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Paper Title: The Developing World within the English School Theory

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THE DEVELOPING WORLD WITHIN THE ENGLISH SCHOOL THEORY

Development theory is undergoing a process of soul-searching in recent years. Development and underdevelopment have become major topics in current debates in international affairs – and so has how we theorize them. Did the early contributors to development theory get it right or not? The answer is a “no” according to a vocal group of scholars who claim that development theory has failed the developing world. Hence they issue a call for a new way of theorizing development that starts with a whole different set of premises than those of the previous theories. In the midst of this process of theoretical soul-searching, I seek to identify what, if any, the English School of International Relations can contribute to the discussion.

As I will demonstrate below, the English School of International Relations (ES henceforth) is well-placed to address the call for a new way of theorizing development in a number of senses. Most International Relations theories are not interested in or in some cases “actively hostile” as Brown (1997, p.274) puts it to the issues surrounding development. The ES is markedly different in this respect. The members of the ES considered these issues persistently. *The Nature and Problems of the Third World* (Watson 1968) for instance is a full inquiry into the needs and aspirations of developing nations and the question of what can be done to achieve them. Similar questions can be found across the ES literature. From the interesting insights of this particular piece to the more recent works, the members of the ES did deal with questions overlooked by many of the other theorists in the field.

A common concern with the predicament of the developing world constitutes an immediate point of intersection between the ES and development theory; and this paper aims at determining what additional points can be established for an ES contribution to development literature. The first section of the paper offers a review of the literature on development theory starting with the earliest approaches to the latest ones that challenge them. The second section of the paper turns to the ES and presents what its members had to say on issues pertaining to international development. The third and final section assesses if the ES can benefit development theory.

Development Theory: A Review of the Literature

Perhaps this section should start with the question of what “development” means and what development theory studies after all. The concept of development is not easy to define. One’s definition of it can quite easily be challenged by others. Indeed, because development eludes easy definition, different theories of development generate controversy. At least we can settle on a definition of what development theory studies. Development theory poses normative questions about a “good and decent life” (Schuurman 2009, p.831). Some trace the origin of this quest for a “good and decent life” to European Enlightenment and the idea of progress that flourished at the time. In the 19th century, those outside the enlightened Europe came to be referred to as uncivilized, hence becoming the ultimate subjects of development (Herath 2009, pp.1449-50). Six defines development as a “distinct product of global history understood as a relationship mainly between two poles: European societies and economies on the one side and non - Western counterparts on the other (2009, p.1103). Initially, the “civilized vs. uncivilized” dichotomy set the terms of development theory. Following decolonization, this dichotomy gave way to a new one, “developed vs. underdeveloped”, that still prevails in our theorizing of development (Six 2009, 1103-5). New terms may of course appear in the future – the point here is that development from this point of view is a process that has its origins in colonial relations and one that has been taking place for centuries now (Six 2009). This is a view that defines development in broad historical terms and there will be more on this below.

Others date the origin of development studies back to a more recent time, namely, to 1949 when Harry Truman offered his inaugural speech as United States president in which he suggested that:

For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people [in the developing world] ... I believe that we should make available to peace loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life...(quoted in Escobar 1995, p.3).

This particular speech by Truman inspired what is widely referred to as the “post-World War II development paradigm” dominated by modernization theory (Escobar 1995). This school of thought places the experience of Europe following the Industrial Revolution at the center. Modernization theory holds that the European path to development can be emulated across the world. Through economic growth and industrialization, others can seek to achieve a level of development similar to that of Europe (Mitsuo 1982). Of course in this line of thinking refers to a particular type of development - a capitalist / industrial society is the standard here. According to this standard, “some areas of the world are 'developed', and others not, and that those which are not can and should set about achieving the 'development' which has thus far eluded them (Matthews 2004, p.375). This relies on the principles of nineteenth century liberal

philosophy which treats the individual nation state in the Third World as the sovereign subject of development; and which accepts the Western model of national autonomy with growth as the appropriate one to emulate” (Manzo 1991, p.6).

Modernization theory has many critiques today. Most critical development theorists completely reject it. Before turning to their criticisms and the alternatives they offer, however, we need to deal with other theories of development in our review of the literature. Perhaps as influential as modernization theory has been the dependency approach. Dependency theorists explain development through core and periphery relations in the world, treat development and underdevelopment as two sides of the same coin. Whereas modernization theory considers that the reasons for underdevelopment lie inside particular countries, dependency theory directly challenges this and looks at the international system (Mitsuo 1982). According to dependency theorists, modernization theory was wrong because it was “blaming the victim” (Manzo 1991, p.10). Dependency theory is the output of a combination of Marxist thinking and nationalism in the South. It argues that countries in the periphery are dependent on the core for things like advanced technological or industrial products. They cannot escape this situation of dependency since the system ensures that they remain as the producers of agricultural products. This entire state of affairs is a neocolonial process in their view (Smith 1979, p.254).

Just like modernization theory, dependency has its critiques as well. Putting too much emphasis on the international system is one of the main criticisms dependency theory receives. This not only undermines the capabilities of the individual states within the developing world but also fails to explain how certain countries have been able to develop amid a neocolonial process hindering that prospect. Not all can be blamed on the system therefore (Smith 1979, p.277). Nonetheless, despite this and similar criticisms, dependency theory was able to challenge modernization theory and offer an alternative way of thinking about development.

If dependency theory is a challenge to modernization, then critical development theory is a complete rejection of it. Post-development or critical development theory is inspired mainly by the works of Foucault and Derrida, alongside Said, and starts by disputing the meaning of “development” and many of the other terms that come under it. Take poverty. A small, self-sustaining village with no industrial activity would be considered “poor” within the modernization framework. Yet this need not be the case. “Poverty is in the eye of the beholder” as Nederveen (2000, p.177) suggests, and even our definitions of poverty may clash. In fact, there now exists a Gandhist school of development which rejects both capitalism and socialism, and calls for the creation of self-sustaining villages across the world with no industrialization (Herath, 2009, p.1455).

Gandism and similar alternatives to development come against the background of a resentment with modernization theory which promotes a particular type of development only – Westernization. It assumes that Western values are universal and represents those who cannot adopt them as a failure. From a critical development theory perspective they are not necessarily so. It is just that they are different (Matthews 2004). Often times it is Africa that is spoken of as a failure. This line of thinking “reduces the diversity of African historical experiences and trajectories, sociocultural contexts and political situations into a set of core deficiencies for which externally generated 'solutions' must be devised” (Andreasson 2005, p. 971). Modernization as Manzo (1991, p.27) puts it “jeopardize[s] the right of Third World peoples to be different” such as those in Africa. Even though the racist discourse toward Africa has disappeared today, there is still one that holds Africa as an inferior place (Andreasson 2005).

Six labels this as “Africanism” in classical approaches to development which is no different than Edward Said’s “Orient” (1978). “Africanism” is essentially a tool for legitimizing intervention in Africa in the name of developing it (Six 2009, p.1107). Critical development theory draws on the works of Foucault and Derrida to demonstrate how “the “Third World” has been produced by the discourses and practices of development” (Escobar 1995, p.4). In the aftermath of the Second World War, some have started seeing themselves as underdeveloped as part of a discursive regime that represented them as such (Escobar 1995, pp.6-7). From then onwards, we could only think of the world within the terms of the “developed vs.underdeveloped” dichotomy. Manzo (1991) treats this “developed vs.underdeveloped” dichotomy as a form of binary opposition as proposed by Derrida. Binary oppositions set two terms against one another whereby the first term is what you want to be and the second term as inferior to it. The latter term is expected to be like the former. Within the terms of this binary opposition, the “underdeveloped” are expected to become like the “developed” or else they are lacking in something (Manzo 1991, pp.8-10).

Critical development theorists argue that this “developed vs. underdeveloped” dichotomy has been so powerful that we now cannot think about the developing world in terms other than this hegemonic discourse allows. Escobar puts it this way:

What you have within this discursive regime is part of the world characterized by “powerlessness; passivity; poverty; ignorance; usually dark and lacking in historical agency; as if waiting for the (white) Western hand to help subjects along and not infrequently hungry; illiterate; needy and oppressed by its own stubbornness; lack of initiative and traditions (Escobar 1995, p.8).

Whereas this is only so if you look at the developing world within the confines of the Western representation of it (Escobar 1995, pp.8-9).

Having rejected the modernization approach, what do critical development theorists think the way forward with international development is then? First and foremost, they argue, we need to start thinking and talking about development in terms other than those allowed by the modernist discourse. Modernization's proposed way of tackling underdevelopment has been through empiricism and project work based on quantitative research (Schuurman 2009). A number of alternatives have been proposed by critical development theorists. Participatory Action Research is one such alternative. This is a bottom-up approach to research in which people define what development means to them in their very own context and identify the means through which they can achieve this (Manzo 1991, p.28). Participatory research has so far been hindered by the empiricist tradition. According to critical development theorist, it is one of the ways forward with development when the results from participatory research are incorporated into a broad strategy of development (Edwards 1989, p.134).

A second alternative to the prescriptions of modernization theory offered by critical development theorists is to rely on local knowledge in the pursuit of development (Sylvester 1999). Local knowledge is important as it is based on direct experience. It is also important because knowledge generated in the developed part of the world is often times of little use in the developing world for a variety of reasons. One is that many cannot access it. Libraries in developing nations for example cannot afford to procure many of the publications in development studies. Even those that can be procured may not be of use due to language barriers. Furthermore, knowledge generated in the developed part of the world for consumption in the developing world risks being irrelevant as the people that produce it have little idea as to what is actually happening on the ground in a developing nation. As Edwards puts it, development "has become a spectator sport, with a vast array of experts and others looking into the fishbowl of the Third World from the safety and comfort of their armchairs", often issuing irrelevant pieces of advice which cannot be implemented in practice (Edwards 1989, p. 124). Thus, we need to alter our way of producing development knowledge through "the participation of poor people in constructing our understanding of the way in which their world operates" (Edwards 1989, p.126).

This completes our review of the development theory literature which was of course not an exhaustive review. There are a number of other approaches in development theory yet it suffices to deal with the main ones only within the aims and scope of this paper. The idea of development has its origins in the European Enlightenment and the idea of "progress" that prevailed at the time. In the aftermath of the World War II, development has come to mean "Westernization" and the theory of

modernization espoused that others seeking development needed to emulate the Western experience. According to the modernization approach, those who failed to achieve a similar level of development needed to look inside their borders for the reasons thereto. Modernization was first challenged by the dependency school which claimed that the reasons for underdevelopment could only be explained through the international system which was so structured as to make sure that the underdeveloped remained so. Post-development or critical development theorists have not only challenged but also completely rejected the theory of modernization. For them, modernization was a way of imposing Western values all over the world – those who cannot were to be represented as a failure. Moreover, this representation legitimized Western interference in the affairs of the developing nations. The way forward with development from this perspective is to rely on local knowledge, and allow people to define what development is to them rather than insist on the Western way of doing things. Following this brief overview of the development literature, we can now proceed to the English School to see how its work compares to the sketch of theories presented above.

The English School and the Developing World

It should be stated at the outset that the ES deserves attention from among theories of International Relations when discussing the developing world if only in the simple sense that it took issue with the predicament of it. This is not a trivial point. As Brown reminds, most theories in the field have been either indifferent or even hostile to this topic (Brown 1997). Ultimately, international development revolves around the question of justice in our world and justice is a legitimate subject matter for the International Relations scholar in the ES theory unlike in some dominant approaches like as Realism. As those familiar with the ES literature would agree, there is a deeply normative aspect to the work of the School and the question of justice occupies an important place for its members. In the School's tripartite scheme of international system, international society and world society; the notion of justice appears in two senses: justice in international society and justice toward world society.

International society in simple terms refers to the common rules and institutions that states have agreed among themselves (Bull 1995). When we speak international development, we speak of a particular type of justice, namely distributive justice. According to Brown, scholars such as Stanley Hoffman, Terry Nardin and Hedley Bull take inter-state relations as their primary subject of concern but “couple this with a concern that inter-state relations be understood as potentially governed by relations of justice” even if the kind of justice they are talking about is procedural rather than distributive (Brown 1997, p.280). This maybe because “[d]istributive justice requires a distributor” as Watson (2007b, p.39) suggested. In the absence of such a distributor, it is difficult to entertain notions of distributive justice in

international society and the members of the ES were aware of this. Distribution creates winners but at the same time leaves some worse-off. It is thus unreasonable to expect the institution of a system of distributive justice within the current functioning of international society (Watson 2007b, pp.42-3).

Still, there was an awareness in the ES that the growing gap between the rich and the poor of the world was a cause for concern that needed to be addressed. In *The Revolt Against the West*, Bull (1984b) recognized economic injustice as one of the main sources of a growing discontentment with the way our world operates. And this growing inequality did indeed bother the members of the ES when considered with respect to the world society category in their tripartite scheme. In simple terms, world society refers to our common humanity - that which unites us all beyond any political arrangement of the world. All individuals are a member of world society and this is an emotionally loaded category for the ES. For the most part, the ES studied inter-state relations but with an underlying recognition that the chief unit of moral obligation was the individual human being (Watson 2007a, p.2). Individuals were part of a "world order" which was "morally prior" to other forms of political orders (Bull 1995, p.21). It is especially through the world society category that the ES demonstrates an interest in the subject of international development. Indeed, the work of the ES is marked by a great degree of concern for the plight of individuals in the developing world. This becomes more pronounced in the later works of Vincent and Bull. Vincent (1993) for instance was attracted to the Shue's "basic rights approach" which called for all individuals' most fundamental needs such as food and nutrition be met properly. For his part, Bull (2000 [1984],p.222) insisted on the idea of a "world common good" and demanded that all states work toward ensuring the rights and benefits of individuals all over the world. Perhaps emanating from his years of direct experience as a member of the British diplomatic service in many of the underdeveloped parts of the world, Watson's work is characterized by a lot of sympathy and even compassion for the developing world. Leaving sympathy aside; the developing world received systematic academic attention from the ES. A prime example in this respect is *The Expansion of International Society* (Bul and Watson 1984) which inquires into the implications of the emergence of new and post-colonial states on international society from a broad historical perspective. It examines questions such as the status of newly independent states, racial equality and multiculturalism in a once Europe-dominated world and studies the impact of all these on international society.

We have now noted that members of the ES were certainly interested in the developing world - but how does their work compare to the theories of development reviewed above or does it at all in the first place? Let us start the comparison between modernization theory and the ES. It is possible to observe an immediate resemblance between the Eurocentricism of modernization theory and that of the ES. Indeed, Eurocentricism has been a frequent criticism directed toward the ES. There are parallels between modernization theory's promotion of Western standards of development and the ES' understanding of how a universal international society came about. In the ES account, a universal international society emerged with the expansion of the European one on a global scale. During this process, non-Europeans tried to adjust to the "standards of civilization" set by the Europeans (Bull and Watson 1984). The concept of "standards of civilization" is a common theme across the two literatures. While the ES traces the concept across history, modernization theory seeks to establish a certain set of standards across the world in contemporary times. The latter has been criticized for being "self-congratulatory" toward the Western civilization (Manzo 1991, p.9). Elements of such self-congratulatory thinking can be found within the ES as well.

Nonetheless, the ES does not entirely revolve around Europe or the broader Western civilization. There is recognition that other civilizations contributed to the emergence of the Western civilization, and Bull regards the setting up of civilizational standards by the Europeans as arrogance and claims that the Western civilization is superior to others as "unfounded" (Bull 1984a, p.125). While acknowledging that our current global international society has been formed by the Europeans, he suggests that there is

"an element of absurdity in the claim that such as China, Egypt or Persia, which existed thousands of years before states came into being in Europe, achieved rights to full independence only when they came to pass a test devised by nineteenth-century Europeans" (Bull 1984a, p.123).

It is from Bull's skeptical remarks onward that I would like to start exploring the points of convergence between the ES and critical development theory. As noted above, critical development theory strongly reacted against modernization theory's attempt to promote Western standards of development all over the world; and called for a new development paradigm in which communities were allowed to define what development means to them. Essentially, this is a familiar debate, that of how to reconcile universal and particular values. This has been a recurrent topic within the ES as well. And I would like to suggest that Bull would agree a lot with critical development theorists if he were reading their works. From his perspective, the assumption that Western values were admired all over the

world was not true. Many across the globe did not necessarily embrace them (Bull 1979a, pp.154-5). In some cases, Western standards were simply irrelevant in other parts of the world. In connection with this point, he asked

do we believe that the rights we claim for ourselves in the West are universally valid? Does an Amazonian tribesman have (as Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says he has) a right to “reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay”? (Bull 1979b, p.155)

Taking such differences in lifestyles into account, what needed to be done in Bull’s view was to find a way for Western and non-Western system to co-exist in the world (Bull 1979a, pp.154-5). Likewise, Vincent (1986, 1992) studied non-Western civilizations and their particular values in the field of human rights, and advised caution against attempts to force Western values or standards onto others.

What we have common here between the ES and critical development theorists is a sensitivity toward local values and traditions, and a reluctance to destroy them by imposing Western ones. In *The Revolt Against the West*, Bull (1984b) labeled “cultural liberation” as one of the aims of the developing world alongside economic and political independence from the developed world. Thomas (2000) suggests that this observation by Bull has become increasingly more pertinent in our day at a time when religion and local cultural values are on the rise; and urges students of international development to take the ES seriously. This is because the ES has always “brought into the fore the question of the other – those communities, states, or peoples outside a given historical international society” and posed questions about what could be done about them. Thomas further suggests that there is an “inherent preference for dissent” in the ES (Thomas 2000, p.825) and that is also why it needs to be included in the current debate between modernization theory and critical development theory which is of course centered around dissenting views in development. Thomas’ claim that there is an inherent preference for dissent within the ES is not entirely clear to me, however, most of his other claims do indeed hold and there we can see the affinities with the arguments of critical development theorists. True that the ES has always displayed a concern with the “other”, their culture, values and traditions and considered how we could coexist amid such diversity. This interest with the “other” comes under the School’s concept of world society. And this is the direction the debate in development theory has taken today: the call for recognizing local values by critical development theorists as against the universal prescriptions of modernization theory. For its part, the ES had already studied these questions and its answers are certainly insightful to the debate.

This leaves us with examining the similarities between the ES and dependency theory. If there is a notion of dependency within the ES, then it is primarily advanced by Adam Watson Starting in one of his earliest works, *The Nature and Problems of the Third World* (1968), till his last, *Hegemony and History* (2007); Watson proposes and further develops his own concept of dependency. Upon examining the patterns of economic relations in a number of systems like that between the United States and Caribbean states, he concludes that:

When a number of small and underdeveloped countries depend in this way on a single power, and when their needs and possibilities are also dovetailed to some extent into one another or operated in common, it is convenient to speak of an imperial system (Watson 1968, p.33).

The term “imperial” here makes more sense within the context of the theory of international systems Watson develops later on. In *The Evolution of International Society*, Watson establishes a four-point spectrum of international systems: independence, hegemony, dominion and empire. The degree of independence decreases as one moves away from the independence point to the empire point. In other words, the degree of dependence increases for certain members of the system toward empire. Close to this point, dependent members’ external as well as internal matters are managed heavily by the imperial powers within the system (Watson 1992).

Watson’s (1992) theory of international systems and dependency theory share certain affinities. Both are based on the assumption that states maybe equal entities in theoretical terms but some states are more equal so to speak, and others are dependent on them. If we speak in dependency language, we speak of a dominant core and a dependent periphery. If we speak Watson’s language, we speak of imperial systems. Watson labels our contemporary imperial system as a “post-Westphalian aid-donor order” whereby a United States-led group of Western states manage others through development aid and the strings attached to it (Watson 2007).

Having noted these similarities, we need to also note that there are major differences in the interpretation of dependency between the two approaches. Watson’s views and ideas on dependency stand to his long-held conviction that an independent statehood is not necessarily the best thing. Nor is full and absolute independence a possible thing. Independence is always restricted in international society and it can only be entertained in degrees as denoted on his four-point spectrum of systems. The degree of independence decreases towards the empire point of it. The differences between dependency school and that of the ES’ thinking on this subject

are obvious at the point of departure. For the former, dependency is a problem. Whereas for Watson, this need not be the case as he departs from the conviction that it is wrong to interpret as a positive condition at all times – many states are simply incapable of managing an independent statehood (Watson 1997, p.xii). Rather than taking dependency as a problem, Watson underscores the possible benefits of it to those who would most likely cease to exist without assistance from developing nations.

Of course, Watson is able to approach the question of dependency in this way due to the underlying assumptions he holds about power. Watson associates power with moral responsibility and leadership on moral issues. He even makes mention of a “hierarchy of responsibility” in which “the larger powers may be considered to have the greatest moral obligation, just as they have the greatest prudential one” (Watson 1982, p.208). In his formulation, a system of pure power politics has never existed. Indeed, he regards such a system as a hypothetical one that cannot exist in practice (Watson 2007c, p.85). What is always present alongside power is morality. The closer toward the empire point of the spectrum a system is, the more loaded it will be with moral concerns according to Watson (1992). Today’s post-Westphalian aid-donor order too is a system that incorporates moral concerns. Throughout history, the notion that the powerful were responsible for the security of the weak existed in international society. At the moment, a new dimension has been added to this: the economic. The more powerful states feel responsible for the *economic* security of the weak as well in our days. It represents an extension toward the economic of the principles of prudence and moral obligation, and without it, the developing nations could be even worse-off (Watson 1998).

In the next section of the paper, I will try to demonstrate how these differences in the interpretation of dependency between the dependency approach and Watson’s own approach can contribute to the debate in development theory. This section scanned the points of convergence as well as major differences between the ES and development theory. It suggested that the ES and modernization theory shared a common notion of “standards of civilization” and that the ES could be considered Eurocentric in its account of international affairs just like modernization theory is. It further argued that members of the ES and critical development theorists could agree on some fundamental issues such as the unwillingness toward the imposition of Western values across the world and a concern with the preservation of local cultures and values. Finally, it presented the similarities, as well as differences, between the dependency approach and that of Watson’s (1992) theory of international systems. Drawing upon this section, the next and final section of the paper discusses how the ES theory can add to current debates in development theory.

Conclusion: How can the English School Contribute to Development Theory

When we discuss international development, we are usually accustomed to discussing it in international political economy terms. This is not how the ES can contribute to development theory. As Buzan (2005) notes, the ES for the most part ignored this subject. Still we need not limit our discussion to international political economy, to figures, statistics or to quantitative data. In other words, the study of development does not have to be economic. Development studies is, as I stated in the beginning of the paper, a normative field of study that poses questions about a “good and decent life” (Schuurman 2009, p.831). The question of justice in the world lies at the heart of it. And this is where I introduced the ES into the debate. Indeed, Brown identifies the ES as “a major source of international political theory” (Brown 1997, p.281) which put forward a notion of international justice and tried to advance in the course of the discussion. Combined with a strong concern with the plight of developing nations, I suggested, the ES was worth looking into in the study of international development.

I will try to elaborate the possible contribution of the ES approach to development theory in more precise terms now starting with that to modernization theory. The parallels between modernization theory and the ES were demonstrated above – both assume for the most part a similar process whereby the rest of the world adjusts to European / Western values. In the modernization approach, this adjustment is expected to occur through project-based development work and advice from development experts. In the ES approach, this is construed in terms of a broader, historical process in which European “standards of civilization” expand throughout the world. For Watson (1998), the development business of today is a continuation of the establishment of “standards of civilization” across the globe. Hence there exists a coincidence between how the two approach the basic dynamics of the process. Yet the ES I would argue seeks to put a “human face” on this pervasive transformation the developing world has to undergo. As Thomas (2000) maintains, a concern with the predicament of the “Other”, their culture, values, and traditions has always existed within the ES. Because the ES studies international society “through the prism of historical sociology, [it] is better equipped to deal with religion, culture, and civilization” than accounts “which reify assumptions of Western modernity” (Thomas 2000, p.816). Thomas’ remarks are especially true in the case of Bull who repeatedly questioned the applicability of Western values in the non-Western world. In this respect, the ES can impart in modernization theory a sense of history and attentiveness toward the sociocultural aspects of international

development. Or let us briefly say the ES can “humanize” modernization theory. This is indeed no small contribution to a theory that economizes the question of development.

The work of Watson rather than Bull acquires more significance when we consider the possible contribution of the ES to one of the other main theories of development – the dependency approach. Above, I presented how Watson and the dependency theorists shared a similar understanding of the dynamics of dependency between a developed core and a developing periphery. However, their interpretation of a similar pattern of dependency differed. The dependency approach originates in Marxist thinking, and looks at the phenomenon of dependency as something to resent. Watson comes from a non-Marxist position and inquires into the moral dimensions of dependency. That dependency persists also demonstrates how the more powerful in international society continue to observe their moral obligations toward the weak. Watson’s (1992, 1997) background assumption to all of this is that independent statehood is not necessarily something that all can manage. Dependency may of course not be a desirable status yet the alternative could be a complete breakdown of all state structures.

Watson is a dissident voice in International Relations theory when it comes to the subject of independence. In a field that places an “obsessive emphasis on the independence of states” (Buzan 1992, p.708), Watson’s insistent questioning of the attainability and desirability in some cases of independence did not have that much of a purchase. Still his arguments should force us all, including dependency theorists, to consider independence in more critical terms. Dependency theorists seek a way out of dependency yet what may follow is not too clear. Watson (1997) argues that most newly independent states fell back into a dependent status shortly afterwards as managing an independent statehood might be quite a difficult task. So the question comes – what happens after dependency? Taking a Watsonian perspective, we could argue that given most states will remain perpetually dependent one way or the other, it is best perhaps to institutionalize dependency in international society. The sheer suggestion that dependency be institutionalized is likely to raise a mountain of opposition from dependency theorists as well as from others. This is where the value of Watson’s work becomes apparent. His approach forces us to grapple with unpleasant suggestions and dependency theorists may well look into his work for a fundamentally alternative approach to the phenomenon of dependency.

We can finally start considering how the ES can contribute to post-development or critical development theory which is mainly inspired by post-structuralism. Perhaps we can open this discussion with an interesting note and point to a general sympathy toward the ES among post-structuralists. This is due to “its textual orientation, with much energy put into constant rereading and reinterpretation of classics, the nature of Wight’s triologue as an ongoing undecidable debate” alongside “a like-minded skepticism toward safe and final answers” (Wæver 1998, p.98). And as I stated above, Bull in particular would agree with a good deal of the arguments put forward by critical development theorists. Having noted this mutually sympathetic attitudes, let us now start considering how the ES can contribute, if at all, to critical development theory. As we already know, critical development theorists reject all the prescriptions of modernization theory in the field of development and call for a new approach to development in which individuals or communities are allowed to define what development is to them. This may all sound very well in theory, however, there are difficulties when one tries to implement the critical view in practice. How are we to ask everyone what development is to them and work on this under an overall development effort? Taken too far, the critical development project may well lead to a “mission impossible” as Schuurman (2009, p.841) suggests.

A more manageable approach is thus in order – an approach that respects particular understandings while maintaining a certain sense of universalism at the same time. Here, the ES theory is useful as

the tradition of international society speaks to the fundamental moral dilemma of reconciling the universal with the particular and of resolving the tension between the pluralism and diversity that is such a fundamental characteristic of human life and the moral need to forge an overlapping consensus around which both the rights of individual human beings can be protected and the interests humankind as a whole can be safeguarded (Hurrell 1998, p.36).

Ultimately, critical development theory and post-structuralism that it is based on are more radical than the ES approach. In the end, the post-structural approach may lead to “unacceptable moral relativism” (Hurrell 1998, p.38). However, as Bull argues, there exists a “corpus of moral truth that is beyond dispute” (Bull 2000 [1979], p.159). This corpus of truth could set the departure point for a dialogue between Western and non-Western societies on some fundamental issues involved in development, a dialogue which Vincent (1992) holds to be useful. The idea of a dialogue would not be favored by critical development theorists who instead propose “local resistance” against Western ideas about development (Sylvester 1999). Yet dialogue is a more favorable way to proceed. Because it accords the developing nations a

voice in the process. In the writings of critical development theorists such as Escobar, “we find Third World countries reduced to helpless victim status by an unstoppable development discourse” (Graaff 2006, p.1394) who can only resist the West if they can. Proposing a dialogue is an implicit recognition of a more equal status. The overall point here is that the ES can contribute to taming the most radical aspects of critical development theory toward the achievement of a “mission possible”.

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