

# END OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERN CITY AT THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION<sup>1</sup>

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## **I. Introduction**

Debates over the role of the city in social change and development have kept the academics busy for a long time. In so-called modernist literature, the city has been considered as one of the prominent driving force behind social change. In the course of last couple of decades, this position has come under a serious challenge from postmodernist quarters. The progressive role attributed to the city in modernisation of society has been questioned and dismissed as another totalising logic of modernism. Contrary to this reasoning it is argued that the city does not present a unity or an integrated whole but represents fragmentation, difference as well as disintegration. At most, the city acts as a destabilizer that makes us question our certainties and identities.

The post-modern challenge has important repercussions for the development studies as the city has been considered one of the major means in and through which development takes place in the Third World. In the postmodernist literature, not surprisingly, the denial of the city as the motor force behind development goes hand in hand with the denial of the progress itself.

The paper questions the post-modernist literature in relation to its denial of both development itself and the progressive role played by the city in this process. While the spatial fetishism of the modernist literature is accepted and attribution of a causal force to urban space is criticised, the paper still argues for an understanding, which preserves the desirability of progress, and the positive role played by the city in this process. The city is designated as an arena where different projects can be unfolded and implemented towards the creation of a socially and environmentally balanced development.

In the first part of the paper, the so-called modernist literature on the development and the role of the city in this process will be reviewed. Second section turns to the post-modern critique of this literature which questions the merits of the development and the progressive role devoted to the city. The Section III comprises a critique of the post modernist view and unveils the dynamics behind the increasing dissatisfaction with the development and the modern city and reinserts a view which defends development and progress as well as the role of the city in this progress by avoiding the some errors of the modernist literature.

## **II. Development, Modernity and the City**

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that most of the classical fathers of sociology, in their own ways, saw the modern city as something progressive, emancipating and revolutionary. For Weber, the city air makes the man free. For Marx and Engels the city was the nest of progressive

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forces and arena of social revolutions. While devoting a progressive role to the city in social and political development, they all reached this conclusion by comparing the city to the country. That is, their appreciation of the city life was relative to the rural way of life and social relations.

The modernist literature of the post-Second World War on development rose upon this state of mind. As Scott points out most of the modernisation theorists juxtaposed ‘the rational, the urban, and the modern, with the parochial, the rural, and the traditional’ (Scott 1995; 51).

Through the process of modernisation economic growth, socio-political development and autonomy of a nation is assumed to be achieved on the principles of equality, fraternity, enhancement of freedoms, and satisfaction of basic needs. Besides these qualifications modernisation approach has from the very beginning been identified with the process of urbanisation both in the West as well as in virtually all developing countries. Existence of a large urban population is classified “as characteristic of an economically advanced area, the advent of industrialisation, and the development of Western civilisation in general” (Hauser, 1969: 247). Urbanisation has been treated by the proponents of modernisation paradigm as the indicator of change in the social structure, wider economic and political participation while the city being the seat of the process ( Smelser, 1964; Lerner, 1964, Ersoy, 1982).

The process of modernisation which implies the existence of a “primitive”, “traditional”, “gessellschaft”, or “folk” society at the beginning is projected to end up with a “modern”, “urban”, “industrialised” society. The levelling down of differences between the country and the city, between groups, and between regions in a modern society is the aim of this process. Urbanisation in this project is taken as a precondition of modern society and economy. “Modern society connotes a way of life so related to the requirements of the city that it is almost the equivalent of ‘urban society’ “(Hatt and Reiss, 1967: i). As ECLA Secretariat stated once, “The most striking aspect of the social structure of the majority of the Latin American countries is the rapidity of their urbanisation process ... Is it not precisely the big city, that is, figuratively speaking, the vehicle of modernity? (Cited in Higgins, 1968: 463).

The close association between the modernisation of a society and urbanisation as proposed by the modernists is summarised very succinctly in the following lines:

“An excellent clue to the economic and social development of an area is the growth of cities. For this there are two reasons. First the city *reflects* the changes in every sphere of social life. Its growth stems from all the factors that change illiterate agriculturalism to literate industrialism; it is correlated with increased industry and commerce, enhanced education, more efficient birth and death control- in short, with the whole process of modernisation. Second the city is a *source* of change in its own right. It is a diffusion centre for modern civilisation, providing a milieu in which social ferment and innovation can take place. City expansion therefore helps to determine as well as reflect the trend toward more modern conditions” ( Davis and Casis in Hatt and Reiss, 1976: 141).

In the works of all the well-known modernist sociologists such as Tönnies, Durkheim, Simmel, Park, Burgess, Wirth and Redfield urbanisation has been treated as an independent variable; in

other words, the existence of the cities and the process of urbanisation *per se* is treated as a cause or an initiator of a social development. The city has been deciphered as the promoter and the ensurance of the continuation of the process of modernization, the loci of structural change (Beyer, 1967). This fetishisation of space or the concept of absolute space can easily be traced in the writings of modernist thinkers.

Various modernist researchers investigate the effects or produces of urbaneness. First, there are those who emphasised the close relation between urbanisation and economic development ever since the Industrial Revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As urbaneness increases, it is postulated that the qualitative differences in the occupational structure and increasing complexity of the division of labour is witnessed. It is asserted that industrialisation, economic development, and urbanisation went hand in hand. Economic development and rising per capita income is equated with transferring population from low-income agricultural or subsistence sector of the rural areas to much higher productivity industrial occupations of the urban areas. Both Lewis's two sector model and the Rostow's stages of economic development highlight the crucial correlation of the growth of the modern industrial sector and of the urban sector. Stage five or highest stage in economic growth in Rostow's model is characterised by high urbanisation and a shift of jobs to factories and offices (Rostow, 1971). Whereas in Lewis economic development is equated with the expansion of capitalist (urban) sector through the transfer of "unlimited supplies of labour" from the subsistence (rural) sector (Lewis,1970).

Migration to cities in this context is considered to be both necessary and desirable first step toward modernization "to destroy peasant communities and free workers needed by the modern economy. Related to this urbanisation process is the necessary destruction of old social structures" (Ezzeddine, 1989: 23). In fact, in almost all models the process of modernisation and development is achieved by the urbanising of the bulk of the society.

Second area of research emphasised the impact of urbanisation on social order. Modernists consider "industrialisation and urbanisation as the independent variables upon which depend two other variables: the transformation of the 'social structure' and he 'culture' of the society" (DeViney, Crowley, 1978). Although there is a belief on the part of the general public to associate urbanisation with other undesirable by-products such as crime, juvenile delinquency, broken families, slums, disease, and the like, modernists defend city life by arguing that it is rather doubtful whether, cities are any worse in terms of these social evils than the countryside (Higgins, 1968).

In other words, modernist social scientists did not believe that such social ills are a necessary consequence of industrialisation. Furthermore, the solution to the urban social problems proposed by the modernist is not to delay urbanisation but rather to accelerate it. As Higgins argued, "The solution (to the urban problems) may not be to retard the movement to the cities by making conditions more attractive in the countryside - a policy which is in itself anti-developmental- but rather to accelerate the rate of industrialisation consequently the rate of employment creation outside the agricultural sector (Higgins, 1968: 470).

Effects of urbaneness on the territorial and social mobility; increased participation in voluntary interest groups or associations; new culture of work and occupational system, functional interdependence among the urbanities, segmentation of social roles, the increased toleration of social differences and a new concept of consumer behaviour and personality make some of the interest topics of the modernist sociologists. (Gist and Fava,1964). It is also emphasized that in urban areas women find more opportunity for employment outside the home (Beyer, 1967).

Urban settlements are also welcomed for the high levels of education and the better records of health conditions. It is asserted that, “Unlike the early industrial cities, contemporary cities in the Third World are not death-traps; in fact in many cases their health records are almost as good as today’s cities in industrialised countries and are far better than those of the Third Worlds rural areas” (Worsley,1978: 460). While better health conditions resulted in population boom in Third World countries, sweeping urbanisation with its lower levels of fertility compared to rural areas has been pointed out as a saviour.

Finally, it is argued that modernisation which went hand in hand with urbanisation resulted in a unified economic system and political democracy and brought the different sections of the population into more frequent contact with each other and created even greater mutual awareness (Shils,1961: 574). While urbanization is hailed to create a fertile ground for mass participation and democratic politics, the significance of the city for political modernization is limited to the promotion of reform movements and a need for coalition politics rather than leading to social unrest and searching total solutions for total problems (Beyer, 1967).

In sum, urbanisation as a an excellent index of modernisation has been embraced by modernists as breeding ground for industrialisation, functional interdependence, better education and health conditions, participation in voluntary interest groups, higher social mobility, differentiation, increased mutual tolerance, rationalisation, the spread of universalism, achievement and specificity and democracy. In other words, economic, social, political and personal developments are presumed to be the causal consequences of urbaneness.

Although the critique of modernisation views gained a breakthrough in the seminal work of Baran (1957) where he asserted that the Western Capitalism retarded and even prevented the development of capitalism in colonial countries, it is Frank who helped to mature and disseminate the dependency theory.

Frank proposed to study the totality of the capitalist system on world scale rather than the individual societies by emphasising the structural interrelations within this whole in historical perspective. World-engulfing expansion of capitalist system, according to Frank, by creating an exploitative relation between “metropolis” and “satellites” sucks capital out of the periphery resulting in the underdevelopment of the latter. This international relationship is replicated on national and local levels through the drain of the economic surplus of the countryside into urban areas by means of market forces of a national and international capitalist economy. This “chain of exploitation” within the world capitalist system comprises on the top the most developed metropolitan city of the most developed nation and proceeds down to the least marginal outpost of the least developed country. Development of the underdeveloped satellites or regions are

impossible since their previous development and industrialisation are choked off when they are incorporated into the world capitalist system. Imperialism is denounced for destroying the indigenous development of the native people by transforming the independent producers or dependent workers of the periphery into “floating” or marginal” populations of the capitalist system. A satellite development is not promising; it is neither self-generating nor self-perpetuating (Frank, 1969; Frank, 1967).

Amin’s distinction of centre as a self-centred, self-generating system -where CMP tends to become exclusive- versus periphery as being only an appendage of it with almost no internal relationship provides a rather similar model with even more pessimistic outcome by drawing attention to the disarticulation and existence of the pre-capitalist modes of production within the peripheral economy which show no tendency to vanish (Amin, 1974; Amin, 1976).

Frank and Amin -as all other Dependency theorists- are subscribed to developmentalist thesis and share many of the assumptions of the dominant paradigm they attempted to overcome. Recourse to similar developmentalist aim of the modernists can be traced in their writings. In other words, the proponents of dependency paradigm argued for the same prime cause, e.g., development as modernists though from a totally different perspective; while the latter propose total integration into the world capitalist system, the former advocate for total disarticulation or delinking. In their positive programs related to the development of isolated, semi-feudal and subsistence based agricultural or mining regions nationalitarian logic has been defended. Self-reliance, autocentric national development and delinking are referred to as key concepts and the image of the West as a model to be attained is left intact by *dependentistas* (Pieterse, 1995; Manzo, 1991).

World-system theory of Wallerstein, (1979) aims to overcome the above limitations of the dependency view and to achieve a conceptual break with modernisation theories in which the primary unit of analysis becomes the world system rather than society, region or nation- state. This globally unified capitalist system/market is based upon a geographically differentiated, hierarchical division of labour. It is divided into sub-systems or countries which are tied to each other through world market and are located in the zones of core, semi-periphery or periphery of the system. Sub-systems within each zone play different roles and rewarded differentially. As Navarro (1982: 77) puts, “whatever happens in a sub-system is explained by the contradictions that appear in the system as a whole”. This model while opens the road for faster and unequal development of individual sub-systems and regions or metropolis, social change is possible only in social system, e.g. in the entire world-system.

In dependency theory urban centres in the peripheral or satellite countries function primarily for the exportation of the foodstuff and the primary goods to the centre and as being outlets for the manufactured products of them. Hence, these urban centres are articulated with the centre rather than the local economy. While they are siphoning off capital from their own periphery, they in turn are sucked out by the higher order metropolises. Under the conditions of foreign investment in the periphery, equilibrium in the balance of payments necessitates a rapid growth of exports while other and basically urban-related forces tend to hasten the growth of imports. “Urban development, together with inadequate increase in agricultural production of foodstuffs, which make necessary increasing imports of basic food products... increase in administrative

expenditure, out of proportion with the possibilities of the local economy...changes in the structures of income distribution, with “Europeanization” of the way and consumer habits of the privileged strata renders the underdeveloped countries dependent on external aid, which tends to become permanent” (Amin 1976: 259).

The spread of capitalist relations into the rural areas of the peripheral countries coupled with the mechanisms of unequal exchange cause the rural population to grow poorer which result in the eviction of overabundant farm labour from the production circuits and exodus from the rural areas. However, the development of a parasitic urban economy cannot provide sufficient jobs in the towns for migrants. Rapid urbanisation without concomitant industrial development results in swelling of the ranks of floating marginalised masses who find living largely in highly unstable tertiary sector (Quijano, 1974).

The picture painted by the *dependentistas* for the metropolitan areas of the peripheral countries is rather different than the modernists’. They focus on the important gaps both absolute and relative between the earnings of the different sections of the urban population. Huge inequality in the distribution of income is argued to be increased owing to the constant spread of underemployment and unemployment. While modernists emphasize and demonstrate the quality of life in the modern section of the Third World cities, *dependentistas* draw attention to the “other” e.g. self-built, sub-standard, low-income, unplanned and largely illegal residential areas of these cities which usually are almost devoid of any urban services where educational facilities and attainment are extremely deficient, health standards are deplorably low, very little receive medical attention. They make a sick population. Only a few percent of the low income people living in metropolises are covered by social security. The rate of infant mortality is very high and sometimes exceeds that of rural areas. (Frank, 1969:283). “The economic structure of the city and the disadvantaged position in which it places many of its inhabitants of course has manifold social and cultural manifestations. In multi-racial and multi-ethnic countries this structure manifests itself in very unequal racial and ethnic residential distributions in the city. The most notable, and most widely studied, is the resulting urban residential pattern” (Frank, 1969:281).

### **III. Modernisation and the Modern City under Challenge**

It was towards the late 1970s, the basic tenets of the developmentalism came under serious attack from different circles, which did not necessarily, formed a united front. However, it was not only the modernisation school that was questioned. Despite its radical criticism, the dependency school was also under attack for its failures to provide an alternative perspective. There was a widespread disillusionment with the promises of development and the possibility of a large scale alternative perspective. Criticisms directed to the development paradigm were general as well as specific. The most general criticism is that developmentalism failed in achievement of the objective of meeting the basic needs, creating an acceptable standard of living for the masses and abolishing the poverty (Crow, et al. 1988). There are also more specific criticisms; it failed to deliver its promise of emancipating women. Likewise, while failing in all these areas, it caused environmental disasters and deterioration in the Third World. Moreover, democratisation promise remained largely unfulfilled. It is this general disenchantment has led to a search for an

alternative perspective. Ironically, the dependence perspective, despite its devastating criticism of modernisation school, was also rejected as a viable and desirable alternative.

As the modernisation school identified modernisation with urbanisation, the role of the modern city has come under scrutiny in the way the modernisation has been subjected to. The modern city as the means of modernisation has also come under close scrutiny. The early optimism attached to modernisation and urbanisation has given way to a more sceptical and pessimistic view on the virtues of modernism and the modern city as a driving force of it.

It was the city in the first place which was depicted as the emancipatory space for almost every single group which expected something positive from development. After all if the urban bias was considered to be acceptable it was primarily due to this miracle which was supposed to take place not only in the city but more importantly through the city. The cities continued to reproduce poverty, inequality, unemployment and environmental deterioration and contributed immensely rather than solving them as the modernisation school proposed. In the mid-1970's, the failure of developmentalism had become clear. (1)

There are five main lines of response to the developmentalism and its city. The first response came from the Marxist and quasi-Marxist quarters. We have already considered part of these replies with reference to the Dependency school. Yet, they still remained faithful to the idea of development even if their conception and the way in which development could be secured were radically different from the one modernization school proposed. Other perspectives are distinctive in that they represent some form of departure from the idea of developmentalism and its assumed role for the city. These are fundamentalism, environmentalism, feminism, and cosmopolitan localism. It is not easy to sustain a view, which finds some sort of common grounds between these approaches in terms of their negativity towards the development and the modern city. Nevertheless, we will argue that there are some common concerns on both accounts and in what follows we aim to show these common points regarding the development and modern city.

It is a well know fact that in response to the disillusionment with the modernist project in general and developmentalism which is one of the prominent element of this project at the periphery in particular, Fundamentalism propose some sort of return to the tradition. As Phillips sums up, 'the fundamentalist movements springing up around the world have two main features. First, they articulated the uncertainties and distress brought about by the social decay that populations experience as a result of the limits of developmentalism and the increasing selectivity of globalisation. Second, they often take the form of a nationalist resurgence against perceived threats to their culture. The combinations frequently involve contesting the Universalist assumptions of global development, presenting alternative ways of organizing social life on a national or local level' (Philips 1996; 215). In line with this reactionary strategy, the fundamentalists, by and large, argue against the anonymity of urban life as well as the alienation brought about by the modern urban life. Instead, they propose the restoration of community life, which re-establishes the traditional forms of living.

Environmental movements deliver, perhaps, one of the strongest criticisms of developmentalism as developmentalist practices have proved to be one of the severe dynamics behind the

environmental plundering. One of the common themes among the environmentalist movements is the question of scale. That is, the large-scale practices were challenged due to their devastating impacts on environment. The small is beautiful is the motto among the environmentalist. What is cared for is small sustainable communities. Likewise, the countryside is emphasized against the large city life. The city itself is considered to be a part of the problem rather than solution. Here too, we are facing with the argument of sustainable cities, which are not harmful to the environment.

Likewise, feminist movements challenge the developmentalism and the emancipatory role attributed to the modern city. They argue that neither developmentalism nor the modern city served to the emancipation of the women. Rather, they continued to reproduce, sometimes even in more dramatic forms, the patriarchal practices. Women continued to be subservient both at home and in the workplace. The city, most of the feminists argued, rather than liberating women, opened new arenas for the exploitation of the women. The city air was making the man free but not the women according to feminists. This does not mean that feminist simply deny the city, but question its supposed role for the emancipation of the woman.

Perhaps at the cross-section of these skeptical approaches to the developmentalism and the role of the modern city is there cosmopolitan localism. It underlines the importance of local knowledge and experience as against to the global and metropolitan universalism. Sach argues that 'Today, more than ever, universalism is under siege. To be sure, the victorious march of science, state, and market has not come to a stop, but the enthusiasm of the onlookers is flagging... The globe is not any longer imagined as a homogeneous space where contrasts ought to be leveled out, but as a discontinuous space where differences flourish in a multiplicity of places.' (Quoted in Phillips 1996; 234). While this argument places the localism at the centre, this is something other than modern city in that modern city still represents the universal and homogeneous whereas cosmopolitan localism stands for diversity and difference based knowledge and practices.

Thus, there is a widespread reaction to the failure of the developmentalism and developmentalist city in fulfilling their promises. Their promises of homogenization, equality, emancipation, eradication of poverty, and similar universalistic promises remained unfulfilled. Save some forms of feminism, there is almost complete reversal of the basic promises of developmentalism as well as the modern city form and life. While developmentalism was reversed for sustainability and similar conservative strategies, idea of modern city has been replaced by a form of localism which stands for tradition, community and sustainable forms of life which imitates the rural life style.

#### **IV. End of Development and Modern City?**

It is almost impossible to deny most of the points the critical views on the developmentalism and developmentalist city have raised. We do not have any hesitation regarding the failures of developmentalism and its city. Yet, we are equally skeptical of the alternatives the critical views offer. In our view they throw the baby out with the bath water. In the first place, there is not a single form of development the Third World can take. It seems to be quite unreasonable to propose a non-development for the so-called developing countries. They urgently need



development for solving their problems including poverty, gender inequality, etc. But as the criticisms have shown development does not automatically bring all these. There is a need to do it humanly. It is not only that old form of developmentalism plundered environment. It also made the life of urban and rural masses. For this reason, a new form of developmentalism should not only be environmentally friendly but also human friendly as well.

We want to concentrate on the criticism on the modern city and its role in the development process. It is true that modernisation school assigned too much role to the modern city which could not be delivered by it. In the first place, seeing the modern city as the main means of modernization was a spatial fetishism, which dedicated a causal force to the space itself rather than the social relations formed in a particular socially constructed space. To deny this fetishism should not lead to the denial of the modern city in toto. Once, the city is perceived as a socially constructed place and space, and then it is possible to identify the goods and evils of it. Then it is possible the elements which needs to be defended and preserved and which should be got rid of.

Modern city is a place the woman can escape the strict control of the community and can work for an independent living. But large city is also a place the women are subjected to a double exploitation. The modern city is a potential place where working classes are able to come together and organize themselves against the exploitation. But it is also a place where there are extreme forms of exploitation. Likewise, the modern city is a place where the large masses are provided with welfare services, it is at the same time a place in which there is misery, poverty and homeless people.

## **V. Conclusion**

The modernist perspectives failed to overcome the problem of spatial determinism. They devoted a causal power to the urban space itself as one of the prominent driving force behind development. Such a perspective is bound to fail due to this unwarranted power attached to urban space. Although the dependency perspective took a healthier position towards the urban space, they too fell short of a dialectical understanding of the interaction between development processes and urban space.

Such failures does not however make the postmodernist approaches any better in so far as they are dismissive of the progress and the role played by the city in this process. They throw the baby with the bath water by denying the possibility of a desirable form of development and progressive role the city would play.

In our view, in so far as Third World countries are concerned, some form of developmentalism is not only desirable but also necessary to solve the persistent problems of poverty and underdevelopment. Without showing a way out, denial of developmentalism is amount to suggest these countries to live with these problems.

On the other hand, it is meaningless to attribute any positive or negative value to urban space itself as a medium of development without unrevealing the nature of social relations forming urban space.

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