When the application of development programs goes awry, actors within the international development regime—NGOs, state-aid agencies, policy-makers—ask questions about the dysfunctions of their models, or the shortcomings of their population target. Massive industrialization, trade liberalization, export-oriented growth, democratization, gender inclusion, human rights—these are all goals couched within the spectrum of development discourse, conjured across geopolitical spaces to remedy dysfunctional states. For agents of development, the overriding mission is uniform and clear, namely, to carry out the transformation of nations into liberal capitalist democracies, the apex of developed society. While the institutions that practice and teach development theory have shifted their discursive orientation from dogmatic modernization models towards a more culturally sensitive, inclusive set of practices, liberal institutionalism continues to function as the consistent framework for development activities. This restructuring of economic policy and governance toward capitalism and democracy carries the normative assumption that these particular forms of social organization are the highest level of human development. (Fukuyama, 1998).
In spreading the transformative mission of the Western development forces, development practices quell contesting voices that might challenge the definition of progress and “development” offered by the developer. This paper argues that development practices carry out a process of depoliticization through the attempt to reconstitute liberal institutionalism’s tenets of capitalism and democracy. Depoliticization or “anti-politics” is intended to stabilize and institutionalize power relations so that challenges to distribution are contained and constrained by the specific processes and practices of development.

The depoliticization that I argue characterizes development has three angles. As I discuss first, development, as the praxis of liberal institutionalism, precludes the political moment in which societies experience the struggle over how to define their goals and the ways to organize to reach them, and hence it is depoliticizing. The very notion of existence outside of the liberal paradigm can only arouse connotations of the pre-modern, uncivilized society, the failed or rogue state. Such conceptions continue the violence enacted upon colonial subjects, where the intrusion of the colonial powers has manifested in “the domination of physical space, the formation of natives’ minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective.” Regeneration of the undeveloped enacts an epistemological violence through the homogenizing project of development and its depoliticizing repercussions.

Regarding the second facet of depoliticization, I argue, in the vein of James Ferguson’s Antipolitics Machine, that development institutions such as USAID treat the problems facing postcolonial states, such as poverty, violence, and lack of legible social and physical infrastructure, as technical problems with solutions that can be engineered.
By framing problems as repairable by technocrats, development projects are formulated as a-political and a-historical efforts. In this sense, development projects carry forth Marx’s notion of depoliticization, where issues are removed from the public sphere and nominated as non-political, thereby removing the potential for meaningful debate and struggle within society. Ferguson argues that notions of liberal institutionalism have been instilled mechanistically as obvious ingredients in the production of a developed state, and politicizing this production runs against the grain of the project of development and those who stand to benefit from it. Development carries out accumulation for those who set up the institutions that are recognized as critical for “right development.”

The third facet of depoliticization is evident in the institutional aspect of development. The creation of institutions can be depoliticizing in two ways. First, institutions formulate problems of development as those which can be remedied through behavioralist, bureaucratized systems, depoliticizing the conditions which may have created and maintain the levels of underdevelopment in a particular state. Second, the manner in which institutions incorporate and purport to manage problems precludes struggle at both material and ontological levels. As I explain in this part of the paper, across its population targets, development efforts engage with the social, political and economic life of their objects through the creation of institutions. New institutionalist theory argues that institutions have the power to inculcate beliefs and practices in a manner that is outside of the public realm of debate. Conceptions that development spreads regarding correct societal growth and organization are formed and indoctrinated as a result of the practices of development institutions. Institutions of democracy and capitalistic exchange are considered a sine qua non to substantial recognition as a
developed state. However, institutions of development are arguably mechanisms of power that entrench those who stand to benefit from drawing former colonial states into the global economy, with all of its rules and procedures. I assert that in addition to performing organizational, routinizing functions for the translation of ideas into practices, development institutions can be unique instruments in the mechanization of power and authority.

In the fourth part of the paper, I argue that development theory, as it emerged during the Cold War, was formulated as a deterministic model of belief and practice, tied to a system of managed democracy, or polyarchy. This can be seen in Rostow and other theorists, and in the mission statements of development institutions, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID, while only one example of a development institution, exemplifies an historical application of development that applies pressure on postcolonial states to transform themselves according to the liberal ideology of free markets and democracy.

The last part of the paper will examine the recent trends in development theory, including the linkage between globalization and development and the critiques offered within the post-development school. Looking beyond these trends, the paper questions what it might mean to repoliticize development when theories of power, language and discourse are applied to an analysis of the process of development as the praxis of liberal institutionalism.
Development Theory as Praxis of Liberal Institutionalism

The practice of development involves external application of resources and conceptions of social organization, both of which originate in the West. Though the practices of international development address a multitude of issues at both micro and macro levels, and while the methods used to bring about change may be contested, the underlying assumptions within the development regime are consistent. These assumptions are based on the notion that change can be inculcated in state and cultural practices in a manner that will result in improvement of the status quo for those who are the objects of development. Gilbert Rist provides historical citation of the notion of development, writing of a few of the different uses of ‘development’ and ‘underdevelopment’ that have appeared in modern political discourse.

“…The use of the word ‘development’ in a socioeconomic context [is] not new. Both Marx and Leroy-Beaulieu employed it, and as we have seen, it figured – together with ‘stages of development’ – in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Lenin wrote a work called ‘The Development of Capitalism in Russia’ in 1899; Schumpeter composed his ‘Theory of Economic Development’ in 1911; and Rosenstien and Rodan submitted ‘The International Development of Economically Backward Areas’ in 1944. And most recently, in December 1948, the UN General Assembly had adopted a pair of resolutions: ‘Economic Development of Underdeveloped Countries’ and ‘Technical Assistance for Economic Development’ (200-III). What all these examples have in common is that, in keeping with Western tradition, they present ‘development’ as an intransitive phenomenon which simply ‘happens’; nothing can be done to change things. The appearance of the term ‘underdevelopment’ evoked not only the idea of change in direction of a final state, but above all, the possibility of bringing about such change. No longer was it just a question of things ‘developing’; now it was possible to ‘develop’ a region. Thus, ‘development’ took on a transitive meaning (an action performed by one agent upon another), which corresponded to a principle of social organization, while ‘underdevelopment’ became a ‘naturally’ occurring (that is, seemingly causeless) state of things.”

2
In addition to the presumption that development can be performed on another, the tenets of liberal institutionalism commonly run through the discourse of the major development institutions at the national and international levels. International development is both an ideology and a practice that carries out the mission of instilling and enforcing peace by building interdependent transnational institutions. These institutions demand an inculcation of governmental and economic practices that will encourage the rationalization of peace efforts in order to bring about the highest levels of prosperity to respective nation-states through economic and diplomatic cooperation. However, the attempts by international institutions to create liberal institutionalist, post-colonial states through development has resulted in a violent homogenization of social organization in the name of international peacekeeping.

Liberal institutionalism, described by Kant in *Perpetual Peace*, establishes the doctrine of liberal discourse. Bruce Russett and John Oneal in their article, “Triangulating Peace”, describe three tenets of Kant’s theory of peace, including representative democracy, commerce and free trade, and international law and organization. These three elements reinforce one another, and result in an institutionalized international peace, unparalleled by other systems of security, such as balance of power systems. This triangle is based upon the supposition that, for substantive and structural reasons, democracies will not fight one another, and that economic interdependence and embeddedness within international organizations will slow any tendencies towards war. Participation in organizations promoting free trade and the principles of democracy further encourage and protect the cooperation of states, and discourage conflict. Russett and Oneal summarize, “If they were dependent on other
countries for markets, for vital raw materials and other supplies, they would resist any policy of movement that threatened to break those economic ties… War would be economically irrational: those with important economic interests would suffer from war, and so they would use their political power to oppose policies that might lead to it.”

While an end to violent conflict between states seems an uncontestable goal, the perpetual peace theory set forth during the Enlightenment is problematic in its erasure of cultural, political and social difference in the name of creating a sense of consistency amongst global actors and their intentions. Development endeavors are based upon positivist understandings of rational actors who, given the right tools and resources from the West, will transform their political, social and economic organization according to the tenets of liberal institutionalism. As the West holds both a position of hegemonic power and is characterized by capitalism and democracy, these elements of liberal institutionalism are assumed as the superior forms around which underdeveloped societies must be reorganized. However, Rist argues that

In every society, of course, people try to improve their conditions of existence, and it is not for anyone to question the legitimacy of their strivings. There is nothing to indicate, however, that ‘development’ is the only way of achieving them, or that every society wished to have the same thing. The misunderstanding would not be so troublesome if ‘development’ discourse was not built into relationships of power. For when the pretense is made that everyone now believes in that discourse, the reason is doubtless that no one has the choice of doing otherwise and distancing themselves from the shared belief.

Under this project of creating universal agreement regarding the manner in which the organization of social life ought to occur is the removal of political struggle.
Depoliticization I.: Schmitt’s Conception of Politics as Struggle

The study of politics is the analysis of the various forms of power that humans employ to manipulate their social and physical environment according to cultural definitions of how social life should be organized and conducted. The attempt by an individual or a group to influence the set of choices available to both himself and others around him characterizes the general means by which politics are enacted. Political struggles are about fostering participation and contestation around defining the good life—what a society wants and how it should organize to get there. In the political space, there is struggle over the meaning and organization of life. Schmitt claims, “The phenomenon of the political can be understood only in the context of the ever present possibility of the friend-and-enemy grouping, regardless of the aspects which this possibility implies for morality, aesthetics, and economics.” Homogenizing social life, according to this definition, obstructs politics.

Schmitt argues that what begins as a political moment, evident in struggle, ends with assimilation of both into the hegemonic neutrality of liberalism. Politics is sublimated and displaced, and what is ultimately pursued is the suppression of struggle. There is no Arendtian public space where contestation over the common good can occur; instead, Schmitt contends that liberalism transforms plurality into polarity. Schmitt wants the political moment to be about enmity and to make us willing to fight to the death, but because of this awareness of what we fight against, we become aware of our friends. Liberal institutionalism spreads a Hellenic version of peace that has shaped Western policing systems and Western development missions that attempt to bring both quietude and homogenization. “Peace on the basis of Truth—on the basis of the truth of
a knowledge where, instead of opposing itself, the diverse agrees with itself and unites; where the stranger is assimilated; where the other is reconciled with the identity of the identical in everyone.”

The notion of development has become coterminous with ideas of spreading peace and prosperity, to the point where struggle over defining how a “right society” should be organized has fallen to the wayside, demonized as radical and dangerous because elements of alternative perspectives may not fall into the liberal institutionalist episteme. As Carl Schmitt wrote, “The adversary is thus no longer called an enemy but a disturber of peace and is thereby designated to be an outlaw of humanity.” The compelling element of Schmitt’s definition of the political is not in its implications of violence, but in its recognition that the variety of independent life realities is a virtue, and that there will always be struggle involved when this variety exists.

Depoliticization II: Marx’s Notion of Inhibiting Public Discourse

Marx offers an angle of depoliticization that buttresses the Schmittian notion of depoliticization as pre-emption of struggle. According to Marx, depoliticization occurs when an issue of social concern is removed from the realm of public debate through claims that the issue has dissolved or is not the responsibility of the state, naturalizing the absence of legitimate contention. Karl Marx describes the depoliticization phenomenon in “The Jewish Question”. While specifically addressing the question of the Jews’ status as citizens deserving political rights equal to those of their secularized counterparts, Marx describes the manner in which religion has become naturalized as a result of the state having removed religion as a constitutive characteristic. The power of Christianity as a framing device for the organization of society grows exponentially when the state claims
its emancipation from religion. Religion does not disappear, but is now made visible in a recursive rather than explicit manner. Marx writes,

> Man emancipates himself politically from religion by expelling it from the sphere of public law to that of private law...It has been relegated among the numerous private interests and exiled from the life to the community as such. But one should have no illusions about the scope of political emancipation. The division of man into the public person and the private person, the displacement of religion from the state to civil society—all this is not a stage in political emancipation but its consummation. Thus political emancipation does not abolish, and not ever strive to abolish, man’s real religiosity.\(^8\)

When the state relegates an element of social, cultural or economic life to the private sphere, it no longer is beholden to any repercussions that element now enacts on the people within the state. Marx uses the example of the abolition of property qualifications for voting rights and the right to hold office in the United States to claim that making an element of social life non-political does not indicate the deactivation of the power that element holds over people, but rather that property now becomes a naturalized element of social life for which the state no longer bears any responsibility. He writes,

> But the political suppression of private property not only does not abolish private property; it actually presupposes its existence. The state abolishes, after its fashion, the distinctions established by birth, social rank, education, occupation, when it decrees that birth, social rank, education, occupation are non-political distinctions; when it proclaims, without regards to these distinctions, that every member of society is an equal partner in popular sovereignty...But the state, none the less, allows private property, education, occupation, to act after their own fashion, namely as private property, education, occupation, and to manifest their particular nature. Far from abolishing these effective differences, it only exists so far as they are presupposed; it is conscious of being a political state and it manifest its universality only in opposition to these elements.\(^9\)
Marx highlights an angle of depoliticization that occurs when an issue that might affect social, cultural or economic life is relegated to the private sphere, releasing the state from addressing any repercussions that issue now enacts on the people within the state.

**Development Institutions: Technocratic Band-Aids versus Structural Accountability**

In both the first and second senses of depoliticization, development institutions can be unique instruments in the mechanization of power and authority. The conditions which may have created and maintain the levels of underdevelopment in a particular state are brushed under the rug, elevating behavioralist, bureaucratized systems for the management of these problems. Moreover, the manner in which institutions act as transmitters of knowledge restricts struggle at both material and ontological levels.

Depoliticization is recognizable in the state’s renunciation of a particular element of social life as part of the public sphere, removing that element from the sphere of contention. Though not specifically abolishing politics from development through a specific policy, the relationship of development to the political state is skewed through the intermediary of development institutions. When the policies of development are assigned to the decision-makers of development institutions, the state is not directly responsible or accountable for the projects and failures of development efforts. In a Schmittian sense, the indicators of development and progress, bounded within liberal institutional conceptions of good society, are determined by the developing force. Development is constructed as a technical problem that can be fixed through the application of Western technology and resources. There is no space for political debate around the basic assumptions embedded in development trajectories, and as such, development depoliticizes society.
There are a variety of indicators used to define the levels that comprise the hierarchy of societal development, most of which describe the ability of humans within a particular state to flourish in ways that have been identified as key to producing developed nations. Development institutions apply a standardized set of indicators which reconstitute and make legible the object of development. While the index to measure development may vary per institution, these indicators allow for comparison across countries, making possible the formulation of programs that address target areas. The World Bank’s *World Development Report* condenses a set of indicators which allow the ranking of countries according to a “Quality of Life” index. The United Nations Development Program’s *Human Development Report* offers the Human Development Index, ranking states according to high, medium and low human development. With this legibility, development practitioners are able to cleanly describe and formulate solutions to the problems of undeveloped states, making reference to structural causes of poverty unnecessary. Ferguson argues, through a kind of conceptual ‘natural selection,’ the theoretical apparatus of ‘development’ thus always tends toward the representation of Lesotho as an entity, the LDC [Least Developed Country], which may be defined as the ideal country that, in order to become prosperous and solve all its problems, requires precisely those things which ‘development’ agencies are set up to provide. The discursive regime of ‘development’ thus inevitably ends up reconstructing Lesotho, sometimes almost unrecognizably, as a generic ‘LDC’ – a country with all the right deficiencies, the sort that ‘development’ institutions can easily and productively latch on to. The homogenizing results of such representations can be almost comical—many reports on Lesotho look as though they would work nearly as well with the word ‘Nepal’ systematically substituted for ‘Lesotho. In addition, development effects depoliticization in the manner described by Marx by displacing development programs from meaningful public engagement. Writing specifically of Lesotho, James Ferguson argues, “The short answer to the question of
what the ‘development’ apparatus in Lesotho does, then, is found in the book’s title: it is an “anti-politics machine,” depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political, operation of expanding state power.”¹³ Ferguson writes, “political and structural causes of poverty in Lesotho are systematically erased and replaced with technical ones, and the ‘modern’, capitalist, industrialized nature of society is systematically understated or concealed.”¹⁴

Development programs are produced and carried out in an ahistorical, technocratic manner, which results in an increase of governmentality and wealth usurpation for those who create the institutions of development. Ferguson writes,

For while we have seen that ‘development’ projects…may end up working to expand the power of the state, and while they claim to address the problems of poverty and deprivation, in neither guise does the ‘development’ industry allow its role to be formulated as a political one. By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of ‘development’ is the principle means through which the problem of poverty is depoliticized in the world today…The instrumental effect, then, is two-fold: alongside the institutional effect of expanding bureaucratic state power is the conceptual or ideological effect of depoliticizing both poverty and the state.¹⁵

With the prevalence of project failure, there is an associated call for increasingly technical solutions. However failure is judged for the particular engineering project to which one is referring--perhaps the voting system needs to be altered or the pipe design for water delivery needs to be rethought--the politics that lie underneath the project failure are increasingly ignored. Ferguson argues for the productive effect of such failures. He cites Foucault who, “speaking of the prison, suggest that dwelling on the ‘failure’ of the prison may be asking the wrong question.” Perhaps, he suggests,
One should reverse the problem and ask oneself what is served by the failure of the prison; what is the use of these different phenomena that are continually being criticized; the maintenance of delinquency, the encouragement of recidivism, the transformation of the occasional offender in a habitual delinquency, the organization of a closed milieu of delinquency. (Foucault 1979: 272).

The implication, Ferguson argues, is that, through failure, the state can justify further intervention in areas that will expanding its scope into the private sphere of people’s lives under the pretense of attempting to fix past mistakes. More studies, more extension agents, more infiltration of the social environment allows, perversely, for more control and manipulation of society. While Marx describes the retreat of the state from development projects so that development become depoliticized, Ferguson call attention to the ways that development can be a tool of the state to insert itself deeper into the surveillance and extraction of capital from society.

While Ferguson writes specifically of the depoliticization of poverty, such depoliticization can be extrapolated as occurring when the failure of other large-scale social engineering projects are explained as a result of a particular missing element in the larger machine of development. Ferguson pushes this notion, bringing to our attention the adverse but powerful affect that failure has on the reduction of such failures to technical problems that can be fixed without attention paid to the underlying political aspects of such failures. He writes,

The state itself, meanwhile, tends to appear as a machine for implementing ‘development’ programs, an apolitical tool for delivering social services and agricultural inputs and engineering economic growth…Issues involving the political character of the state and its class basis, the uses of official position and state power by the bureaucratic elite, the functions of bureaucratic ‘inefficiency’ and corruption—matters which are central to academic understandings of modern African states—are nowhere to be found in the ‘development’ versions of Lesotho.16
There are numerous arguments that blame structural constraints for the failure of development to spur postcolonial states along the path of development, such as parasitic governments at the state level or unequal terms of trade at the global level. However, these arguments do not substantially make their way into the discourse of development agencies, who make the claim that their efforts at improving societies abroad must remain apolitical. The traditional promises of increased material progress and accumulation, and the more recent goals of increased freedom, have not been enjoyed by the majority of those nations on whom development has been practiced. The models that purports to bring these prizes have, according to these two criteria, largely failed. Ferguson argues that development institutions, by framing the problems faced by developing countries in technocratic terms, depoliticize the continued failure of development to meet the goals within the models for growth.

James Scott in Seeing Like a State explains that failure of state-led projects is repeatedly attributable, regardless of their particular goal, to the inability of the planner to regard as both valuable and crucial the voice of civil society. This included, state planning may have a hope of success. Scott analyzes the large-scale attempts of state-engineered social design, seeking to explain the profound failure of these projects to reach their utopian ends. He argues, “The most tragic episodes of state-initiated social engineering originate in a pernicious combination of four elements”. These include: 1.) the administrative ordering of society; 2.) high-modernist ideology, which is “best conceived as a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress; 3.) an “authoritarian state that is willing and able
to use the full weight of its coercive power to bring these high-modernist designs into being; and 4.) “a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans.”

The critical element of failure, Scott emphasizes, is the proclivity of the state to reduce society to a series of standardized indicators, leaving out the enormous complexity, the “living tissue” that holds together and makes functional any kind of social institution. Development projects, as an example of social engineering, fail because they ignore the complexity, the local knowledge, the “metis” of a particular setting. Scott describes the failure of forced villagization projects, the failure of high-modernist agriculture, and the failure of dehumanizing, modern urban planning.

Scott articulates the state’s mapping of social life as a means both for increasing the efficiency of the delivery of social services associated with good, modern governance, and the control, homogenization and violence against social life associated with forced standardization of social life. He writes, “Much of this book can be read as a case against the imperialism of high-modernist, planned social order. I stress the word “imperialism” here because I am emphatically not making a blanket case against either bureaucratic planning or high-modernist ideology. I am, however, making a case against an imperial, hegemonic planning mentality that excludes the necessary role of local knowledge and know-how.”

For Scott, the failure of the state to engineer social development via agriculture or architecture does not necessarily translate into a critique of the state’s general efforts at development. Instead, the critique is aimed at the manner in which the state has gone about its project design and implementation, specifically the acts of violence committed through the oversight of the diversity and site-specificity necessary for successful social
institutional functioning. As he describes, “the failures and vulnerability of monocrop commercial forests and genetically engineered, mechanized mono-cropping mimic the failures of collective farmers and planned cities.”¹⁹ Instead, planning should take place with the input of the local community, allowing for diversity, flexibility and inherent, non-standardized knowledge forms to be expressed in project design, ensuring a cooperative rather than coercive relationship between state and society.

However, we might press our inquiry of the functionality of the spread of state power, and examine another angle which might shed light upon the failure of large-scale social engineering projects. While commodification and homogenization of social life may have had adverse effects upon the eventual success of engineering projects, there is an associated level of utilitarian benevolence with this mapping process. Scott writes, “Where the premodern state was content with a level of intelligence sufficient to allow it to keep order, extract taxes, and raise armies, the modern state increasingly aspired to ‘take charge’ of the physical and human resources of the nation and make them more productive. These more positive ends of statecraft required a much greater knowledge of society.”²⁰

While this increased the functionality of the state to respond to the needs of its citizenry and expanded by association the obligation of the state to its citizenry, the level of intelligence which grew as a result of the mapping process of the populace increased the control and permeability of society by the state. He writes, “state authorities endeavored to map complex, old cities in a way that would facilitate policing and control… When urban revolts occurred, the authorities wanted to be able to move quickly to the precise locations that would enable them to contain or suppress the rebellions
effectively.”

Like Ferguson, Scott recognizes the effects of heightened state control, describing with the example of modern urban planning how the intention to increase efficiency, cleanliness and order in the city-scape resulted in the violent rending of social patterns, an environment of alienation, and depoliticization through the reconstitution of the built environment.

Scott argues that the goal of architects such as Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus school was to increase the Taylorization of social life via a built environment that would produce inhabitants habituated to be rational, efficient citizens. In examining Brasilia, a new city intended to transform the environment into one “minutely tailored to the latest dictates regarding health, efficiency, and rational order”, Scott writes that the actual result was an unplanned Brasilia that responded in a backlash to the engineering of the state. “If we judge [Brasilia] by its capacity to transform the rest of Brazil or to inspire a love of the new way of life, then its success was minimal. The real Brasilia, as opposed to the hypothetical Brasilia in the planning documents, was greatly marked by resistance, subversion, and political calculation.”

Planning, development and attempts at increased social control by the state was in the case of Brasilia an attempt to remove from public debate and to depoliticize the engineering actions of the state. As both Ferguson and Scott have argued, not only does development ignore the structural levels of violence that perpetuate poverty and underdevelopment, its institutions also help to obfuscate the levels of power that are implicated in maintaining the inequality both within and amongst states. In addition, the practices of development agencies refashion the social environment into an increasingly legible, controllable space. This refashioning is undertaken outside of the realm of public debate, framed inside the discourses of progress and improvement.
Depoliticization of development is additionally exacerbated as the actions and funding of development are carried out via non-democratic, external development agencies and donors. The public does not have the ability to voice its opinion or direct political resistance as a result of both the active removal of development agendas from public debate, and through the particular ways that power works inside and through institutions of development.

**Theories of Power and Institutions**

Power operates in distinct ways through institutions, both by constricting or mandating action and by inculcating norms. Institutions of development act as management systems in which there are numerous levels of actors participating in policing the boundaries of knowledge and the creation of liberatory projects. A brief exploration of the theories of power offered by John Gaventa, Foucault, and Bourdieu expands the understanding of how development naturalizes liberal institutionalism. Power can be witnessed in the active employment and in its relative absence, i.e., in its active disempowerment or the powerlessness of another. In John Gaventa's book, *Power and Powerlessness*, he describes the long-standing inequities and patterns of quiescence in the coal-company towns and valleys of Appalachia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Here, in describing the “capital-intensive, resource-extractive [processes] in Yellow Creek and the surrounding valleys”, he notes how the “control of the political apparatus…meant the instillation of an ideology that would more permanently serve to shroud the inequalities and help to ensure non-challenging participation by the non-elite in the new order.”

This ideological apparatus had four aspects, including the notion of common purpose, an ethic of perseverance, the virtues of progress, and a shift in culture according to these
norms. A speech of a local politician, Alexander Arthur, sums up the normativity of industrialization:

Our mines, ovens, furnaces, and the works you have seen: these comprise our plant. We have also the sinews of body and of money, and stand ready, clean-cut and vigorous for a generation of progress and success in manufacture and arts and sciences. Come and join hands with us in the great enterprise worthy of the noblest efforts of us all, native or foreign born though he may be.\(^{24}\)

The manner in which power is deployed in the Appalachian mining town relates to the ways in which liberal institutionalism is naturalized. Gaventa argues that there are several dimensions to the habitudes of power. Whereas the first dimension of power emphasizes the ability of A to get B to do what B might not otherwise have done, evident in both decision-making processes and more direct conflicts, and the second dimension of power emphasizes “not only might A exercise power over B by prevailing in the resolution of key issues or by preventing B from effectively raising those issues,” the third dimension of power is employed through affecting B’s conceptions of the issues altogether.\(^{25}\) Inequality is reinforced through the shaping of B’s conceptions and legitimation of hierarchies of power. This is particularly evident in “the development of domination, or the colonizing process.”\(^{26}\) Gaventa writes,

The establishment of dominance includes the development of an administrative relationship by the dominant society over the dominated, either through the direct control of the representatives of the former, of through the development of collaborators or mediating elites amongst the latter….In short, the development of the colonial situation involves the shaping of wants, values, roles and beliefs of the colonized. It is a third-dimensional power relationship.\(^{27}\)

A relationship of third-dimensional power may be evident in the ways that development institutions systematize and naturalize particular definitions of social, economic and political life. The particular features and modes of institutions are
important to understanding their effect on how practices of ideology are carried forth. Gaventa’s suggestions regarding the third-dimension of power may encourage a finer examination of the role of institutions and use of ideology to construct quiescence.

The legitimation process that occurs when development actors create the object they are studying in a way that privileges certain forms of state construction and civil participation is a principle of institutionalized forms of development. The strength of the normativity and rationality of liberal institutionalism has not grown simply as a result of development agents coercing the objects of their projects into accepting definitions of a “right political organization”. Rather, the rearrangement of societies according to the particular worldview of liberal institutionalism, as Gaventa has postulated, occurs through the ways that power functions through institutions. By undermining the plurality of social and political organization, Gaventa’s argument regarding the third dimension of power illustrates how development as an institution depoliticizes the societies in which it operates.

Liberal institutionalism is the dominant ideational and material organization pattern for societies in our present moment. Development helps reinforce the hegemony of liberal institutionalism through shaping worldviews via educational programs, workshops, contingent funding, and participation on policy committees in developing countries. Speech and language mediate understandings of truth, shaping perspectives and actions of people. Though the language that development institutions adopt may take on an objective, rationalized and naturalized tone, this information may also be serviceable to the operation of those institutions. Whether to control the individual or benefit from his or her acceptance of the status quo of which the institution is a part, these
objectified, rationalized forms of knowledge can come to colonize the everyday life of individuals, exacerbating depoliticization.

According to behavioralist understandings of knowledge creation and understanding, in establishing an understanding of the world and one’s place in it, an individual has the responsibility to decide which pieces of information resonate in the most satisfactory way with him or her. The resonance experience is one that taps into lived experiences, familial heritage, and learned information, which has been transmitted from both the private and public sector. In receiving this information, the individual places the various facts and impressions into a master frame, which will allow the divergent elements to fit together in a congruent manner. However, authors such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault tell us that this process of creating a frame and one’s place in it is not only not within the autonomous realm of the individual, but is controlled by the mechanisms that create and impart knowledge for the purpose of maintaining the status quo. These mechanisms take the institutional form of the state legal apparatuses, educational systems, private corporate bodies and international bodies.

For Pierre Bourdieu, language is an incomparably powerful element in maintaining divides among people and the status quo. Specialized language creates professionalization of articulation, decides the question of legitimacy of who can speak on a matter, and reproduces a separation of actors. One of the central concerns of Bourdieu’s work is “the way in which unequal power relations, unrecognized as such and thus accepted as legitimate, are embedded in the systems of classification used to describe and discuss everyday life.” ²⁹ Bourdieu uses the concept of “habitus” to describe the ways in which a quiet agent generates a consciousness in the individual, which can
serve to legitimate certain kinds of knowledge. Bourdieu formally defines habitus as the system of “durable, transposable dispositions… principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.”

Habitus signifies the process where external structures reproduce internal structures through an intertwining of the symbolic aspects of social life with material conditions. Symbolic power is based on diverse forms of capital that go beyond the economic element to include cultural and linguistic capital. Bourdieu offers the term doxa to express power as a framing devise. He argues:

As an object of knowledge for the agents who inhabit it, the economic and social world exerts a force on them not in the form of a mechanical determination, but in the form of a knowledge effect…Politics begins, strictly speaking, with the denunciation of this tacit contract of adherence to the established order which defines the original doxa; in other words, political subversion presupposes cognitive subversion, a conversion of the vision world…Every theory, as the word itself suggests, is a program of perception, but this is all the more true of theories of the social world.

Challenges to power and its source from a social movement is expressed through appropriation of doxa with a counter-narrative or a reframing, which creates the possibility of a political space in which struggle can occur. However, liberal institutionalism, as argued by Schmitt, elevates closure of this space as critical to its internal functioning and maintenance of peace. Development, as the praxis of liberal institutionalism, carries this depoliticizing mission forward.

In addition to theories of power, institutional theory helps elucidate the manner in which liberalism is naturalized and endorsed through development. The distinctive
features, modes and histories of institutions are important to understand how they particularly systematize social practices in a recognizable and durable manner. “To see liberalism as a historical event means that one understands it as the inheritor and bearer not only of rights and freedoms but also of structures of power and domination, of colonial and class exploitations, of the hatred of, rather than the opposition to, the Other”.

March and Olsen write that in political science, there have been a number of assumptions regarding the behavior of institutions and the relationship of institutions to political life that need to be reevaluated. The claims of “new institutionalism” assert that institutions are subordinate to rather than directive of social and political life, that institutions can be understood by a reductionist analogy where institutional behavior can be compared to the behavior of an individual, and that choices made within an institution are conducted rationally to maximize the utility and efficiency of the institution’s function. In the place of these institutional characteristics, March and Olsen propose the “new institutionalist” perspective in which the ideas deemphasize the dependence of the polity on society in favor of an interdependence between relatively autonomous social and political institutions; they deemphasize the simple primacy of micro processes and efficient histories in favor of relatively complex processes and historical inefficiency; they deemphasize metaphors of choice and allocative outcomes in favor of other logics of action and the centrality of meaning and symbolic action.

This new institutionalist perspective understands institutions as having the ability to shape social and political life. March and Olsen emphasize that institutions create norms which influence society, in contrast to old institutionalism and behavioralism. This contrast is significant for our understanding of how USAID, as an institution of development and liberalism, performs the linkage between ideas and practices, and
explains why the stated functions of institutions are not always evident in their resultant actions.

Similar to the notion of institutions shaping social norms as described by March and Olsen, the historical approach calls attention to the ways that institutions construct different types of restraints and opportunities for actors to express their interests. Immergut writes that

political institutions and government politics, for example, may facilitate the organization of interests by recognizing particular interest groups and or delegating government functions to them. More fundamentally, government actions may encourage (or discourage) the mobilization of interests by recognizing the legitimacy of particular claims or even by providing these persons with the opportunity to voice their complaints.  

By placing the evolution of USAID within a new institutionalist perspective, we can understand the operation of the ideology and practice of development as the praxis of liberal institutionalism.

**Agencies of Depoliticization: The Historical Emergence and Application of Development**

As an agent of development, USAID promulgates liberal conceptions of state and international organization, with the end goal of promoting peace via the creation of an international society that is interdependent and which practices a set of prescribed norms in its relations. The liberal institutionalist perspective has been predominant in the foreign policy of the United States since the end of World War II, though this ideology has been riddled by realist concerns of anarchy, self-interested state behavior, and the associated drive towards power expected of states. In international development institutions such as USAID, we can see the strong thread of the liberal institutionalism weaving through and shaping its practices.
At the end of World War II, the leaders of the United States set upon a path of institution building unprecedented by previous states. Ikenberry writes of the planning process, which instituted liberal objectives: “It was agreed that just lowering barriers to trade and capital movements was not enough. The leading industrial states must actively supervise and govern the system. Institutions, rules, and active involvement of governments were necessary.”

After the demise of the League of Nations and facing the broken economic and political systems of the former international order, including the breakdown of colonial rule, the United States was in a position post World War II to assist and control the rebuilding of institutions through contingent foreign aid packages that would carry forth the dominant foreign policy ideology of the hour, liberal institutionalism. While foreign assistance began officially before World War II, the Lend Lease Act began the formal program of international aid in a large scale. “The Lend Lease Act…gave the President authority, in the interest of national defense, to support our potential allies with arms…The United Kingdom and the USSR were by far the largest recipients of Lend-Lease. The term “foreign aid”, still an enigma to many persons, certainly had a different connotation than that currently in use, for the prime purpose of Lend-Lease was to win the war.”

Immediately after the Second World War, Lend-Lease was terminated and a series of new rehabilitation and relief programs, specifically in Western Europe and Japan, were established. This included the “Fulbright scholarship program, which was established under authority of the Surplus Property Act. While not foreign aid as such, the Fulbright program has proven to be a significant activity in furthering the long-range
objectives of economic development.” With the threat of expanding Soviet power, the Marshall plan and the Truman Doctrine were brought into play, extending the assistance for economic recovery beyond Europe. In his inaugural address on January 20, 1949, President Truman described the four major aspects of American foreign policy, setting the course for the institutionalization of US foreign aid. The program of technical cooperation and international development through aid grew out of Truman’s “Point Four” of his address. An excerpt from his Point Four is as follows:

> We must embark on a bold, new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped area…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. And, in cooperation with other nations, we should foster capital investment in areas needing development…

Through the 1950s and the heightening of Cold War tensions via the Korean War, there were a number of Congressional acts that shifted administration of economic and military aid programs, including the Mutual Security Act of 1951 and the Technical Assistance Act. Both of these were administered by the State Department until, in 1953, these were merged into the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), a new foreign aid agency administered by the Pentagon. A second Mutual Security Act grew from the FOA under President Eisenhower’s administration in 1954, “which created the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) as a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of State.” From this intermingled background of aid and security, in November 1961, President Kennedy created the United States Agency for International Development with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The Statement of Policy (Section 102) reads:
It is the sense of the Congress that peace depends on wider recognition of the
dignity and interdependence of men, and survival of free institutions in the United
States can best be assured in a worldwide atmosphere of freedom.
To this end, the United States has in the past provided assistance to help
strengthen the forces of freedom by aiding peoples of less developed friendly
countries of the world to develop their resources and improve their living
standards, to realize their aspirations for justice, education, dignity, and respect as
individual human beings, and to establish responsible governments.

The Congress declared it to be a primary necessity, opportunity, and
responsibility of the United States, and consistent with its traditions and ideals, to renew
the spirit which lay behind these past efforts, and to help make a historic demonstration
that economic growth and political democracy can go hand in hand to the end that an
enlarged community of free, stable, and self-reliant countries can reduce world tensions
and insecurity.

It is the policy of the United States to strengthen friendly foreign countries by
encouraging the development of their free economic institutions and productive
capabilities, and by minimizing or eliminating barriers to the flow of private
investment capital.42

Modernization Theory

USAID as a vehicle for the development of the global South embodied
modernization theory, a framework for conceptualizing and practicing development
presented most notably by W.W. Rostow, author of The Stages of Growth. In this
seminal work, Rostow asserted the widely accepted understanding of modernization
theory which has most profoundly affected the assumptions and regarding Third World
development, echoed prolifically across the works written on development, such as that
of David Apter and Daniel Lerner.43 “His basic thesis states the process of change as a
series of stages through which each national unit has to go. The inference, quite overtly
drawn, was that this path was a model to be copied by other states. One could then
analyze what it took to move from one stage to another, why some nations took longer than others, and could prescribe (like a physician) what a nation must do to hurry along its process of ‘growth’. The underlying assumptions that have come from Rostow’s work are as follows: 1) development and economic growth are identical; 2) growth can be achieved by the application of western science and technology; 3) all societies pass through identical stages; 4) in the social realm, this means the replacement of communal/tribal patterns with more modern forms of social relations.

Modernization theory dominated national policy issues and the forms of assistance coming from USAID during the 1950s -1960s. Efficiency and growth were emphasized, as measured by GNP, over redistribution and equity. An emphasis was placed on industrialization and urbanization to the neglect of land reform and traditional agriculture. Advocates of these policies included multinational corporations, governments and Bretton Woods agencies, who readily promoted a laissez-faire attitude for new access to markets and advocated the liberalization of the exchange of goods, directed specifically through state planning and foreign assistance. USAID became an institutional vehicle for the development agendas of modernization theory, supporting a dual interest of increased domestic security through Kantian notions of democracy, trade liberalization, and growth of international linkages.

USAID has been engaged in “development” for over forty years. Yet as numbers of observers have remarked, development has not been forthcoming to the majority of countries in which AID has been engaged. The successful movement of states from non-industrial, peasant economies to urbanized, industrialized, export-based economies, otherwise known as the aforementioned modernization theory, is dubious.
Unfortunately, trade liberalization, injections of various forms of capital, scientifically modified super-grains and other inputs from Western countries did not prompt the majority of the Third World along to the next stages of growth as described in Rostow’s model. The inputs of capital for development projects did not lead to the expected outputs of industrial and cultural modernization.

The notion of poverty alleviation and basic needs were tacked onto this economic definition of development during the Johnson and Carter Administrations. These goals, too, were largely unmet. While the standard of living, as measured by indicators such as infant mortality rates and primary school enrollment, has increased for many countries in the global south, the project of creating developed states, in which poverty levels, average household incomes, and GNP ratios are at or near the levels of the states of the global North, has not come to fruition. When modernization theory ran into problems, responses arose that did not challenge the idea of the model of growth, but rather attempted to examine the cultural and societal factors as well as structural, exogenous factors that might be responsible for inhibiting the success of modernization theory.

**The Cultural Explanations of Development**

An example of a cultural explanation for the failure of development was offered by David McClelland, promoter of “n-achievement” as an indicator of a nation’s capacity of economic growth. McClelland, in his article “The Achievement Motive in Economic Growth”, tries to pinpoint the internal factors that lead people to aspire to economic growth. He isolates an inner factor, which he terms “n-achievement—a desire to do well, not so much for the sake of social recognition or prestige, but to attain an inner feeling of personal accomplishment.”
His studies showed “that people with high n-achievement tend to work harder at certain tasks, to learn faster…” N-achievement then manifests itself in entrepreneurs and subsequently in a nation’s economic success. Here, culture seems to be shaping economic success. Although McClelland states his findings do not indicate that n-achievement is hereditary, he does believe the instilling of n-achievement values must come from the parents and society when children are young, because societies build n-achievement standards through the lessons given to their children.

**Dependency Theory**

An important criticism that can be made about McClelland’s prescription of cultural/psychological ingredients needed for societal development is that it ignores completely the Weberian treatment of historical-structural issues. In “On the Sociology of National Development,” Alejandro Portes argues this point, asserting that psychological theories of development are flawed, as are the underlying assumptions of this direction of modernization theory. Portes lists structural constraints, consumption-oriented values and the ideas of historical fiction to oppose the cultural and psychological arguments made by authors like McClelland. He writes, “An active set of individuals, motivated by whatever psychological mechanisms one may wish to posit, must still cope with existing economic and political arrangements.” In different socio-political environments, those characteristics typified as entrepreneurial might be exercised in revolutionary movements or be channeled into the elitist economic structures often seen in developing nations. Essentially, Portes argues “individual motivations for achievement can be absorbed, fulfilled and utilized without changing a basic situation of economic subordination and social misdistribution.”
In addition, Portes makes his most salient point when he discusses the idea of historical fiction, the biggest apparent flaw of the modernization school. Regardless of psychological and cultural factors, modernization theory fails because it is a-historical, and takes for granted that all societies pass through a series of identical stages, emulating the Western model. Portes writes, “While providing points of reference for developmental efforts, features of currently industrialized nations are products of unique historical processes which already belong to mankind’s past.”

The conditions which allowed the First World to rise to power and economic stability no longer exist. There is no universal model for societal development. To try to discover psychological traits necessary for the individuals of a nation to then reach the threshold of the critical stages of development or to create a list of cultural features necessary for economic development is moot, because there is no a-historical model.

Portes writes as part of the dependency theory school, which argues that existing economic and political structure maintains a system of inter-state dependency and inequality. Dependency theory and its sister, world systems theory, claim that developing countries, having achieved independence in terms of political sovereignty as a result of decolonization, remain impoverished due to their dependence on foreign investment, donor funds, and the willingness of developed countries to purchase their primary good exports. These exports are constantly at risk of devaluation depending on market supply, and the openness of trade policies set by powerful states via institutionalist methods. The dependistas blame the policies of the developed world for the failure of developing economies, and hold fast to the idea that liberal markets, if allowed to function without the biases and restrictions of the core states, would encourage
peripheral states to lurch into equal participation in world trade and prosperity. Dependency theorists, in other words, do not negate the modernization concepts of liberal development discourse.

**Globalization and Post-Development**

The term “globalization” has been tossed around for about fifteen years now, and it seems to be the label of choice for a new paradigm within the development debate. The spread of multinational corporations, media and marketing, information technology—these all have supposedly eroded the boundaries and definitions previously relied upon within debates of international politics and political economy. As borders and interests merge in this paradigm, there is a parallel to the earlier description of liberal institutionalism, under which mutual interdependence encourages peace and prosperity for all involved in the global economy. While some argue that state sovereignty is being superceded by financial institutions with potentially deleterious effects upon local populations, others laud globalization as a prescription for the poverty-stricken, dependent countries of the Third World to rise to a level of equality and strength in modern world markets.

One of the proponents of globalization is Francis Fukuyama, who has declared that the end of evolution of human ideology has arrived in the form of universal liberalism, in essence, an “end to history.” Like Rostow’s modernization theory, this argument presumes that there is a progression of societies through stages of growth, all aimed ultimately towards the Western ideals of a consumer culture. The failure to progress, to develop, Fukuyama explains, is based upon cultural deficiencies, an argument echoed in the work of McClelland and others. Fukuyama explains, “the root
causes of economic inequality do not have to do with the underlying legal and social structures of [a] society…so much with the cultural and social characteristics of the groups that take it up, which are in turn the historical legacy of pre-modern conditions.”

According to Fukuyama, the highest achievement of humankind is embodied in the characterizations of liberal institutionalism. The downfall of Communism and Fascism are convincing examples of the dominance and righteousness of a universal liberalism, which entails both political and economic liberalism, based on free-market and free votes. Fukuyama writes, “Political liberalism has been following economic liberalism, more slowly than many had hoped, but with seeming inevitability.”

The proponents of the universal liberalism described in Fukuyama’s piece have traditionally come from Western bilateral and multilateral institutions, including those in the development industry, who some argue have worked carefully with local elite to maintain the continued flow of resources to Western nations.

The Bretton Woods organizations were developed at the end or World War II, allowing wealthy Western powers to have legitimate involvement in the economic policies of the Third World. In addition, the cloak of Cold War policies allowed U.S. intervention in the affairs of developing countries as a necessity of containment. Authors who fall within the “post-development” genre argue that the formal development community was established, then, not to alleviate poverty, but as a propaganda tool for the West to legitimize its extraction of resources and to ensure its own security through the seemingly benevolent involvement of the IMF and World Bank.

The United States, the dominant force in this system, set about supporting or toppling leaders who did not agree with their expansionist, domineering policies and used
trade agreements to guarantee the arrangement of exploitation. Chomsky describes the

GATT negotiations, which guaranteed:

the removal of constraints on services and investment…a mixture of liberalization
and protectionism, determined by the interests of the powerful. The effects of
these measures would be to restrict Third World governments to a police function
to control their working classes and superfluous populations, while transitional
corporations gained free access to their resources…

Nassau Adams, author of *Worlds Apart*, adds to Chomsky’s analysis of the influence of
the North on Southern politics. He writes,

It not infrequently happens that political leaders in the South come to power and
are maintained in power, with the support of the North. Since such support is
usually provided in order to promote specific Northern interests, it should not be
surprising to find it is in just those cases that the political leadership is likely to be
most alienated from the interests of the community at large, that the diversion of
the national wealth to personal ends is liable to be most blatant, and that, in
consequence, the domestic environment is prone to be least propitious for
economic development.

These authors and others within the post-development school argues that such
alliances between the elites of the North and the South have concentrated capital into the
hands of the very few and form an understanding of the present situation that social
activists and the poor of the Third World are trying to negotiate. The rapid movement of
capital and information made possible during this age of globalization has created a new
shift in power. The new structures of resource and capital control have little to do with
the state and everything to do with corporations. While the United States Treasury
Department still maintains a strong grip, the role of the state in developing nations rarely
includes the ability to determine monetary or fiscal policy. Third World states have lost
the ability to negotiate trade, to maintain value in its local currency, and to control their
own resource utilization. In their weak position of power at both local and transnational
levels, exacerbated by institutions of development, we see another manner in which
development carries out depoliticization.

The IMF and the World Bank, as the two largest institutions of development, have
had large roles in the creation of this new world order, preaching neoliberal economics
and stringency measures for the salvation of the developing world. Structural adjustment
policies and bilateral trade agreements have, in essence, forced developing countries to
sign away their nations’ souls in return for desperately needed bail-out funds. The results
of this corporate penetration and stringency policies mandated by multilateral
development organizations have been most profoundly felt at the local level in
developing countries.

Policies of economic liberalization for developing countries will continue to allow
financial flows to occur across borders with the ability to create invisible corporate
dynasties and destroy nation-state sovereignty. Mark Weisbrot writes,

The WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank—the three most important international
economic institutions—are often described as institutions in global governance.
But in practice they are much more of a global anti-government, unaccountable to
any electorate. Indeed, one does not need a conspiracy theory to notice the
progressive transfer of economics decision-making from governments to
unelected bureaucrats. 54

After the deconstruction of their traditional systems during decolonization the
state kept large portions of the population just above water. But IMF structural
adjustment policies demand drastic cuts in subsidies for farmers and public goods, like
cooking oil and gasoline. Privatization of formerly public utilities has taken basic
provisions like water and electricity further out of the budgets of people in developing
countries in both rural areas and in cities. Essentially, the ability of states in the
developing world to provide a level of human security to their citizens has broken down
and these governments are more accountable to international investors and IMF review committees than to their own constituencies. The well-being of the poor does not factor into the financial transactions of these investors or the demands of structural adjustment policies.

James Mittelman posits the concept of “hypercompetition” to describe the shifting nature of the state due to the technological speedways that have encourage rapid capital transfers and minimalization of traditional place-based boundaries, and explains that this intense level of competition to attract capital and investment has been to the detriment of the societies within the state. He writes, “the capacity to provide social protection against market shocks is…lessened, evidenced by the diminution of the welfare state in diverse contexts. In fact, the state itself adopts corporate logic, embracing variants of neo-liberal ideology to justify the socially disruptive and polarizing consequences of its policies…”

A study titled “The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis and Poverty,” conducted by the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRIN), demonstrates the relationship between adjustment programs and poverty and inequality. Begun in 1996, the SAPRIN findings are based on interviews with members of civil society in Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, and Hungary in a participatory assessment of structural adjustment. Their findings are as follows:

Investigations sought to identify four basic ways in which adjustment policies have contributed to the further impoverishment and marginalization of local populations, while increasing economic inequality. The first is through the demise of domestic manufacturing sectors and the loss of gainful employment by laid-off workers due to the nature of trade and financial-sector reforms. The second relates to the contribution that agricultural, trade and mining reforms have made to the declining viability and incomes of small farms and poor rural communities, as well as to declining food security, particularly in rural areas. Third, retrenchment of workers through privatizations and budget cuts, in conjunction
with labor-market flexibilization measures, has resulted in less secure
employment, lower wages, fewer benefits and an erosion of workers’ rights and
bargaining power. Finally, poverty has been increased through privatization
programs, the application of user fees, budget cuts and other adjustment measures
that have reduced the role of the state in providing or guaranteeing affordable
access to essential quality services.56

This study, published in April, 2002, establishes a link between neoliberal economic
policies as prescribed to developing countries in structural adjustment programs and
increased poverty. There is no local political space in which protest against these
program can occur.

Repoliticization in the Face of Globalization

Having examined a range of theories of globalization, its effects upon the
structure of the political-economic world order and the depoliticizing elements of the
linkage between globalization and development institutions, the work of Jessica Mathews
and Amartya Sen offers suggestions on how the international development community
can adapt to the conditions of globalization, in an attempt at repoliticization.

In her piece, “Power Shift”, Jessica Mathews expounds upon the loss of state
sovereignty resulting from the rapid globalization of financial markets, and argues that
strengthening international institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is
the best way to account for the needs of civilians in developing countries. She argues the
following:

At a time of accelerating change NGOs are quicker than governments to respond
to new demands and opportunities. Internationally, in both the poorest and richest
countries, NGOs, when adequately funded, can outperform government in the
delivery of many public services. International organizations, given a longer rein
by governments and connected to the grassroots by deepening ties with NGOs,
could…take on larger roles in global housekeeping (transportation,
communications, environment, health…57
Mathews describes how “a single strong voice for the common good” as represented by large international organizations should be encouraged rather than support for civil society because “in the longer run, a stronger civil society could also be more fragmented, producing a weakened sense of common identity and purposes…which could ultimately threaten democratic government.” To Mathews’ discredit, she fails to consider that the presence of plurality might be the essence of democratic governance, messy and multiple as it may be.

Nonetheless, this piece makes an important contribution to understanding the options through which activists can attempt to direct development in the face of globalization. Unfortunately, Mathews clearly does not include as part of her conception of social activists the membership of Third World civil society. She omits the most important link in repoliticizing the development process—the connection to the very people on whose behalf she and her rising international development industry are attempting to act. In addition, her solution to negotiating the power shift for the benefit of citizens misses the mark. Placing more and more power in unelected international bodies does little for the long-term, sustainable stabilization of underdeveloped countries. Her approach to the prospect of strengthening civil society defines her piece as patronizing and Western-focused, unfortunate characteristics of present-day development industry.

Amartya Sen, author of *Development as Freedom* and an important critic of current development discourse, offers yet another conception of how to improve upon the idea of development. Sen argues that “the success of a society is to be evaluated mainly by the substantive freedoms that the members of that society enjoy. This evaluative
position differs from the informational focus of more traditional normative approaches, which focus on other variables, such as utility, or procedural liberty, or real income.”

Sen discredits the idea that features of development, such as adequate health care, education and democratic governance, will result eventually from more concrete, economic development endeavors, and argues instead that these very features are not only results of development but are constitutive of development. “In this approach, expansion of freedom is viewed as both the primary end and the principal means of development. They can be called respectively the ‘constitutive role’ and the ‘instrumental role’ of freedom in development.”

He writes that the constitutive elements of freedom are made of intertwined instrumental freedoms, which include the following: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security.

In the chapter entitled “Poverty as Capability Deprivation,” Sen warns about tying poverty to income levels without looking at the relationship between income and achievement capability and freedom. This misconception has been particularly problematic in its almost ubiquitous hold on the minds of development practitioners and policy-makers. Sen writes, “policy debates have indeed been distorted by overemphasis on income poverty and income inequality, to the neglect of deprivations that relate to other variables, such as unemployment, ill health, lack of education, and social exclusions.”

While Amartya Sen has argued that development should be conceptualized as a process of encouraging freedom, this freedom is limited to the increased choice of consumption patterns, and increased empowerment of the individual. Liberalism
encourages individualism, accompanied by definitions of freedom and equality that are limited by the notion of a society of atomized, consumption-oriented individuals. For example, while Sen illustrates how incomes earned and substantive freedoms achieved vary, respective of differing socio-political and natural environments, he maintains that policy makers should take the heterogeneity of capability to exercise income-based freedoms into account.

There is a friction in development that comes from the questionable expansion of freedom that development purports to spread. I argue that development shuts down freedom due to the acceptance of its narrow definition as market-based. In claiming that development has been expanded through liberalism, particular boundaries are put into place, belying the liberatory premise upon which Sen’s faith in development is based. The discourse of development promotes the idea that emancipation will occur as a result of democratization and propagation of liberal economic transformations through the medium of institutions and discourse. However, institutions of development are arguably mechanisms of power that support those who stand to benefit from drawing former colonial states into the global economy, with all of its rules and procedures.

The promise of liberalism is openness, inclusion, and empowerment as well as increased income capabilities and the presumed correlation to human flourishing. The institutions of capitalism and democracy purport to bring about this increased notion of human flourishing. Rist, however, argues that “what passes today for the truth of the history of humankind (that is, progressive access of every nation to the benefits of ‘development’) is actually based on the way that Western society - to the exclusion of all others – has conceptualized its relationship to the past and the future…This is what
Latour calls ‘particular universalism’, one society extends to all others the historically constructed values in which it believes.”

**Moving Outside of the Liberal Paradigm to Repoliticize Development**

From a variety of angles, the work from the post-developmental group critiques the practices and ideologies embedded within those practices of international development primarily from the post-colonial period until the present. The authors of most analyses follow the same format: describe the terms and their foundations, such as progress, development, underdevelopment, poverty, etc. These terms all have links to Western notions of success, salvation, and teleological movement towards a better world.

The message from the authors within the post-developmental genre repeats the description of international development as disempowering, homogenizing and violent. Typically, this violence is traced to the historical political economy of the Europeans, followed American meddling in the affairs of the “non-West”. The goal, it seems, of these authors is to provide an intellectual history and discourse analysis of the active underdevelopment of the global South, an unmasking process that reveals the actions of the development community to be nothing if not detrimental to the populations under their scrutiny. These patterns of academic exploration seem to have carved grooves in the road of developmentalist literature; the vehicle of inquiry repeats itself along the same path. Indeed, I recognize that even this paper’s inquiry into the notion of development as depoliticizing performs the same narrative. The question though, remains: what should one, as a member of the privileged West who experiences the frustration over the
maintenance of global inequality and suffering, make of, consider, intellectually explore or do, in response to the unmasking of the results of development practices?

The literature I have explored until this point remains mostly silent, beyond normative cries for transitions that run the liberal to radical gamut. In addition, the literature that I have reviewed seems to fall short on the inclusion of power analyses. Political economy and the traditional notions of materially driven power are rife, yet there is a vast body of literature that explores the way that power is generated, spread and maintained in a manner that intermingles the material and the ideational. In applying theories of power and institutions to development critiques, a new understanding of repoliticization outside of the liberation on offer within the liberal paradigm appears. Liberation and notions of flourishing are not, in fact, universal. Institutional transformation through development programs may have little to do with the ways in which improvement to daily life is experienced outside of the West.

Saba Mahmood brings attention to the ways that ordinary tasks in daily life of Egyptian women produce a shift from the inside, a transformation that has come from relearning a role, from a shift in mentality via a self-initiated alteration of the body’s demeanor, pointing to the ways that naturalization of social formations/institutions occur in the body. She explores how Egyptian women, desirous of an increase in their levels of piety and humility, practice bringing about change within their personal ethos by the creation of habits.

Mahmood explores the places where resistance does take place, in this realm where governmentality has seeped into notions of health, well-being, security as well as liberation from the state. She asks how one can operate within a Foucauldian paradigm of
power and resist governmentality, through self-initiated disciplinary regiments.

According to Mahmood, the Egyptian case is an example of the misreading of the liberatory project by Western feminists, calling our attention to the larger problem of any claim for an alternative ethos that ignores questions of agency. She writes:

The veil has been freighted with so many meanings in contemporary social and political conflicts that any ascription of a singular meaning to it—such as ‘symbol of women’s oppression’—is unconvincing…More recently, the practice of veiling has gained ascendancy as part of an opposition movement protesting the rigid policies of a state that insists on dictating the ways in which personal practices of religious piety should appear in public…This points out the degree to which the normative subject of feminism remains a liberatory one: one who contests social norms (by wearing torn jeans and dying her hair blue), but not one who finds purpose, value, and pride in the struggle to live in accord with certain tradition sanctioned virtues.62

With women in Egypt, self-cultivation is done through practices throughout the day and may be an experience of liberation that belies governmentality because the actual methods described by Foucault are reinscribed in the sovereign individual. This opens a space for a different kind of emancipatory political context, one that does not rely upon liberal discourses that entails legalistic, culturally homogenous notions of liberation. This form of resistance is one that possibly empowers the practitioner to experience a form of emancipation that occurs bodily, personally, while simultaneously engaging in a structure of politics and social norms that seemingly do not shift, and are not recognizable by the Western liberal observer desiring the emancipation of the other. She writes,

To begin with, what is striking here is that instead of innate human desires eliciting outward forms of conduct, it is the sequence of practices and actions one is engaged in that determine one’s desires and emotions. In other words, action does not issue forth from natural feelings, but creates them. Furthermore, in this conception it is through repeated bodily acts that one trains one’s memory, desire and intellect to behave according to established standards of conduct…. Although there is little doubt that the injunction about women’s veiling is predicated on an
entrenched logic of gender inequality, there is more at stake in this conception of
the role of the body in the making of the self in which the outward behavior of the
body constitutes both the potentiality, as well as the means, through which an
interiority is realized.\textsuperscript{63}

Mahmood points to the figuration of a subject who must be saved, improved or
disciplined. She looks at the apparatus of subjectification and argues that there are many
different kinds of ways that exist to act, to engage in opening the space for liberation.
Like Mahmood, I am trying to explore notions of knowledge and politics without creating
the abject, actionless “other”. She “argues for uncoupling both the notion of self-
realization from that of the autonomous will, as well as agency from the progressive goal
of emancipatory politics…The normative subject of post-structural feminist theory
remains a liberatory one, her agency largely conceptualized in terms of resistance to
social norms.”\textsuperscript{64}

This notion picks up a thread offered by Elizabeth Povinelli in “The Cunning of
Recognition”, in which she unpacks liberal discourse or, the “liberal diaspora”, as it
intersects with indigenous people’s identity formation in Australia. She writes,
“Although on the one hand I am interested in liberal forms of multiculturalism as a form
of domination, I am also interested in these forms both as a response to previous
discursive impasses of national life and as a place within which minority and subaltern
subjects creatively elaborate new social imaginaries.”\textsuperscript{65} These new social imaginaries, I
construe to mean, at times, political spaces. The institutionalization and normativity of
liberal modes of politics encourages the notion that there is one political culture that is
acceptable to the developer agent. She writes,

How do we, and why would we, critically engage a seemingly irreducible good
and truth—the liberal regulatory ideal of decreased harm through increased
mutual understanding of social and cultural differences? Of a liberal aspiration for
a world where conflict does not exist across epistemic and deontic communities? The trouble with this tactic is that in actual social worlds people who consider themselves liberal are confronted with instances of intractable social difference that they do not set aside—that they do feel they can or should set aside…These moments are not moments at all, but somebody’s life. They mark the site where indigenous persons struggle to inhabit the tensions and torsions of competing incitements to be and to identify differently.  

CONCLUSION

Liberal institutionalism seeks to suppress the contentious aspects of social life in the name of security, and this material and ideological paradigm dominates accepted ideas of governance and development. The liberal state is linked to governmentality and power; capitalism is part of the notion of a good, which is then inculcated into daily life.

Proponents of a society not dominated by a Smithian notion of the way human beings interact have long taken up the cry for equality and liberation of men from the enslaving commodification of liberal capitalist economics. However, this cry has not been ubiquitous, and the taxonomical divide of social life that includes the separation of ethos from market behavior and markets, in turn, from social life, has established its own epistemological normativity. This divide is just one way in which liberal institutionalism has usurped the political space for states to define their own mode of stasis versus growth. This logic is encapsulated within the liberal framework, which values freedom above all else. The individual within society should be free from constraints against his ability to achieve his own happiness and meet his own needs. The individual within an enterprise should be free from the interference of the state.

Liberal capitalist economics is a way of thinking about the organization of production and distribution of resources in order to encourage human flourishing. There are flaws in human thinking, and there are flaws in economic models. Because economics
is ultimately a social science, and because all social sciences are the study of and
application of hypotheses to the constantly shifting human reality, economists repeatedly
fall short of cementing a model of organization and management that fulfills the goals of
human flourishing. Also, we are social engineers; we think there is a solution to
everything. But there are no real solutions. The constantly reworking of political
struggles and the partnering attempts at depolitization continue.

We need to be aware of the ways that constitutive politics can frame a social
ethic, where a set of normative beliefs becomes so embedded in social norms so
extensively that it is no longer questioned, as Marx argued regarding religion and
property. In addition, the manner in which institutions maintain power and restrict
struggle complicates the space in which politics can occur. A new language must be
adopted to express concerns of post-coloniality, and the variety in consciousness about
how human abilities can affect social circumstances differently, perhaps outside of the
boundaries created by structures and assumptions of liberalism. There are other
languages that can move through the problems that development discourse has claimed
for its own. Opening the door for other languages to talk about the problems that are
owned by development discourse may perhaps access the space categorized as the
deontological, providing a much needed addition to the dominant notions of liberal
institutionalism as the apex of social organization and epistemology. We may discover
that there are other ways to frame, to speak, and to explain, and in this way, aim to
address the suffering and violence that occurs in people’s quotidian experiences as a
result of the dominant and depoliticizing actions of development institutions and
ideology.
4 Gilbert Rist, p. 44.
7 Carl Schmitt, 79.
9 Karl Marx, p. 29.
12 Ferguson, p. 70.
13 James Ferguson, p. xv.
15 James Ferguson, p. 236.
16 Ferguson, p. 65.
18 James Scott, p. 6.
19 James Scott, p. 6.
20 James Scott, p. 51.
21 James Scott, p. 55.
22 James Scott, p. 130.
24 John Gaventa, p. 61.
26 John Gaventa, p. 31.
27 John Gaventa, pp. 31-32.
30 Pierre Bourdieu, p. 5.
34 March and Olsen, p. 738.
38 Lloyd Black, p. 4.
39 Lloyd Black, p. 5.
40 Lloyd Black, p. 6.
41 Black, p. 7.
47 Alejandro Portes, p. 245.
48 Alejandro Portes, p. 247.
50 Fukuyama, pg. 168.
58 Ibid. pg. 68.
60 Amartya Sen, p. 36.
61 Gilbert Rist, p. 44.
62 Jackson, p. 351.
63 Jackson, p. 214
64 Jackson, p. 208.
66 Elizabeth Povinelli, p.12.

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