

## Is Development a Problem of Security: Global South, Postcolonialism and Foucauldian Biopolitics

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: June 13, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: January 17, 2022</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords :</b> Global South, Postcolonialism, Foucauldian Biopolitics, Security, Human Development</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.5860668</p>	<p><i>This essay takes as its focal point the emergence of the development-security nexus, which reproblematised underdevelopment as inherently dangerous. Conflict, having been rediscovered post-Cold War as an ethno-cultural war waged by civilians within states, was internalised within various forms of scarcity to render the underdeveloped prone to violence. In light of this, the main contention of this paper is that development is not a problem of security, but an artificially constructed discourse, which generates further insecurity for people living in the Global South. By employing the Foucauldian theory of biopolitics as methodology to demonstrate that the concept of development is a reductionist and colonial disciplinary technique, which creates the underdeveloped. The present study will refer to colonial Jamaica as an example of this. Subsequently, an analysis will be provided in relation to human security, which will be defined as a technology of governance, a method of ruling over the populace of the Global South. Illustrative of this will be Mozambique, post-1992. Lastly, the study will show how the masses have been construed into political consent of development as a problem of security.</i></p>

### Introduction

This essay takes as its focal point the emergence of the development-security nexus, which reproblematised underdevelopment as inherently dangerous. Conflict, having been rediscovered post-Cold War as an ethno-cultural war waged by civilians “within states”, was internalised within various forms of scarcity to render the “underdeveloped” prone to violence (Duffield, 2007, pp. 115-116; Boutros-Ghali, 1992). In light of this, the main contention of this paper is that development is not a problem of security, but an artificially constructed discourse, which generates further insecurity for people living in the Global South.

The thesis will unfold in sections. Firstly, the Foucauldian theory of biopolitics will be employed as my methodology to demonstrate that the concept of development is a reductionist and colonial disciplinary technique, which creates the underdeveloped. The study will refer to colonial Jamaica as an example of this. Subsequently, an analysis will be provided in relation to human security, which will be defined as a technology of governance, a method of ruling over the populace of the Global South. Illustrative of this will be Mozambique, post-1992. Lastly, I will show how the masses have been construed into political consent of development as a problem of security.

### Biopolitics

The rationalization of security that led to the broadening of its concerns so far as to see it in complementarity with development, is generally seen as normal and unproblematic by policy makers (CHS 2003; HSC 2005). However, viewing development and conflict as forms of biopower will conclusively show that the association of development and conflict is manufactured and lends itself to a form of Western interventionism, generating insecurity for the people from the Global South. Before demonstrating the aforesaid, we must firstly seek to define the rise of biopower and biopolitics to understand the detrimental effects of development and security.

Foucault argues that the rise and imposition of any liberal form of government is inseparable from the rise of biopower which is formed of two basic modes: the disciplining of the individual and the regulatory control of the population (known as a technology of governance) (Foucault, 1980b, 139). These disciplinary and regulatory technologies of biopower, aid the current neoliberal form of government identify various processes of life to subsequently subsume them to the political realm and thus rule over them (Foucault, 2008). This is called biopolitics-and it ensures that life, the social and the biological are circumscribed to the political. This is key, as it allows present *loci* of power to alter these processes and govern over them, thus “to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault, 2004, p. 65).

### **Development as a Disciplinary Technique**

Disassembling the idea of development is paramount for the understanding of the development-security nexus as the former encompasses the policy of “structural prevention” of conflict, which simply is development repackaged (IDC, 1999, para. 25). Working within the boundaries of Foucault’s given framework, the concept of “development” disciplines, for it teaches the individual to see effortlessly a hierarchical differentiation between those living in the Global North (or the Western societies) and the Global South. The former come to be seen as the normal, the capable, the “insured”, whilst the latter and its populace become the abnormal, the incapable, the “uninsured” (Lemke, 2015, p. 47).

What this entails is that the South, the failed states, lack governments which can provide via public welfare bureaucracies, benefits and safety nets that help ameliorate the contingencies people might face in their lives (Wood and Gough 2006). A biopolitical division is thus created, one generated, on the basis of scarcity and social insurance, or lack thereof (Duffield, 2007, p. 17). It necessarily follows from these distinctions that the concept of development is highly reductionist, since it transmogrifies people from the Global South into an “inverted mirror” of the Global North: one that renders their identity and heterogeneity into one homogenizing idea—the underdeveloped (Sachs, 2009, p. 2).

### **The Colonial Aspect of Development: Jamaica**

In spite of “development” being presented as reinvigorated conceptually via its association with conflict, its disciplinary characteristic is simply given a new lease on life to legitimize the intervention and rule of the Global North. The sustainable development policy, which bases itself in the logic provided by the development-security nexus, epitomises this disciplinary effect along with the biopolitical distinction it generates. This policy warrants a shift from relief to betterment measures, and in so doing, it asserts that the only option left for this new category of “insecure humans living within ineffective states” is to incur an educative trusteeship instructing them how to self-help, according to a programme formulated in the West (Duffield, 2007, p. 8).

More worryingly, the mere reference to a developmental educative trusteeship, under the current policy discourse, is reminiscent of the civilising mission undertaken by the British in its colonial domains during the nineteenth century. As at that time, British political identity forged itself in a manner that permitted it to become the commercial-and-liberal centre of the world, this discursive space permitted it to preach political and economic freedom at home and abroad as a display of this centrality (Holt, 1992). In the colonies, this took the form of a move away from slavery and a leap towards emancipation to legitimize the status of liberal values and, thus, of Britain (Merefield, 2009, p. 18).

In Jamaica, in 1833, this was achieved via the imposition of an apprenticeship system, under which the freed people still had to work on their master’s former plantations in return for housing and food, but the new emancipatory system encouraged them to also sell their labour at the market rate, in their “free time” (Merefield, 2009, pp. 22-23). Consequently, Jamaicans constructed the expectation that their earnings will enable them to own a small holding where they could finally be free.

The civilizing mission, was however, another attempt by the British Colonial Office and the Jamaican Assembly to govern life bio-politically. It firstly, redefined the distinction between Great Britain and Jamaica, based on liberal values, to assert that want of freedom equated itself to the uncivilized and immature nation state (Merefield, 2009, p. 27). In effect, this simply construed people into consent of colonial rule (or educational trusteeship). Subsequently, the Jamaican Assembly enabled people to render land ownership into a life-long ambition, which would remain unfulfilled under the auspices of an abusive tenure and taxation system. This systematically forced Jamaican labour back to the plantocracy (Semmel, 1963, p. 33).

In effect, this novel colonial rule created a self-governing population that was forced into social reproduction as peasants on the plantation system. Through a new inculcation of economic values created via the disciplines of the institutions of the state and labour market, rather than by sheer means of racialized taxonomies, a new form of colonialism appeared (Holt, 1992, p.75).

As the current sustainable development policy heralds the advent of a similar apprenticeship, it is strongly suggested that the association of development and security is abnormal and done in a manner which generates insecurity for the people from the Global South. If development is reductionist and inextricably interwoven to colonial exploitation to create a population, then that populace is ruled upon through human security as a technology of governance.

## Human Security as a Technology of Governance

Within the literature, human security is portrayed as the weft of human rights and human dignity to broaden security beyond states to encapsulate factors such as poverty and population displacement as threats to life (Duffield, 2007, p. 113). However, as a technology of governance, the concept bridges erstwhile distinct policies related to development and conflict (security). It particularly reworks the relationship of these concepts to bring non-insured communities from the Global South under the tutelage of the Northern governments, in accordance with sustainable development and, thus, the idea of communities “ensuring their own security” (CHS, 2003, para. 5).

Taking the human being as a pivot of security achieves the above-mentioned by reflecting insecurity in the internalisation of the motifs of conflict and political instability within the experiences of the underdeveloped (Duffield, 2014, p. 28). This rationalization of security is, however, based on a series of representations by Western policy makers. For example, war is seen as “development in reverse” because the identification of conflict as civilian, under the development-security nexus, entails that public infrastructures and livelihood systems are targeted and this amplifies poverty (Collier, 2003, p. 9). Moreover, conflict is represented, not only destructive of development per se, but of cultural cohesion, as it generates population displacement (Duffield, 2014, p. 123). Thus, in the face of paucity, the poor are pushed into a shadow economics logic of joining criminal networks or opting for illicit commodity trades (DFID, 2005a).

It is improbable that either of these representations of conflict and their effects can be substantiated. Mozambique, for example, was deemed to be amongst the poorest states by the UN *before* the civil war became a prolonged reality for its populace, thus refuting the assumption of “development in reverse” (Nordstrom, 2001, p. 5). Moreover, in relation to culture, Gellner suggests that war and population displacement, in rendering people more dependent on their own resources, coping techniques and social networks, actually strengthens cultural ties (Gellner, 1998).

The only certain aspect of these assumptions is that they show how the simple association of development with security, in a manner that redefines the modalities of underdevelopment as perilous, adds a layer of urgency to matters of scarcity. The former seems true, because it takes shape in this reality guided by the glib axiom of interconnectedness through globalization and neoliberalism, which presumably causes the international circulation of disasters (Duffield, 2014, p. 124).

Hence, human security is a neoliberal technology of governance, which, along with development, are based on shared assumption that permit the Global North, the developed, to intervene in the Global South (Duffield, 2014, p. 122). In reiteration of the discussion above, as the poor are also represented as a cultural-blank population under the discourse of human security, current neoliberal *loci* of power can bio-politically construct new forms of identity and social cohesion, under the sustainable development policy (Duffield, 2014, p. 125).

## Western Interventionism at Play: Mozambique

Mozambique and the experiences of its populace, after the end of the civil war in 1992, typify how the Global North reconstructs their society via the development-security nexus, which took the form of sustainable development. Firstly, in securitizing the modalities of underdevelopment, human security as a technology of governance, emerged to rework the conditions of interventionism post-Cold War to the extent that sovereignty became contingent upon states’ effectiveness in protecting their have-nots (Pupavac, 2001). This conceptual innovation had the upshot of transforming a “failed state” like Mozambique in permanent breach of this condition of sovereignty.

Under the mantle of sustainable development, the solution to contingent sovereignty took the form of a “governance state”, characterised by a fairly unchanging donor-beneficiary government funding between the British (the developed, the insured) and the aid-dependent Mozambique (Graham Harrison, 2004). Becoming a governance state permitted the British through the governmentalization of its NGOs to exert some control and oversight over “the core economic, environmental and welfare functions of the state (i.e.: its core biopolitical functions)” (Duffield, 2007, p. 82).

This ingrained view is reminiscent of the civilizing mission in Jamaica: in effect, the United Kingdom and other effective states created sovereign voids in Mozambique through the use of human (in)security to strip the South of their right to choose their path towards development and self-rule (Duffield, 2007, p. 85). Practically, the Global North was ensuring through the new development-security logic that Mozambique would not become a threat to the Western way of life, now marked by the globalisation of liberal economic values and ends (Chandler, 2008, p. 269).

In Mozambique, simply viewing development as entrenched in internal causes (human rights infringements, lack of national safety nets, people's ways of life) killed International Socialism as a political alternative to modernity (Duffield, 2014, p. 30). Along with its homicide, the idea that wealth production, the liberal trade and ways of life as propounded by the "developed" had a direct bearing on the generation of poverty for the South, lost relevance and created a new absence in thinking (Duffield 2014, pp. 27-28).

It follows that the Western's exclusionary logic was the only model to follow, which came to life via sustainable development. It permitted British NGOs and DFID to colonize that species-life deemed to have the best potential for achieving self-reliance, while excluding that which does not. In Mozambique, the peasantry which was seen as "undifferentiated" in the eyes of the developed was fostered through the creation of new forms of equitable social organization to achieve self-reliance. This was done at the expense of the distinct peasant following their own customs and the wage-labourers whose lives are disallowed to the point of death (Duffield 2007, p. 52; Pandolfi, 2002). Evidentially, the situation in Mozambique exemplifies how the association of development with security rests on a number of artificial assumptions which herald the advent of Western interventionism.

### **Consensual Hegemony through Common Sense**

To further demonstrate that development is not naturally subsumed to the exceptionalism of security practices, I will show how knowledge production is not an innocuous process, but one laden with the violence of bias. This ultimately permeates people's common sense.

Firstly, the portrayal of the poor as dangerous, although depleted of a sense of objectivity, is accepted as true because it is generated from a position of power. As Said says, knowledge is inseparable from power and when it is generated from a position of strength, it creates the Orient or, on a broader level, the Global South, which has to stay in opposition with the image of the West, so the aims of the latter can be justified (Said, 1979, p. 40).

In the same manner, the development-security nexus was yet another discourse created by the West to discipline the process of knowledge production of people worldwide. One compelling view is that the West constructed political consent to the current development-security paradigm bio-politically, by what Gramsci calls "common sense". Common sense is viewed as grounding consent because it is often deeply entrenched in national traditions constructed out of "long standing practices of cultural socialization" (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 321-43). It follows that there is a risk of cultural values and fears being invoked in a style that masks other realities and power-structures (Harvey, 2005, p. 39).

As the regional culture of the West is that of various forms of freedom, which are the ethos of a neoliberalist form of government, people's common sense is governed through the same tradition (Cowen and Shenton, 1996, p. 27). The distinctiveness of this practise of freedom is that it is foregrounded in a culture of insecurity and precaution: you are free to act and think as you wish, but you are always under the looming threat of social degradation.

Life under permanent threat subsumes, in turn, socio-cultural processes to a neoclassical economic logic structured around rational choice theory and methodological individualism (Cramer, 2002, p. 1846). These presuppose that human beings are maximising agents construed as existing outside the social or historical context and expected to calculate a risk versus payoff trade-off in their daily practices to cope with the social risks and insecurities (Cramer, 2002, p. 1847).

The aforementioned has been instilled into the common sense of people from the Global North for long, and the same is being done to the Global South via the development-security nexus and its sustainable development policy. The identification of issues relating to poverty and conflict by the West, its promise for aid and security induces people from the South into consent to this new discourse, through which the "developed" reconstructs the human, thus generating further insecurity to the South.

### **Conclusion**

Using Foucault's methodological framework, it has been shown that there is no organic link between development and security. It is a discourse which creates the underdeveloped in the same way the uncivilized and the slaves once were, in order to govern the Global South by securitizing various life processes associated with its populace. The aim is to create a differentiation between the haves and the have-nots, which will justify an intervention that would replace indigenous values and modes of organisation with (neo)liberal, economic

ones (Duffield, 2014, p. 42). The new exceptionalism of underdevelopment harks back to forms of colonial exploitation of the body, mind and soul of the human of the South.

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