

Conceptualising Development:
The Changing Meanings of
Development

From 'underdevelopment' and 'development' to 'post development'

- Development means different things to different people.
 - Important to first distinguish between:
 - Development as a state or condition-static
 - Development as a process or course of change- dynamic
 - Development as fundamental or structural change – for example, increase in income
 - Development as intervention and action, aimed at improvement, regardless of whether betterment is, in fact, actually achieved
 - Development as improvement, with good as the outcome
 - Development as the platform for improvement – encompassing changes that will facilitate development in the future

Understanding development

- Purely in terms of material advances (higher incomes and salaries) the benefits of which it was argued would 'trickle down' to the gain of all in society – led to selective benefits
- Social factors, such as health and education, were also part of development and needed specific support (Seers, 1972)
- Freedom and empowerment were equally important to attain (Sen, 2000)

Outcomes often associated with development

Good outcomes	Bad outcomes
Development brings economic growth	Development is a dependent and a subordinating process which privileges a 'western/northern' perspective
Development brings overall national progress	Development is a process creating and widening spatial inequalities
Development brings modernization along western lines	Development undermines local cultures and values
Development improves the provision of basic needs	Development perpetuates poverty and poor working and living conditions
Development can help create sustainable growth	Development is often environmentally unsustainable
Development brings improved governance	Development infringes human rights and undermines democracy

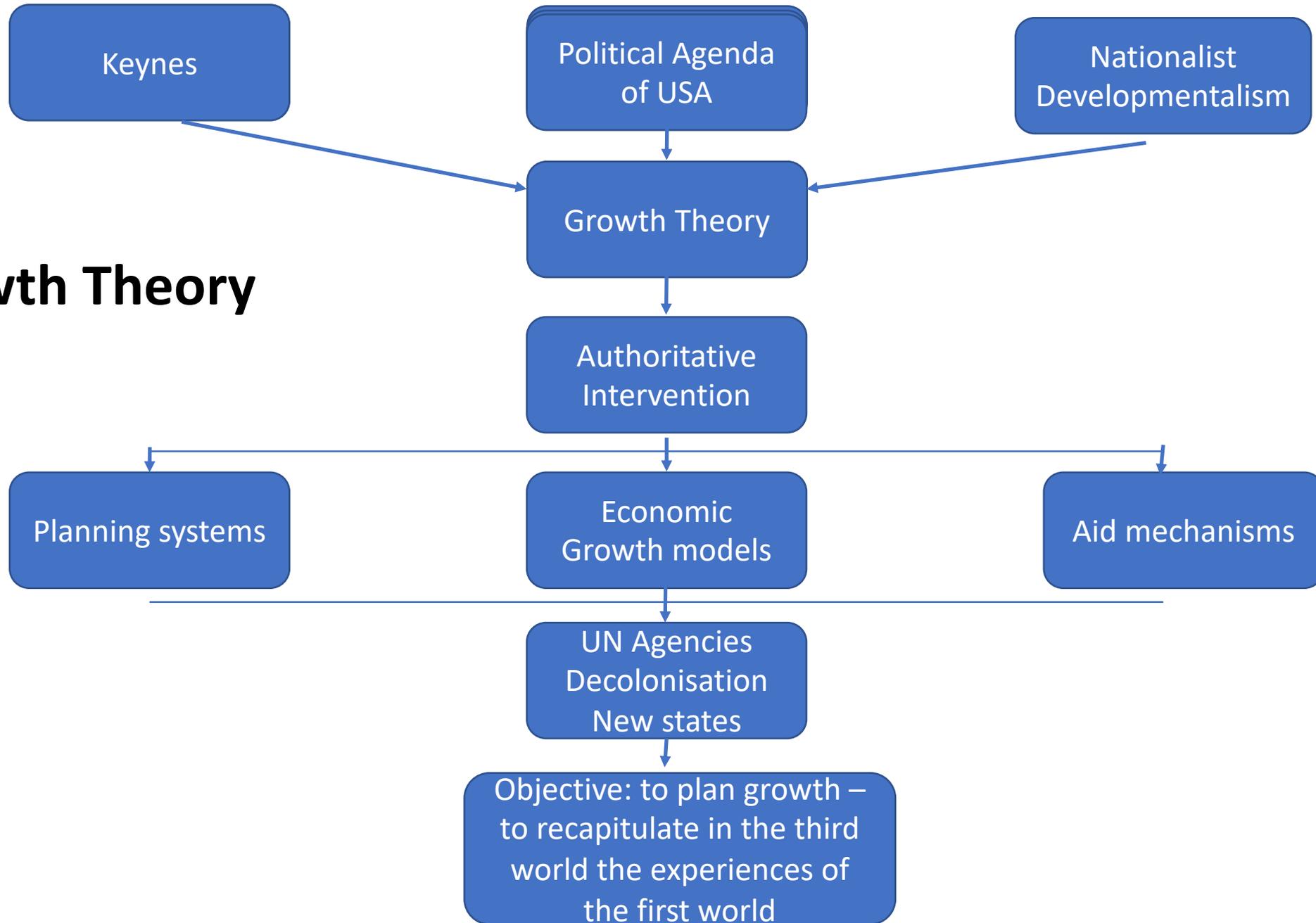
Alternative interpretations of development

- **Development as Modernization-** attributed to a speech by Truman in 1949 – used the term ‘underdeveloped area’ which later came to be known as the third world/ global south - established the neo-colonial role for the USA. But origins can be traced to the industrialization period – Enlightenment – people can be transformed from barbarian to civilized.
- Emphasizes process of social change which is required to produce economic advancement – technology adoption; examines changes in social, psychological and political processes – transforming traditional countries into modern, westernized nations
- How to develop wealth oriented behavior and values in individuals; profit seeking rather than subsistence and self sufficiency
- Shift from commodity to human approach with investment in education and skill training

Development as economic growth

- Truman (1949) the underdeveloped world's poverty is a 'a handicap and threat both to them and more prosperous areas... greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge' (Porter, 1995).
- The neo-colonial mission was accomplished by 'authoritative intervention', primarily through the provision of advice and aid programs.

Growth Theory



Alternative interpretations of development

- **Development as Distributive Justice**- view development as improving basic needs
- Interest in social justice which has raised three issues:
 - Nature of goods and services provided by governments
 - Matter of access of these public goods to different social classes
 - How burden of development can be shared among these classes
- Target groups include small farmers, landless, urban under-employed and unemployed

Marxist view of development

- Emphasizes **Mode of Production** - elements and activities necessary to produce and reproduce real, material life
- Capitalist (market economy) mode depends on wage labor whose labor power produces a **surplus** which is accumulated and appropriated by the employer-result is often class conflict in capitalist societies

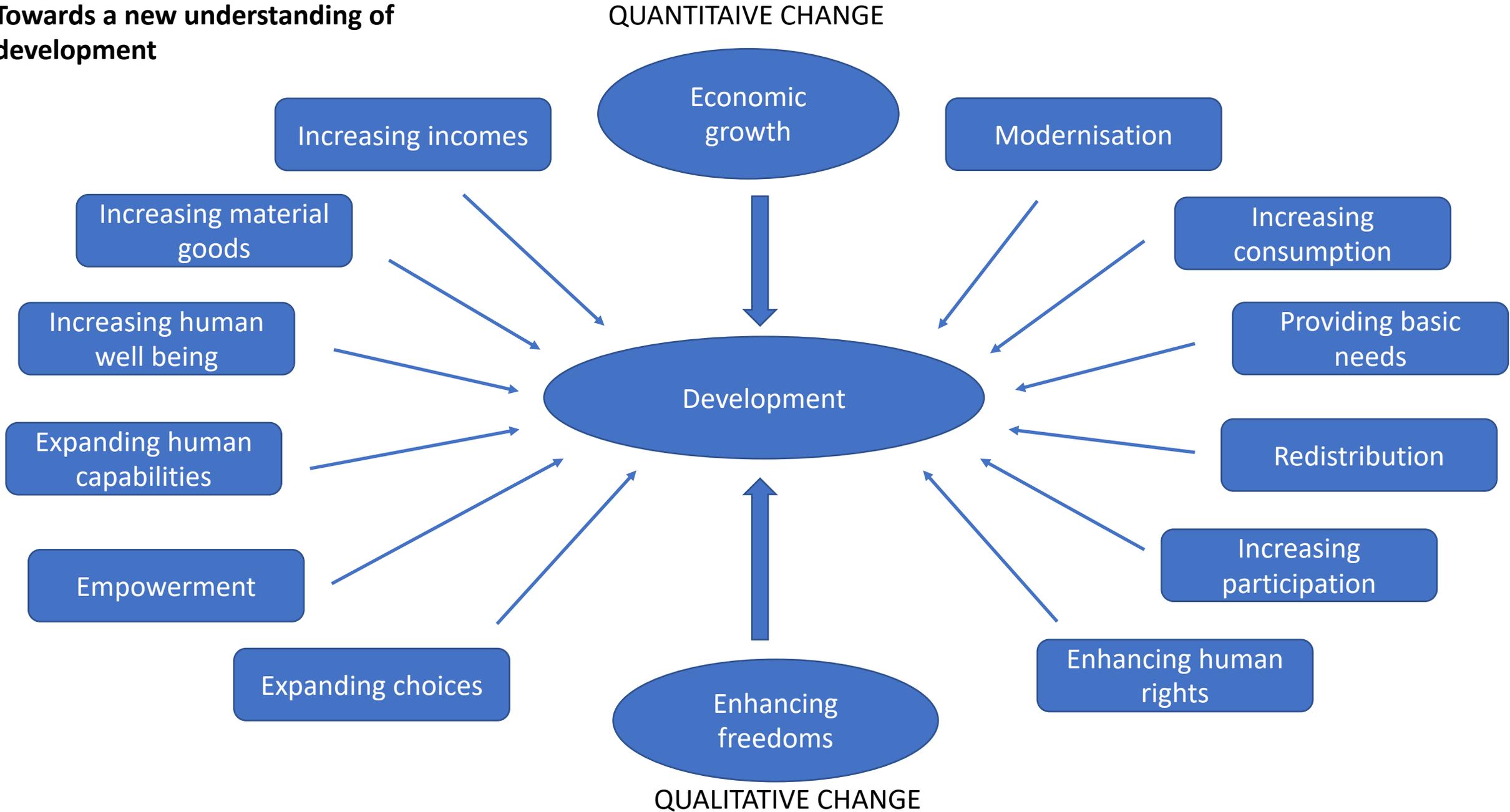
Human development indices

- HDI measures the overall achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development – longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living (UNDP 2001). Thus it is measured by life expectancy, educational attainment plus adjusted income per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) US dollars.

Sustainable Development

- Defined as development that is likely to achieve lasting satisfaction of human needs and improvement of the quality of life and encompasses:
 - Help for the very poorest who are left with no option but to destroy their environment to survive
 - Idea of self-reliant development with natural resource constraints
 - Cost effective development using different economic criteria to the traditional –i.e. development should not degrade environment
 - Important issues of health control, appropriate technologies, food self-reliance, clean water and shelter for all
 - People centered activities are necessary- human beings are the resources in the concept

Towards a new understanding of development



Towards a new understanding of development

- Development should be about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential in order that they should be enabled to lead productive and creative lives, in accord with their needs and interests
- Development is now seen as being more about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value
- People should be free to exercise their choices and to participate in decision making that affects their lives (UNDP, 2001)

Anti development, post development and beyond development

- Radical reaction to the dilemmas of development
- The idea is to seek new ways of addressing community needs, which are generally seen as being anchored in the capacity and resources of the community (Escobar 1995)
- Anti developmentalism is based on a criticism that development is a Western construction in which economic, social and political parameters of development are set by the west and imposed on other countries in neo-colonial mission to normalize and develop them in the image of the West.
- This discourse has brought about a re-emphasis of the importance of the 'local' in the development process and the skills and values that exist at this level.
- Critique of the shortcomings and bias of Eurocentric and 'top-down' development.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

- 1990' increased focus on poverty
- On 18 Sept 2000, following a protracted negotiation and planning process, 190 world leaders agreed at the United Nations to commit to achieving a set of internationally determined development targets. Known as the Millennium Summit, the UN endorsed the following eight MDGs to be achieved by 2015:
 - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
 - Achieve universal primary education
 - Promote gender equality and empower women
 - Reduce child mortality
 - Improve maternal health
 - Combat HIV/AIDs, Malaria and other diseases
 - Ensure environmental sustainability
 - Develop a global partnership for development

Challenges

- Biggest challenge was the funding of the goals. Although govts committed to it, they did not live up to it. Also the achievement was patchy especially in Africa. Most gains were in Asia, and within that China.
- One of the critiques of MDGs was that their narrow focus diverted attention away from broader developmental concerns such as equity, empowerment and the impact of globalization, liberalization and privatization on poorer countries.
- Much needs to be done and much is expected of the SDGs.

Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015)

- In Sept 2017 the eight MDGs were formally replaced by 17 SDGs
 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere
 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all ages
 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
 - Build modern infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

- Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Spatialising development

- The concept of the third world has its origin in the global geopolitics of the post second world war period. Many other terms such as developing countries, underdeveloped countries, less economically developed countries, poor Nations and the global south are now used.
- Statistics show that overall the world as a whole is showing signs of development and improving conditions- and this is taken as the evidence of continued development by those who believe in the so-called 'development mission'
- However, data show all too clearly that global inequalities have continued to widen considerably over the past 40-50 years. It is circumstances such as this that are cited by anti-developmentalists.