

# **EU Development Policymaking in a Globalizing World**

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## Introduction: Globalization and Development

Globalization, the process of creating an integrated global economy, polity and society, is an inescapable theme of much of today's academic literature.

In fields ranging from cultural studies to economics, sociology and politics, scholars address questions of what globalization is, how it is occurring and, with particular relevance to development studies, who benefits and who loses out.

In development studies, the analysis and categorization of different regions or groups of countries, such as the richer countries of North America and Western Europe, the formerly socialist countries of central and eastern Europe, or poorer countries of Africa and Asia has been central, with the aim of getting the poorer regions to 'modernize' or catch up to the living standards and development levels of the richer ones.

Previous models or schools of thought of development studies divided the world into 'haves' and 'have-nots' for the liberals, or in dependency terms, into the powerful and developed Centre and the weak and marginalized Periphery. From the perspective of globalization, there is also a distinction to be made between the countries and individuals who are richer and more powerful in the new, globalized world system and the others. That is, countries or individuals can be categorised as the 'globalisers', those

who have agency and actively make the decisions creating globalization, and the 'globalised' who are powerless onlookers 'or just a mere prop in the play being staged' (Ki-Zerbo 2001). For Professor Ki-Zerbo, Africa as a whole fell into the powerless and 'globalised' category; which, up to now, also fits most of the rest of the developing and post-socialist world.

This paper addresses the changing environment produced by globalization, and how it affects the international development agenda, the concept of a 'Third World' and the post colonial approach to international politics.

Furthermore, it analyses the positions of the eastern and central European states *vis a vis* the developing countries in the European Union's panoply of external relations. Finally, in the new globalizing international system both central and eastern Europe and the developing countries are known as 'partners' of the European Union (EU). In practice, what does this mean?

### The End of Development?

Traditionally, development studies aimed at understanding and improving the lot of the global poor and disadvantaged, but met with mixed success. Over the past three decades the Lome Conventions and subsequent Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states were emblematic of this disjuncture between high development aspirations and limited positive, measurable development performance (Lister 1997). Since the 1980s the whole project of international development and the discipline of development studies have been

called into question.

For some, the development agenda failed because it could not prevent the increase of global poverty and inequality, coupled with the destruction of the environment (Amin 1997). The French post-structuralist author, Bruno Latour, succinctly expressed the anguish of the failure of the West's attempt to develop the Third World: "We might have done it; we thought we could do it; we can no longer believe it possible" (quoted from Lister 1998, 377). In theoretical terms, the failure of development thinking to transcend the limitations of the dependency and modernization schools (representing socialist- and capitalist-based approaches respectively) led in the 1990s to a period of stagnation and introspection in development studies (Scott 1996).

Ankie Hoogvelt (2001) argued that not only was developmentalism, i.e. the pro-development international agenda, dead, the disappearance of a definable Third World had caused the disappearance of development studies as a discipline. Development studies, she contended, had no coherent identity and no pretensions of being an academic discipline in its own right. Development studies had fragmented and virtually dissolved into area studies, gender studies, environmental studies and international political economy.

Nevertheless, the reported death of development studies is premature. The fragmentation of development studies lamented by Hoogvelt could instead be considered an enrichment of the field as insights from area studies, geography, gender and environmental studies and elsewhere are incorporated. The literature of development studies, including

numerous journals such as *Oxford Development Studies* and *Development and Change* as well as books, is burgeoning rather than decreasing and academic departments at Universities such as Leeds in the UK are successfully recruiting talented students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Professional organizations such as the European Development Policy Study Group and the Women and Development Study Group of the Development Policy Study Association are active in producing papers, holding conferences and creating networks.

While some disciplines such as economics become more and more rarefied (note the glee which greeted the failure of economic theories to apply to the real world as evidenced in the collapse of the Long Term Capital Management hedge fund in 1998) development studies has kept a more grounded and empirical focus. Its interdisciplinarity and openness to incorporating new ideas and approaches constitute a strength rather than a weakness. The explanations, for instance, of the relative post-war economic success of the south east Asian 'tiger' countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore are not merely due to the single policy factor of economic neo-liberalism but to variety of constituent elements ranging from government leadership to education, culture, social policies and export strategies (Broad, Cavanagh and Bello, 1995)

Another source of strength both for the global development agenda and, secondarily for the development studies discipline, is the widespread public support for (if not always deep knowledge of) development objectives as revealed in numerous opinion polls (Lister 97, Spur 1995) as well as the financial support from the public and

governments for development objectives. Even the EU-ACP relationship, which has frequently struggled for political attention and legitimacy, or the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which has faced considerable criticism (Joffe 1999), have continued into the third millennium carrying with them a mixture of political, developmental and other objectives.

The end of the development era, with its emphasis on state-centred development and 'modernization', was identified by McMichael as having occurred sometime in the post-war period, around the 1970s according to his timeline (McMichael 2000). Its demise took place in the wake of the debt crisis and the popular disillusionment with traditional development thinking. The development project was then replaced, he argued, with the globalization project. The dominant idea of globalization was the rule of the free market at the global level. Nevertheless, McMichael himself backtracked from this position, noting subsequently that the development project has perhaps changed rather than disappeared with more emphasis on grassroots and ngo-led development as well as more attention 'upward', presumably to international organizations (McMichael 2000, 154).

But on the whole, the death of development argument is unconvincing:

governments, ngos and publics continue to take an interest in development aid and in international development targets for reducing hunger, poverty and illiteracy. Neither has the development agenda completely collapsed into mere management of crises in Africa or former Yugoslavia or mere management of exclusion (Amin 1997; Hoogvelt 2001). The European Union (EU) for instance,

bolstered its development credentials with the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000, an extension of its longstanding EurAfrican partnership for development with the ACP Group.

The EU also hosted the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in 2001, promoting special concessions such as free trade in ‘everything but arms’ for 49 of the world’s poorest states. \* At the same time, conferences such as the World Food Summit Plus 5 of 2001 or the Earth Summit Plus 10 of 2002 (attended by an unprecedented number of countries and delegates) continue to put forward development objectives at the global level.

### Third World or Globalization ?

‘The emergence of the Third World , the assertion of its independence, and its collective awareness of the historic role it has to play will appear as major facts in the history of the 20th century.’

Edgard Pisani - Speech to United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 1-4 Sept. 1981.

The Third World has always been an ill-defined or ambiguous concept. It signified a political unity desired by the developing countries, but also a convenient ‘lumping

\*In practice commodities like sugar and rice were also excluded.

together’ of the poorer countries by outsiders. In Cold War terms, the ‘Third World’ meant the countries, the so-called ‘gray areas’, which were neither part of the Western nor Eastern camps.

Many academic authors struggled to get to grips with the concept and its implications. To Clapham, for example, the Third World was defined by its economic, cultural and social peripherality - and their political consequences (Clapham, 1985). Although this formulation failed to put politics at the centre of the 'Third World' idea, it did express the commonality of weakness, marginalization and poverty which characterized much of the developing world. Nevertheless, 'Third World' was primarily a political construct. It was political reasons such as the negative stereotype of being third rate or third class, that led many authors to abandon it entirely, although it persists extensively in journalism, in popular usage and many academic texts.

The emergence of 'Third World politics', or the Third World as a political force was considered by European Development Commissioner Pisani (quoted above) as one of the key facts of the twentieth century. The apparent power of the Third World as a voting bloc in the UN General Assembly, with its demands for political, economic, social and cultural equality, and fair trade challenged the thinking of decision-makers in the developed countries, especially in the 1960s and '70s. However, it has been argued that as we enter the new millennium, "the Third World as such no longer exists" (Hoogvelt, 2001, xi). The Third World appears to have lost its political coherence, acceding to Western neo-liberal orthodoxies while becoming fractionalized into competing rather than cooperating regions and states.

Alternatively, the Third World, it could be contended, has not disintegrated; it has been globalized. This signifies that since the end of the Cold War,

more states have become poor and marginalised, vulnerable to external political and economic conditions. Notably the formerly socialist countries have now entered the 'Third World'. In addition, within all states both 'First World and 'Third World ' conditions exist (Thomas 1999). For instance, the expansion of low paid, sweatshop garment industry jobs in developed countries has been compared to Third World conditions (McMichael 2000). Thus the answer to Caroline Thomas' question, 'where is the Third World now?' would seem to be - everywhere.

The *Post Post Colonial* phase?

According to the EU's green paper which prepared the way for the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, 'The colonial and post colonial period are behind us' ( European Commission 1997a) . Europe's relations with the developing world would henceforth be based on a new international environment. But to what extent is this picture of non-colonial Europe true? Europe still has dependencies, although they are greatly reduced in number from the high point of the colonial empires : twenty territories with varying legal status are covered by the Cotonou Agreement. And some of them, like the Falkland Islands, are the subject of post colonial dispute. Thus, the colonial period of Europe is not entirely over.

The end of the post colonial phase is also difficult to establish. Post colonialism is a particularly broad concept or approach to contemporary social and political conditions. On one hand, it refers to events from the colonial period and its aftermath, but on the



other it also refers to viewing the present in terms of the effects of the colonial experience. Emerging in the 1980s, postcolonialism became largely a discourse of identity, aiming to restore to the colonized peoples their self-esteem (Hoogvelt 2001).

Post-colonialism is also often associated with the seminal work of Edward Said. Said insisted on the importance of the political dimension of imperialism in understanding not only politics but also literature and philosophy, “realizing that the political dimension of imperialism governs an entire field of study, imagination, and scholarly institutions” (Said 1991, 13-14).

In contemporary politics, the grievances of Zimbabwe’s President Mugabe, for example, against the British government, or the political struggles of East Timor cannot be fully understood without reference to the colonial and post colonial experience. Nevertheless an alternative perspective on developed-developing country relations is currently emerging which places less emphasis on the colonial period and could therefore more nearly be called *post* post colonial. According to this perspective, current levels of development are not based on colonial or post colonial legacies, but depend largely on the quality of national governance.

This mode of thinking is enshrined not only in the declarations of national equality between EU and ACP states stretching back to Yaounde 1 in 1963, but still more explicitly in the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 which places the primary responsibility for maintaining positive conditions for development on the ACP side (Cotonou Agreement, Preamble). Furthermore, the ACP states were intended to be responsible for their own development strategies: “the partnership shall

encourage the ownership of the development strategies by the countries and populations concerned” (Article 2). In a similar vein African Presidents like Museveni and Jammeh have acknowledged that many of their continent’s problems are not the fault of Europe, but of Africa’s own making.

In 1976 William Zartman argued that the Lome Convention was a step on the road to decolonization and real economic and political development for Africa ( Zartman 1976). But by 2000, with the influence of *post post* colonial thinking in the Cotonou Agreement, few scholars saw the new system as particularly favourable to the African, Caribbean and Pacific side. Cotonou in fact represented the loss or rolling back of some of the key benefits of Lome I, including contractually guaranteed levels of aid, non-reciprocal trade concessions, special trade provisions for commodities, and an interest in addressing the problems of commodity dependent economies (Raffer 2001).

## Enlargement and Development

An important part of the end of the Cold War, with its division of the world into Western, Eastern and Third World camps, and the subsequent rise of globalization is the change in the status of eastern and central Europe. They have shifted since 1989 from socialist to transitional / developing countries, and many are now set to join the developed world through the European Union.

The enlargement of the EU with the addition of ten new candidate members - Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Cyprus

and Malta - is expected by 2004 (Warakaulle, 2002 ) However, the overall mood of the enlarging EU is somber, with a notable lack of public enthusiasm for the project. Yet the importance to the EU of this new millennium's enlargement would be hard to overstate. Just as the 1980s have been termed 'the lost decade for development' the failure of the EU to act more swiftly to reunify Europe in the 1990s could be called ' the lost decade for enlargement'.

Timothy Garton Ash compared the forthcoming enlargement to a wedding party 'delayed for fifteen years by the meanness and prevarication of the bridegroom (EU). ' (Garton Ash 2002) The lack of public interest from western Europe, the complex and costly bureaucratic regulations imposed on the prospective new members, notably some 80,000 pages of EU legislation, the miserly regional aid they are to receive after joining (around half of present EU levels) and limited benefits to their farmers suggest the EU is less than fully committed to a successful enlargement process (*The Times* 2002). Even the emergency aid granted by the EU to the candidate members following the floods of 2002 was not new funding, but reallocated from other projects (Benoit, Guerrera and Wright, 2002).

Four areas of comparison below illuminate the differences and similarities in EU policy towards central and eastern Europe and the developing countries. These are EU power, the importance of political vs. economic links, the policies' effects on the core EU political system, and disappointment.

1. The European Union as a powerful attractor

The extent of the EU's external influence has often been doubted. The EU is not a state, its actions are often dismissed as not amounting to foreign policy, not coherent, and not influential (Ginsberg, 2001) In terms of its Mediterranean partnership, for instance, the EU has succeeded in paying the piper but not in calling the tune.

In respect of both the cases of developing countries and eastern and central Europe, the attraction and influence of the EU is undeniable. As the world's largest trade bloc and, collectively with the member states, as the world's largest aid donor, the EU is the rich countries' club almost everybody in Europe wants to join - or, in the case of the ACP Group, at least to have as a partner.

## 2. Political vs Economic ties?

For both central and eastern Europe and the developing countries, relations with the EU have become overtly more political. For Africa, EU relations extend back to the Treaty of Rome, to its various annexes dealing with developing countries and the Part IV Association which prefigured the Yaounde and Lome Conventions. Links between Europe and the ACP were always post colonial and political links, despite the convenient fiction often invoked by the European Commission that the Conventions were solely economic, neutral or non-political (Lister 1988). Under the Cotonou Agreement the political element has been explicitly recognized, enhanced and turned from a vice into a virtue.

By contrast, relations between the EU and eastern and central Europe were not

mentioned in the Treaty of Rome. Links between the EU and central and eastern Europe evolved only gradually under the common commercial policy and originally aimed only at defending Europe's trading interests. Not until 1990 did association agreements signed with eastern and central European countries call them 'partners' and begin to talk about shared values and close political relations (Grilli 1993).

Ultimately, the central and eastern European countries accepted for membership in the European Union will achieve levels of power and influence on the organization's structure and policies immeasurably greater than those of the developing world.

### 3. Effects on the structure of the EU - Constituent Policies

Policies which affect the ground rules of the structure and functioning of the EU are known as constituent policies (Wallace 1996). To what extent have the relations of the European Union with the other regions examined here had effects on the structure of the EU itself? In the case of development policy, effects were felt primarily at the stage of negotiating the Treaty of Rome.

In 1956 France made the association of its colonial possessions a *sine qua non* or essential condition of membership of the European Community. France got its way: the Association for developing countries was established and France joined the Community. British accession to the European Community in 1973 resulted in the enlarged system for developing countries known as the Lome Convention, but not in any fundamental changes to the structure of the Community.

The constituent effects on the EU of its relations with central and Eastern Europe

are more complex and far-reaching. In order to create a solid Union of 25 member states instead of the current 15, a constitutional convention was launched in 2002. Chaired by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, it is still in progress, wrestling with the issues of what fundamental changes to the EU are needed to create a constitution for Europe for the next 50 years. Key topics under consideration include a common foreign policy, tax harmonization, power over national budgets, the respective powers of the European parliament, national parliaments and Council of Ministers (*The Economist*, 2002).

#### 4. Disappointment

Many ACP countries have been disappointed with the mixed results of the Lome partnership and Western development aid in general (Lister 1997). The current negotiations of regional free trade areas with the EU, scheduled for completion in 2008, could well increase levels of disappointment as some regions or classes such as least developed countries appear to receive more favourable treatment than others.

Likewise, eastern and central European candidate members of the EU (as well as Turkey)

have been disappointed at the slow pace of membership negotiations, strict conditions for membership, and lack of full membership benefits upon joining. Whether their disappointment with the EU will disappear once membership is gained remains to be seen.

Partnership: an elusive goal?

The meaning of partnerships among sovereign states has long been a subject of some perplexity, given the number of widely different international partnerships in operation. (Lister 1988, Raffer 2002). Nevertheless, the usage of this terminology is virtually universal today, having flourished, for example in the EU's lexicon, ever since it replaced "Association" to designate EU relations with developing countries in the first Lome Convention of 1975.

At present 'partnership' can be applied to almost any interstate relations - from the close links between EU partner states, the relations between Europe and the US in NATO, NATO's Partnership for Peace with central and eastern European states, to the US plans for partnerships with poor countries in Africa (Lister 1999b). The dissemination of the contemporary discourse of interstate 'partnerships' is a part of the process of globalization.

Adjectives such as 'uneven', 'unequal' or 'asymmetrical' can be added to 'partnership' to indicate its often unbalanced nature in practice.

Even more graphic is the description of partnership as stemming from the model of the 'partnership' of the horse and its rider (Lister 1988) or the Orwellian model of partnership where the stronger party makes all the decisions and the weaker one is largely a historical burden (Raffer 2001).

In any case, relations of equality seem much rarer in the contemporary interstate partnership arena than those of inequality. Politics has been defined, not only as the science of government or the authoritative allocation of values in a political system, but as the permanent redistribution of inequalities among and within states (Hoffmann 1998). This definition could be applied to the EU's own array of development policies which appear to have been up to now more about managing or redistributing inequalities than eradicating them.

Despite the vagueness of the term 'partnership' and the difficulty of defining it precisely (Maxwell and Riddell 1998), it does express for many people an ideal of equality, equity, and harmonious cooperation. This ideal, for example in the case of the Lome Convention, is "known by everybody never to have existed but to be necessary to create" (Sebegnou 1999). In the case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between the 27 members, the terminology and the ideal of partnership can be juxtaposed against the problems of inequality between the wealthy and powerful EU states and the poor countries of the southern Mediterranean littoral. Instead of partnership, the basic power configuration in the region is one of European hegemony with Europe as the centre or hub of the system and the outlying Mediterranean countries as the spokes (Joffe 1997; Joffe 1999).



Francis Fukuyama emphasised the importance of trust in building social capital and promoting economic development (Fukuyama 1995). Such an argument could be further extended beyond national societies and to international relationships as regimes of trust or at least regimes based on predictable and consistent patterns of state behaviour (Lister 1997), for example between the EU and USA or between EU member states. To expand Fukuyama's model, under such conditions of international trust, for instance around the Mediterranean basin, economic prosperity would be a more likely outcome.

Another possible alternative to the over-used term 'partnership' and incorporating the importance of a sense of trust was expressed by the Czech Republic's President Havel. He employed 'solidarity' rather than 'partnership' in his description of the reasons for NATO's fifty years of success. For Havel the key to NATO's longevity was not just the self-interest of the states concerned, not a mere market or trade relationship, but a special type of human culture and civilisation. NATO was "a common wealth-in-solidarity of those sharing common values, with its principles of openness and solidarity being implied by the very nature of these values." (Havel 1999) Although NATO expanded its

membership in 1999 to accept Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, it is not yet a commonwealth-in-solidarity of every country that wishes to join.

It would be hard to find a better case than the two shores of the Mediterranean to illustrate thousands of years of shared culture and civilisation (Braudel 1972). But so far the realisation of the Euro-Mediterranean region as a commonwealth-in-solidarity, or a partnership of the aspirational kind, is still in progress.

In July 2001, five African states - Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Senegal and Zambia - launched the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Its intention is to use peer pressure to evoke policy change in African countries, and to turn its back on the unsuccessful history of loans and aid to the Continent, while developing a more successful relationship with the international community. An early meeting between NEPAD leaders and the G8 summit in 2002 emphasized this second objective.

The new partnership intends to focus on transport, education, health, information and communication technologies, energy, access to markets and debt issues. NEPAD plans to cooperate closely with the European Union, to hold biannual meetings between its executive

committee and the European Commission, and to consider other development issues such as how to coordinate the new initiative with the instruments of the Cotonou Agreement (Mouradian 2001).

Already a number of questions can be raised about the partnership, including the potential membership, means of accountability, relations with the African Union, proliferation of institutions, and the top-down nature of the agreement which has had little public or civil society input (Maxwell and Christiansen 2002, De Waal 2002). Although hopeful about the future of NEPAD, Alex De Waal noted that at this early stage, “the initiative can easily be read as either Africa’s best hope or another futile grand plan.” (De Waal 2002, 475)

## Conclusion

For the EU, globalisation has several meanings. On one hand, it means becoming a global actor, taking on a larger political role as its “richer but inevitably more complex relations with the rest of the world” unfold (European Commission 1997b, 36). Globalization also means more international economic integration, but not necessarily an end to the inequalities between the rich and the poor, ‘the globalizers’ and ‘the globalized’.

For the EU, the advent of its single currency, the Euro, the external potential of the single market and the Union's ability to act cohesively in international fora such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) potentially offer it great power.

The effects of globalization on the EU's existing development and external policies are extensive. Globalization also means facing global-level problems, including poverty-alleviation, development, failures in governance, conflict and environmental mismanagement. But addressing these as global problems doesn't necessarily mean the death of the international development agenda, including aid and regional partnerships such as the Cotonou Agreement.

Not only the end of development, but also the demise of the Third World as a cohesive political force has been widely discussed. The idea of the Third World as a political and geographical unity is certainly greatly diminished. But increasing numbers of poor people and poor states still experience the conditions of poverty and marginalization which characterized the Third World during the Cold War period.

It can be argued that forty years after most of the developing countries attained independence, the post colonial approach to politics and society has now been superseded. Initiatives like the Cotonou Agreement and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) stress that the ownership (i.e. responsibility) for development programmes lies mainly with the developing countries, not with the former colonizers. Yet the relationship, for instance, between Britain and the 54-member Commonwealth, or the basis of the Cotonou Agreement are impossible to understand without reference to the colonial period. The post colonial perspective on slavery, on political and economic dependency is still of value as a complement to an emerging perspective of globalization.

The changed status of east and central European countries from socialist to transitional / developing countries is one of the outstanding features of post Cold War politics. The relations of central and eastern European countries with the EU has also radically altered, from grudgingly accepted trade partners, to, in many cases, candidate members. Just as the developing countries suffered a lost decade for development in the 1980s, the central and eastern European states have experienced a lost decade for EU enlargement in the 1990s. Whether full EU membership in the coming years will eliminate the disappointments of this period is still unclear.

Finally, in this era of globalization, the rhetoric of partnership has grown increasingly powerful. From Nato's Partnership for Peace to the New Partnership for African Development, 'partnership' is the international discourse of choice. Yet the term is perhaps most remarkable for its flexibility in operation, and for its aspirational qualities. 'Partnership' appeals to an ideal of equality, equity and harmonious cooperation among states and peoples which has still to be realized in practice.

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