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# INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

IDEAS, EXPERIENCE, & PROSPECTS

*edited by* Bruce Currie-Alder, Ravi Kanbur,  
David M. Malone, & Rohinton Medhora



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*Ideas, Experience, and Prospects*

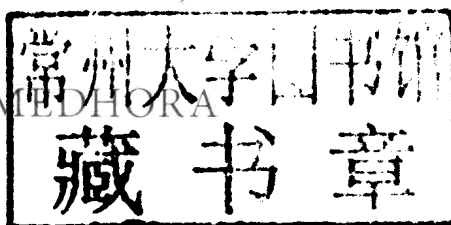
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*Edited by*

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IDRC | CRDI

International Development Research Centre  
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Canada

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,  
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
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First Edition published in 2014

Impression: 1

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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 978-0-19-967165-6 (hbk)

ISBN 978-0-19-967166-3 (pbk)

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CRO 4YY

# FOREWORD

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AMARTYA SEN

When Thomas Hobbes grumbled about the state of mankind in his seventeenth-century world, he pointed not only to the fact that human lives were “nasty, brutish and short,” but also to the deprivation coming from the “solitary” lives of people. Hobbes’s attempt to change the world took the form of his championing co-operative action through an imagined social contract, the provisions of which would be put into practice through the work of a sovereign state. That route, while a major advance in social thought, may be full of problems of various kinds (not the least of which being its dependence on national states, respectively working within their isolated sovereignties). However, Hobbes was remarkably insightful in understanding the far-reaching adversity of the solitariness of human lives.

The subject that we now call “development economics,” or more broadly “development studies,” is particularly concerned with reversing the solitariness of human efforts to improve their individual lives, through attempts to overcome the nastiness, the brutishness, and the shortness of human lives through human interactions, within the boundaries of a state, but also across the boundaries. Various relationships, practices, and institutions—from economic markets and legal interventions to political alliances and social agitations—can contribute to societal changes that can help to reduce, or eradicate, the penalties of privation. People relate to and interact with each other through communicating ideas, through exchanging commodities, through collaborating in political movements, through joining in making economic and social demands, through instituting and improving legal arrangements, and through many other routes.

The enterprise of development is, thus, a gigantic field, and includes immense diversities of engagement. In this wonderfully ambitious book, the editors have judiciously identified a range of topics in terms of which attempts at development can be viewed, scrutinized, and assessed, and have then proceeded to arrange for significant contributions in each of the identified areas. The result is a very distinguished collection of studies, with an overarching understanding of the complexity of the process of development, offering richly informed and enlightening insights, theories, and applications. The reader can find illumination in an astonishingly large range of issues that make up the thoroughly diverse field of development.

It is greatly to the credit of the editors that they have not tried to arrive at anything like a “consensus” on what needs to be done for development. Analyses of many issues can live with—indeed flourish with—different approaches, related not only to unresolved priorities, but also to varying contexts and diverse circumstances. While some airing of

preconceptions or prejudices, whether or not hallowed by alleged authority (past or present), can be subjected to withering scrutiny, the heterogeneity that remains can include different—and *differently relevant*—understandings and conclusions. This is a reflection of the nature of the subject, rather than evidence of “unfinished business.” There are many insights, understandings, and proposals in this distinguished collection of essays that will greatly aid practitioners, and yet there are also enough disagreements and disparate evaluations, and what the editors call—rather charmingly—“dialogue between authors,” to serve extremely well the purpose of developmental education and pedagogy. I feel very privileged to be given the opportunity to welcome a book on development that is, in more than one way, a triumph. It is not often that one is fortunate enough to be given a task that is as delicious as this.

## PREFACE

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The aim of this book is to trace the history of thought on various aspects of development that are presently in a state of flux, map the current range of approaches for each sector, and set out options and possibilities for the future, some of which may open new avenues for research. Development has come to be understood as more than economic growth and poverty alleviation, and policy choice is more than the result of ideological positions or designed social experiments. As more global powers emerge, the ideas shaping concepts of development and how it happens, and the policy recommendations that flow from them, are less likely to be hegemonically driven. The only unity in future development thought and practice might be at the broadest possible level—that there is no such unity and that its application must be intelligently and doubtless diversely pursued by local actors (how local would depend on the issue at hand).

This book provides both a reference point for and a counterpoint to conventional wisdom always subject to challenge. We hope to demonstrate in the pages that follow that as with any study of thought and practice, a logical progression of reason yields to fads, deviations, and inconsistencies. But equally, the development arena has been a massive laboratory for the scientific method. Ideas born of context and necessity are floated, developed, applied, modified or discarded only to be succeeded by others. Despite the seeming messiness of this process the field is in fact advancing. The lack of a resultant unified theory of development is entirely to be expected, but still distresses some.

## PEDAGOGIC ELEMENT

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The editors also want this work to be of practical and not solely intellectual use. It occurred to our publisher and to us that a variety of combinations of these essays could lend themselves to undergraduate and graduate university education with some supplementary guidance for instructors and students, as well as advice on appropriate further reading. This supplementary material is provided free of charge at the following website: <[www.developmentideas.info](http://www.developmentideas.info)>. So is the pre-published text of all of the chapters.

Readers may wish to look out for a number of themes and related assertions that arise in the volume, sometimes mutually reinforcing, sometimes in conflict or at best running in parallel to each other. Because development does not lend itself to conventional wisdom for long—consensus in this field nearly always turns out to be wrong, at least in part—this is neither surprising nor alarming. Rather, the dialogue between authors, now reflected on the page, aims to stimulate the minds of those seeking to tackle our rich subject through this book.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This volume originated with a concern that many books, and university courses, on international development fail to grapple with the complexity of the field, the relevance of regional and country specificities, and the need to breach the disciplinary silos in academe. The editors are deeply grateful for the guidance provided by eminent colleagues who helped shape our work, including Mats Berdal, Julio Berdegué, Kevin E. Davis, Gerry Helleiner, Alan Hirsch, Devesh Kapur, Xue Lan, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Simon Tay, and Ngaire Woods. They forced us to refine our thinking, identified potential contributors, and provided much needed guidance and encouragement throughout.

The editors warmly acknowledge the hard work of the contributors assembled here. They form an exceptional community drawn from around the world, reaching across disciplinary boundaries and spanning generations. Although each is credited with their own chapters, we are indebted to you all for your timely response to our feedback and deadlines and patient work in bringing this volume into existence.

The process of preparing this volume involved three separate workshops held in Ottawa, Bellagio, and New York. These occasions afforded an opportunity to offer critique, identify synergies, build on common themes, and shape our overall arguments. The editors are extremely appreciative of the generous support extended by Canada's International Development Research Centre, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Greentree Foundation. In particular, the editors recognize Emmanuelle Dany, Nadia Gilardoni, and Ahmad Dawwas for their skill and professionalism which proved critical in making these events happen.

Our final meeting was attended by several distinguished individuals whose views we greatly value. They included Paul Bluestein, Alison Evans, Rebeca Grynspan, Bruce Jones, Rima Khalaf, Ricardo Lagos, Mustapha Nabli, Martin Ravallion, Emma Rothschild, Amartya Sen, Doug Saunders, Janice Stein, Philips Stephens, Jan Švejnar, and Dwight Venner. To them, our warm thanks for sacrificing a lovely fall weekend, albeit in beautiful surroundings. We hope this volume will seem to them worthy of their contributions to it.

The editors are also deeply grateful to Oxford University Press, particularly Adam Swallow, who provided excellent advice throughout, on substance as on form. His patience and wise counsel helped us always to consider the reader over the interests of the writer. We could not have hoped for a more supportive publishing team, notably one committed to making this work available in the developing world and through new forms of dissemination.

The research presented in this publication is the result of a project supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre. IDRC supports research in developing countries to promote growth and reduce poverty. IDRC rarely carries out research of its own, yet welcomed this collegial effort to shed light on the complexities of the wider topic and of the subject matter discussed in each of the ensuing chapters. We are very grateful to the Board of Governors, particularly former Chairperson, Barbara McDougall. IDRC is an exceptional institution that we look to with great admiration and affection.

Numerous individuals within IDRC were tremendously helpful to us. Elizabeth Mohan was invaluable behind the scenes on financial management and logistics, and everyone associated with this project is indebted to her tireless efforts. Daniel Norfolk and Niranand Kumar helped orient us within the intellectual history of development. Charles Cater acted as a contributing editor, offering constructive feedback, contributing to workshops, and providing countless hours of editing. Emily Jansons and Nuala Nazarko coordinated all the drafts and revisions, organized the second and third workshops, and supported us in myriad ways. Diana Tyndale and Maggie Gorman-Vélez provided a fresh perspective on the final text.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to those who taught us that engagement can bring enlightenment, and that collaboration is more fun (and often produces better results) than solitary endeavor, and to those who continue to encourage us to understand more and better. It is never too late for any of these dispositions that we have learned from others and that have made our professional lives much more fulfilling than they otherwise would have been.



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