

Book Review



Title: The end of the developmental state?

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With the question *The end of the developmental state?* staring one squarely in the face, logic dictates that there are numerous opinions and answers to this question. The deduction can also be made that this question informs the reader about the actual condition that the concept of the developmental state is in, as well as the relative governance and development-related results that have been attained. Whatever perceptions about the navigational paths of development may be raised, the present discourse affects the future.

In the spirit of steadfastness, integration and adaption, this book articulates a new framework for what may be termed a neodevelopmental state. This framework originates as a result of the development-related data obtained from numerous case studies by authors from diverse backgrounds, who have made valuable additions to the debate on the role of the state in social and economic transformation in the 21st century. The chapters of this book assess the current status of the developmental state in several developing and transitional economies such as South Korea, Taiwan, Ireland, Brazil, China, South Africa and India.

Commencing with the chapter by Williams, the reader is made aware of the four pivotal conditions that she regards as driving the evolution of developmental states and the revision of goals and strategies. She adds that the continued ignorance of these conditions will lead to the end of the developmental state and proposes that the global North considers the reintroduction of the concept of the 'developmental state' as part of its ideological reasoning. The four pivotal conditions are: economic restructuring, democratisation, epistemic shifts and ecological crises.

Williams holds the view that economic restructuring has led many developmental states to walk the path of industrialisation, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries; however, many of the states from the global North and global South have shown a tendency to deindustrialise and assume the 'bit-driven' approach to cater to the needs of growing working-class populations. Therefore, it is argued that the restructuring of the world economy requires the entrenchment of the state, including its actions. Evans proposes that growth sought by developmental states in the 21st century 'bit-driven' economy, will be achieved through the application of potentially valuable systems of education, health and ideas, which he terms 'human capabilities'.

Ó Riain's case study of Ireland's experience demonstrates that caution needs to be taken when constructing a developmental state as technocratic and political problems will hamper its progress. In this regard Chibber, Isaac and Satgar demonstrate that South Africa and India's developmental goals and systems have also been negatively affected by the lack of political will. It is assumed then that democracy is a necessary but insufficient condition for sustainable development. Therefore, empirical references for the 21st century developmental state are sourced from an array of developmental experiences across the world. In this instance, the relevance of democracy for development becomes the second pivotal condition.

This volume makes a concerted effort to consider the historical contexts of development as well as pointing out the constantly changing political conditions that force a revision of the character of the developmental state. Thus, the second condition forcing a revision of the contemporary developmental state is the consideration of the impacts of democratisation. Williams suggests that historically, economic growth has brought about growing demands for increased democratic participation and that the developmental state has maintained its narrow business allegiance. It is in this regard that democratic values must be embedded in state institutions and have an extended role for civil society decision-making.

In contrast, the Chinese experience provides testimony to the understanding that democracy is a necessary but insufficient condition for sustainable development. The investigation by Lee concerning the Chinese Communist Party and the effect it has had on development in China is rather interesting. She suggests that China has applied policies that can be considered as neoliberal and developmental.

The chapter by Kerstenetzky presents Brazil's unique experience of three state-led development models over the past 40 years, focusing on the democratic 'redistributive growth' development path initiated by former Brazilian president Da Silva. The interest in the case of Brazil leads to the assumption that the processes that determine the flexibility of national development policies are related to civil society's participation.

The third pivotal condition refers to the epistemic and ideological differences that are present in current policy and academic debates. Williams is of the opinion that neoliberalism dominates the ideological discourse of development and in this regard she notes Taiwan's experience with its pharmaceutical industry, Ireland's experience with a developmental network state, and South Africa's contemporary experience of a 'green' developmental state. This volume suggests that the power of ideas to shape and change market regimes is a dimension of the 21st century developmental state that requires more theoretical and policy-related attention. The prevalent epistemic conditions also increasingly consider the global North as part of the dialogue surrounding development, compared to the previous tendency to ascribe the developmental state agenda to states of the global South.

Regarding the fourth pivotal condition referring to ecological limits, this book discusses the validity of ecological challenges to the agenda of developmental states. As development is dependent on the productive and innovative utilisation of resources, the environment needs to be scrutinised.

Satgar demonstrates that the South African state's engagement with 'green' development discourse has not resulted in a serious consideration of its ecological challenges. In fact, he argues that the rhetoric of 'greening' the state has been used by the South African government to take advantage of the new avenues of neoliberal accumulation driven by the exploitation of minerals. Satgar argues that this approach reproduces an 'ecologically destructive minerals-energy complex' and in a state like South Africa it has the potential to disregard an indispensable in-depth and democratic approach to affect the just transformation of South African society.

Harris-White posits that the neoliberal state has brought about the dilemma whereby competition between the private interests of the fossil-fuel energy industry and the interests of the renewable energy agenda pursued by state, have resulted in the sluggish migration towards renewable energies. She notes that to affect the required processes toward renewable energies whilst avoiding restrictions, a state would require sufficient political and developmental economic autonomy.

The end of the developmental state? combines diverse experiences and approaches from the South. Not only does this volume edge towards a new understanding of the developmental state, but also towards a new pragmatic approach that needs to be considered by states who define themselves as developmental. This book could be recommended for academia, policy researchers and makers, including those who work within and have a keen interest in matters of development and the developmental state.