



**Article History:** Received: 26 January 2020 | Revised: 17 March | Accepted: 21 March 2020

***Theoretical Paper***

# **Sociology of Development: Towards a Theoretical Option for the Global South**



**Justus B. Aungo**

Department of Sociology and Social Work, Mombasa Campus, University of Nairobi,  
Nairobi, Kenya

Email: [jbaungo@gmail.com](mailto:jbaungo@gmail.com)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7046-428X>



© 2020 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC-BY-NC-SA) International Public License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium or format, provided the original work is properly cited and such creations are licensed under the identical terms.

## Abstract

This article proposes that social analysis should view the idea of global development as a series of actions and practices that seek to fundamentally reconfigure social relations in order to ‘manufacture’ new forms of community in the global South. The emergent social forms exist at the margins of neoliberal economy, where personhood and morality are flexible, fluid, contested and remade through continuous dispossession and changing survival possibilities. In effect the practice of development is a continuation of the process of rule established by the colonial civilizing projects and maintained under postcolonial modernity’s neoliberal capitalism. The article elaborates that as a national and regional process and discourse, development continues to generate and maintain forms (subjectivities) of self-regulation and control (governmentality) that both internalize and externalize the South in relation to the global economy and power structure. The paper suggests that sociology of development and related social inquiry should explore a South-aware theory of development in a way that could problematize development itself. It further suggests that the application of Michel Foucault’s concepts to examine the development trajectories may be a starting point that could excite discussions and collaborations for a nuanced exposition of the macro- and micro dynamics and experiences of the development phenomenon.

**Keywords:** *Development; Social Theory; Global South; Foucault; Governmentality; Sociology of Development*

## Context and Conceptualising the Global South

The notion of the global south has an ironic history: whereas it is supposed to defiantly identify most of the formerly colonized developing world, its origins

can be traced to Italian Antonio Gramsci’s essay ‘the Southern Question’ which sought to highlight the difficulties of the participating in workers action by peasants in Southern Italy. As a sociological concept, it encapsulates conflict of interests between the developing societies (mostly former

colonies) and the industrialized countries irrespective of ideologies. Informed by the writings of Wallerstein, Said and Spivak among others, the global south references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy and access to resources are maintained (Dados & Connell, 2012). Much of the knowledge of the global South and attendant development programs have often been through the global North's lenses and frameworks prompting sociologists and anthropologists to argue for an alternative view. For instance, Fraser (2013) argues for a scholarship that goes beyond the confines of the global north in order to allow the presence of the south in among others, the sociology of development in the South.

I hasten to note that discussing development in the global South is problematic. This is because, the South is a diverse and variegated collection of countries, cultures, religions, nation states and even development clusters. Geographically, it constitutes of parts of Africa, Asia and South America. Yet, within these regions and even countries themselves, there are significant variations in 'development'. This is

partly the motivating challenge behind this paper.

In this paper, I conceive development as an effort and effect– a deliberate process that is enacted with the intention to transform; and its results. As an effort and effect, it is both a material and discursive reality and therefore imbued with power relations and intentions. This way, I will then explore discursive construction of development as a sociological concept but also using awareness and knowledge from the South, mostly Africa and Asia, show how its materiality is significantly transgressive of the dominant northern conceptions. In the first part, the article will show how sociology and related social analysis have often approached development as modernization. In the second part, I will attempt to propose a potential alternative which could enable a more informative view of the development efforts and effects in the South. Though my research is predominantly in Africa, this attempt at the problematization of development engages with various studies on the project on rethinking development studies in Asia (Li, 2007; King et al., 2016).

## **Conceptualizing Development as Modernization**

The sociology of development is built on the classical conceptualization of change and development which can be traced to the works of Durkheim, Weber and Marx; all characterised by a teleological modelling of societal transformations from primitive state to modern state. The three connect in their adherence to an evolutionary logic in which society evolves through increasing division of labour, building specialized organization structures and social differentiation (Mayhew, 1982). For Durkheim (1997) society develops in terms of solidarities in which traditional communities mechanically held together transform to industrialized ones which are organically united. The changes in type of solidarities are also buttressed by a shift from collective consciousness to rational and specialized division of labour. This in effect puts capitalist relations at the core of process of development as a shift from primitive to industrial society in which merit and individual qualifications are the basis of partaking as well as sharing rewards. The transition from primitive to industrial society is apparently accompanied by

crises of adjustment to the new sets of relations which may lead to a state of anomie and disorder to which Durkheim proposes various restitutive rather than penal forms of moral and economic regulation. Lastly, optimal development and improvement leads to the industrial society in which action is driven by individual agency (interest, effort and skill) and an acquired subjectivity. To become modern, societies need to be industrialized with more specialized division of labour, impersonal relations based on mutual dependency and responsibility. Set in motion here is the orientation of social organization needs towards structured, rational and logical application of means, to the realization of strategic interests and ends (Aron, 1968). Aron expounds that Durkheim's conception of industrial society reveals the emergence of individuals driven by desire for success, quest for possessions and engaged in competition which inevitably strain and even shatter the authority of norms and traditions characteristic of primitive society (p. 156). This ultimately leads to anomie 'absence of a system of values or of behaviour patterns which would at once impose itself with self-evident authority' (p. 157) becoming a normal feature of the process. Within Durkheim's views, one detects the proposition that societal

change involves the development of a particular type of orientation – a mentality so to speak- defiant of communal normative prescriptions (traditions) but subservient neighborly supplicant to operative structures which are formed to regulate conduct based on converging self-interest. A mentality which in effect, nurtures a form of self-regulation based on individual desires and obvious need for order.

Karl Marx on his part views the teleology of progress as historically determined along a rugged trajectory. He espouses a materialist perspective to conceive change as transformation in productive forces and relations, and destruction of social relations and formation of ideas. For him, society progresses in stages defined by the dominant mode of production from peasantry, feudalism and eventually capitalism as the most developed mode of production. The level of development and performance of a stage is determined by the ease or difficulty of commodification and transacting of the products of labour (Marx, 1976). The anticipation, persistence and spread of capitalism and its dynamics remains the legacy of Marx's postulation of social change and development. Hooked to Durkheim's conception of primitive

society, Marx constructs history along contours of the diminution and even elimination of simple forms of community (traditional) in which production is essentially driven by subsistence needs (Wallerstein, 1996).

Accordingly, social relations are intricately bound with the productive forces which in turn become the indicators of change (Larrain, 1989). The sophistication of the modes of production and the expansion of productive forces lead to the instituting of systemic dispossession through which there is increased production, commodity availability and consumption. This increases simultaneous appropriation and accumulation which is not universal but lopsided in favour of those with capital hence social differentiations resulting in class formation. The key productive factors are land and labour dispossessed off the other classes (proletariat) and appropriated by the capitalist class leading to disproportionate dispossession and accumulation which in turn exacerbate the differentiation thus generating class conflicts. The ability of capitalism to increase productivity and enhance efficiency in its divisions of labour lies in the freedom of those wishing to accumulate capital finding

conditions in which work-forces can be created at the lowest levels of remuneration (Wallerstein, 1996); and the belief that societies grow to adapt to the working logic and conditions of capitalism. Despite its relative appreciation of the conflict-prone tendencies of social change and progress, the capitalist conception of change foregrounds the dominance of social formations by production relations. Evidently, a determined relational subjectivity emerges from the model predestined to follow the dictates of capitalism as it runs its sequence of dispossession, appropriation and accumulation.

Max Weber provides a synthesis of Durkheim and Marx views of progress by conceiving modernization as a shift in forms of authority and rationality. Societies change from the traditional social organization where authority is customary to the rationally organized state in which power is based on objectivity and prescribed authority (Weber, 1947). A combination of Weber's theses of 'the protestant ethic' and 'rationalization' inheres the concurrent centrality of capitalism and bureaucratization of authority in the transformation of societies (Larrain, 1989). Under the capitalist state of

development, people are more individualistic and selfishly driven focusing on the acquisition and accumulation of wealth- money- and the economy becomes the dominant basis of social organization and relations. Weber's rationality implies fundamental societal change towards an iron cage and diminution or progressive loss of freedom (Gerth & Mills, 1946), as the disparate processes of rationalization intensify knowledge, growing impersonality, and enhanced control (Brubaker, 1991).

### **Development of the Global South as Economic Growth: Productivity and Accumulation**

Leys (1996) has argued that under modernization, development tends to have a 'symptomatic silence over its social character' (p.11); and instead adopts a predominantly economic frame. This mode is more focused on transforming the systems of production, levels of capital accumulation and division of labour. This orientation is traceable to the construction of social progress as economic growth measured in terms of productivity and accumulation and has been the focus of mainstream development programmes in

many countries in the global South, especially Africa and Asia. The conceptual thread herein combines the ideas of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Walt Rostow in viewing development as a teleological process albeit with distinctive nuances.

For Smith, development is a process of creating conditions and structures within which efficiency in the production process is optimal. Efficient specialized application of technology (machinery and organization) and labour increase productivity and accumulation of material wealth by individuals pursuing self-driven and focused interests (Smith, 1976). According to Smith, progress is a characteristic of a society in which there is sufficient freedom for the market forces- the invisible hand- to facilitate exchanging the product of labour at true value but also regulated by a foundational moral sentiments and systems of support guiding social relations and obligations (Coker, 1990). Without labelling it, Smith charts out a capitalist development trajectory of society, economically determined and traceable through levels of market efficiency, accumulation and specialization (Sachs et al., 2001). Ricardo's analysis focuses on the relation between agricultural

productivity, labour and land and the inevitable social tensions. For him development implies self-sustained accumulation of capital and growth in the face of land scarcity hence the challenge to sustain the society (Ricardo, 1955; Larrain, 1989). By foregrounding agricultural production and food security, Ricardo subtly introduces tripartite matrix to the analysis of economic development: poor health (labour), low agricultural productivity (land) and infrastructure (organization and technology). Though Ricardo's model remains at the core much of the global South's development attempts especially for rural communities, its utility in the post-independence global South was stymied by national diversity in different regions in which there were different levels of agricultural production. To address its shortcomings, much of the development research turned to Walt Rostow's conceptualization of social change.

Rostow views development as progression through stages defined by the modes of production and accumulation. He identifies five economic stages: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption. Ideally,

societies pass through these stages as they develop (Rostow, 1960). Transition from one stage to another depends on levels of productivity, systems of production, temporal orientation to life, relations of exchange, technology, patterns of consumption and forms of authority progressing from rudimentary to complex forms of production as societies build technologies as 'proximate stimulus' for production, increase real income per capital due to sophistication in capital appropriation systems and mass consumption characteristic of urbanization (Rostow, 1960); and social orientations, media and lifestyles (Lerner, 1958). Development then becomes an epic trajectory of human social evolution towards the from the garden to the shopping malls accompanied by concurrent but pre-conditional disintegration of traditional society. External domination, according to Rostow, is a pre-requisite for 'shocking' non-western societies out of their backwardness towards economic take-off (Sahlin, 2000). Rostow, however, fails to explain how the external shocking intervention varies in formation and impact as demonstrated by the cases he reviews regarding British interventions in Africa and Australia as well as the internal disparities of

societies shocked by similar external structural stimulus. More importantly, it hardly acknowledges the possibility of overlapping development stages within the same country as observed in many countries in the South.

By the late 60s, structural heterogeneity in many of the countries was evident through the emergence of internally stratified relations of appropriation and accumulation disproportionately dependent on former colonial powers (Hoogvelt, 2001). As the process got 'developed,' wage labour, relations of production and appropriation of resources in the South became systematically geared towards super-exploitation of the poor countries and peripheral segments within them and concurrently buttressing the stronger economies of former colonizers and core segments within the peripheral societies/countries (Frank, 1978). This is the gist of dependency theory which dominated development discourse and framing in 1970s is this character of being built on exploitation of the periphery of capitalist systems both internationally and locally.

The dependency theory postulated that the projected industrial output necessary for spurring transition to advanced

economy status was/is essentially extractive and under the dictates of foreign capital (Amin, 1990). While accepting the premise that indeed societies progress through stages, the dependency approach views it as nonautonomous, induced and constrained by interests of global North as centres of capital which extract both raw materials and surplus (Wallerstein, 1996) making development and underdevelopment integral and concurrent (Portes, 1976). The theory explicitly links the conditions of underdevelopment in the South to the colonial experience whose impact and structures persisted in policies thus creating continuities in which the colonial 'master class' is replaced by an African local elite strategically integrated into the contextual workings of the capitalist political economy (Cooper, 2005). In effect the theory explicates the belated realization that the congenital weakness of capitalist political economy does not lie in its drive for industrial advancement but its systemic kowtowing to the market forces which are externally controlled and oriented towards extracting locally but accumulating elsewhere (Polanyi, 1944/2001). Locally, the national economies remain disproportionately

geared towards the metropolitan centres where the elite resided and invested.

Though the dependency is critique of the dominant capitalist models of development in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it explains the condition of development by focusing on its alter ego- underdevelopment- by employing the same metanarrative, hence remains equally logocentric and circular (Wilson, 1995). In principle, both view development as systemic and graduated economic appropriation and accumulation of capital. They also view the social and personal dimensions of development that remains the cornerstone of the civilization project and its teleology- as not only orderly, but also subordinate to the economic. The difference lies on the location and direction of control of the flow of appropriation and accumulation as well as the explanatory narratives and legitimating discourses of development's failure. While the modernization-through-capitalism-market accumulation proponents explained underachievement of development efforts as locally determined, the dependency advocates indicted the global structures of inequality which made the entire system parasitic on its periphery (Davis, 2008).

## **Where Does the Global South Fit?**

The broad theories of modernization have always explained the turn of events in Europe and the global North quite systematically and empirically. However, the global South has often been absent and on occasion engaged as a relic of earlier development stages, an illustrative site. In order to propose a sociology of development that engages more robustly with the South, it is critical to examine the central views of the three (Durkheim, Weber and Marx) in order to identify possible entry points for the South. To this end, there are three relevant assumptions cutting across the three that are central to modernization theory which offer the opportunity. First is the notion of immanent drive towards historically inevitable state. Society is assumed to inevitably progress from primitivity to a destined advanced state qualitatively evaluated based on three variables- mentality, organization and authority- described differently by the three. Second is the reference to ideal types to mark epochal changes in social and productive relations and orientations over time as society progresses from simple to complex forms of organization (Larrain, 1989). Lastly, the form of

authority to organize and establish social relations and norms is projected as less collective and more individualistic; increasingly rational and objective.

From the foregoing, the South's modernization project commonly framed as development is discursively bifurcated into economic growth and social welfare promotion. The bifurcation which emerged in the 1980s with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) saw a dialectical positioning between development as welfare and development as economic growth. The former has been taken over by select state departments and civil society organizations focused on promoting a variety of social protection (care) interventions while the latter is a domain of private business and state corporations invested in promoting production for economic growth (economy). Regardless of the dimension, when actual practices and experiences connect thought with behaviour, development seems to conceive the targeted spaces and their occupants as out of place and time, chaotic and in need of rapid systemic incorporation into the larger (mostly global) circuits of human progress (Friedman, 2007). It becomes a 'willed and governing' (Li, 2007)

elixir to the chaos, deprivation and difference through progressive organization of the productive or the protective forces (Arndt, 1981); often riding roughshod over the complexities of the reality and organization of the target communities (Scott, 1998). Together, the three properties of modernization theories highlighted above, and this new intentionality of development interventions point towards a materialization of Foucault's governmentality- 'the conduct of conduct', 'calculable and instrumental' (Joseph, 2010). They offer the conceptual roots for framing the relational flow of disciplinary power through self-management compared to directly imposed authority enforced through actual acts of those deemed to be superior such as elders, gods and kings. This development of diffuse forms of relaying power and subsequently nurturing perpetual self- management; is at the heart of the modernization project and finds historical resonance with the development trajectory of many countries in the South.

## Development for Development Sake: From Imaginary to Reality

Contemporary practice of development operates at two fronts: discursive (as discourses) and performative or interventional (as practices). At the discursive level, development focuses on generating and maintaining a utopian narrative in which the undeveloped landscapes are re-written figuratively and literally to generate a futuristic imaginary bereft of real and present suffering. As a process, development is predicated on a concurrent process of framing, staging and constructing realities in need of normalizing; inseparably hitched to a progressively teleological and eternally deferrable state. It is internally split and double-meaning with an instinctual reference to its companion other –poverty (Bicum, 2005). A new smooth world is imagined and willed upon the present, transformed and cleared of its incongruities and inconsistencies (Crush, 1995). The discourses often constitute 'social fields of power' (Polier & Roseberry, 1989) which continuously reconstitute and reproduce themselves within dynamic material relationships, activities and power contexts.

Generating its own apparatus, development links forms of knowledge about the deprived and their futures with the deployment of interventional powers to map and produce the poor as a group of identities, deviant and risky; thus in need of control and management (Escobar, 1992, 1995). The poor and their Southern locations constituted as objects and spaces of development, are constructed as characteristically anarchic, outside and deficient in the fundamental aspects in 'a terminal condition of stasis' to be reinserted into the pathways of modernization through interventions (Crush, 1995). Persistent categories of the South that pepper development imaginaries include the rural, the illiterate, women (especially pregnant), the malnourished, children in poor settings, slum dwellers, the landless and homeless. Poverty, frequently presented as deficiency, decay and degeneracy, and all that it engenders, becomes a counteractive trope through which development is explained and presented as the automatic, functional and structural elixir (Biccum, 2005). Continuously presented and refreshed as a moral and security imperative as well as a nationalist necessity, development's discursive tropes are centred on the creation and multiplication of the global South's anomalies embodied in endless

programmes and strategies that allow for subjection unto knowledge regimes and intimacies with power to create endless mirages of possibility (Schultz, 1964). For instance, the persistent ethnic and sectarian violence in Kenya and Nepal present perfect examples of such anomalies, irrespective of their historical links to colonialism and exploitation.

In its endeavour to translate the civilizing, modernizing project into a reality, development has produced concurrent power and powerlessness; affluence and deficiency; and progress and regression. This inevitable duality present in development outcomes has always been ingrained in the structural conception of its reality regarding capitalism and modernity (Marx, 1976; Polanyi, 1944/2001). McClintock (1995) points out this fact by emphasizing that development both in imaginary and practice is a chaotic and heterogeneous experience. Inevitably, it leaves in its wake, inequalities and stratified differentiation along which benefits, and costs are borne differentially. These get worse when it (development) is linked or even subsumed with capitalist industrialization and globalization where exploitation and production go hand in hand (Berman, 2006). The dichotomous experience of development perpetuates

dispossession where there is concurrent enrichment of few and impoverishment of many inevitably generating destruction and violence (Bauman, 1989). In effect then this changes the focus of development- its thinking, practices and projects in the South from improving the welfare to governing the existing destruction wrought by development or prevent and shape the potential violence it has left in its wake. As elaborated in the final section below, in a self-fulfilling tautology, development has become its development, a government of its own survival.

### ***Development as Government: Solving Social Problems Through Disciplining Lives***

From the foregoing, I suggest that development interventions in the global South are more or less disciplinary apparatus which ‘reflects the interiorization of the poverty and deprivation; and evolution of communities for care from disassembles of marginalized poverty and deprivation subjects, and eventually, restating the emergence of project-citizenry’ (Rabinow, 1984, pp. 334-336). Through surveillance, profiling and targeting, the

subjects of poverty become technically knowable and known (Foucault, 2008; Said, 1979). This facilitates prescriptive diagnosis by State and corporate experts for systematic management, organization and ‘conducting of conduct’ driven by the economic logic of disciplinary society. Foucault explains this ordering as a penetration of regulatory mechanisms into the everyday life through mediated hierarchies. Individuals, groups and communities are allocated an identity, place, body and specific deprivation which can then be confronted with an appropriate correlative subjectivity amenable to management by conduct of self- governmentality (Foucault, 2008). Individuals are shaped, guided and moulded into capable and active members of work relations, occupations and identities (Dean, 1999). This codifies, consolidates and institutionalizes the dominance of the new regime and its authority into micro-realms: self-management of people as workers or beneficiaries and their region as particular production centres, dependent on their contribution to the economy (Jessop, 2007).

Foucault (1977) views social problems as opportunities for specialized practices and techniques in the administration of

power and dispossession of agency (Rabinow, 1984). Poverty, 'rural backwardness,' and urban unemployment have been constituted as social problems in Sub-Saharan Africa and many parts of Asia; and the initiation of development interventions are strategic responses. From this view, 'development projects' are part of the establishment of the 'dispositif' -system of techniques, mechanisms, and devices, a sort of apparatus or machinery' (Foucault, 2003) for creating order out of the chaos of traditional Southern societies (in the case of colonial government); rural backwardness and urban poverty (in the case of the post-independent governments and international organizations). In a study of the setting up of sugar factories as development projects in Kenya, I found that through a series of plans, acts and practices, a processual regime of control is mapped unto the socio-economic and political life of a community. This echoes findings from studies of the sugar industry in Indonesia by among others, Li (2007). These regimes are enacted through efforts to create order and cultivate an aspiration for improvement, specific practices and forms of social visibility whose intelligibility relies on reference to the project's relations as the power grid emerges. The development

project workings become a cartography of power and knowledge (Escobar, 1992) pursuing the transformation of everyday lives and experiences into diffuse events and acts of self-regulation and government in a banal and visceral manner (Howes, 1996). I have also observed how daily practices gradually transform into forms of governing people and communities without overt domination or use of force. This is what Foucault's notion of governmentality looks like in practice.

The concept of governmentality reveals a mode of power and the modalities of diffused and 'socially internalized' ways of its exercise. The way it fleshes out in the development practices and processes at local level reveals a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application and targets. Meanwhile, it generates a physics or diffuse anatomy of power which systematically and gradually extends and spreads throughout the social body to nurture a system of self-management and identification (Foucault, 1979). Whereas disciplinary power requires manifest demonstration of sovereignty and force, governmentality applies itself in a softer manner by assuming the ordering of human multiplicities economically and discretely in ways that fix, regulate and

disarm disorder (threats) among subjects through a sort of remnant agency. The transition from development as a disciplinary regime (often linked with the colonial imposition) to a regime of governmentality (conduct of conduct) (Foucault, 1979, 2008) captures the actual intentionality of development-creation of self-governing productive subjects.

## **So What for Sociology of Development?**

Dominant theoretical frameworks face conceptual challenges which need to be accommodated in search of a Southern theory of the Sociology of Development. For instance, the materialist Marxist approach to capitalist development presupposes subject relations defined solely by class positions or a semblance thereof (Marx, 1976; Larrain, 1989). This is problematic and constraining for such social inquiry into development. The consequences of unequal development are neither systematic nor predictably structured along clear differentiation boundaries as class would presuppose, at least not in Kenya, Nepal or similar countries in the South. Instead, they tend to be variegated chaotically mixed forms of dispossession, appropriation and accumulation within

the larger system of the economy. Social inquiry may opt to view class as a process of social formation to allow analysis of spatial, group and individual subjectivities formed within a capitalist development project. Ruccio (2011) somewhat posits such an approach to class analysis emphasizing application of class as process in which surplus labour is performed, appropriated, distributed and accumulated. He also highlights the fact that individuals can belong to different positions – as labourers and capitalists- within a particular social structure and more than one structure can be in existence creating multiple and possibly overlapping subjectivities.

On the other hand, there is significant potential for Foucauldian conception of development in the South. By illuminating how development's subject is formed, lived and managed, such analysis would reveal that the development process does not produce 'docile bodies'. Instead it creates conditions of possibility for the emergence of highly fluid 'shockable subjectivity' (Friedman, 2007) which may escape the confines of the disciplinary gaze and structural flows of government. This process of the subject defying the logic of its formative power,

is in line with Foucault's assertion that power multiplies itself, and the resultant forms of subjectivity expose the different ways individuals constitute themselves through self-mastery /self-care to produce themselves as a 'work of art'. The fluidity of development's own outcomes at micro and macro levels in the South confirms this multiplicity and artistry of power under development projects.

Furthermore, while Foucault's approach has been effective in examining the dominance of development as a form of governance; locating the place of capitalism in the organization and trajectories of self-existences in different contexts, and relations of violence and subordination; it has not been particularly robust in the examination of the Southern contexts. Adoption by Southern researchers could prod it towards examination of the potential for subject mutations where the docile body acquires a significant capacity to mutate into a 'bastard agency'; in other words, transforms the presumed docility into a form of action, as well as multiple identities activated at will. Here lies both an analytical and functional linkage between the macro-dynamics of development through which a modular form of governmentality is enacted and

the micro-experiences and everyday realities of development. This could push Foucault's conception to completely expose the depth and breathe of governmentality. In other words, there is need for a functional and relational concept that can link governmentality attributes of development with the actual materiality of its experiences; its subjectivities. Examining the relationality and functionality of governmentality in the everyday materiality of development subjectivities and the power artistry within the respective locations in the South is a potentially fascinating terrain for inquiry for researchers in the sociology of development field.

## **Disclosure Statement**

The author declares that no potential conflict of interest exists.

## **References**

- Amin, S. (1990). *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of a global failure*. United Nations Press.
- Arndt, H. (1981). Economic development: A semantic history. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 457-466.

- Aron, R. (1968). *Progress and disillusion: The dialectics of modern society*. Mentor.
- Baumann, S. (1989). *Modernity and the holocaust*. Polity Press.
- Berman, J. B. (2006). The ordeal of modernity in an age of terror. *African Studies Review*, 49(1), 1-14.
- Biccum, R. A. (2005). Development and the 'new imperialism': A reinvention of colonial discourse in DFID promotional literature. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(6), 1005-1020.
- Brubaker, R. (2003). *The labouring poor in India: Patterns of exploitation, subordination and exclusion*. Oxford University Press.
- Coker, W. E. (1990). Adam Smith's concept of the social system. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 9, 139-142.
- Cooper, F. (2005). *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history*. University of California Press.
- Crush, J. (Ed.), (1995). *Power of development*. Routledge.
- Dados, N., & Connell, R. (2012). The Global South. *Contexts*, 11(1), 12-23
- Davis, M. (2008). The origins of the third world. In N. S. Chari & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *The development reader* (pp. 14-30). Routledge.
- Dean, M. (1999). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society*. Sage Publications.
- Durkheim, E. (1997). *The division of labor in society* (L. A. Coser, Trans.). Free Press.
- Escobar, A. (1992). Imagining a post-development era? Critical thought, development and social movements. *Social Text*, 31/32, 20-56.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the third world*. Princeton University Press.
- Foucault, M. (2003). *The essential Foucault* (P. Rabinow & N. Rose, Eds.). New Press.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (1979). Governmentality. *Ideology and Consciousness*, 6, 5-21.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. Vintage Books.
- Frank, A. G. (1978). *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment*. Macmillan.
- Fraser, N. (2013). *Fortunes of feminism: From state managed capitalism to neoliberal crisis*. Verso
- Friedman J. (2007). Shock and subjectivity in the age of

- globalization: Marginalization, exclusion and the problem of resistance. *Anthropological Theory*, 7(4), 421-448.
- Gerth, H. H., & Mills, W. C. (Eds. & Trans.). (1946). *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- Hoogvelt, A. (2001). *Globalization and the postcolonial world: The new political economy of development* (2nd ed.). John Hopkins University Press.
- Howes, D. (Ed.) (1996). *Cross-cultural consumption: Global markets, local realities*. Routledge.
- Jessop, B. (2007). *The state power*. Polity.
- Joseph, J. (2010). Poverty reduction and the new global governmentality. *Alternatives*, 35, 29-51.
- King, V.T., Salemink, O., Middleton, C., Kim, S., & Friend, R. (2016). *Rethinking development studies in Southeast Asia: State of knowledge and challenges*. Regional Center for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University.
- Larrain, J. (1989). *Theories of development*. Polity.
- Lawrence, P. (2010). The African tragedy. In V. Padayachee (Ed.), *The political economy of Africa*. Routledge.
- Leys, C. (1975). *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The political economy of neo-colonialism*. East African Publishing House.
- Li, M. T. (2007). *The will to improve: governmentality, development, and the practice of politics*. Duke University Press.
- Marx, K. (1976). *Capital: A critique of political economy* (Vol. 1, B. Fowkes, Trans.). Penguin Books & New Left Review.
- Mayhew, H. L. (Ed.). (1982). *Talcott Parsons on institutions and social evolution: Selected writings*. University of Chicago Press.
- McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial leather: Race, gender and sexuality in colonial contest*. Routledge.
- Polanyi, K. (2001). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Beacon Press. (Original work published 1944)
- Polier, N., & Roseberry, W. (1989). Tristes tropes: Postmodern anthropologists encounter the other and discover themselves. *Economy and Society*, 18, 245-264.
- Portes, A. (1976). On the sociology of national development: Theories and

- issues. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(1), 55-85.
- Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1984). *The Foucault reader*. Pantheon Books.
- Ricardo, D. (1955). *The principles of political economy and taxation*. JM Dent.
- Rostow, W. W. (1960). *The stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ruccio, F. D. (2011). *Development and globalization: A Marxian class analysis*. Routledge.
- Sachs, D. J., Mellinger, D. A., & Gallup, L. J. (2001). The geography of poverty and wealth. In C. Sharad & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *The development reader* (pp. 9-13). Routledge.
- Sahlins, M. (2000). On the anthropology of modernity, or, some triumphs of culture over dependency theory. In A. Hooper (Ed.), *Culture and sustainable development in the Pacific* (pp. 44-61). Australian National University Press.
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- Schultz, W. T. (1964). *Transforming traditional agriculture*. Yale University.
- Scott, J. (1998). *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.
- Smith, A. (1976). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. Penguin Books.
- Wallerstein, I. (1996). *Historical capitalism with capitalist civilization*. Verso.
- Watts, M. (1995). The crisis of development. In J. Crush (Ed.), *Power of development*. Routledge.
- Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organization*. Free Press.
- Wilson, G. (1995). A postmodern approach to structured dependency theory. *Journal of Social Policy*, 26(3), 341-350.

## Author Biosketch

**Justus Bwonderi Aungo** holds a PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology from the Central European University, Budapest. He is currently teaching Sociology and Social Planning, Development and Policy at the Faculty of Arts, University of Nairobi, Mombasa Campus. His research interests are on poverty, marginalization and gender through development evaluation, social theory, qualitative research, and value for money analysis. He is currently exploring the dynamics marine and infrastructural sociology in the Kenyan coast where he lives in Kenya.

---

**To cite this article:** Aungo, J. B. (2020). Sociology of development: Towards a theoretical option for the global South. *Social Inquiry: Journal of Social Science Research*, 2(1), 11-30. <https://doi.org/10.3126/sijssr.v2i1.28905>

---

**For other articles and journal archive, visit:**

1. <http://socialinquiryjournal.org/index.php>
2. <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/sijssr/index>