

Summaries

Aram Ziai: Postcolonial perspectives on „development“. This article engages with the relationship between postcolonial and development studies. After sketching the two fields and their differences, it identifies four analytical strategies typical to postcolonial studies and examines a number of postcolonial works which deal with „development“. As postcolonial studies are often reproached for neglecting material practices, this aspect of the works in question is highlighted. While some of the works are not at all, or are only superficially concerned with material practices in development policy, others prove that postcolonial studies are most productive when taking them into account.

Patricia Deuser: Gender-oriented development policies and population discourses: The concept of „Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights“ in post-colonial perspective. The liberal colonial reforms of the Wilhelminian Reich marked the first appearance of the concept of „help“ focussing explicitly on indigenous women and their reproductive abilities. This article discusses to what extent these reforms can serve as a departure point for a critical reading of present women-oriented development policies and practices, which have been formed in the aftermath of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. Both reform events „discovered“ women as a specific field of intervention, connecting demographic and developmental discourses. While exploring these two interrelated but historically separate incidents does not allow all the complexities of colonial and present politics to be taken into account, it does allow for certain continuities/transformations in (neo-) colonial population politics to be highlighted. The article argues that an analysis of German development programs and discourses helps determine whether or not the ICPD's core concept of „Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights“ (SRHR) represents a neo-liberal and neo-colonial instrument of governing the „other“.

Franziska Dübgen: „Respect the Poor“ – Postcolonial Perspectives on Poverty. In contrast to being empowering, modernity constructs „the poor“ as low consuming individuals living in material scarcity without access to an adequate wage. This article presents a postcolonial and post-development critique of the discursive effects and normative grounds of the concept of poverty. It denounces the „state of nature“ myth, which is inherent to the construction and blind to the social embedment of a basic needs subject. Making the poor an object of scientific inquiry furthers their disempowerment and undermines their self-esteem. Postcolonial theorists criticize the standardized methods of measuring poverty for their dismissal of the larger historical and social contexts from which marginalization in the postcolonial world has evolved. In contrast, post-development proponents challenge the economic definition of poverty by juxtaposing it with communitarian ethical conceptions of a good life. They stress discursive self-representation as a field of struggle. Both modes of critique challenge the moral premises of Sen's capability theory. Moreover, they dispute the ethnocentrism of the operationalisation of Sen's approach. Finally, the article discusses the Millennium Development Goals, which have put poverty reduction back on the development agenda, and sheds light on their inherent contradictions and blind spots.