresses that poverty, development, and hunger are complex and deeply controversial issues. It examines the orthodox mainstream understanding of poverty, development, and hunger, and contrasts this with a critical alternative approach. Consideration is given to how successful the development orthodoxy has been in incorporating and thereby neutralizing the concerns of the critical alternative. The paper then closes with an assessment of the likelihood of a globalization with a human face in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Poverty, Development, Hunger, Underdevelopment, Integration, Liberalism, Sustainability, Globalization.

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, the problems of hunger, poverty, and development have gained more attention. During the early stages, industrialized western nations were experiencing historically unparalleled levels of economic growth, but decolonization failed to bring about economic and social improvement in what was then represented as the Third World. Some said that colonialism had given way to "neocolonialism" as global economic inequities increased, with more nuanced but equally effective economic dominance taking

the place of political rule. Some predicted the formation of a "North-South divide." A number of development NGOs and activist groups, as well as institutions as disparate as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), began to see the task of closing the wealth gap between rich and poor countries as an immoral one in this context. Hunger, poverty, and development, however, are difficult and contentious issues.

Over seventy-five years of exceptional official development programs and remarkable global economic growth have been experienced since 1945. However, there is a rising economic divide between affluent and poor governments and people, leading to a rise in global polarization. The majority of the world's poorest inhabitants are still women and girls, and poverty, starvation, and illness are still pervasive. Furthermore, the region of the world that we have historically referred to as the "South" or the Third World is not the only place where this basic scenario exists. Growing disparities within and between nations have coincided with the global governance institutions' advocacy of neo-liberal economic policies (the so-called Washington Consensus), especially since the 1980s and 1990s. Millions of individuals who had previously been protected by the state have fallen into poverty as a result of the shift to market economies, and the former Eastern Bloc's Second World nations have been absorbed into the Third World alliance of states during this time. Growing socioeconomic disparities defined the 1980s and 1990s social environment in the industrialized countries. The Third World has been particularly affected by globalization, since they have been pushed to implement free market policies in order to reschedule their debt and in the hopes of drawing in fresh investment to promote growth. Although the global image of these neo-liberal economic policies is quite varied and other elements like race, ethnicity, and class contribute to local results, gendered consequences of these policies have been recognized (Buvinic 2017: 39; Akinola 2019: 112).

The enormity of the current challenges was recognized by the United Nations in 2000 with the acceptance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These set time-limited, quantifiable targets across eight areas, ranging from poverty to health, gender, education, environment, and development. The first goal was the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, with the target of halving the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day by 2015.

The attempts of the majority of governments, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) since 1945 to address global hunger and poverty can be categorized into two very broad types, depending on the explanations they provide for the existence of these problems and the respective solutions that they prescribe. These can be identified as the dominant mainstream or orthodox approach, which provides and values a particular body of developmental knowledge, and a critical alternative approach, which incorporates other more marginalized understandings of the development challenge and process (see Table 1.1). Most of this paper will be devoted to an examination of the differences between these two approaches in relationship to the three related topics of poverty, development, and hunger, with particular emphasis being placed upon the topic of development. The paper concludes with an assessment of whether the desperate

conditions in which so many of the world's citizens find themselves today are likely to improve. Again, two contrasting approaches are outlined.

Table 1.1: Mainstream and Alternative Conceptions of Poverty, Development, and Hunger

	Poverty	Development	Hunger
Mainstream Approach	Unfulfilled material needs	Linear path - traditional to modern	Not enough food to go around everyone
Critical Alternative Approach	Unfulfilled material and non-material needs	Diverse paths, locally driven	There is enough food, the problem is distribution and entitlement

Poverty

Poverty has been the normal state of affairs for most of world history. Even in well-organized societies with advanced systems of rule (ancient China and Rome, the Incas and so on), economies were technologically simple with modest productivity levels and populations were overwhelmingly poor. Even most of those who were thought of as rich in their day would be poor by modern standards. Poverty, thus, is not the exception; it has been the rule. The exception, from this perspective, is the wealth currently enjoyed in the modern West, and even this has occurred only fairly recently. It was only in the late eighteenth century that European and North American societies started to increase productivity in ways that defied the predictions of Thomas Malthus, who had warned that any improvement in productivity would simply be nullified by demographic growth. How did Western societies avoid this Malthusian trap? The answer to this question is 'development'. Development was certainly associated with a series of innovations in technology and organization that led to the industrial revolution. Nevertheless, there is significant debate about precisely how the affluence of the developed West has been brought about, and, most particularly, about how affluence and development can best be replicated in parts of the non-western world. Before the complex and contested issue of development is considered, however, it is necessary to look more closely at what poverty is and how it can be measured.

What is poverty? What distinguishes 'the poor' from 'the rich'? If poverty reduction is a goal of national, regional or global policy, it is necessary to understand what poverty is, and how it can be measured. However, poverty is a complex and contested concept. On the face of it, poverty means being deprived of the necessities of life; that is, lacking sufficient food, fuel, shelter and clothing to maintain 'physical efficiency'. In its original sense, this was seen as an *absolute* standard, below which human existence became difficult to sustain. This means, for instance, that adult males must eat about 2,000–2,500 calories a day simply in order to maintain body weight. According to this view, poverty hardly exists in developing

industrialized states like the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia; even the poor in such countries live better than much of the world's population.

Absolute poverty is founded on the idea of 'basic needs', corresponding to physiological needs in Maslow's (1943) 'hierarchy of needs'. However, the idea of absolute poverty may miss an important dimension of poverty. People may feel that they are poor not because they suffer from material hardship and their basic needs are not met, but because they lack what others have got. They feel deprived in terms of the standards, conditions and pleasures enjoyed by the majority in their society. In this sense, poverty is a social, and not merely physiological, phenomenon: it is based on people's *relative* position in the social order. Relative poverty defines the poor as the 'less well off' rather than the 'needy'. For instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) both use a 'poverty line' that is based on a relative poverty threshold, which is set at an income level that is 50 per cent or less than that of the median household. In other words, people are considered to be 'poor' if their available income is substantially lower than that of a typical person in their country of residence. The concept of relative poverty nevertheless raises important political questions because it establishes a link between poverty and inequality, and in so doing suggests that reducing or eradicating poverty can only be achieved through the redistribution of wealth and the promotion of equality.

Whereas relative poverty is a subjective calculation, based on feelings of deprivation and disadvantage created by the gap between the poor and the rest of society, absolute poverty can surely be objectively defined. But at what level do people become absolutely poor? The World Bank, which has assumed growing responsibility for global poverty reduction, takes as a standard of extreme poverty an income level of a dollar a day, calculated at purchasing power parity (PPP). Based on its 2017 recalculation, which now uses $1.25 a day rather than $1 a day, the World Bank estimates that 1.4 billion people live at or below the international poverty line. Nevertheless, this calculation remains somewhat arbitrary, with some commentators preferring to use $2 a day or $2.5a day. By the latter standard, the ranks of the world's poor would more than double to 3.14 billion or 49 per cent of the world's population (Adeola and Chidiebere 2019).

However, there has been growing dissatisfaction with a narrowly income-based definition of poverty. This stems from a recognition that poor people suffer from multiple deprivation involving a failure to meet their non-material needs as well as their material needs. Amartya Sen (2015: 375) contributed to such thinking in pointing out that famines often arise not from a lack of food, but from a complex of social, economic and political factors such as rising food prices, poor food distribution systems and government inefficiency. Poverty is therefore as much about restricted opportunities and the absence of freedom, in particular positive freedom, as it is about lack of income or resources. Such thinking has placed greater emphasis on the notion of 'human development', which has become central to the UN's approach to global poverty, as reflected in its annual Human Development Reports.

These reports review various issues related to poverty and development and rank states on the basis of the Human Development Index (HDI).

Different conceptions of poverty underpin the mainstream and alternative views of development. There is basic agreement on the material aspect of poverty, such as lack of food, clean water, and sanitation, but disagreement on the importance of non-material aspects. Also, key differences emerge in regard to how material needs should be met, and hence about the goal of development.

Most governments, international organizations citizens in the West, and many elsewhere adhere to the orthodox conception of poverty. This refers to a situation where people do not have money to buy adequate food or satisfy other basic needs, and are often classified as un – or- under-employed. This mainstream understanding of poverty based on money has arisen as a result of the globalization of Western culture and the attendant expansion of the market. Thus, a community which provides for itself outside monetized cash transactions and wage labour, such as a hunter-gatherer pygmy group, is regarded as poor. Since 1945, this meaning of poverty has been almost universalized. Poverty is seen as an economic condition dependent on cash transactions in the market-place for its eradication. These transactions in turn are dependent on development defined as economic growth. An economic yardstick is used to measure and to judge all societies.

Poverty has widely been regarded as characterizing the Third World, and it has a gendered face. An approach has developed whereby it is seen as incumbent upon the developed countries to 'help' the Third World eradicate 'poverty' and increasingly to address female poverty. James Wolfensohn, Managing Director of the World Bank, declared in February 2000 that "The World Bank is committed to making gender equality central to its fight against poverty" (cited in World Bank 2000). The solution advocated to overcome global poverty is the further integration of the global economy (Thomas 2002) and of women into this process (Pearson 2000; Weber 2002). Increasingly, however, as globalization has intensified, poverty defined in such economic terms has come to characterize significant sectors of population in advanced developed countries such as USA (see Bello 2014).

Critical, alternative views of poverty exist in other cultures where the emphasis is not simply on money, but on spiritual values, community ties, and availability of common resources. In traditional subsistence methods, a common strategy for survival is provision for oneself and one's family via community-regulated access to common water, land, and fodder. The autonomy characteristic of such methods may be highly valued by those who have traditionally practised them. Indeed, some such methods have been sustained over thousands of years. For many people in the developing world the ability to provide for oneself and one's family may be preferable to dependence on an unpredictable market and/or an unreliable government.

Critical views on poverty have emanated from within Western society also. For example, it has been asserted that our emphasis on monetary values has led to the creation of 'a system of production that ravishes nature and a society that mutilates man'(Schumacher 1973).Some global institutions have been important in promoting a conception of poverty

that extends beyond material indicators. The work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since the early 1990s is significant here for distinguishing between income poverty (a material condition) and human poverty (encompassing human dignity, agency, opportunity and choices).

The issue of poverty and the challenge of poverty alleviation moved up the global political agenda at the close of the twentieth century, as evidenced in the UN's first Millennium Development Goals citied earlier. While World Bank figures for 1990s showed a global improvement in reducing the number of people living on less than a dollar a day (its orthodox measurement of extreme poverty), the picture was uneven: in sub-Saharan Africa the situation deteriorated, and elsewhere, such as the Russian Federation, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and some Middle Eastern states, the picture remains bleak. Most of the global improvement resulted from trends in China and India, and even there, deep pockets of poverty remain.

Having considered the orthodox and critical alternative views of poverty, attention will now be focused on the important topic of development. This will be conducted in three main parts. The first part will start by examining the orthodox view of development and will then proceed to an assessment of its effect on post-war development in the Third World. The second part will examine the critical alternative view of development and its application to subjects such as empowerment and democracy. In third part consideration will be given to the ways in which the orthodox approach to development has responded to some of the criticisms made of it by the critical alternative approach.

Development

When we consider the topic of development it is important to realize that all conceptions of development necessarily reflect a particular set of social and political values. Indeed, it is true to say that 'Development can be conceived only within an ideological framework' (Roberts2014:7). Since the Second World War the dominant understanding, favoured by the majority of governments and multilateral agencies, has seen development as synonymous with economic growth within the context of a free market international economy. Economic growth is identified as necessary for combating poverty, defined as the inability of people to meet their basic material needs through cash transactions. This is seen in the influential reports of the World Bank, where countries are categorized according to their income. Those countries that have the lower national incomes per head of population are regarded as being less developed than those with higher incomes, and they are perceived as being in need of increased integration into the global market-place.

An alternative view of development has, however, emerged from a few governments, UN agencies, grassroots movements, NGOs, and some academics. Their concerns have centred broadly on entitlement and distribution. Poverty is identified as the inability to provide for the material needs of oneself and one's family by subsistence or cash transactions, and by the absence of an environment conducive to human well-being broadly conceived in spiritual and community terms. These voices of opposition are growing

significantly louder, as ideas polarize following the apparent universal triumph of economic liberalism. The language of opposition is changing to incorporate matters of democracy such as political empowerment, participation, meaningful self-determination for the majority, protection of the commons, and an emphasis on pro-poor growth. In the following two sections we will examine how the orthodox view of development has been applied at a global level and assess what measure of success it has achieved.

Economic Liberalism and the Post-1945 International Economic Order

During the Second World War there was a strong belief among the allied powers that the protectionist trade policies of the 1930s had contributed significantly to the outbreak of the war. Plans were drawn up by the USA and the UK for the creation of a stable post–war international order with the United Nations (UN), its affiliates the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, plus the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), providing the institutional bases. The latter three provided the foundations of a liberal international economic order based on the pursuit of free trade, but allowing an appropriate role for state intervention in the market in support of national security and national and global stability (Rapley 2006; Oluwatoyin and Afris 2016). This has been called embedded liberalism. The decision – making procedures of these international economic institutions favoured a small group of developed Western States. Their relationship with the UN, which in the General Assembly has more democratic procedures, has not always been an easy one.

In the early post-war years, reconstruction of previously developed states took priority over assisting developing states. This reconstruction process really took off in the context of the Cold War, with the transfer of huge sums of money from the United States to Europe in the form of bilateral aid from the Marshall Plan of 1947. In the 1950s and 1960s as decolonization progressed, the focus of the World Bank and the UN system generally shifted to the perceived needs of developing countries. The USA was heavily involved as the most important funder of the World Bank and the UN, and also in a bilateral capacity.

There was a widespread belief in the developed Western countries, among the managers of the major multilateral institutions, and throughout the UN system, that Third World states were economically backward and needed to be 'developed'. This process would require intervention in their economies. This attitude was widely shared by Western – educated elites in those countries. In the context of independence movements, the development imperative came to be shared by many citizens in the Third World. The underlying assumption was that the Western lifestyle and mode of economic organization were superior and should be universally aspired to.

The Cold War provided a context in which there was a competition between the West and the Eastern bloc to win allies in the 'Third World'. The USA believed that the path of liberal economic growth would result in hostility to socialist ideals. The USSR, by contrast, attempted to sell its economic system as the most rapid means for the newly independent states to achieve industrialization and development. The process of industrialization

underpinned conceptions of development in both East and West, but whereas in the capitalist sphere the market was to be the engine of growth, in the socialist sphere central planning by the state was the preferred method.

The majority of Third World states were born into and accepted a place within the Western, capitalist orbit, while a few, either by choice or lack of options, ended up in the socialist camp. Yet in the early post-war and post-colonial decades all states – whether in the West, East or Third World - favoured an important role for the state in development. Many Third World countries pursued a strategy of import substitution industrialization in order to try to break out of their dependent position in the world-economy as peripheral producers of primary commodities for the core developed countries.

This approach, which recognized the important role of the state in development, suffered a major setback in the early 1980s. The developing countries had borrowed heavily in the 1970s in response to the rise in oil prices. The rich countries' strategy for dealing with the second oil price hike in 1979 resulted in massive rises in interest rates and steep falls in commodity prices in the early 1980s. The developing countries were unable to repay spiraling debts. Mexico threatened to default in 1982. The Group of Seven (G7) leading developed Western countries decided to deal with the debt problem on a country-by-country basis, with the goal of avoiding the collapse of the international banking system by ensuring continued repayment of debt. In this regard, the IMF and the World Bank pursued a vigorous policy of structural adjustment lending throughout the developing world. In applying this policy, the Fund and Bank worked together in an unprecedented fashion to encourage developing countries to pursue market-oriented strategies based on rolling back the power of the state and opening Third World economies for foreign investment. Exports were promoted so that these countries would earn the foreign exchange necessary to keep up with their debt repayments.

With the ending of the Cold War and the collapse of the Eastern bloc after 1989, this neo-liberal economic and political philosophy came to dominate development thinking across the globe. The championing of unadulterated liberal economic values played an important role in accelerating the globalization process. This represented an important ideological shift. The 'embedded liberalism' of the early post-war decades gave way to the unadulterated neoclassical economic policies which favoured a minimalist state and an enhanced role for the market: the so-called Washington Consensus. The belief was that global welfare would be maximized by the liberalization of trade, finance, and investment, and by the restructuring of national economies to provide an enabling environment for capital. Such policies would also ensure the repayment of debt. The former Eastern bloc countries were now seen to be in transition from centrally planned to market economies, and throughout the Third World the state was rolled back and the market given the role of major engine of growth and associated development. This approach was presented as common sense, with the attendant idea that 'There is No Alternative' or TINA (Thomas 2002). It informed the strategies of the IMF and World Bank, and importantly through the

Uruguay Round of trade discussions carried out under the auspices of GATT, it shaped the World Trade Organization (WTO).

By the end of the 1990s the G7 (later the G8) and associated international financial institutions were championing a slightly modified version of the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy, labelled the post-Washington Consensus, which stressed pro-poor growth and poverty reduction based on continued domestic policy reform and growth through trade liberalization. Henceforth, locally owned national poverty reduction strategy (PRS) papers would be the focus for funding (Cammack 2012). These papers quickly became the litmus test for funding from an increasingly integrated line-up of global financial institutions and donors.

The Achievements of the Post-1945 International Economic Order

There has been an explosive widening of the gap between the rich and the poor since 1945 compared with previous history, and more particularly in the 1990s (Adams 2013: vii; Thomas 2002). Nevertheless, there have been major gains for developing countries since 1945 as measured by the orthodox criteria of economic growth, GDP per capita, and industrialization. The rates of total and per capita growth for developing countries in the period 1960—2004 are shown in Tables 1.2 and 1.3. A striking feature of both is the marked regional diversity. The East Asian experience has been generally positive throughout this period, the African experience not so. China has been strong since the early1980s, and India has fared better since the late 1980s.

Table 1.2: GDP Growth in Selected Developing Countries and Regions, 1960 – 2004 (Average Annual Percentage Change)

Region /Country	1960 – 1965	1965 – 1970	1970 – 1975	1975 – 1980	1980 – 1985	1985 – 1990	1990 – 1995	1995 – 2000	2000 – 2004
Africa	5.4	4.9	4.4	3.8	2.2	2.6	1.1	3.4	3.9
Sub- Saharan Africa, excl. South Africa	3.9	3.9	3.9	1.9	1.7	3.2	1.5	3.7	4.2
Latin America	4.6	5.8	6.6	5.1	0.5	1.8	3.6	2.8	1.5
East-Asia	5.0	7.5	6.8	7.6	7.1	8.2	8.8	4.9	6.2
China	2.1	5.3	5.1	6.1	11.0	7.8	12.9	8.5	9.4
First–tier NIEs	8.0	9.8	8.3	9.0	7.1	9.1	7.3	4.2	3.8
South Asia	4.5	4.9	2.3	3.6	5.3	5.9	5.0	5.3	5.7
India	4.2	4.9	2.4	3.0	5.3	6.6	5.3	5.8	6.1
Developing Countries	4.8	6.0	6.4	5.1	2.9	5.4	5.4	4.1	4.4

Source: UNCTAD secretarial calculations, based on World Bank, *World Development Indicators,* various issues United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) *National Accounts Main Aggregates* Database; and Taiwan Province of China, *Macro-Economics* Database

Note: Calculations are based on GDP in constant 1995 dollars

Source: UNCTAD (2006a:46)

Table 1.3: Per Capita GDP Growth in Selected Developing Countries and Regions, 1960 – 2004 (Average Annual Percentage Change)

Region/Country	1960 – 1965	1967 – 1970	1970 – 1975	1975 – 1980	1980 – 1985	1985 – 1990	1990 – 1995	1995 – 2000	2000 – 2004
Africa	2.8	2.2	1.6	0.9	0.7	-0.2	-1.5	1.0	1.6
Sub- Saharan Africa, excl. South Africa	1.3	1.2	1.1	-1.0	-1.2	0.2	-1.3	1.1	1.8
Latin America	1.7	3.1	4.0	2.7	-1.6	-0.2	1.9	1.2	0.1
East-Asia	3.0	4.7	4.4	5.9	5.4	6.4	7.5	3.8	5.3
China	0.3	2.6	2.8	4.6	9.5	6.1	11.7	7.5	8.7
First–tier NIEs	5.0	7.2	6.1	7.1	5.5	8.0	6.1	3.2	3.2
South Asia	2.2	2.5	0.0	1.4	2.9	3.6	2.8	3.3	4.0
India	1.9	2.5	0.1	0.9	3.1	4.4	3.3	4.0	4.5
Developing Countries	2.5	3.4	3.9	2.9	0.7	2.2	3.5	2.4	2.9

Source: UNCTAD secretarial calculations, based on World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, various issues UNSD, *Population* Database and *National Accounts Main Aggregates* Database; and Taiwan Province of China, *Macro-Economics* Database

Source: UNCTAD (2006a:47)

In the 1990s, the picture was far from positive. The UNDP reports that: 'no fewer than 100 countries - all developing or in transition - have experienced serious economic decline over the past three decades. As a result, per capita income in these 100 countries is lower than it was 10, 20, even 30 years ago' (UNDP 1998: 37). Moreover, the 1990s saw 21 countries experience decade-long declines in social and economic indicators, compared with only four in the 1980s (UNDP 2003). Financial crises spread across the globe and indicated marked reversals in Mexico, the East Asian states, Brazil, and Russia. The African continent looked increasingly excluded from any economic benefits of globalization, and 33 Countries there ended the 1990s more heavily indebted than they had been two decades earlier (Easterly 2012). By the end of the century, not a single former Second or Third World country had joined the ranks of the First World in a solid sense. Significant growth occurred in a handful of countries such as China, India, and Mexico—-the 'new globalizers' —but the benefits were not well distributed within those countries. Despite significant improvements in global social indicators such as adult literacy, access to safe water, and infant mortality rates, global deprivation continues.

Having outlined the broad development achievements of the post-war international economic order, we will now evaluate these from two different development perspectives: a mainstream orthodox view and a critical alternative view.

The Development Achievement of the Post-War International Economic Order: Orthodox and Alternative Evaluations

The orthodox liberal assessment of the past seventy years of development suggests that states which have integrated most deeply into the global economy through trade liberalization have grown the fastest, and it praises these 'new globalizers'. It acknowledges that neo-liberal economic policy has resulted in greater inequalities within and between states, but regards inequality positively as a spur to competition and the entrepreneurial spirit.

It was clear at least from the late 1970s that 'trickle-down' (the idea that overall economic growth as measured by increases in the GDP would automatically bring benefits for the poorer classes) had not worked. Despite impressive rates of growth in GDP per capita enjoyed by developing countries, this success was not reflected in their societies at large, and while a minority became substantially wealthier, the mass of the population saw no significant change. The even greater polarization in wealth evident in recent decades is not regarded as a problem, so long as the social and political discontent which inequality engenders is not so extensive as potentially to de-rail implementation of the liberalization project itself. This discontent will be alleviated by the development of national PRSs, which it is claimed put countries and their peoples in the driving seat of development policy, thus empowering the local community and ensuring a better distribution of benefits.

Advocates of a critical alternative approach emphasize the pattern of distribution of gains within global society and within individual states, rather than growth. They believe that the economic liberalism which underpins the process of globalization has resulted, and continues to result, in increasing economic differentiation between and within countries, and that this is problematic. Moreover, they note that this trend has been evident over the very period when key global actors have been committed to promoting development worldwide, and indeed when there were fairly continuous world economic growth rates and positive rates of GDP growth per capita, at least until 1990 (Chidi and Adebisi 2014; Brown and Kane2015).

The increasing gap between rich and poor was regarded as inevitable, and undesirable, by dependency theorists such as André Gunder Frank (1967). Writing in the 1960s and 1970s, they stressed how the periphery, or Third World, was actively underdeveloped by activities which promoted the growth in wealth of the core Western countries, and of elites in the periphery.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, exponents of a critical alternative in contrast to their orthodox colleagues -question the value of national PRSs, arguing that while a new focus on issues such as health and education is important, the more fundamental issue of discussion of possible links between Washington-Consensus policies and poverty creation is ignored.

The orthodox and alternative evaluations are based on different values and they are measuring different things. Glyn Roberts' words are pertinent: 'GNP growth statistics might

mean a good deal to an economist or to a maharajah, but they do not tell us a thing about the quality of life in a Third World fishing village' (Roberts 2014: 6).

A Critical Alternative View of Development

Since the early 1970s, there have been numerous efforts to stimulate debate about development and to highlight its contested nature. Critical alternative ideas have been put forward that we can synthesize into an alternative approach. These have originated with various NGOs, grassroots development organizations, individuals, UN organizations, and private foundations. Disparate social movements not directly related to the development agenda have contributed to the flourishing of the alternative viewpoints: for example, the women's movement, the peace movement, movements for democracy, and green movements (Thomas and Adekoya 2016). Noteworthy was the publication in1975 by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation of What Now? *Another Development?* This alternative conception of development (see Ekins 1992: 99) argued that the process of development should be:

- need-oriented (material and non-material);
- endogenous (coming from within a society);
- self-reliant (in terms of human, natural, and cultural resources);
- ecologically sound; and
- based on structural transformations (of economy, society, gender, power relations).

Since then, various NGOs, such as the World Development Movement, have campaigned for a form of development that takes aspects of this alternative approach on board. Grassroots movements have often grown up around specific issues, such as dams (Narmada in India) or access to common resources (the rubber tappers of the Brazilian Amazon; the Chipko movement, which began as a women's movement to secure tress in the Himalayas). Such campaigns received a great movement worldwide. The two-year preparatory process before the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, in June 1992, gave indigenous groups, women, children, and other previously voiceless groups a chance to express their views. This momentum has continued, and it has become the norm to hold alternative NGO forums, parallel to all major UN conferences. Also, the World Social Forum meets annually.

Democracy, Empowerment and Development

Democracy is at the heart of the alternative conception of development. Grassroots movements are playing an important role in challenging entrenched structures of power in formal democratic societies. In the face of increasing globalization, with the further erosion of local community control over daily life and the further extension of the power of the market and transnational corporations, people are standing up for their rights as they define them. They are making a case for local control and local empowerment as the heart

of development. They are protecting what they identify as the immediate source of their survival— water, forest, and land. They are rejecting the dominant agenda of private and public (government-controlled) spheres and setting an alternative one. Examples include the Chiapas uprising in Mexico, and Indian peasant protests against foreign-owned seed factories. Protests at the annual meetings of the WTO, and also the IMF and World Bank, have become routine since the late 1990s, and are indicative of an increasingly widespread discontent with the process of globalization and with the distribution of its benefits. Such protests symbolize the struggle for substantive democracy which communities across the world are working for. In this context, development is about facilitating a community's participation and lead role in deciding what sort of development is appropriate for it; it is not about assuming the desirability of the Western model and its associated values. This alternative conception of development therefore values diversity above universality, and is based on a different conception of rights.

The Alternative Declaration produced by the NGO Forum at the Copenhagen Summit enshrined principles of community participation, empowerment, equity, self-reliance, and sustainability. The role of women and youth was singled out. The Declaration rejects the economic liberalism accepted by governments of North and South, seeing it as a path to aggravation rather than alleviation of the global social crisis. It called for the immediate cancellation of all debt, improved terms of trade, transparency and accountability of the IMF and World Bank, and the regulation of multinationals. An alternative view of democracy was central to its conception of development. Similar ideas emanated from the parallel NGO forums, which accompanied all the UN global conferences in the1990s.

For some commentators, national PRSs offer the opportunity —albeit as yet unrealized- for greater community participation in development policy-making in the South. If all parties operate in the spirit which was intended, the PRS process could enhance representation and voice for states and peoples in the South, and it offers the best hope available for expanding national ownership of economic policy.

Now that we have looked at the critical alternative view of development, we will look at the way in which the orthodox view has attempted to respond to the criticisms of the alternative view.

The Orthodoxy Incorporates Criticisms

In the mainstream debate, the focus has shifted from growth to sustainable development. The concept was championed in the late 1980s by the influential Brundtland Commission (officially entitled the World Commission on Environment and Development -see Brundtland *et al.* 1987), and supported in the 1990s by a series of UN global conferences. Central to the concept of sustainable development is the idea that the pursuit of development by the present generation should not be at the expense of future generations. In other words, it stressed inter-generational equity as well as intra-generational equity. The importance of maintaining the environmental resource base was highlighted, and with this comes the idea that there are natural limits to growth. The Brundtland Report made

clear, however, that further growth was essential; but it needed to be made environment-friendly. The Report did not address the belief, widespread among a sector of the NGO community, that the emphasis on growth had caused the environmental crisis in the first place. The World Bank accepted the concerns of the Report to some degree. When faced with an NGO spotlight on the adverse environmental implications of its projects, the Bank moved to introduce more rigorous environmental assessments of its funding activities. Similarly, concerning gender, when faced with critical NGO voices, the World Bank eventually in 1994 came up with its Operational Policy 4.20 on gender. The latter aimed to 'reduce gender disparities and enhance women particularly in the economic development of their countries by integrating gender considerations in its country assistance programmes'.

With the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED - sometimes referred to as the Rio Summit) in June 1992, the idea that the environment and development were inextricably interlinked was taken further. However, what came out of the official inter-state process was legitimation of market-based development policies to further sustainable development, with self-regulation for transnational corporations. Official output from Rio, such as Agenda 21, however, recognized the huge importance of the sub-state level for addressing sustainability issues, and supported the involvement of marginalized groups. But while the groups had a role in the preparatory process, they have not been given an official role in the follow-up to UNCED. At the alternative summit, where the largest selection of non-governmental views ever expressed was aired, the viability of this strategy was challenged. For example, the possibility of structural adjustment policies being made environment-friendly was seriously questioned.

The process of incorporation has continued ever since. This is seen most recently in the language of poverty reduction being incorporated into World Bank and IMF policies: 'growth with equity' and 'pro-poor growth' are the buzzwords, yet underlying macroeconomic policy remains unchanged. An examination of the contribution of the development orthodoxy to increasing global inequality is not on the agenda. The gendered outcomes of macroeconomic policies are largely ignored. Despite promises of new funding at the UN Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, new transfers of finance from developed to developing countries have been slow in coming, and all eyes are fixed now on the new promises made by the G8 at their Summit in 2006. In addition to new finance, that Summit saw commitments to write off $40 billion of debt owed by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs). However, the commitment was not implemented with immediate effect and didn't cover all needy countries. The North—South agenda has changed little in the years since the Rio Summit, when sustainable development hit the headlines.

It is important to note that some parts of the UN family have been genuinely responsive to criticisms of mainstream development. The UNDP is noteworthy for its advocacy of the measurement of development based on life expectancy, adult literacy, and average local purchasing power - the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI results in a very different

assessment of countries' achievements than does the traditional measurement of development based on per capita GDP (Thomas *et al.* 2014: 22). For example, China, Sri Lanka, Poland, and Cuba fare much better under HDI assessments than they do under more orthodox assessments, while Saudi Arabia and Kuwait fare much worse.

An Appraisal of the Responses of the Orthodox Approach to Its Critics

During 2000, a series of official '+ 5' mini-conferences were held, such as Rio +5, Copenhagen + 5, and Beijing + 5, to assess progress in specific areas since the major UN conferences five years earlier. The assessments suggested that the international community had fallen short in its efforts to operationalize conference action plans and to mainstream these concerns in global politics. For example, a critical reading of Beijing suggests that the conference represented a continuation of the attempts of the 1970s and 1980s to integrate women into prevailing development practice (so-called 'WID'), in other words to increase their economic opportunities within the existing economic system. This stands in contrast to an attempt fundamentally to alter the social and economic power of women relative to men, which would require a transformation in prevailing development practice via the promotion of a gender and development ('GAD') approach. The World Bank's own assessment of its mainstreaming of gender, undertaken by the Social Development Task Force in 1996, concluded that gender concerns are not incorporated systematically into projects and are regarded by many as 'add-ons'.

Voices of criticism are growing in number and range. Even among supporters of the mainstream approach, voices of disquiet are heard as increasingly the mal-distribution of the benefits of economic liberalism are seen to have been a threat to local, national, regional, and even global order. Moreover, the social protest which accompanies economic globalization is regarded by some as a potential obstacle to the neo-liberal project. Thus, supporters of globalization are keen to temper its most unpopular effects by modification of neo-liberal policies. Small but nevertheless important changes are taking place. For example, the World Bank has guidelines on the treatment of indigenous peoples, resettlement, the environmental impact of its projects, gender, and on disclosure of information. It is implementing social safety nets when pursuing structural adjustment policies, and it is promoting microcredit as a way to empower women. With the IMF, it developed a Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative to reduce the debt burden of the poorest states. What is important, however, is whether these guidelines and concerns really inform policy, and whether these new policies and facilities result in practical outcomes that impact on the fundamental causes of poverty.

The Bank has admitted that such changes have been incorporated largely due to the efforts of NGOs which have monitored its work closely and undertaken vigorous international campaigns to change the way the Bank funds projects, and to change its general operational processes. These campaigns continue, with the Bretton Woods Campaign, the Fifty Years is Enough, Jubilee 2000, and, most recently, the Make Poverty History Campaign being particularly significant in calling for open, transparent, and accountable

decision-making by global economic institutions, for local involvement in project planning and implementation, and for debt write-off. In addition to the NGO pressure for change, pressure is building within the institutional champions of the neo-liberal development orthodoxy.

There is a tremendously long way to go in terms of gaining credence for the core values of the alternative model of development in the corridors of power, nationally and internationally. Nevertheless, the alternative view, marginal though it is, has had some noteworthy successes in modifying orthodox development. These may not be insignificant for those whose destinies have up till now been largely determined by the attempted universal application of a selective set of local, essentially Western, values.

Approaches to Development

There is no realist theory of development as such. Nevertheless, in explaining the phenomenon of economic development, realists have generally drawn heavily on the ideas of mercantilism. Mercantilism stresses the interplay between economics and politics, particularly through the extent to which healthy and stable domestic economies rely on a strong dose of state intervention, especially in order to manage external trade relations (implying protectionism). Such a view is highly sceptical of liberal claims about the natural tendency of market economies towards equilibrium and growth, believing, always, that markets need to be managed.

The liberal approach to development is firmly rooted in the ideas of economic liberalism. Classical liberal economics draws heavily on individualist and rationalist assumptions about human nature, placing a strong emphasis on the idea that human beings are primarily motivated by the desire for material consumption. Liberalism therefore provides the basis for the orthodox notion of 'development as growth'. From the liberal perspective, the central mechanism for generating wealth is the market, which operates according to the wishes and decisions of free individuals. The attraction of the market is that it is a self-regulating mechanism, which tends naturally to promote economic prosperity and well-being. However, individual acquisitiveness and market forces are not always in themselves powerful enough to deliver economic development. For liberals, 'development failures' stem from factors that are internal to the society itself. These include cultural or religious norms that inhibit individual self-seeking, rigid and authoritarian state institutions, chronic corruption, and ethnic and tribal rivalries that subvert civil order. The best way to overcome these obstacles is through market reform (privatization, financial deregulation, labour flexibility, tax cuts and so on) and the integration of the national economy into the global capitalist economy (free trade and an open economy).

Critical approaches to development have been dominated by neo-Marxists theories. These shift attention away from internal obstacles to development, to external ones, particularly those that stem from the structural dynamics of the global capitalist system. Neo-Marxist thinking about development has been shaped by two main theoretical sub-traditions. Dependency theory highlights the extent to which, in the post-1945 period, traditional

imperialism gave way to neo-colonialism, sometimes viewed as 'economic imperialism' or, more specifically, 'dollar imperialism'.

Despite enjoying formal independence and sovereignty, developing world states continued to be subject to economic dependency through, for instance, unequal trade relations, the impact of TNCs and biases within bodies such as the IMF and the World Bank that favour the interests of industrially advanced states. The other key neo-Marxist sub-tradition is world-system theory, which portrays the world economy as an interlocking whole, composed of core, peripheral and semi-peripheral areas. In this, economically advanced and politically stable core areas dominate and exploit peripheral areas that are characterized by low wages, rudimentary technology and a dependence on agriculture or primary production. Amongst other critical approaches to development, green politics has challenged the conventional emphasis on economic growth by championing the notion of 'development as sustainability', usually linked to the concept of sustainable development. In this view, economic growth must be balanced against its ecological costs, a healthy environment being vital for meaningful development. For cosmopolitan theorists, development should be understood in terms of the larger project of advancing global justice.

Feminism has been associated with various views about development. Some feminists argue that overturning gender inequality must be seen as a key component of development, thereby highlighting the need to change social structures, institutions and cultural practices in the developing world. However, other feminists stress the extent to which 'development as growth' is constructed on the basis of masculinist assumptions, or the degree to which women already play an important, if usually ignored, role in bringing about development. Post-colonialists, for their part, have sometimes challenged the very idea of development, advancing instead the notion of 'post-development'. While conventional models of development involve the imposition of western institutions and values on non-western societies, 'post-development' allows each society to embrace its own model of economic and social progress, based on aspirations and a cultural heritage that are authentic to the society itself.

Development and the Politics of Aid

The end of empire in the 1950s and 1960s had profound political effects in the developing world, but remarkably few economic consequences. The established division of labour within the world economy between the industrialized North, the home of manufacturing production and the impoverished South, the chief source of primary production, especially raw materials and foodstuffs, remained unchanged. A lack of economic diversification in the South intensified economic vulnerability, as many developing world countries were (and in some cases still are) dependent for their export income on a single commodity, or a very narrow range of commodities. In 2005, as many as 43 developing states still depended on a single commodity for more than 20 per cent of their total revenues from exports. A

slump in a single economic sector, often brought about by volatility in world export markets, could therefore have devastating consequences.

However, from the late 1970s onwards the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund adopted a radically new approach to promoting development, using what became known as structural adjustment programmes, or SAPs. Why did this policy change take place, and what was the nature and purpose of SAPs? The shift in the approach to development in favour of structural adjustment occurred for two main reasons. The first was a growing debt crisis in the developing world. This occurred as poorer countries borrowed heavily from western banks and other private bodies which were themselves flush with 'petro dollars' as a result of dramatic increases in the price of oil introduced in 1973 by the newly formed Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

However, a combination of an increase in interest rates and the slowdown in the world economy in the 1970s (in part because of the world oil crisis) led to economic stagnation across much of the developing world, making it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for their debts to be serviced. In this context, many developing countries looked instead to borrow from the IMF (in order to deal with balance of payments crises) or from the World Bank (in order to fund development projects). Global financial institutions were therefore confronted by growing pressure to increase or restructure loans in a context in which previous loans had done little to promote economic growth. The second factor was the ideological shift that had occurred as a result of the collapse in the early1970s of the Bretton Woods system and the emergence of the so-called 'Washington consensus'. Based on the belief that the debt crisis and other problems were due to structural inefficiencies in the economies of many developing countries, compounded by bad or misguided government policies, the IMF and the World Bank sought to build conditionalities into the provision of any future loans. The purpose of these conditions was to bring about a market-orientated 'structural adjustment' of economic policy in line with the principles of neoliberalism.

The imposition of SAPs proved to be highly controversial. The thinking behind them was clearly rooted in economic liberalism. For officials at the IMF and the World Bank, the key to development was market reform, which would foster the dynamism, innovation and entrepreneurship that they believed are essential for economic growth, employment and poverty reduction. In encouraging the governments of poorer countries to introduce such reforms, IMF and World Bank officials believed that they were acting in the long-term interests of domestic populations. What is more, structural adjustment programmes were not imposed on unwilling or resistant governments, but were, rather, negotiated and agreed between independent states and international bodies based on the former's recognition that alternative sources of loans are not available, and, presumably, through an acceptance of the benefits of market reform. The principal alleged benefit of SAPs was that free trade and market reform would facilitate the integration of national economies into the global economy, thereby offering, it was believed, the best hope for increasing growth rates and ending the poverty cycle. Such thinking, indeed, may be backed by the striking difference between the economic performance of Africa and East Asia. In the 1950s

and1960s, GDP per capita in many African states was little different, and sometimes higher, than in most East Asian states, with countries such as China and India widely being viewed as economic 'basket cases'.

However, East Asian countries subsequently made rapid economic progress, first through the success of the export-orientated strategies adopted by the East Asian 'tigers' and subsequently through market reforms that were adopted in China from 1978 onwards and by accelerating market reform in India, particularly after 1991. An example of this widening divide can be seen in the fact that whereas in 1957 Ghana had a larger gross national product (GNP) than South Korea, by 1996 South Korea's GNP was almost seven times larger than Ghana's. Nevertheless, the idea that the improved performance of East Asian economies can be put down to free trade should be treated with caution, particularly in the light of their use of state aid and forms of protectionism.

However, to recognize that the countries that have been most successful in recent years in boosting economic growth and reducing poverty have been ones that have placed emphasis on trade and economic integration, is very far from demonstrating the benefits of SAPs. SAPs, in fact, have been remarkably ineffective in achieving such goals, as the IMF and the World Bank eventually acknowledged (Przeworski and Vernon 2010; Charles 2016; Adeosun 2019). Top-down programmes of market reform designed by usually US-trained technocrats from the IMF and the World Bank were often harsh and paid little attention to local needs and circumstances. In cases such as Chile which adopted reforms designed by Chicago School economists, following the ideas of Milton Friedman, Argentina and Mexico, market-orientated structural adjustment led to years of economic disruption and political instability. Following the Asian financial crisis of 1997, it was notable that Malaysia, which had refused to accept the IMF's offer of a loan and its accompanying conditions, recovered significantly more quickly than Thailand and South Korea, which accepted loans and faithfully carried out IMF prescriptions. The lesson of China and, to a lesser extent, India is that market-orientated and pro-export reforms work most effectively when they are part of national strategies for development, allowing countries to engage with the global economy essentially on their own terms.

What were the drawbacks of SAPs? First, as analysts such as Joseph Stiglitz (2011) have pointed out, they often resulted in greater poverty rather than less. For instance, pressure to reduce government spending frequently led to cuts in welfare, education and health budgets, which had a disproportionate impact on the less well-off and especially on women and girls. Similarly, exposing relatively weak economies to foreign competition often pushed up unemployment while also driving down wages and worsening working conditions, all in the name of greater 'labour flexibility'. Increased foreign investment also tended to focus on the production of consumer goods for world markets rather than the building of schools, roads and hospitals where economic returns are far less impressive. Second, far from creating a rising tide of global economic growth that would 'lift all boats', SAPs, arguably, attended more to the interests of major donor states, especially the USA, which were seeking expanded investment and trading opportunities, than they did to the

needs of the developing world. This, indeed, may reflect deep biases that operate within the IMF and the World Bank, based, for instance, on their reliance on largely western, or western-trained, senior officials and analysts, and the fact that, suffering from the pressures of hunger, disease, poverty and spiralling debt, developing countries often have very limited freedom of manoeuvre in dealing with international organizations.

Finally, and perhaps most crucially, many would argue that SAPs were based on a flawed model of development. They had a very weak empirical underpinning; in that it is based on a model of development that no economically developed state had actually followed. In imposing SAPs, industrially advanced countries were, in effect, saying: 'do as we say, not as we did'. The record of countries such as the USA, Germany, Japan and, more recently, China, is that early industrialization is closely linked to a willingness to protect industries from foreign imports until they are strong enough to compete. Such countries only converted to policies of free trade and economic liberalism once they had reached a level of economic maturity that ensured that domestic industries were no longer vulnerable. By contrast, SAPs are based on the myth of free-market development, in that they treat an open economy as a pre-condition for development, rather than as a consequence. As criticism of SAPs intensified during the 1990s, pressure for reform built up. Even the IMF and the World Bank came to accept that SAPs had caused at least short-term economic and social disruption, and were an unreliable means of boosting growth. Since 2002, the 'one size fits all' approach to structural adjustment has largely been abandoned.

Conventional SAPs have been replaced by Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which are modified SAPs that are more flexible, seek to promote country ownership, place a heavier emphasis on poverty reduction and allow for longer-term loans (up to 7 years). Nevertheless, the underlying emphasis on market economics and boosting exports remains unchallenged.

Since the 1980s there has been growing political and ethical debate about development and how it can best be achieved. This, in part, reflected mounting disillusionment with 'orthodox', market-based approaches to development, greater attention being paid to more critical and reflective 'alternative' theories of development that, amongst other things, give greater scope for Southern views rather than technocratic intervention by the North. Amartya Sen's (2009) notion of 'development as freedom' and growing interest in the 'human development' approach to poverty are examples of this process. In addition to this, a global anti-poverty movement started to emerge, often acting as the most prominent element within the larger anti-globalization or anti-capitalist movement. The anti-poverty message has been conveyed by a wide range of development NGOs, groups such as Jubilee 2000 (which campaigned for the end of developing world debt by the year 2000) and the Make Poverty History campaign, and by the Live Aid concerts in 1985 (which aimed to raise funds for famine relief in Ethiopia) and the Live 8 concerts and protests that sought to exert influence on the 2005G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. One consequence of this has been a willingness to make bolder assertions about what Jeffrey Sachs (2005) called the 'end of poverty', and to set ambitious targets for its achievement. The most

significant attempt to do this, and to reinvigorate the development agenda took place through the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Underlying these developments has been the emergence of a new development ethic that reflects the declining influence of realist assumptions and a strengthening of cosmopolitan sensibilities. In the realist approach to development, aid and other forms of support for foreign countries are, and should be, motivated for a concern for national self-interest. This is based on the assumption that people's moral obligations are essentially confined by citizenship and culture, and are thus restricted to people who share the same national identity and are part of the same community. This ethical nationalism suggests that concern about the plight of other peoples and other countries should be informed by a kind of enlightened self-interest, in which, for example, rich countries provide international aid primarily to support the creation of new and more vibrant markets for their own good. By contrast, cosmopolitanism globalizes moral sensibilities in that they extend to all peoples and groups, regardless of national differences. As such, it provides a stronger and more positive basis for supporting development and poverty reduction based on the principle of global justice. The extent of moral obligations, and particularly whether our obligations extend to all other people in the world, is therefore a matter of hot dispute.

At least three arguments have been used to support such a development ethic. The first is based on the principle of general benevolence. Peter Singer (2003), for example, used utilitarian arguments, which favour acts that promote overall happiness and reduce overall levels of pain and suffering, to advance the principle that 'if we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable significance, we ought to do it'. Thus, if absolute poverty is bad, and at least some absolute poverty can be prevented without significant sacrifices being made (charitable giving or protesting, for example), then not to help in these circumstances would be wrong, even, according to Singer, amounting to the moral equivalent of murder. The second argument is based on the doctrine of human rights. The idea of a 'right to development' has emerged out of a combination of economic rights and 'third-generation' solidarity rights. This right imposes important duties on other people. Shue (2006), for instance, argued on this basis that people not only have a duty not to deprive others but, more radically, a duty to relieve their deprivation. The acceptance of this duty would imply a major redistribution of wealth and resources on a global level. The third argument is based on attempts to rectify past injustices. If the wealth of the North has substantially been based on the oppression and exploitation of the South (in particular through colonialism and neo-colonialism), this imposes powerful obligations on rich countries to make amends, compensate or bring about restitution for past actions. Clearly, however, those obliged to support poverty reduction may not themselves be involved in exploitation, but they are the beneficiaries of past and present exploitation, as part of a larger causal chain of exploitation (Dower 2008).

International aid is the principal way in which countries discharge their development responsibilities and help to promote socio-economic development in other countries. Aid may consist of the provision of funds, resources and equipment, or staff and expertise.

Nevertheless, despite a series of major international development initiatives, often focused on boosting aid commitments, there are persistent concerns about the levels of aid actually provided. Although rich countries have committed themselves to meeting the UN's target of donating 0.7 percent of their GNP to aid, donation levels have lagged far behind, with only five OECD states (Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg, Denmark and the Netherlands) achieving the target in 2007. Aid levels have instead generally been in the rangeo.2–0.4 per cent, and in the case of the USA, also in 2007, 0.16 per cent. Official aid figures, moreover, are notoriously unreliable as they often include money allocated for purposes such as debt relief and administrative costs incurred by donor states that do not take the form of direct economic assistance.

On the other hand, official figures take account only of government spending and ignore the fact much more is given by private donations of various kinds. For example, private donations from the USA (from foundations, businesses, NGOs, religious bodies and colleges) are more than twice as large as the US international aid budget, and personal remittances from the USA to developing countries are about three times as large. Nevertheless, there is general agreement that the level of international aid is generally insufficient to support meaningful development, and is putting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals at risk. Although substantial progress has been made in areas such as primary education, AIDS treatment and access to safe drinking water, poverty in sub-Saharan African countries has been reduced by only about 1 per cent, and these countries appear unlikely to meet their goals. The quest for equitable development has, furthermore, been damaged by the fact that, in the context of the global financial crisis, developed countries reduced their aid budgets in 2007 and 2008.Such difficulties have fuelled attempts to generate additional funds that can be used for international aid. These have included the so-called 'Tobin tax', which also aims to dampen down the volatility of financial markets, an airline ticket levy and the International Finance Facility, which would involve the sale of government-backed bonds on the financial market.

However, the issue of international aid is not only about numbers. The quality of international aid may be just as important as its quantity. Jeffrey Sachs (2005) identified the standards for successful aid as that it should be targeted, specific, measurable, accountable and scalable (appropriate to the scale of the task for which it is designated). It should, moreover, support a 'triple transformation'. In agriculture, it should boost food production to end cycles of famine, particularly by promoting a 'green revolution'. In health, it should aim to improve nutrition, the provision of cleaner drinking water and basic health services. In infrastructure, projects should help to tackle economic isolation by improving transport, supply chains and connectivity generally.

The idea that international aid promotes development has not gone unchallenged, however. Economic liberals have even gone as far as to argue that aid is a 'poverty trap' helping to entrench deprivation and perpetuate global disparities. From this perspective, international aid tends to promote dependency, sap initiative and undermine the operation of free markets. Ogbu Osita (2016), for example, argued that the $568 billion that had been

given by rich countries in international aid to Africa over four decades had resulted in no increase in per capita income. A major factor accounting for this gloomy picture has been the growth in corruption. The level of corruption in an institutional system is conditioned by factors such as the effectiveness of external checks, the level of administrative discipline, the strength of internal codes and norms, and the general level of economic development. Government-to-government aid to authoritarian or dictatorial regimes has therefore often been siphoned off for the benefit of elite groups and contributed little to the alleviation of poverty or deprivation. This is why aid programmes since the 1990s have increasingly stressed the need to meet conditions for 'good governance'. Moreover, aid is rarely donated disinterestedly. Realists argue that aid, if it is provided at all, invariably reflects donor-state national interests. It comes with 'strings attached'. Much of US official international aid is therefore linked to trade agreements, a practice that the EU now actively discourages. Similarly, food aid that appears to be designed to relieve hunger has commonly takes the form of 'food dumping', which undercuts local farmers, who cannot compete and may be driven out of jobs and into poverty.

The issue of developing world debt has been prominent since the debt crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. This created problems for both the North and the South. As poorer countries (starting with Mexico in 1982) announced that they could no longer service their debts, many Northern banks were faced with the possibility of collapse. More severely, however, Southern countries, due to the size of their debts and their poor economic performance, channeled more and more money into their escalating debt repayments at the expense of building schools and hospitals, investing in the economic infrastructure and helping to alleviate poverty. Even though loans from the World Bank and the IMF were provided on the most favourable terms that developing countries could get anywhere in the world, debt escalation was dramatic. For instance, Zimbabwe's foreign debt rose from $814 million in 1970 to nearly $7 billion by 1990. A growing campaign to bring about debt relief therefore started to emerge (George 1998).

Table 1.4: Major Development Initiatives

1970 Rich countries commit themselves to achieving the UN's target of providing 0.7 per cent of GNP and official assistance to poorer countries.
1974 UN declaration on the New International Economic Order (NIEO), which included a call for the radical redistribution of resources from the North to the South.
1980 The Brandt Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, chaired by Willy Brandt (former German Chancellor), emphasizes the depth of the North–South divide but also stresses the 'mutuality of interests' argument.
1987 The Brundtland Report, Our Common Future, prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development, emphasizes the principle of 'sustainable development', linking economic growth and poverty reduction to stronger environmental protection.
1992 The UN's Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, attempts to translate sustainable development into a range of policy proposals.
2000 Through the Millennium Development Goals, some 189 states and at least 23 international organizations sign up to a series of bold goals on the reduction of poverty by the year2015.
2005 The G8 Summit at Gleneagles, Scotland, agrees to boost aid to Africa and adopt a programme of debt cancellation.

Powerful voices were, nevertheless, raised against debt relief. Concerns, for example, were raised about its implications for the stability of the world's financial system and about the message it sent poorer countries about the need to uphold financial disciplines. On the other hand, Northern countries were becoming increasingly aware that if the growing debt burden was entrenching poverty in the South, it was merely strengthening the pressure to expand international aid and other forms of assistance. In 1989, the USA launched the 'Brady bonds', through which it underwrote a proportion of Latin America's debt overhang from the 1970s and 1980s. Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, negotiated in 1996, the World Bank and the IMF agreed to extend the opportunity for debt relief to 40 of the world's poorest countries.

Uganda was one of the first to enjoy debt relief under HIPC, and by 2006, 29countries were enjoying debt relief, at a cost estimated to be about $62 billion. The G8 Gleneagles deal in

2005 significantly accelerated the pace of debt relief, through the agreement to provide 100 per cent cancellation of debts owed to the IMF and the World Bank. By 2006, this covered 21 countries at a cost of $50billion, with eventual plans to include up to 43 countries. Greater progress has undoubtedly been made on debt relief than on either increasing aid levels or switching from free trade to fair trade. Nevertheless, some have argued that it has weakened pressure to increase aid, as money allocated for debt relief is usually calculated within international aid budgets.

After international aid and debt relief, the third priority within the antipoverty agenda is the global trading system. Anti-poverty campaigners have argued that free trade must be replaced by fair trade. This stems from the belief that structural disparities that operate within the global trading system systematically benefit the wealthiest and most developed countries at the expense of the poorest and least developed ones. These are often linked to inequalities in the terms of trade, whereby primary goods, often produced in the developing world, are relatively cheap while manufactured good, usually produced in the developed world, are relatively expensive. So-called 'free' trade can therefore rob people in developing countries of a proper living, keeping them trapped in poverty. Attempts to promote development through the provision of international aid and debt relief, but which ignore the global trading system, are therefore doomed to failure. Many development NGOs have, as a result, called for fair trade rather than free trade, which would involve setting prices for goods produced in the developing world that protect wage levels and working conditions, thus guaranteeing a better deal for producers in poorer countries. However, the extent to which such campaigns, which often focus on changing consumer preferences in the developed world in order to alter companies' commercial practices, can alleviate poverty is necessarily limited. More significant progress in establishing fair trade requires the reform of the global trading system itself.

Having concluded discussion on the topic of development, attention will now be focused on the topic of hunger.

Hunger

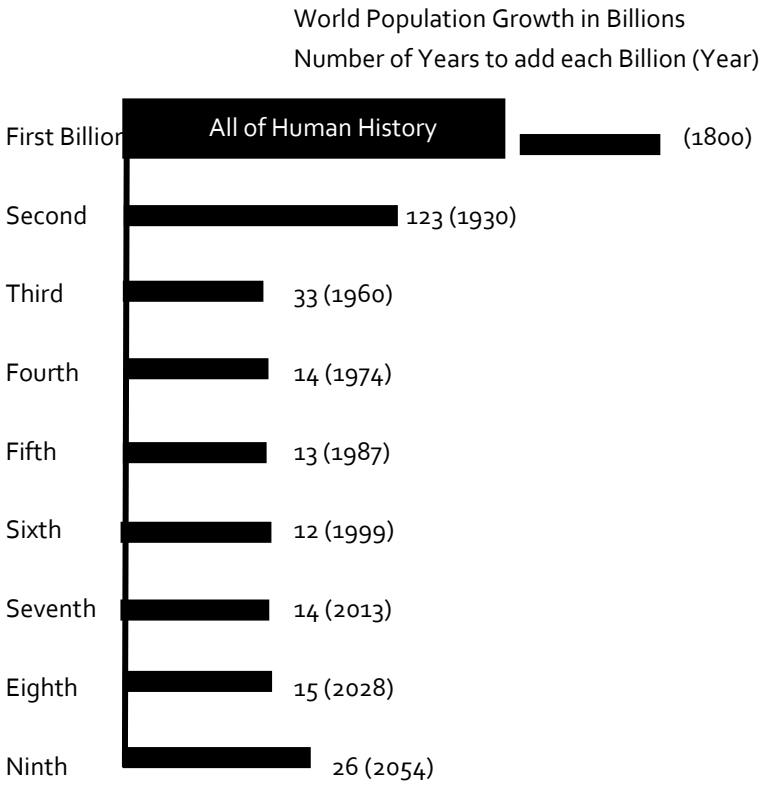
In addressing the topic of global hunger, it is necessary to face the paradox that while 'the production of food to meet the needs of a burgeoning population has been one of the outstanding global achievements of the post-war period' (ICPF 1994: 104, 106), there were nevertheless in 2006 around 852 million malnourished people in around 80 countries, and at least 40,000 die every day from hunger-related causes. While famines may be exceptional phenomena, hunger is ongoing. Why is this so?

Broadly speaking there are two schools of thought with regard to hunger: the orthodox, nature-focused approach which identifies the problem largely as one of overpopulation, and the entitlement, society-focused approach, which sees the problem more in terms of distribution. Let us consider each of these two approaches in turn.

The Orthodox, Nature-Focused Explanation of Hunger

The orthodox explanation of hunger, first mapped out in its essentials by Thomas Robert Malthus in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* in1798, focuses on the relationship between human population growth and the food supply. It asserts that population growth naturally outstrips the growth in food production so that a decrease in the per capita availability of food is inevitable, until eventually a point is reached at which starvation, or some other disaster, drastically reduces the human population to a level which can be sustained by the available food supply. This approach therefore places great stress on human overpopulation as being the cause of the problem, and seeks for ways to reduce the fertility of the human race, or rather, that part of the human race which seems to breed faster than the rest - the poor of the 'Third World'. Recent supporters of this approach, such as Paul Ehrlich and Denis and Donella Meadows (1972), argue that there are natural limits to population growth - principally that of the carrying capacity of the land - and that when these limits are exceeded disaster is inevitable.

The available data on the growth of the global human population indicate that it has quintupled since the early 1800s, and is expected to grow from six billion in 1999 to ten billion in 2050. Over 50per cent of this increase is expected to occur in seven countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Figure 1.1 provides data on world population growth from1800, with projections through to 2050, and shows that the rate of world population growth is set to increase over the coming decades. The most populous countries in the world are located in the Third World and only 11 of them account for over half of the world's population. Many adherents of the orthodox approach to hunger have been convinced that it is essential that Third World countries adhere to strict family-planning policies which one way or another limit their population growth rates (Nkoliamaka 2019). Indeed, in the case of the World Bank, most women-related efforts until very recently were in the area of family planning.



Source: First and second billion: Population Reference Bureau. Third through ninth billion: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 1998 Revision* (medium scenario).

The Entitlement, Society-Focused Explanation of Hunger

Critics of the orthodox approach to hunger and its associated implications argue that it is too simplistic in its analysis and ignores the vital factor of food distribution. They point out that it fails to account for the paradox we observed at the beginning of this discussion on hunger: that despite the enormous increase in food production per capita that has occurred over the post-war period (largely due to the development of high-yielding seeds and industrial agricultural techniques), little impact has been made on the huge numbers of people in the world who experience chronic hunger. For example, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that although there is enough grain alone to provide everyone in the world with 3,600 calories a day (i.e., 1,200 more than the UN's recommended minimum daily intake), there are still over 800 million hungry people.

Furthermore, critics note that the Third World, where the majority of malnourished people are found, produces much of the world's food, while those who consume most of it are located in the Western world. Meat consumption tends to rise with household wealth, and a third of the world's grain is used to fatten animals. A worrying recent trend is the use of corn produced in the USA to produce green fuel, thus reducing what is available to feed the hungry overseas. Such evidence leads opponents of the orthodox approach to argue that

we need to look much more closely at the social, political, and economic factors that determine how food is distributed and why access to food is achieved by some and denied to others.

A convincing alternative to the orthodox explanation of hunger was set forward in Amartya Sen's pioneering book, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, which was first published in 1981. From the results of his empirical research work on the causes of famines, Sen concluded that hunger is due to people not having enough to eat, rather than there not being enough to eat. He discovered that famines have frequently occurred when there has been no significant reduction in the level of per capita food availability and, furthermore, that some famines have occurred during years of peak food availability. For example, the Bangladesh famine of 1974 occurred in a year of peak food availability, yet because floods wiped out the normal employment opportunities of rural labourers, the latter were left with no money to purchase the food which was readily available, and many of them starved. Therefore, what determines whether a person starves or eats is not so much the amount of food available to them, but whether or not they can establish an entitlement to that food. For example, if there is plenty of food available in the shops, but a family does not have the money to purchase that food, and does not have the means of growing their own food, then they are likely to starve. The key issue is not therefore per capita food availability, but the distribution of food as determined by the ability of people to establish entitlements to food. With the globalization of the market, and the associated curtailing of subsistence agriculture, the predominant method of establishing an entitlement to food has become that of the exercise of purchasing power, and consequently it is those without purchasing power who will go hungry amid a world of plenty (Sen 1981, 1983).

Sen's focus on entitlement enables him to identify two groups who are particularly at risk of losing their access to food: landless rural labourers - such as in South Asia and Latin America - and pastoralists - such as in sub-Saharan Africa. The landless rural labourers are especially at risk because no arrangements are in place to protect their access to food. In the traditional peasant economy, there is some security of land ownership, and therefore rural labourers have the possibility of growing their own food. However, this possibility is lost in the early stages of the transition to capitalist agriculture, when the labourers are obliged to sell their land and join the wage-based economy. Unlike in the developed countries of the West, no social security arrangements are in place to ensure that their access to food is maintained. In this context, it is important to note that the IMF/World Bank austerity policies of the 1980s ensured that any little welfare arrangements that were previously enjoyed by vulnerable groups in developing countries were largely removed, and therefore these policies directly contributed to a higher risk of hunger in the Third World.

Building upon the work of Sen, the researcher Susan George in *The Hunger Machine* (Bennett and George 1987: 1-10) details how different groups of people experience unequal levels of access to food. She identifies six factors which are important in determining who goes hungry: (1) the North—South divide between developed and developing countries; (2)

national policies on how wealth is shared; (3) the rural—urban bias; (4) social class; (5) gender; and (6) age. In addition, one could add to the list two other very important, and often neglected, factors determining hunger - that of race and disability. Consequently, people are more likely to experience hunger if they are disabled rather than able-bodied, black rather than white, a child rather than an adult, poor rather than wealthy, a rural dweller rather than a town dweller, and an inhabitant of a developing country rather than a developed country.

Globalization and Hunger

It is possible to explain the contemporary occurrence of hunger by reference to the process of globalization. Globalization means that events occurring in one part of the globe can affect, and be affected by, events occurring in other, distant parts of the globe. Often, as individuals, we remain unaware of our role in this process and its ramifications. When we drink a cup of tea or coffee, or eat imported fruit and vegetables in the developed countries, we tend not to reflect on the changes experienced at the site of production of these cash crops in the developing world. However, it is possible to look at the effect of the establishment of a global, as opposed to a local, national, or regional system of food production. This has been done by David Goodman and Michael Redclift in their book, *Refashioning Nature: Food, Ecology and Culture* (1991), and the closing part of this discussion on hunger is largely based on their findings.

Since 1945, a global food regime has been established, and as we are in the twenty-first century we are witnessing an increasingly global organization of food provision and of access to food, with transnational corporations playing the major role. This has been based on the incorporation of local systems of food production into a global system of food production. In other words, local subsistence producers, who traditionally have produced to meet the needs of their family and community, may now be involved in cash-crop production for a distant market. Alternatively, they may have left the land and become involved in the process of industrialization. The most important actor in the development and expansion of this global food regime has been the USA, which, at the end of the Second World War, was producing large food surpluses. These surpluses became cheap food exports and initially were welcomed by the war-ravaged countries of Europe. They were also welcomed by many developing countries, for the model of development prevalent then depended on the creation of a pool of cheap wage labour to serve the industrialization process. Hence, in order to encourage people off the land and away from subsistence production, the incentive to produce for oneself and one's family had to be removed. Cheap imported food provided this incentive, while the resulting low prices paid for domestic subsistence crops made them unattractive to grow; indeed, for those who continued to produce for the local market, such as in Sudan, the consequence has been the production of food at a loss (Bennett and George 1987: 78). Not surprisingly, therefore, the production of subsistence crops in the developing world for local consumption has drastically declined in the post-war period.

The post-war US-dominated, global food regime has therefore had a number of unforeseen consequences. First, the domestic production of food staples in developing countries was disrupted. Second, consumer preferences in the importing countries changed in line with the cheap imports, and export markets for American- produced food were created. Effectively, a dependence on food aid was created (Goodman and Redclift 1991: 123). Third, there has been a stress on cash-crop production. The result has been the drive towards export-oriented, large- scale, intensively mechanized agriculture in the South. Technical progress resulted in the 'Green Revo1ution', with massively increased yields being produced from high-yield seeds and industrialized agricultural practices. This has in some respects been an important achievement. However, the cost has been millions of peasants thrown off the land because their labour was no longer required, the greater concentration of land in a smaller number of hands, and environmental damage from pesticides, fertilizers, and inappropriate irrigation techniques.

Since the early 1980s, the reform of national economies via SAPs has given a further boost to the undermining of the national organization of agriculture, and a further fillip to the activities of agribusiness. Also, the aggressive pursuit of unilateralist trade policies by the USA, such as the invocation of free trade to legitimize prising open the Korean agricultural market, has added to this. Global trade liberalization since the early 1980s, and especially the Uruguay Round's Agreement on Agriculture (the original text of which was drafted by the multinational Cargill's Vice President Dan Amstutz-Oxfam 2003: 23), are further eroding local food security and throwing peasant producers and their families off the land. In India disputes over intellectual property rights in regard to high-yielding crop seeds have resulted in violent protest by peasant farmers at foreign-owned seed factories. In the North, NGOs have campaigned against the double standards operated by their governments in expecting Southern countries to liberalize their food markets while Northern economies continue to be protected and while Northern agriculture is heavily subsidized.

Conclusion

It is clear when we consider the competing conceptions of poverty, development, and hunger explored above that there is no consensus on definitions, causes, or solutions. A distinction is commonly drawn between absolute poverty, founded on the idea of 'basic needs', and relative poverty, in which the poor are the 'less well off' rather than the 'needy'. However, narrowly income-based definitions of poverty have increasingly been viewed as limited or misleading, as greater attention is paid to the broader notion of human development.

We are faced with an awesome development challenge. Early indications suggest that the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets will not be met. Most gains are being made in very few countries like China and India, and even within those states there remain deep pockets of poverty. Beyond, the picture is less encouraging. If sub-Saharan Africa continues on its current course, it will take another 150 years to reach the MDG target of halving poverty, and the hunger situation continues to worsen there (UNDP 2003).

The 'orthodox' view of development takes economic growth to be its goal and understands modernization in terms of western-style industrialization. The 'alternative' view of development rejects such technocratic, top-down and pro-growth strategies, but it encompasses a wide range of views and approaches. Trends in global inequality are often highly complex and contradictory. It is widely believed that in recent decades the growing importance of emerging economies has had an equalizing impact, counter-balanced by deepening poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and a general trend towards greater within-country inequality.

Official development policies, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, were based on structural adjustment programmes that sought to remove blocks to economic growth in the developing world. These proved to be highly controversial, sometimes resulting in deeper, not reduced, poverty, and have, in some respects, been modified in recent years.

International aid is often viewed as the key mechanism of development. It is justified by a development ethic that suggests that rich countries have an obligation to support poor countries and reduce global inequality. Critics, nevertheless, have argued that aid provides ineffective support for the world's poor because it undermines markets and tends to promote corruption and oppression.

The orthodox model of development is being held up for closer scrutiny, as we become more aware of the risks as well as the opportunities which globalization and the Washington Consensus bring in their wake. The key question is: can globalization develop a human face? The impact of globalization on levels of poverty and inequality cannot be resolved through empirical trends alone. Some claim that globalization, like a rising tide, will eventually 'raise all boats', but others argue that globalization is based on structural disparities that inevitably benefit some countries and areas at the expense of others.

Opinions differ. For Michel Camdessus, speaking as Head of the IMF, it is clear that a new reformist paradigm of development is already emerging which entails the 'progressive humanization of basic economic concepts' (Camdessus 2000). However, more critical voices see in the reforms under way a complete failure to tackle fundamental issues of redistribution, which require valuing an economic system only if it works for people and the planet.

The current development orthodoxy is following the reformist pathway. History will reveal whether this pathway bears the seeds of its own destruction by delivering too little, too late to too few people.

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