LIMITS OF POST-DEVELOPMENT IN THE CRITIQUE OF DEVELOPMENT

Maiara Tavares Sodré [a]* - Rosangela Aparecida de Medeiros Hespanhol [b]

(a) PhD in Geography. Professor at the State University of the Center-West, Irati (PR), Brazil.
ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8848-098X. **LATTES:** http://lattes.cnpq.br/0311116103802731.
(b) PhD in Geography. Professor at the State University of São Paulo, Presidente Prudente (SP), Brazil.
ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5073-8308. **LATTES:** http://lattes.cnpq.br/9262661934864680.

(*) CORRESPONDING AUTHOR
Address: Rua Professora Maria Rosa Zanon de Almeida, CEP: 84505677, Irati (PR), Brasil. Tel: (+55 42) 34213000.
E-mail: maiara.sodre@hotmail.com

Abstract

The theoretical current known as post-development emerged in the 1980s. Its proponents were authors with different analytical focuses and diversified themes, firmly committed to a radical critique of the idea of development. In this regard, this article aims to analyze post-development's theoretical and propositional basis, evaluating its arguments' consistency and the coherence between the basis of this argument and its propositional direction. Initially, the main issues raised by post-development are examined, paying particular attention to the two main strands of criticism of the concept of development. Next, there is a counterargument to the criticisms discussed above to demonstrate their inconsistencies and possible contributions to the reflexive and operational development field. Based on this debate, it is concluded that post-development makes valid and necessary criticisms, if these are intended to improve development projects that aim to address the objective reality of a large part of the Brazilian and global population. However, stripped of this crucial practical focus and an awareness of the gravity of different populations' social situations, post-development contributes little to overcome the history of failures of different development proposals.

Keywords: Development, Post-Development, Alternative Development, Theoretical-Propositional Critique.

Resumo / Resumen

LIMITES DO PÓS-DESENVOLVIMENTO NA CRÍTICA AO DESENVOLVIMENTO

Composta por autores com diferentes focos analíticos e por temas bastante diversificados, a corrente teórica denominada pós-desenvolvimento despontou na década de 1980 de maneira fortemente comprometida com uma crítica radical à ideia de desenvolvimento. Nesse sentido, o objetivo do presente artigo consiste em analisar a base teórico-propositiva do pós-desenvolvimento, avaliando a consistência de seus argumentos e a existência de coerência entre tal base argumentativa e o direcionamento propositivo dessa corrente. Para isso, propõe-se, incialmente, uma abordagem das principais questões levantadas pelo pós-desenvolvimento, com especial atenção às suas duas principais vertentes de crítica à ideia de desenvolvimento. Na sequência, realiza-se uma contra-argumentação às críticas anteriormente discutidas, de modo a demonstrar suas inconsistências e possíveis contribuições ao campo reflexivo e operacional da ideia de desenvolvimento. Com base em tal debate, conclui-se que o pós-desenvolvimento permite uma crítica válida e necessária, desde que orientada para o aprimoramento de projetos de desenvolvimento voltados para o enfrentamento da realidade objetiva de grande parte da população brasileira e mundial. No entanto, despido desse necessário enfoque prático e da consciência da gravidade do quadro social vivenciado por diversas populações, o pós-desenvolvimento pouco pode aportar para a superação do histórico de falhas das diferentes propostas de desenvolvimento.

Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento, Pós-Desenvolvimento, Desenvolvimento Alternativo, Crítica Teórico-Propositiva.

LÍMITES DEL POSDESARROLLO EN LA CRÍTICA AL DESARROLLO

Compuesta por autores con diferentes enfoques analíticas y una gran diversidad de temas, la corriente teórica denominada posdesarrollo surgió en la década de los ochenta de una manera fuertemente comprometida con una crítica radical a la idea de desarrollo. En este sentido, este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar la base teórico-proposicional del posdesarrollo y evaluar la consistencia de sus argumentos y la existencia coherencia entre dicha base argumentativa y la dirección proposicional de esta corriente. Para ello, se propone inicialmente un acercamiento a las principales cuestiones que se plantean en torno al posdesarrollo, con especial atención a sus dos principales vertientes de crítica a la idea de desarrollo. Posteriormente, se presentaron contraargumentos a las críticas previamente discutidas con el fin de demostrar inconsistencias y posibles aportes al campo reflexivo y operacional de la idea de desarrollo. A partir de tal debate, se concluye que el posdesarrollo permite una crítica válida y necesaria, siempre que se oriente a la mejora de proyectos de desarrollo enfocados a enfrentar la realidad objetiva de gran parte de la población brasileña y mundial. Sin embargo, despojado de este necesario enfoque práctico y de la conciencia de la gravedad de la situación social que viven las distintas poblaciones, el posdesarrollo poco puede contribuir a superar la historia de fracasos de las diversas propuestas de desarrollo.

Palabras-clave: Desarrollo, Posdesarrollo, Desarrollo Alternativo, Crítica Teórico-Proposicional.

INTRODUCTION

A casual look at the historical course of the term development shows us that the idea, viewed as a positive transformation, has taken on various guises, advocated different projects, and carried out processes that are often incompatible with achieving the concept democratically. More recently, this trajectory has taken a new turn, with the diffusion of the idea of alternative development - based on popular participation, prioritizing socially vulnerable segments, and the leading role of the local scale - in the rhetoric of the most prominent multilateral organizations (PIETERSE, 2010). It so happens that often these rousing speeches do not match the proven practices of international organizations and the G-8's foreign policy.

Partially derived from Pieterse's (1998) approach, a particular theoretical current understood that despite the legitimacy of the discursive use of the terminology "alternative development," in practice, it never implied a distancing from hegemonic perspectives or a break with the historical contradiction between the discourse and practice of development. This logic has led some authors to propose and disseminate a line of thought that does not propose reforms to the construction of development proposals; instead, it advocates the demolition of the whole edifice (SACHS, 2010a). This group of authors rejects the term development, attributing the responsibility for the imposition of projects and processes to the fundamental nature of the idea.

The following text explores these authors' views and critically analyzes the limitations and inconsistencies of the theoretical current known as post-development without disregarding valid contributions. The article's main objective is to analyze post-development's theoretical and propositional content, evaluating its arguments' consistency and the coherence between them and its propositional orientation. In this sense, the counterargument to the post-developmental perspective understands that development projects can lead to authentic positive transformation processes in people's lives, even if they have structural constraints and impositions. In other words, although historically distorted by deceptive projects and processes, the concept of development does not need to be condemned along with its misuses.

POST-DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES: CRITICISM OF THE IDEA AND PRACTICE OF DEVELOPMENT

The post-structuralist and post-colonial theoretical current, inspired by the work of Michel Foucault (COSTA, 2006; VEIGA, 2006), and consolidated using the term post-development, emerged in the 1980s. This approach went beyond a critique of development proposals; instead, it was a peremptory repudiation of development. However, as a coordinated theory on the subject, it is impossible to point to post-development as a unified and cohesive body of epistemic production. Conversely, the articulations between its supporters are exclusively based on criticisms with a common background. To some extent, these reciprocally involve the same group of authors, such as Escobar (2007, 2009), Esteva (2009, 2010), Rahnema (2010), Rist (2008), and Sachs (1990, 2010b), among others. These criticisms revolve around aspects such as the ethnocentric, positivist, and patriarchal character of the Enlightenment and Modernity, institutions that guide the ideological content of all development proposals, including alternative development, which impose disciplinary processes on the aspirations and expectations of populations of countries in the global South (DE VRIES, 2007; RADOMSKY, 2011).

The reasoning of post-development's criticisms emanates from two camps. The first highlights development's successive failures to fulfill its promises and emphasizes the impossibility of these being fulfilled from the outset due to the actions of domination and, in practice, dispossession, which are clothed in agreeable language and imposed as necessary. The second criticizes the very conception of development in axiological terms. Based on civilizing, cultural, and ideological principles, it is an absolute rejection of the concept, asserting the dispensability of development and the rhetorically constructed character of the development-underdevelopment binomial. Given its greater exposure in the post-development perspective, the first critical approach is addressed below.

This critique understands that the successive development concepts are merely linguistic and formatting adaptations intended to harmonize the propositional framework with cultural changes.

Without any substantial change to the character of the measures recommended, they are always committed to reproducing the establishment through instruments that reinforce unequal relationships,

> Since development always implies transformation and typically occurs through encounters between insiders and outsiders in different positions of power, development initiatives are anchored and traversed by situations where power inequalities abound. The difficulty of making internal changes to the so-called 'development community' is closely related to the fact that it is a field of power (RIBEIRO, 2008, p. 110).

So, as posited by Escobar (2007), the idea of development – the imperative of its pursuit – was very skillful in formulating a body of knowledge and a system of power over peripheral countries. Since Truman's opening speech[1] , both have produced several successful theories, strategies, and practices in the institution of a regime of authority over the global South. By imposing subjection on these peoples, developed countries guarantee a margin of control over the rest of the world.

> The coherence of the effects achieved by the discourse of development is the key to its success as a hegemonic form of representation: the construction of the 'poor' and 'underdeveloped' as universal, pre-constituted subjects, based on the privilege of representatives; enables the exercise of power over the Third World through this discursive homogenization, which implies the elimination of the complexity and diversity of the Third World people, in such a way that a Mexican colonist, a Nepali peasant, and a Tuareg nomad end up being alike as 'poor' and 'underdeveloped' and the colonization and domination of economies and human and natural ecology of the Third World (ESCOBAR, 2007, p. 99-100).

The content of this domination is evident in the fact that the countries and international organizations that led the promotion of different development models continue to recommend the same instruments: remodeling institutions, expanding market mechanisms, and fighting poverty. Presently surrounded by new politically correct slogans, such as combating gender and ethnic inequality, sustainability and encouraging the engagement of civil society in development programs, the essence of the problem, the unequal dynamics of the current economic system, is never questioned. The fact that capitalist logic is responsible for maintaining poverty and inequality is utterly obliterated.

In this way, development rhetoric works purely as a discursive resource to legitimize the imposition of mechanisms that maintain the power structure of an asymmetric economic system. Since the concrete measures adopted, such as the release of loans through the internal implementation of the neoliberal prescription, only increase countries poorly used external debt, or worse, only cover their balance of payments, the resources they obtain keep them in a situation of subjection and dependence (MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, 2006, 2007, 2008).

Development is an illusory light at the end of the 'tunnel,' as it guides the inhabitants of underdeveloped countries on a journey in which each step they take makes the 'tunnel' longer and the light at the end more distant. For Sachs (2010a, 2010b, 2010c), it is a perverse instrument that acts skillfully as a successor to the ideal of independence. With the (official) end of colonial and imperialist domination, any social cost or political constraint became valid, as a greater aspiration was at stake, a redemptive reward. At the same time, development carves North-South relations in a particular way, both shielding the domination and maintenance of plundering practices under an aura of legitimacy and guaranteeing the North and international financial organizations a convenient seal of generosity. After all, only benevolent agents continue to grant loans to repeat offenders who breach agreed targets.

In other words, hegemonic development discourses build up such credible promises that they can blur the structural infeasibility of their universalization. Thus, the material impossibility of generalizing development along the lines shared by the United States-Europe-Japan axis is lost sight of, as already pointed out by authors such as Furtado (2000), who dedicated their lives to defending development. The fabricated legitimacy of this culturally indoctrinated discourse denies the global South the possibility of what Massey (2008) calls other trajectories, deepening the second post-development critique, the axiological questioning of the validity and necessity of development.

Given its role as a perpetrator of inequality, beyond being a set of promises and propositions incapable of bringing the above to fruition, development is viewed as the consolidation of the

westernized project inscribed in modern rationality. It involves an attempt at homogenization that degrades or corrodes cultural multiplicity (SHIVA, 2003, 2010). This process is triggered under a very elementary comparative binary logic and so is easily disseminated and internalized. As Said (1990) explains, the West's superiority is formulated as a natural consequence of the inferiority of the East and underdeveloped countries (a functional term in itself). Thus, the West's hallmark of sovereign and benevolent rationality also reaffirms the irrational inferiority of other countries and their innate inability to consider their destiny. Hence the need for endorsement from external help for those who are not yet ready to walk on their own two feet.

At this point, the post-development critique transposes its opposition to development's discursive content and propositional fallacies and begins to examine the axiological problems of the very idea of development. As Esteva (2009, 2010) outlined, the contention is that the distinction between North and South, based on the rational superiority of the former and the inferiority of the latter, is false in both cultural and material terms. In other words, underdevelopment does not exist; it is a condition that was imposed on most of the world as a stereotype and a destiny on January 20, 1949. An indecorous archetype that, arrayed with the civilizing authority of those who stated and endorsed it, acquired the status of undeniable truth. The South was not underdeveloped before Truman and not just because the terminology and its imposing and pejorative content were not globally communicated. As an existential material condition of the peoples of the South, underdevelopment was produced by processes such as the Green Revolution, the imperative of industrialization, and environmental and social degradation resulting from the different "recipes" prescribed to these countries by multilateral organizations.

Previously, the global South was not underdeveloped; it was a set of societies characterized by diverse and unique ways of life, not subject to comparisons with the North. The official development discourse denied such countries the fulfillment of the potential of these unique forms of existence and imposed a tortuous path of conversion instead. The material deprivation suffered by the populations of the global South before the "discovery" of underdevelopment can be viewed as characteristics of ancestral societies, in which frugality guided their subsistence needs, without the obsession with consumption that defines the middle-class ideal in developed countries. The very concept of scarcity underlying international organizations' policies to combat poverty is nothing more than a natural consequence of a productivist and consumerist urban standard. A standard that degrades and segregates the peoples of the global South, denying them their traditional frugality and condemning them to social exclusion in inflated and structurally unviable cities (ESCOBAR, 2010; SACHS, 1990).

Therefore, the desire for development that permeates the existence of these exploited peoples is a farce (DE VRIES, 2007). It was culturally instilled in these populations by associating their past with material penury and undignified deprivation, alongside the idealization of some form of the American way of life. For post-development, underdevelopment is the product of the search for development. The global South's biggest problem is the perception that these peoples have built of themselves. Therefore, post-development points to the need to completely abandon the idea of development and incorporate certain understandings on the plane of collective imaginations and practical actions:

> At the imaginary level, it can point to the creation of a collective space/time where 'development' becomes the central principle that organizes economic and social life. This implies the following elements: questioning the pre-eminence of the concept of economic growth and development and its historicity (dominant vision of modernity); gradually disarticulate in practice the development model based on the premise of modernization, the exploitation of nature as a living being, exportation, and individual action. On the affirmative side, it implies a) recognizing the multiplicity of definitions and interests surrounding the forms of livelihood, social relationships, and economic and ecological practices; b) the design of policies from relational cosmovisions, instead of the dominant dualist cosmovision; c) establish intercultural dialogues around the conditions that could develop in a pluriverse of socio-natural configurations (multiplicity of visions, such as liberal and communal, capitalist and non-capitalist, etc.); d) to seek autonomous forms of regional integration based on ecological criteria and self-centered development (as dictated by the requirements of world capital accumulation), at subnational, national, regional, and global levels (ESCOBAR, 2009, p. 445).

In general, the propositional scope of post-development's discussions revolves around valuing traditional societies' ways of life, emphasizing the collaborative aspects of tribal collectivities and the

importance of the contemporary recovery of the values and knowledge permeating these societies' structures. The recovery of ancestral cultural values and abandoning the rationality and knowledge system spread by modernity are vehemently defended. In particular, there is an absolute rejection of the term development and any initiative that proposes to transform the reality of the global South based on a preconceived final model. At the same time, its proponents highlight the importance of breaking away from the global macroeconomic logic, based on the collective rejection of the value system that sustains and legitimates modernity. Despite broadly acknowledging many of the points made by advocates of post-development, this article is not in line with it. Some counter positions to this perspective are given below to elucidate our lack of agreement.

THE INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN POST-DEVELOPMENT'S CRITIQUE AND ITS INCIPIENT PROPOSITIONAL CORE

Viewed objectively, post-developmental authors resort to vague proposals, including Escobar (2007), whose practical proposals are considered the most reasoned (RADOMSKY, 2011; SEVILLA GUZMÁN; WOODGATE, 2013). They sometimes point to the need to establish a society founded on less material foundations, or they evoke the protagonism of social movements in the new era that is unfolding. Their oratory often slips into a romanticization[2] of these movements. The fact is that, despite post-development's propositional poverty[3], recent years have seen the emergence of a profusion of alternatives associated with this term.

However, for some authors, these alternatives are no more than sophisticated cosmetics applied to the essence of the mainstream. Thus, particular processes, such as constructing a negotiated consensus around the definition of local priorities, are regarded as sterilizing conflicts for capitalist planning (MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, 2007). This alternative argument questions the democratic principle more than the vices and asymmetries that limit its application. However, these asymmetries are recollected when it comes to questioning the possibility of dialogue between actors with different margins of action and influence due to their position in different geometries of power (MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, 2008) since it ignores or disregards alternative development proposals' emphasis on equity.

It is prudent to point out that the intention is not to idealize the possibilities of equitable partnerships between groups located at opposite ends of contrasting power geometries (MASSEY, 2008) or question the legitimacy of social movements' historical struggles for rights that have been systematically denied to them. There is no proposal to cast doubt on the fact that much of the harmonious coexistence between small and large rural producers, for example, involves a logic of exploration, subtly covered by bogus generous patronage. All these points are true, but none of them permits a definitive affirmation of the impossibility of dialogical and cooperative relationships between groups differently positioned on the power spectrum. Furthermore, none of the above supports a position of closure given the multiplicity of possibilities offered by the dynamics of social interaction. Otherwise, there would be no sense in debating any proposal for social action (MASSEY, 2004, 2008).

However, the post-developmental critique is even broader and encompasses classical approaches to development and alternative applications of the term. The result is an inconsiderate and ill-constructed homogenization of the significant propositional changes to the concept over the years. Since, as stated by Pieterse (1998, 2010), although it is possible to affirm the shift of alternative development into the mainstream, the divergence between the content of current development propositions and Truman's original ideas is undeniable. If economic austerity still dominates multilateral organizations' prescriptions, its function has been reduced to guaranteeing economic stability and fiscal responsibility; it no longer plays the role of driving development. Development and economic growth have long ceased to be synonymous with mainstream institutions.

Clearly, it is always possible to suggest that development only offers minor corrections, deviating from the crux of the problem: the capitalist economic system's excluding, segregating, and inequality-producing character (MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, 2007). Thus, given the limitations of origin imposed by macroeconomic dynamics, a critique is constructed through criticism, which attacks the development rhetoric (ESCOBAR, 2007) without going beyond discourse. No alternative is offered to

the commodity world; instead, post-development shields itself with an absolute and essentially laconic skepticism in propositional terms (MORAES, 2006; POLLARD et al., 2000).

It must be borne in mind that development is just a word or linguistic unit. Alternative proposals use it with the content or core meaning of a change for the better (PEET, 2007; SACHS, 2008; SOUZA, 2013). The definition is deliberately imprecise because the intention is not to

> [...] define a specific content for 'development,' as is often the case, [...] [but rather] propose, discuss and test principles and criteria as openly (but also as coherently) as possible, so that the definition of the content of 'change for the better' is deliberately reserved as a right and a task of social agents themselves (subjects, protagonists), and not a privilege of the analyst (SOUZA, 2013, p. 262-263, emphasis added).

Several points in the post-developmental arguments are admissible. Indeed, the history of development justifies the charge that its projects merely provided a discursive envelope for imposing strategies for directing capital flows to already rich countries. It is also legitimate to question a self-styled westernized development as the only way, neglecting the possibility of the existence of other paths. However, consideration is needed when going beyond these points. First, many alternative conceptions of development do not make this type of proposal, such as Ignacy Sachs' (2008) inclusive development or the wide-ranging discussions on territorial development (DELGADO; BONNAL; LEITE, 2007; SAQUET, 2019), among other approaches. Second, there is a risk of committing the error that post-development explicitly slips into: to amalgamate diversity and inequality into a hodgepodge that precisely obscures what one wants to preserve.

Post-development has effectively incorporated this impetus, which is a passive condescension in the face of inequality (called diversity) denounced in Bauman's (1999) lucid self-criticism:

> News of human poverty and suffering today are additional colorful accounts amidst the many images of the various ways of life that people have chosen or are destined to lead due to their history, religion, and culture. For a mindset taught to treat society as an unfinished project for managers to complete, poverty was an abomination; its life expectancy depended solely on a managerial determination. This poverty is only an element in the infinite variety of existence for the mentality that rejects global visions and is suspicious of all social engineering projects. Once again, as in pre-modern times, convinced of the inscrutable and timeless wisdom of the divine order, we can live with daily visions of hunger, homelessness, lives without a future and dignity, and, simultaneously, live happily, enjoy the day and sleep peacefully at night (BAUMAN, 1999, p. 272).

What Peet and Hartwick (2009) call a sense of urgency is lost in this process, and it becomes easy to forget that nowadays, millions of people live in extreme poverty. In an immeasurable and almost irrational relativization of any postulated theoretical formulation[4] (MARKUSEN, 1999; PACIONE, 1999; SOKAL; BRICMONT, 2010), the very idea of poverty, or another less materialistic form of existence (RAHNEMA, 2010), is called into question and the meaning of the term 'better' in the notion of change for the better is queried. Peet and Hartwick's (2009) statement about the anxiety to integrate millions of people currently living in sub-human conditions into development projects is treated as a desire conditioned by a seductive narrative. People have been indoctrinated to want development. Faced with a question of this nature, which casts doubt on the authenticity of the desire to abandon destitution, penury, and pauperism, Massey's (2006) observation, a severe critique of unidirectional and undemocratic development, seems to be the best answer: in any culture or society "clean water is certainly better than dirty water" (MASSEY, 2006, p. 12).

Yes, there are hegemonic discourses on development, but they are not the problem, nor are Western knowledge or the technologies that such discourses and knowledge have produced. The problem is the asymmetrical power relations using these instruments (FRASER, 2000).

> In practice, post-structuralist analyses generally forget the agency behind the discourse or over-generalize agency as 'modernity' or 'power' [...]. There is an excessive emphasis on the representation and framing of imaginaries at the expense of practicality and action (PEET; HARTWICK, 2009, p. 233, our translation).

In line with these authors' understanding, we understand that development has been, and still is, used by projects that deviate from the equitable proposal of a better life for all. However, this does not mean that the search for positive transformations should be abandoned in favor of a contemplative indulgence of diversity/inequality. The concept of development retains an immense unrealized potential that can be appropriated by those who need it most.

Given the above, two considerations emerge. The first is that authors aligned with post-development offer significant and necessary reflections, which emanate from a standpoint centered on the successive failures of development propositions and the inconsistencies and insufficiencies present in alternative development proposals[5]. These criticisms denounce the artifices employed by hegemonic discourses when co-opting the social potential of many recent proposals. Furthermore, post-development reveals the presence of ethnocentric tendencies in some rhetorical constructions and encourages rethinking the artificial character of many pillars of contemporary society. Therefore, Watts and Peet (1996) and Souza (1996) propose incorporating part of post-development critiques into alternative development strategies as a warning mechanism to avoid repeating past mistakes and the need to improve future proposals constantly.

In more objective language, it is necessary to think of post-development as a forward-looking element for constructing a propositional field, which does not consecrate a past that may only be the projection of frustrated expectations of the present. Indeed, memory and cultural traditions should not be forgotten; likewise, they must be used to face present conditions. However, legacies from the past are assets and differentials, not ties preventing us from seeing the future that opens up beyond the idealization of the past. Instead of proposing the imposition of time on life or reducing space to time to Massey's (2004, 2006) discourse, it is a coordinated set of actions and events that mobilize reality in a desirable direction for those who constitute it.

In contrast, the second consideration concerns the strand of post-development criticism that advocates abandoning the idea of development altogether. Together with Pacione (1999) and Souza (1996), it is understood that an idea cannot be definitively rejected due to previous inequitable co-optations. Development is not intrinsically perverse, as Rist (2008) rather catastrophically postulates. Conversely, it is just a word that expresses a democratic and human ideal: to make reality less socially perverse. The factual impossibility of doing this en bloc and systemically is not a valid argument to embargo the formulation of alternatives. Inertia is the most efficient measure to maintain the status quo, and as Pieterse (2010) points out, few approaches match neoliberal rhetoric as closely as those that advocate that nothing can be done.

Markusen (1999) recognizes the difficulty of considering an intellectual and operational social project in a world primarily dominated by financial and industrial elites with a scope for action that goes far beyond the possibilities of reaction in some places. However, if forces greater than the places they apply to are created, there are fissures, gaps, and cracks to build feasible possibilities for change. There is no certainty about the results or the consequences that mobilization of this type of action can generate. Nevertheless, the results of inaction or apathy are evident. "What can be expected is no longer the best of all worlds, but a better world" (MORIN, 2013, p. 381). It is no longer a question of proposing major ruptures but small advances, which pave a viable path for less asymmetric societies.

CONCLUSION

The academic exercise carried out in this article proposed a reflection on post-development's theoretical basis, arguments, and propositions. Next, there was a discussion of the critical analysis of the content disseminated by the school of thought, retaining ideas that contribute to planning improved development projects, and avoiding ideas that contribute little to change people's lives for the better. Hardly any propositional-theoretical formulation is immune to limitations, failures, and lapses. Pointing out these limits to advance discussions on the topic is justifiable; it is indefensible to disregard these ideas entirely because of their imperfections. We concur with this view of development and this debate in the field of knowledge construction.

As a fruit of hegemonic discourses, over the years, development has adopted garments with a short expiration date, incapable of denying the proof of the failure of its projects and processes to

achieve the long-promised idea: a better life for all. The recognition of this situation led a group of authors to break with development and blame it for all the ills plaguing the world since the second half of the twentieth century. Many post-development critiques are relevant, but not those that confuse the idea with how it has been used. Development did not invent inequality, social injustice, or poor income distribution. Many of its projects have aggravated these problems, but since the era of Luddism, it is evident that machines cannot be blamed for exploiting workers. When an idea or ideal is misrepresented, one does not abandon it; one struggles to construct it effectively.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTE

1- Academic development literature, whether partisan (PEET; HARTWICK, 2009; SOUZA, 1996; WATTS; PEET, 1996) or defecting (ESTEVA, 2009; MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, 2006; SACHS, 1990), usually agrees on the date when the term development reached the status of a global imperative: the inaugural address of the President of the United States, Harry Truman, on January 20, 1949. When Truman referred to the countries that make up the United States, Europe and Japan axis as developed and the countries that integrate Latin America, Africa, and part of Asia as underdeveloped, he declared to the world the historic mission of the former group of countries to guide the latter towards development.

2- It is worth mentioning the existence of critical postures in views partly aligned with post-development, such as Hobart (1993), who emphatically rejects the idealization of social movements and the oppressive atavism in idyllic gazes on the past.

3- Orlando Fals Borda himself, upon signing the introduction to Escobar's book (2007), gives him recognition.

4- Again, it is due to the caveat of Hobart's (1993) position regarding the postmodern inclination to question the existence of any validity in the scientific production of knowledge: "Although there may not be a privileged neutral position to capture a timeless truth, it does not follow that all representations are equal or that nothing worthwhile can be said" (HOBART, 1993, p. 12, our translation).

5- It is pertinent to weigh this statement, highlighting post-development's tendency to formally ignore many of the reformulations already present in alternative development proposals. An example of this can be found in the resumption, in the previous section, of the imaginary and practical hypotheses advocated by post-development according to Escobar (2009), which are generally recognized and endorsed by most of the current alternative conceptions of development.

REFERENCES

BAUMAN, Z. Modernidade e ambivalência. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1999. 334p.

COSTA, S. Desprovincializando a sociologia: a contribuição pós-colonial. Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, São Paulo, v. 21, n. 60, p. 117-134, fev. 2006.

DE VRIES, P. Don't compromise your desire for development! A lacanian/deleuzian rethinking of the anti-politics machine. Third World Quarterly, v. 28, n. 1, p. 25-43, 2007.

DELGADO, N. G.; BONNAL, P.; LEITE, S. P. Desenvolvimento territorial: articulação de políticas públicas e atores sociais. Relatório parcial. Rio de Janeiro: IICA – OPPA/CPDA/UFRRJ, 2007.

ESCOBAR, A. La invención del Tercer Mundo: construcción y deconstrucción del desarrollo. Caracas,

Venezuela: Fundación Editorial el perro y la rana, 2007. 419p.

ESCOBAR, A. Planning. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010. p. 145-160.

ESCOBAR, A. Una minga para el postdesarrollo. America Latina em Movimento, Quito, ano XXXIII, época II, p. 26-30, jun. 2009.

ESTEVA, G. Development. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010. p. 1-23.

ESTEVA, G. Más allá del desarrollo: la buena vida. America Latina em Movimento, Quito, ano XXXIII, época II, p. 1-5, jun. 2009.

FRASER, N. Rethinking recognition. New Left Review, London, v. 3, p. 107-120, May/June 2000.

FURTADO, C. O mito do desenvolvimento econômico. 3. ed. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2000. 92p.

HOBART, M. Introduction: the growth of ignorance? In: HOBART, M. (ed.). An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance? London: Routledge, 1993. p. 1-30.

MARKUSEN, A. Fuzzy concepts, scanty evidence, policy distance: the case for rigour and policy relevance in critical regional studies. Regional Studies, Brighton, v. 33, n. 9, p. 869-884, 1999.

MASSEY, D. Filosofia e política da espacialidade: algumas considerações. GEOgraphia, Niterói, ano 6, n. 12, p. 7-23, 2004.

MASSEY, D. La conceptualización del espacio y la cuestión de la política en un mundo globalizado. In: SILVA, J. B. da; LIMA, L. C.; ELIAS, D. (org.). Panorama da geografia brasileira I. São Paulo: Annablume, 2006. p. 11-19.

MASSEY, D. Pelo espaço: uma nova política da espacialidade. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2008. 312p.

MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, J. Desenvolvimento em (des)construção: narrativas escalares sobre desenvolvimento territorial rural. 2006. Tese (Doutorado em Geografia) — Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Presidente Prudente, 2006.

MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, J. Desenvolvimento em (des) construção: provocações e questões sobre desenvolvimento e geografia. In: FERNANDES, B. M.; MARQUES, M. I. M.; SUZUKI, J. C. (org.). Geografia Agrária: teoria e poder. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2007. p. 39-54.

MONTENEGRO GÓMEZ, J. Los límites del consenso – la propuesta de desarrollo territorial rural en América Latina. In: FERNANDES, B. M. (org.). Campesinato e agronegócio na América Latina: a questão agrária atual. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2008. p. 249-274.

MORAES, A. C. R. Na trilha do purgatório: política e modernidade na geografia brasileira contemporânea. In: SILVA, J. B. da; LIMA, L. C.; DANTAS, E. W. C. (org.). Panorama da Geografia Brasileira II. São Paulo: Annablume, 2006. p. 39-46.

MORIN, Edgar. A via para o futuro da humanidade. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2013. 392p.

PACIONE, M. Applied geography: in pursuit of useful knowledge. Applied Geography, v. 19, p. 1-12, 1999.

PEET, R. Imaginários do desenvolvimento. In: FERNANDES, B. M.; MARQUES, M. I. M.; SUZUKI, J. C. (org.). Geografia agrária: teoria e poder. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2007. p. 19-37.

PEET, R; HARTWICK, E. Theories of development: contentions, arguments, alternatives. 2nd. ed. New York: The Guil Ford Press, 2009. 324p.

PIETERSE, J. N. Development Theory: deconstructions/reconstructions. 2nd. ed. London: SAGE, 2010.

PIETERSE, J. N. My paradigm or yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development. Development and Change, Oxford, v. 29, p. 343-373, 1998.

POLLARD, J.; HENRY, N.; BRYSON, J.; DANIELS, P. Shades of grey? Geographers and policy. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, London, v. 24, i. 2, p. 131-136, 2000.

RADOMSKY, G. W. Desenvolvimento, pós-estruturalismo e pós-desenvolvimento: a crítica da modernidade e a emergência de "modernidades" alternativas. Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, São Paulo, v. 26, n. 75, p. 149-162, fev. 2011.

RAHNEMA, M. Poverty. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010. p. 174-194.

RIBEIRO, G. L. Poder, redes e ideologia no campo do desenvolvimento. Novos Estudos CEBRAP, São Paulo, v. 27, n. 1, p. 109-125, mar. 2008.

RIST, G. The history of development: from western origins to global faith. 3. ed. London: Zed Books, 2008. 288p.

SACHS, I. Desenvolvimento: includente, sustentável, sustentado. Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008. 151p.

SACHS, W. Introduction. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010a. p. xv-xx.

SACHS, W. One world. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010b. p. 111-126.

SACHS, W. Preface to the New Edition. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010c. p. vi-xiv.

SACHS, W. The archaeology of the develompent idea: six essays. Interculture, Montreal, v. XXIII, n. 4, p. 1-37, Fall 1990.

SAID, E. W. Orientalismo: o Oriente como invenção do Ocidente. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990. 370p.

SAQUET, M. A. O conhecimento popular na praxis territorial: uma possibilidade para trabalhar com as pessoas. Geotema, Roma, Supplemento 2019, p. 5-16, 2019.

SEVILLA GUZMÁN, E.; WOODGATE, G. Agroecology: foundations in agrarian social thought and sociological theory. Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, London, v. 37, n. 1, p. 32-44, 2013.

SHIVA, V. Monoculturas da mente: perspectivas da biodiversidade e da biotecnologia. São Paulo: Gaia, 2003. 240p.

SHIVA, V. Resources. In: SACHS, W. (ed.). The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power. 2nd. ed. London: Zed Books, 2010. p. 243-259.

SOKAL, A.; BRICMONT, J. Imposturas intelectuais: o abuso da Ciência pelos filósofos pós-modernos. 4. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2010. 316p.

SOUZA, M. L de. A teorização sobre o desenvolvimento em uma época de fadiga teórica, ou: sobre a necessidade de uma "teoria aberta" do desenvolvimento sócio-espacial. Revista Território, Rio de Janeiro, v. 1, n. 1, p. 5-22, 1996.

SOUZA, M. L. de. Os conceitos fundamentais da pesquisa sócio-espacial. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil. 2013. 319p.

VEIGA, J. E. da. Neodesenvolvimentismo: quinze anos de gestação. São Paulo em Perspectiva, São Paulo, v. 20, n. 3, p. 83-94, jul./set. 2006.

WATTS M.; PEET, R. Conclusion: towards a theory of liberation ecology. In: PEET, R.; WATTS, M. (ed.). Liberation ecologies: envinronment, development, social movements. London: Routledge, 1996. p.

260-269.