



Keynote Speech by UNRISD Director Thandika Mkandawire
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Introduction

Distinguished Delegates and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

This forum is intended to highlight the importance of social sciences engagement with a number of today's critical issues, especially as they relate to developing countries. At gatherings such as these, social scientists are inundated with exhortations to be relevant to the societies they live in. They are implored to eschew the subjection of the social sciences to the imperatives of analytical tools and methods. Policymakers bemoan the drift in the social sciences towards what they consider irrelevant abstractions. This is a fair complaint. All too often, research driven by *tools* or *methods* has led to the mastery of new techniques, rather than to identifying—let alone answering—questions of immediate importance. You will probably be hearing a lot of this during the coming days, so I will spare you the pain of an *exposé* so early in the proceedings. The theme is a recurring one, and its persistence must surely be a sign that no satisfactory answer has been found.

My speech today will touch on three issues. First, I will consider the forces driving the new interest in research on development, and how this constellation of forces is shaping the research agenda. Second, I will address the problematic nature of the interface between researchers and policymakers. And third, I will outline what I understand to be the current challenges for the social sciences. I will then suggest a new way of synthesizing theories and techniques from various social science disciplines and study areas to produce knowledge that is appropriately structured for the issues now on the social agenda, especially the problems of

poverty and underdevelopment, democratic transition and consolidation, and social protection and inclusion.

This forum is premised on the belief that (a) the problems of development warrant close and critical attention by the social sciences; (b) the social sciences can contribute to addressing many of the problems on the development agenda; and (c) there are numerous social actors eager to listen to social scientists and willing to put to use the knowledge and insights from the social sciences. Only 30 years ago none of these propositions would have raised eyebrows. In the heyday of development studies, leading social scientists, at least those in the developing world, paid close attention to the problems of development and took it for granted that serious study and research would contribute to development. It was further assumed that policymakers were out to maximize a social welfare function for the benefit of society. For a while, social scientists working on developing countries saw themselves as engaged in an emancipatory project of modernization, development and nation-building. There was a general acceptance of Karl Marx's proposition that the task of philosophy was not simply to engage in exegesis on society's problems within the cloistered ivory tower of academia, but to change society for the better.

In today's world, there is much less certainty about the veracity of these propositions. And people are definitely much less sanguine about the intentions of policymakers. In some academic circles, the development discourse became a subject of academic derision, especially among those of a post-modernist disposition who harboured a deep suspicion of "development", considering it as the child of the flawed "enlightenment" project. In some academic circles, the crisis of the emancipatory project of nation-building and development had also induced a sense of despondency and cynicism.

Several factors accounted for this disenchantment with and recoil from the utopian ambitions of the nationalist and developmentalist project. First was the failure of the development project to be inclusive. Second was its authoritarian and *dirigiste* features. And third was the embeddedness of development in an international order of extreme asymmetry in power and access to resources, and the manipulative use of development in geopolitical games. All these features were made even more repellent by the "development crisis" of the 1980s and the subsequent "lost decades", especially in Latin America and Africa. Furthermore, many of the new social movements spawned by the crisis were suspicious of such meta-projects as "development", which they viewed as Eurocentric, elite driven and "antipolitics". They thus confined themselves to micro-level projects in which "local participation" was key. In addition, the rise of ideologies in which greed played a central role posed a challenge to the many "utopias" that had placed various forms of social solidarity at their core.

These factors nourished doubts not only about the capacity of researchers to inform policies and the moral appropriateness of doing so, but also about the commitment of policymakers to the utilization of rational and evidence-based research recommendations. Given the assumption that policymakers were driven by crass material self-interest or retrograde primordial ties, it was difficult to argue for research addressed to policymakers. At best, research might be useful to insulated technocratic “change teams” and donors.

For a while there was a glut of literature declaring the disciplines devoted to addressing problems of underdevelopment dead, or at least terminally ill. Among aid donors, development theories that had been associated with the putatively failed “developmentalist project” lost ground. Strategic thinking about development was accused of lying behind the interventionism that had produced bloated states and distorted markets. And in any case, given the triumph of what Hirschman has called “monoeconomics” and its colonization of other disciplines, there was no need for a specialized discipline called “development studies”. Among the new social movements viscerally opposed to top-down development policy-making, what was needed was “participatory” research that was directly linked to action. In the more extreme cases of voluntarism, the tendency seemed to focus on changing the world without really knowing or understanding it. Although this period was mercifully brief, much was lost due to the rupture in accumulation of policy experience in the South. The proverbial baby had been thrown out with the bathwater.

I. The Research Drivers

Fortunately, even as “development” was declared dead in some academic and policy circles and among some social movements, political actors, in governments and various other institutions, insisted that the issues of development remain on the agenda. Indeed, one can speak of a resurgence of interest in development issues towards the end of the 1990s. Aid donors once again insisted on the importance of carrying out research that would be relevant to developing countries. There was considerable soul-searching among researchers themselves over the relevance of their work to burning issues of our time. Many social movements also demanded knowledge on development processes. It is important to understand the forces that have driven these sentiments and demands, because it is these forces that serve to focus and drive research, and determine what research will be carried out by whom and at whose behest.

One obvious driving force has been the seriousness and recalcitrance of the social problems crying out for attention, and the belief that social sciences can in fact contribute to the resolution of some of these problems. Poverty will simply not be silenced.

A second driving force has been the demand of various social actors at the national level, many of whom have only recently been empowered by the wave of democratization sweeping the world. Scandalized by the persistence of poverty, many social and political movements in the developed countries have begun once again to engage with issues of development and are clamouring for alternatives to the anti-development agenda of stabilization and debt servicing. They have called for “alternatives” and “paradigm shifts”, appealing to researchers to “come up with new ideas”. The resurgence of interest in development by the so-called “third sector” has also created new demands for research as an input in advocacy and service delivery.

The emerging global agenda pushed by the international system, including the United Nations and transnational civil society, has been a third driving force. Numerous international conferences have insisted on the important issues of poverty eradication, social justice and human rights. The great UN conferences of the 1990s placed these issues on the development agenda, along with democratization, social protection and equality. Many declarations of universal goals of social well-being have been adopted, with the Millennium Development Goals the most iconic. This new international agenda has given impetus to new research efforts, and has already spawned a research industry on how individual countries will be able to meet the goals, or whether they will be left behind.

A fourth driver has been the strong belief in “evidence-based” policy-making, which was partly driven by the sense of consensus on most matters pertaining to development policy. The end of the Cold War and the putative triumph of the “West” led to the euphoric pronouncement that we had come to the “end of history”, which had hitherto been characterized by great ideological divides. It was now argued that not only would the removal of ideological blinkers and commitment make it possible to make rational policy decisions on the basis of evidence but also that the end of the sharp ideological divisions both globally and within nation states is facilitating “consensus” on key issues. Differences of opinion can now be resolved simply by bringing more empirical evidence to bear.

The last but definitely not least driving factor that I will mention have been the needs of the donor community, which discovered that many ideas around which they had formed a consensus simply did not work. They began talking about “second generation” or “post-Washington Consensus reforms”. While the phase of market liberalization was relatively easy, requiring a few technocrats at the Central Bank and Ministry of Finance, supported by a “strong” executive, to push through currency devaluations and fiscal policies, the institutions required by new agenda are much more complex than those implied by the mantra of “getting prices right”. Indeed, aid donors themselves have concluded that for their interventions to be

effective they must be “sector wide”, “comprehensive”, “evidence based”, “cutting edge”, “best practice”, “outcome oriented”, “empowering”, “accountable”, “transparent”, “participatory”, etc. The new agenda has placed a premium on knowledge about “governance”, “social capital”, “institutions”, etc.

But this broad new agenda englobes two contradictory propositions. One is that “ownership” of policies should be returned to the developing countries after decades of untrammelled remote management of these economies by international financial institutions. And yet on the other hand, there are demands for increased monitoring of aid. This “hands-on” approach and the need for greater control of policy processes in what is essentially a *terra incognita* increase “information requirements” which, in turn, place a high premium on usable knowledge in the form of consultancies. Donors have found themselves on the edge of a yawning gap between the knowledge required for their broad agenda, and the self-imposed monitoring and evaluation procedures that come with the more hands-on approach of policy-making. And to put it simply, they do not have the capacity to generate, manage and use the required information. The new agenda has thus required the mobilization of sociologists, anthropologists, human geographers and political scientists. Undaunted by this gap, many donors now see themselves as “knowledge institutions” without really thinking through what would be required of them to earn such a lofty status or what this would do to the accessibility of knowledge in developing countries themselves.

II. The Interface between Research and Policy-Making

These forces the new interest in development research are pulling in different directions that do not make the life of researchers easy. In many cases, the public demand on social scientists is driven either by the simple appeal to the old adage “who pays the piper calls the tune”, or to some moral imperatives derived from the view that the problems facing contemporary societies do not allow the luxury of a research agenda determined entirely by the whims of academia. Such demands are made even more persistently on institutions designed to address “policy matters”. Sometimes the demands are couched in the language of the “market” that insists that research should be “demand driven”. In the more populist variants of this argument, there is the insistence that the research agenda should be determined from the grassroots and be conducted and disseminated in a manner that leads to “popular empowerment”. However, taken to their extreme both positions can be self-defeating, rendering the social sciences worthless by denying their creative and critical roles. Simply playing the paid-for tunes might lead to research whose horizon is limited by the views of those with money. And at worst, it might lead to research that is relevant only to narrow interests. We see

the effects of such a position in the growth of a kind of barefoot empiricism engendered by the demands of NGOs for actionable knowledge, or in the churning out of thick consultancy reports driven by the aid industry. The effect of all this is to undermine research by tying it down research to the mindless production of reports.

The Problem of “Priors”

A frequent concern of policymakers is the gap between their own needs and the production of knowledge in research institutions. I believe this is a legitimate concern, but I also believe that the hiatus between research and policy is often exaggerated. Policymakers are influenced by the intellectual climate and, even, by fads of the time. This is partly because, in many ways, they are products of their countries’ research and educational systems and get glimpses of academic thinking in various consultancy reports and some of the middle-brow media. Much of the toolbox that policymakers carry around is cobbled together from the research results that have filtered down to them via various channels.

Policymakers often share the same *weltanschauung* and often think within the same paradigm. Paradigms can remain dominant if there are no alternatives and if they continue to satisfactorily answer the questions posed within them. But all paradigms have their blind spots, so that at least some of the evidence undermining them will simply not be seen. It is *this*, rather than an absence of knowledge, that accounts for the persistence of policies that are contradicted by actual experience and available knowledge. So the issue, often, is not one of knowledge versus ignorance, but of knowledge “authorized” by different paradigms and acquired by policymakers at any given time. As Mark Twain observed, what does damage is not what we do not know, but what we do know that is just not so. In the development context, the problem is not that one is dealing with donors who know nothing about a recipient country, but with donors who bring along with them a baggage of knowledge that is often highly stylized and preconceived.

You may recall my earlier statement about how the view that we had somehow come to the end of history has nourished the belief that policy can be made on the basis of evidence. It has also encouraged the insistence on consensus. Part of the new, supposedly evidence-based, consensus reflects unilateral declarations, by those with the most influence and power, of what is “universal” or “true”. But much of it is artificial, an artificiality that is often concealed by “buzzwords” that falsely suggest common understanding. This poses two problems for researchers. First, it entails a premature foreclosure of inquiry and debate, and the insistence on “one-size-fits-all” policy proposals. And second, it puts pressure on researchers to fit their work into a mould cast by this consensus. Aid donors’ quest for knowledge is thus vitiated by the attempts of researchers to substantiate the *a priori* beliefs of policymakers, beliefs which make

them not always receptive to discomfiting research outcomes. Research might be pleasing when it supports existing prejudices and is produced “*prêt-à-porter*” to meet the deadlines of men and women of action, but this also makes it a less rewarding social activity. We should also bear in mind that while evidence-based policy may be an obvious option in the physical sciences, a hotly debated issue even there, it has technocratic overtones that impinge on the democratic decision-making process by obviating the need to pay attention to the conflicted claims on ways of knowing. In democracies, knowledge enters policy in a more roundabout way—involving dialogue, conflict, compromise, manoeuvring—than is suggested by the positivist view of evidence-based policy-making. In such political contexts research contributes to what at best is “evidence-aware”, pluralistic and reasoned debate. One consequence of this view is that researchers must be aware of the diversity and multiplicity of policy-makers beyond the specific institutions that may have commissioned a particular piece of research. It bears repeating that knowledge is a public good.

I believe the wise view to be taken by donors is that expressed by the head of the UK’s Department For International Development who made the following statement, after noting that DFID likes to think of itself as a department that stresses “evidence-based policy” and that actively supports research and capacity building. I quote:

“We worry that like all large bureaucracies, we probably find it easier to take on board research that calls for incremental shifts within our existing paradigm and to dismiss the first buds of research which are harbingers of paradigm shift.

I welcome your role in challenging the status quo and as the champions of change. Autonomous research carried out by researchers not preoccupied by today’s policy imperatives is more likely to be ground-breaking in terms of changing the way we work—so retaining independent, autonomous space for research by academic institutions, civil society organisations and others is critical.”

Policymakers also frequently lament that research results take too long to reach them. This is a valid concern. It is true that there is sometimes too much of a lag between the production and utilization of knowledge. Some of this is inevitable. While the time lag can be reduced, it cannot be entirely removed, given the nature of research and its cumbersome but essential protocols of validation. New knowledge must undergo complex processes of academic and scientific validation before it can be implemented. The rhetoric notwithstanding, social science is financed largely as “research for knowledge” rather “research for action”. This said,

researchers must assume their social responsibility by critically examining their part of the bargain to see whether they are doing useful work and are doing their best to make their work relevant and accessible, without compromising the integrity of the research process.

The Appropriation of Knowledge

The disparate driving forces behind development research and the asymmetries among them in terms of power and influence raise serious questions about the expropriation of knowledge. Development is a process of self-discovery involving learning by trial and error, and by selective borrowing to fit the context and specificities of particular country situations. The implication here is that more of the knowledge on development generated by research ought to be informing the citizens of the poor countries themselves rather than aid donors. I stated earlier that the need for closer monitoring and the broadening of the development agenda had led to greater donor demands for information. One of the effects of this is the increased appropriation of knowledge on the developing countries by the donors themselves. By design or by default, significant research results circulate among donors themselves even when nationals have conducted the research. The commodification of development research through the ubiquitous consultancy industry has compounded matters. In some of the poor countries, national governments have simply been priced out of the knowledge market and can only access national research capacity through externally funded consultancies. The knowledge produced at the behest of external funders may be useful knowledge *about* developing countries, but it is not necessarily knowledge *for* developing countries.

III. Contemporary Challenges

Let me now turn to the third part of my speech—that dealing with the contemporary social sciences challenges. Ever since their modern reincarnation, the social sciences have had to deal with at least four aspects of change. The first and most basic of these has been the process of biological and social reproduction. The second has been the concern over what Adam Smith called the “wealth of nations”. The third has been the question of the distribution of such wealth and its translation into life chances of individuals and different social categories. The fourth has stemmed from the fact that progress has always been Janus-faced, in a sense something of a Faustian bargain, whose “creative destruction” has brought forth both the positive and darker sides of a disruptive process in terms of the security of people’s livelihoods, social relations and social institutions, inducing societies to seek ways of protecting individuals or communities from the ravages of change and attaining some modicum of social peace.

Successful policies have taken on all these tasks, although the weight given to each of them has differed between countries and, within each country, from period to period.

And even today social policy must be concerned with the redistributive effects of economic policy, protecting people from the vagaries of the market and the changing circumstances of age, enhancing the productive potential of members of society, and reconciling the burden of reproduction with that of other social tasks, as well as sharing the burden of reproduction. The pursuit of only one of these goals to the exclusion of others can cause problems which might undermine the pursuit of the one chosen goal. Thus, for example, a focus only on the productive functions of social policy would ultimately have no moral or political basis for its legitimacy, and would therefore politically implode. A purely distributivist state would run aground because it would not have the material wherewithal for its policies and no political support from the middle classes. This was the fate of the “populist” regimes whose exclusive focus on distribution often led to inflation and stagnation that left the poor worse off than they were initially. And a purely “protectivist” regime would fail on both grounds, and would not cope with the dynamics of demography

The Issue of Agency

One other old concern of the social sciences has been between structure and agency. Indeed, one distinguishing feature of theories of social change is the relative weight attached to each aspect, and their understanding of the dialectical interplay between them—that is, between intention and process.

The point on agency now extends to our understanding of poverty. As emphasized by Amartya Sen, the concepts of human development and human rights share an underlying universalistic vision of the human being as an agent. This vision leads to the question of what may be the basic conditions that normally enable an individual to function as an agent. The aspect of agency and intention as central to development has raised the question, “Who is developing whom?” Who is entrusted with the task of development by whom, and with what degree of autonomy and accountability? Until quite recently in much of the world, colonial powers assumed the trusteeship of development, whether as “the white man’s burden”, or the French “*mission civilisatrice*” or America’s “manifest destiny”. The anti-colonial struggles and wars of liberation challenged such premises and insisted upon national ownership of the development process. With the attainment of independence and the continued colonial ties and the emergent imperial order, the view prevailed that trusteeship would be given to local elites who would act unencumbered by societal demands for immediate gratification. Development, so the argument went, entails traversing a vale of tears of inequality, forced savings and discipline which would be best guided by strong governments. Such strength was often

interpreted to mean authoritarian rule. The “developmentalist” state thus emerged as the architect of the future through its plans, as arbitrator of social conflicts, protector of the nation-state and, generally, as a blessing on society. But even in this context of “modernization”, democratization never completely disappeared from view. Modernization predicted that the social change (education, urbanization, unionization, professionalization, etc.) that follows industrialization would produce a chain reaction that would lead, in turn, to more open, participatory politics. But one had to wait for this linear process to unfold.

Today the issue of democracy has been brought back onto the development agenda in part by the clamour of large sections of society for their human rights, and in part due to the recognition that “ownership” of policies matters. There is now a general view that “good governance” must entail democracy, although even today participation is circumscribed to spaces authorized by the powerful.

The Challenge of Poverty and Development

Poverty, we now know, is a multidimensional syndrome and the linkages among its constitutive elements imply a broad policy agenda of poverty eradication. Indeed, the agenda spans the gamut of development. The recognition of this multidimensionality is partly reflected in the new international and national poverty agenda, including the MDGs. There is, however, no one-to-one link between an MDG relating to a particular sector and policies relating solely to that sector. The outcome in a given sector depends importantly on factors outside it. The combined effects of interventions and policies, and their articulation as social policy, are likely to yield the greatest returns. Multidisciplinary research will be required if we are to avoid the distinct danger that specialized international agencies and their ministerial counterparts at the national level each focus on a particular goal that presumably falls under their mandate, thus losing sight of the interconnectedness of the goals. Even more importantly, there is the real danger that the broad agenda of development implied by the multidimensionality of poverty may be undercut by some of the current strategies on poverty reduction.

The Challenge of Social Inequality

One major trend of the 1980s and 1990s was the increase in social inequality in virtually every country, and the persistence of what the World Bank has called “egregious disparities”. Now, the growing interest in equity and poverty brings to the forefront of development policy the “social question” that has preoccupied thinkers about social policies ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

IV. Towards A New Synthesis

In the past it was widely assumed and accepted that the means for development would be different from the ends of development, that countries would have to traverse the vale of tears and overcome authoritarian rule, inequality and social exclusion. In such a view both democracy and equity constituted end states of the development process and could not be part of the process itself. It seems to me that the real challenge of social policy is how promote the ends of democracy, equity and social inclusion with the means of democracy, equity and social inclusion. If one accepts this new understanding, one is immediately struck by the fact that research on development is not structured in a manner that would address these issues (whose interconnections are often merely given perfunctory recognition). There is still a striking disjuncture among various areas of concern, and fields of research, all of which claim to address issues of human equality and agency. I will illustrate this by juxtaposing some research areas.

Democracy and Development

The theorizing about developmental states has only marginally concerned itself with issues of democratization and is only now coming to terms with “democratic developmentalism”. There is a vast literature on “developmental states” that says very little about democratization, except perhaps to point out to the oddity of “democratic developmental states”.

Outside the Latin American literature which problematized the “developmental states” by stressing the “bureaucratic authoritarian” features of such states and the socially exclusive nature of their policies, the “developmental state” literature rarely talked about problems of democratization and human rights. Much of the literature on Asian developmental states tended to consider their authoritarian character as simply one aspect of “the autonomy of the state”, which was somehow made bearable by its “embeddedness” and its spectacular success in development. The African literature focused on how to make authoritarian regimes stronger and more developmental. Indeed, the high economic growth rates achieved by authoritarian regimes were used to support the view that the suspension of human rights was the price one had to pay in the process of development. This was part of the “full belly thesis” (“you can’t eat democracy”) or the vale of tears that had to be crossed before the promised land of economic well-being. States themselves often claimed there was a sequencing of rights, with the “right to development” taking precedence.

Similarly, the literature on democratic transitions and consolidation, while acknowledging the importance of material conditions, said very little about what democratic

practices and capabilities can be brought to bear on development. We are only now beginning to examine how the intrinsic properties of democracy can facilitate development. In some circles democracy is as seen as good for development because it ensures accountability and property rights. For some, democracy is desirable because it places human agency at the core of the development process. For others, any attempt to relate democracy and development is seen as retreating from the view that democracy is an end itself, and succumbing to the substantivist/instrumentalist discourse linking democracy to material well-being and placing the “right to development” on par with human rights. And yet I believe democracies must be preoccupied with the material conditions of their reproduction and consolidation. Even for the developed countries there is the debate about the “quality of democracy”, which suggests that concern with the substantive, developmental aspects of democracy is not merely a developmentalist prejudice.

We all know the theoretical arguments advanced for the need for such an authoritarian order. There was never convincing empirical evidence for such “iron laws”, and even if they were suggested by the past it was not the final word on how societies would move forward. Many political actors reject these putative iron laws and seek ways of edifying societies that are developmental, democratic and socially inclusive

Equality and Development

Over the years the understanding has been that there is a trade-off between equality and growth. More recent empirical evidence suggests that such a negative relationship is not robust and that in fact equality may be an important stimulus to growth through various channels—human capital formation, political stability, market size, overall macroeconomic policy, etc. The literature of “developmental states” is replete with arguments that welfare initiatives have played an important role in consolidating the power of authoritarian regimes. In contrast, there is very little work on how social policies might play similar roles in democratic transitions and consolidation, and how this can be done without undermining the developmental efforts of new democracies.

In the “developmental state” literature, equality was posited as simply one of the enabling “initial conditions” often imposed by some exogenous force. There was much less interest in the study of growing inequality in developmental states. The question, then, concerns development paths that could ensure the virtuous cycles of increasing equality and growth. A related problem is that, once such paths are identified, the transition costs to move from the undesirable to the desirable path are not always well understood.

Welfare and Democracy

The concern for both human development and democracy is premised on the notion of agency, which, in turn, builds on the capabilities of the agent and suggests the importance of social policy and social mobilization for enhancing those capabilities. Although in many cases social policy is reduced to cushioning the effects of adjustment, it generally has a broad explicit or implicit mandate which has serious implications for the quality of democracy. Indeed, the question raised with respect to the “quality” of democracy has had to do not only with its institutional reach, and but also the substantive outcomes of the politics engendered by it. The literature on “quality of democracy” and the gender critique of democracy provides a useful framework for making the links between democratization and social policy. We now know there are problems with “low intensity democracies”, or “tropicalized democracies” or “patriarchal democracies”. All these epithets point to the importance of considering the qualitative aspects of democracy.

Debates on democratization do not integrate distributive issues at the core of their concerns and do not inform the debates on the institutional prerequisites of development or redistributive social policies.

If the remit of democratic governance is a broad one, including equity and growth, then we have to address the question of whether in such a context the reduction of the state to Smithian “night watchman” makes political sense. Democracy contests the hollowing out of the state. Both the social demands for improved welfare and the material exigencies of such demands need something more than what the regulatory state can provide, and therefore require the state to play a more developmental role. Until the late 1980s, it was assumed that “the right policies” could only be implemented by authoritarian regimes or technocrats insulated from democratic oversight. On the assumption that economic crisis was the result of excessive demands on the state by organized interest groups, much of the theorizing about politics tended to lean towards the establishment of institutional arrangements that would circumscribe the reach of democratic institutions. In the more extreme versions of this account, the rise of neoliberal authoritarian regimes was attributed to the “non-governability of civil society and social movements”, the implication being that social movements should moderate their demands so as not to overload the political system. Not surprisingly, the new democracies have been at great pains to establish that they too can “impose” discipline and can implement orthodox policies just as well, if not better. What has not been adequately considered is whether such circumscription of democratic governance is indeed good for democracy itself. Policy-making that hollows democratic policies can undermine democracy itself.

Why the Divide?

I hope my sketchy presentation is persuasive on the need for tying together the literature on democratization, development and welfare regimes. This leads to the question: Why the divide? A number of factors account for this separation of the literatures. One is the particular way these literatures are apportioned among academic disciplines. Development studies emerged from the view that developing countries should be understood on their own terms. On the assumption that while neoclassical economics might apply to developed countries, there were just too many structural characteristics of the developing economies that diverged from those of the advanced economies. This led to the need for the special discipline of development economics. The point, however, was to be so misconstrued as to suggest that it should be understood only on those terms. This, I believe, pushed a good point a bit too far, as we know developing countries share a lot of features with developed countries. The problem with neoclassical economics was not that it was somehow appropriate to the developed countries but not to the developing ones. The model was simply a misplaced abstraction of any known economy.

In its early years development studies attracted some of the leading figures in the various fields of social sciences. Since then, in many universities, the study of development has been relegated to specialized development institutes or area studies. While this may signal the recognition of the specificities of the problems of development or certain geographical areas, in a way development studies has lost some of its intellectual moorings by being excessively driven by the development establishment. One consequence is that valuable lessons from experiences of developed countries have little resonance in developing countries, and vice versa. Opposition to a linear theory of development has led the study of the histories of the developed world to be neglected. Thus the literature on “welfare regimes” is rarely evoked in considering both the “democratic regimes” and the “developmental regimes” in the development process, presumably on the grounds that its analytical tools are only relevant to developed countries. There are many areas in which the studies of these different societies can be mutually rewarding. A number of problems that seemed exclusively developmental now impinge on the developed countries as well. Thus globalization and the quest for competitiveness have aroused interest in the “productivist” features of the “productivist social development regime”. The call for a “social investment welfare state” is a case in point. In the developing countries there is growing interest in “developmental welfare states”, and hitherto authoritarian developmental states have had to rethink their welfare regimes in light of democratization processes that are tending to push these states towards the “European” model.

There is a rich literature on welfare regimes and their historical trajectories that has some useful and suggestive insights. Much of this literature has remained outside development studies because of the often implicit view that the current condition of the developed countries provides little that is of use to developing countries. The static view of the welfare state has led to the mistaken view that the theoretical insights of the welfare regime literature are of little relevance to developing countries. If, however, we understand that the institutionalization of the welfare state was a long-term historical process, we immediately see the relevance of that literature to the developmental arena. This is a point that has been strongly argued by people like Evelyn Huber, who is with us here today.

Researchers working on democratization in the developing countries have often operated from the political development standpoint, which has, until quite recently, been anchored to the beleaguered field of “area studies”. Those coming from “development anthropology” have generally been preoccupied with questions of micro-level “participation” and have generally eschewed the macro-level issues of democratization, and they have thus paid little attention to the actors, actions and power relations involved in the developmental projects, except as they impinge on micro-level actors. This fragmentation according to geography or level does not help much in producing a truly multidisciplinary understanding of the processes of development and social change. Indeed, it produces the proverbial parochial understanding of the blind men and the elephant.

Many societies are managing the dual transition—from authoritarianism to democracy, and from developmental states to regulatory states. The practical concerns over this process and the need for knowledge about it are strong enough reasons for bringing the disparate literatures of development, welfare and democracy together.

The WHO has observed that with respect to medical research, something like 90 percent of research funds are spent on diseases that are of concern to only 10 percent of the global population. Just as the ailments that afflict the poor are relegated to poorly funded “Institutes of Tropical Medicine”, the ills afflicting the poor are relegated to poorly funded institutes of development studies. The point is not to mainstream development studies, but to engage actively with the mainstream and challenge it to take the problems of global poverty seriously. The new synthesis will entail rethinking the validity of the Chinese wall between “development studies” and other areas of the social sciences.

Obviously there are many more challenges facing the social sciences. The issues I chose to discuss today were what could be culled from the many declarations of the 1990s. They also seem to me, at least, to be what the general public and political actors are grappling with. To deal with these issues in the allotted time I have had to paint on a very broad canvas. I must

also ask you to indulge me some of the *ex cathedra* pronouncements that may come with being a keynote speaker. I can only hope that they will stimulate debate.

To end on a positive note, however, let me mention that there are some research sites where such synthesis is being tried—the literature on “democratic developmental states”, on “developmental welfare states”, and varieties of capitalism—to name only a few that are pointers to these endeavours.

I also believe that this forum is a good initiative in that direction.

I thank you for your attention.