Theorizing Development and Globalization

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Development
Development – a political construct

• 1944 Bretton Woods Conference – the “proximate beginning of international aid was the agreement to create an International Bank of Reconstruction Aid and Development” (Rostow 1985)
Bank aid: principles

• Top down approach to development planning…marginal space for local views
• Neutrality of scientific knowledge
• Rationality of economic reasoning – “trickle down”
• Universal applicability of scientific and economic principles..
• Superiority over traditional knowledge
• Technology determinism as developments strategy
Critiques

• Ulterior motive of promoting the first world’s strategic and commercial interests through recolonization

• Being un-democratic

• Merely comprising transfer of western technology, knowledge, resources and organizational forms to developing country to make them acquire “modernity”
Outcomes

• World Bank ploughed more than USD 50 billion since 1975 without being able to make any dent on poverty

• “The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crime have been the companions of development, and they tell a common story: it did not work.”
Alternative conceptualizations (to GDP measured development)

• Sen “development as freedom”
• Development conceptualized as capability
• Development should expand people’s capability to do things that they value for whatever reasons in life
• Development then seeks to remove the “unfreedoms” to achieving these capabilities
Some theories of globalization

• Giddens “runaway world”
• Beck’s “risk society”
• Castells’ “network society”
Giddens’ “Runaway World”
Background

• Notions of structuration theory (1979, 1984)
• Agency
• Structure
• Dualism
• Later writings:
  – The consequences of modernity (1990)
  – Modernity and Self Identity (1991)
Conditions of Social Interactions

- Social integration - conditions of presence, in time and space
- Systems integration - conditions of absence, absent in time and space
Life in Contemporary Society

• Implicitly builds on structuration theory
• Not an abrupt change from modern period
• Intensification of particular modes of thought and behavior
• Uses the term “high-modernity” as contrasted to “post-modernity”
Features of High Modernity

• Time-space separation
• Disembedding mechanisms
• Institutional Reflexivity
Time-Place Separation

• Time and space is separated
• Traditional societies time and space were linked through “place”
• “When” connected to “where” and also to the “substance” of conduct - rituals
• Clock contributed to separation of time from space
Time and Space Separation

• Separation of space from place
• Traditional societies interactions occur in conditions of “presence” - social integration
• Now interactions take place in “absence” - systems integration
• “When” coordinated by “where” but not through particularities of “place”
IT and Separation of Time and Space

• Contributes to the separation of time and space
• Example, e-mail, set aside time when you want to interact (to reply to email)
• Computer memory allows storage across time and space, example surveillance
• Role of telecommunication networks
Disembedding Mechanisms

- Social relations disembedded from local contexts of interaction
- Non-local relations mediate social interactions
- Standardization of processes of interaction
Disembedding Mechanisms

• “Expert Systems” not the traditional sense
• Example, bank managers using credit scoring systems for loan appraisal
• Not confined to technical expertise
• “Symbolic tokens” - media of exchange which have standard value, example money
• Money brackets time and space
IT and Disembedding Mechanisms

- IT creates complex interdependencies - Wall Street collapse
- India’s “milk miracle”
- IT constitutes expert systems (for example, financial models)
- IT allows the rapid and large-scale spread of these models
Institutional Reflexivity

• Time-space separation coupled with disembedding mechanisms - help to break traditional forms of knowledge systems
• Knowledge is provisional, mutable and constantly being assessed and revised
• Traditional societies based on stable rules
• Internet will intensify these processes
IT and Institutional Reflexivity

• IT itself form of a “Knowledge system” which is constantly being revised
• IT allows more people to be involved in the creation and challenging of knowledge
• Faster feedback cycle: knowledge creation and the application of results
• IT helps to also legitimize knowledge claims
Self-Identity

• Self-doubt implied by chronic monitoring and revision of knowledge
• Existential anxiety
• Personal meaninglessness
• For example, eroding of the concept of “job for life”
• Reactions in terms of fundamentalism
Trust and Risk

- Uncertainty and multiple choice - characterize life today
- Trust connected with notions of time-space and absence
- Trust shapes how we view the world and also ourselves
- Risk deals with uncertainty of the future
Unintended Effects

• Always have unintended consequences of action
• Reflexive processes a basis to understand why it occurs
• Cannot predict in any precise way the consequences of action
Summarizing

- Giddens provides a set of concepts to study life and work in contemporary society
- Giddens provides a way to conceptualize linkages between macro-level and distant happenings with our daily lives
- Consequences of modernity
Beck’s “Risk Society”
Background

• Thesis of “reflexive modernization” in the book Risk Society in 1992
• Broad agenda to stimulate a political and critical will in contemporary debates
• More recently, writings on “What is Globalization?”, “Beyond the Risk Society” and “The End of Work”
Processes of Modernization

- Pre-modernity (traditional society)
- Simple modernity (industrial society)
- Reflexive modernity (risk society)
- Risk society not a break from the past, but structures that extend beyond the classical industrial design
- Each phase represent different relationships of agents with social structures
Risk Society

• Built around three key processes
• Redistribution of wealth and risk
• Individualization
• Destandardization of labor
Redistribution of Wealth and Risk

- Industrial society - distribute “goods”
- Risk society - distribute “bads” (risks)
- Risks introduced by modernization itself
- Risks global
- “Pluralized underemployment”
- Status of scientific knowledge
- Key challenge: “how to redistribute risks?”
Individualization

• Feudal roles->Nuclear family-> “I am I”
• “Choices” obligatory in the Risk society
• Conditions - “living on your own,” demographic shifts, divorce, contraception
• Liberation accompanied with reembedding
• Individualization and standardization
• Dealing with risk - essential cultural qualification
Destandardization of Labour

- Industrial society - “career”, “job for life”
- Risk society - work structures dismantled
- Generalize unemployment, pluralize contractual obligations
- “Second rationalization” beyond Taylor’s scientific management
- Work --“malleable” and “destandardized”
Risk Society

• Constructed nature of risks - “stork does not bring consequences, they are made”
• Risks inherent in the sciences themselves
• Calculability and assessability
• No experts, nothing is certain
• Political, contested nature of arguments
• Side-effects, unintended consequences
Reflexive Modernization

- Possibility of self-destruction
- “Capitalism is its own grave-digger”
- first, effects systematically produced
- next, dangers dominate public - socially and politically problematic
- Reflexivity more than reflection - self-confrontation
- Return of “uncertainty”
Beck and Globalization

- Globalism: “world-market”
- Globality: “world-society”
- Globalization: influence of transnational actors on the state
- Place polygamy - married to multiple places
- Globalization of biographies
Rick Society and IT

• Creating proximity over distance
• Creating distance within proximity
• Absence within the same place
• First world residents - live in time, space (distance does not matter)
• Non-first world residents - live in time. Space ties down time
Implications for us

- Focus on risks - comes hand in hand with new technologies
- Risks normally incalculable
- Side effects, unintended effects
- Individualization-standardization tension
- The power of reflexivity
Manuel Castells

The “Network Society”
Castell’s Triology

- Develops a “grand narrative of the present” where the entire planet is capitalist
- Volume I - The Network society - outlines basic tenets of a “network society”
- Volume II - The Power of Identity - outlines various processes of social change
- Volume III - End of Millennium - processes of historical transformation
Basic Thesis

• Relation between IT-Globalization-Social Development
• Two key trends in the information age
• New capitalism - global and informational
• Challenged by social movements based on cultural singularity - affirming identity
• Dialectical opposition of “self and the net”
Network Society

- Network basic form of social structure
- Social interactions take place in a “networking logic”
- Example stock exchange
- Not restricted to financial systems
- Networks not new, informational basis is what is new
Castell’s IT Paradigm

• Information - raw material also outcome
• ITs are pervasive - all aspects of life
• ITs foster a networking logic because it allows to deal with complexity, which in itself is increased by IT
• Specific ITs converge into highly integrated systems
Theoretical Assumptions

• Dialectical interaction of social relations (modes of production) and technological innovation (modes of development)

• The way social groups define identity shapes the institutions of society (unlike Marxist view of identity as effect)

• Production-Development dialectic
Modes of Production

• Social relationship of the production process, class relations
• Capitalist systems and institutions embody certain social relationships
• Institutions for creation of surplus and regulation of distribution
• Driven by a capitalist logic
Modes of Development

• Technological arrangements to convert labor into a product

• The dominant mechanism for this conversion is informational

• Driven by a logic of its own- interface between science, technology and how organizations incorporate new knowledge
Network Society - Characteristics

- Represents a structural transformation (production, power and experience)
- Social processes organized around networks
- Studying the logic of these networks
- Logic based on the “power of flows” rather than “flows of power” (the “flow society”)
- Social morphology dominates social action
“Space of flows”

- Global networks, comprising of:
- Technology (infrastructure) places (hubs and nodes), and managerial elite
- Topology defines inclusion/exclusion and also intensity of interactions
- Space of flows defined by
  - timeless time
  - placeless space
Place and Space

- Organizations are based in places
- Organizational logic is “placeless”
- Depend on space of flows of information networks
- Increasing complexity of networks, more place-independent
- “Structural schizophrenia”
The notion of “flows”

- Material basis of society defined by “flows”
- Flows of information asymmetric, power-ridden
- “Power of flows” more important than “flows of power”
- Flows of - finance, information, technology, and images
Space of Flows

- Space brings together practices in time
- “Space of flows” - versus
- “Space of places” (physical space)
- Organization located in places, logic “placeless”
- Megacities - simultaneously globally connected and locally disconnected
Power

• Not in institutions
• Located in networks
• Lies in codes of information
• Three kinds of dichotomies
  – net and the self
  – timeless time and placeless self
  – inclusion and exclusion
Varying Perspectives on Globalization

• The radicals versus the skeptics
• “The position of developing countries within the global economy is going to get worse” (the skeptic view)
• Instant global telecomm and computer networks will overthrow ancient tyrannies of time and space
A view on globalization

• The intensification of the world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa (Giddens 1991)
Some Features of Globalization

• A process of mutual linkages
• Transcends national boundaries
• Connects communities across time & space
• Flows - economic, social, political, cultural, military, technological, people, identity
• Goes hand in hand with marginalization
• Central role of IT
Marginalization

- Deals with exclusion, absence, differentiation, fragmentation, dropping out
- Economic, social, political or cultural exclusion
- Homogenization versus diversity
- Technology access both a cause and effect of marginalization
Infrastructures

- Relevant themes/concepts –
  - Scope
  - Standards
  - Processes of development
  - Scaling
  - Integration
Determinism

- Relation between II and society
- Technological determinism
- Social determinism
- “Hard” and “soft” determinism
- Symptomatic technology
- Continuist, transformationist and structuralist
Key Questions

• Interaction between processes of globalization, marginalization and II
• Role of trust, risk, power, control, communication, learning etc in shaping these interactions
• How infrastructures redefines these different notions
• How globalization, marginalization - both shape, and are shaped by Infrastructures