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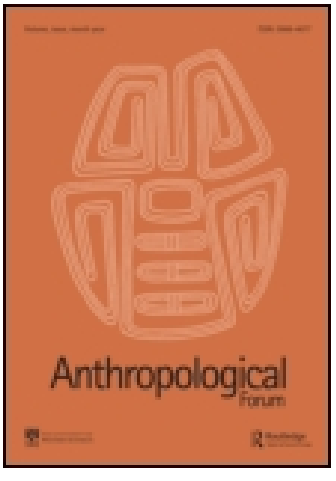

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Global Flows of Development Models[1]

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro

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In spite of the fact that development is one of the most powerful and malleable contemporary discourses, its dissemination on a global level still needs a framework of analysis. Development entails a vast array of modelling devices of the natural and social worlds. Its dissemination is subject to the logics of dissemination of discourses and models and of their transformation into hegemonic visions of the world. The analysis of global flows of development models supposes the analysis of the dissemination of a discursive matrix, of its different components (of diverse levels of abstraction) and the different modes through which such dissemination occurs. I will explore the existence of the diffuse and concentrated modes of dissemination of development models, their characteristics and dynamics in order to provide a framework to think the different ways development is disseminated and naturalised in today's globalised world.

Keywords: Globalisation; Development; Models; Flows; Dissemination

Introduction

Anthropologists, perhaps more than other social scientists, know that 'development' broadly refers to a way of being in the world and of defining what good life and destiny should be to everyone, everywhere. Anthropologists know the claim that endless transformation, economic growth and technological innovation are the goals to pursue in life is a result of specific and highly powerful processes enmeshed with the history of Western modernity. Such processes presuppose (a) the objectification of the natural and social worlds, (b) capitalist accumulation and differentiation, (c) industrialism, (d) ideologies and utopias such as those embedded in the notion of progress, and (e) evolutionist conceptions of unilinear time. Indeed, it is in the nature of anthropology to mistrust metanarratives that uncritically suppose their own universality. This may be the reason why some of the strongest critiques of development, several sheltered under the label of postdevelopment, were made by anthropologists (see, for instance, Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994; and my own work Ribeiro 1991, 1994, 2002a).

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Inspired by Émile Durkheim's well-known argument that religion is society worshipping itself, I wrote (Ribeiro 2002a) that development is economic expansion worshipping itself and that it was necessary to understand the belief system underlying this devotion as well as the power field sustaining it (on the notion of field see Bourdieu 1986). Social representations naturalised in powerful ideologies and utopias, and incorporated in institutions, policies and technologies are what Michel Foucault called discourses (see, for instance, Foucault 1969, 1970, 1992). Development is one of the most powerful and malleable discourses of the contemporary world. It is crucial to the understanding of the world system since World War II, when it came to center stage as a discourse of universal pretension informing policies of global reach. In areas where social agents were not socialised neither under the influence of development discourses nor of the Western categories they presuppose, unbelievers need to be convinced of the validity of development's salvific promises and accept it by consensus building, symbolic or physical violence. In such scenarios, often studied by anthropologists, a veritable pedagogy of development is deployed and can be ethnographically observed.

Development discourses are made up of several models that are capable of framing the natural and social worlds and of being transferred to other peoples on a global scale. The dissemination of 'development' is thus subject to the logics of dissemination of discourses and models and of their transformation into an hegemonic vision of the world, i.e., into an unquestioned and silent consensus. My arguments in what follows certainly resonate with previous discussions on diffusion as well as more recent ones on flows. In an article about the keywords of transnational anthropology, Ulf Hannerz (1997, 11) recognises the long-standing usage of the notion of 'flows' in anthropological studies, and says that 'this looks like a way of reintroducing the idea of diffusion, without the need of returning to the term that apparently is outmoded'. I would say the same regarding 'circulation' and 'dissemination'. They also seem to be ways of avoiding 'diffusion'.

For me, what is at stake is the need to understand how people, commodities, capital and information move around the planet in intensities that have greatly increased in current times. This need has been epitomised by the recurrence of terms in the literature and academic meetings that are metaphors of mobility, exchange and loans (as the ones I mentioned above). The issue is not whether a notion or an approach is more effective than other. More often than not, they can be complementary. For instance, while diffusion may call attention to propagation centers, flows, dissemination and circulation may point more clearly to fluidity, volatility, and to the plurality of agencies and agents participating in the process as well as to their differentiated capacity of structuring movements and their impact. The problem arises when approaches become theoretical panacea that preclude the understanding of the complexity they purportedly want to explain, something that happened to diffusionism and, to some extent, also to 'flows' in current times (see Heyman and Campbell 2009).

In any event, one of the goals of my own formulation is to provide a framework for the understanding of diffusions, disseminations, circulations or flows, by focusing on a

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most fecund scenario, that of how 'development' was spread as a discourse that orients public and private policies around the world. While it is common that discussions on 'global flows' indicate directionality and overemphasise the power of the more powerful to dictate directions, in my perspective the subalterns not only can speak but often can produce flows that find their own pathways, that get entangled with those of the powerful or influence them. Movements of political globalisation from below are a good example of the latter and of the complexity of the resulting arrangements that may bring together fragments of hegemonic and non-hegemonic discourses in complex cycles of (re)appropriations (see Ribeiro 2009). Development provides another good example. The formulation of 'sustainable development' would not have been possible without the critique that the environmental movement made, in the 1980s, of developmentalist policies and initiatives.

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Discursive Matrix

Since development comprises a vast array of formulations of different levels of abstraction it is better understood as a discursive matrix composed of a great quantity of discourses and models, some of them so highly inclusive that they can also be seen as civilisational matrices. These are high level abstractions that can be turned into very concrete models, such as blueprints, managerial and technological paradigms. The analysis of global flows of development models thus needs to take into consideration the existence and dissemination of a discursive matrix, its different components and the different modes through which such dissemination occurs.

General Characteristics

The discursive matrix is the macro framework within which the meanings and tacit knowledge on development are produced. It also is the semantic universe within which dissemination occurs and development is validated as a naturalised ideology/utopia. Although this high level abstraction can be perceived in mundane behaviors and discourses (especially in stereotypical and ethnocentric speeches and actions, for example, when countries are classified as 'backward'), the matrix is better understood as a set of mega civilising discourses that have been structured in a historical *longue durée* scale by a multitude of social agents and agencies. The discursive matrix informs all encompassing categories such as those of personhood, time, good life, humankind's destiny as well as conceptions of nature/culture relations. It is also central for the structuration and consolidation of processes that are related to crucial characteristics of modernity and often discussed under the labels of rationalization, disenchantment of the world, Eurocentrism, Orientalism, scientism, economism, individualism, and the objectification of natural and social life.

Development's notions, statements and interventions are impregnated with the kernel of the matrix that functions as a rhizome of interconnected flows and nodes.

The capillarity of the matrix reaches all social agents who have been socialised and who live within it. However, there are also contradictions within the matrix and resistances against it. Contradictions, resistances and discontinuities are inherent to the discursive matrix since social agents and agencies located in different subject positions are constantly attempting to establish their perspectives as the only true ones. The co-existence of ethnic segments with different cultural backgrounds within a political and economic unit, a typical outcome of the history of capitalist expansion (Wolf 1982), further stimulates contradictions and resistances.

Development's discursive matrix thus supposes: (a) nature viewed as a set of objects in the service of humankind; (b) a cumulative, unilinear time, a notion of progress that posits life as a process of moving toward a better future; (c) the bourgeois notion of person and individual; (d) the prevalence of economic/market-oriented visions (with its consequences such as competition, expropriation, accumulation and fetishism); (e) Western capitalist expansion and the ideological production of its inevitability and centrality; (f) the belief in science and technology as the solutions for humankind's problems; and (g) a notion of power as accumulation of energy and control.

Development is part of a genealogy of discourses that, in specific junctures, are strongly expressed by taxonomic devices that usually generate a dualistic and hierarchical classification of the world, veritable keywords that refer, in static or dynamic ways, to transient states or relationships of subordination: progress versus decadence, civilisation versus savagery, advanced versus backward, developed versus underdeveloped, developing countries or emergent markets (see Perrot, Rist, and Sabelli 1992, 189). Such stereotypes indicate, in not so subtle ways, the power imbalance between two sets of actors, those who promote development and those who are the objects of development. They legitimate the transformation of one set of them into objects of the other's initiatives.

Since the late 15th century, the most important long duration process structuring the matrix's mega civilising discourses has been the movement of capitalist expansion and integration that created and consolidated the modern world system (Wallerstein 1974). The integration of territories, social strata (Elias 1972) and ethnic segments on a planetary scale was guided by growing Western capitalist interests that generated multiple global interconnections (Wolf 1982) through which people, information, capital and goods flowed in various ways. From the 17th century on, nation-states gradually assumed a protagonist role in the making of the inter-national system. For Aníbal Quijano (1993, 214–15), the current world system

> … shares three central elements that affect the daily life of the world population in its entirety: the coloniality of power, capitalism and Eurocentrism. This pattern of power … does not cause the eradication of the historical and structural heterogeneity within its domains. But its globality implies a common ground of social practices all over the world as well as an intersubjective sphere that exists and acts as a central sphere of value orientation within this whole. In consequence, the institutions that are hegemonic in each area of social life are universal intersubjective

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models. The nation-state, the bourgeois family, the corporation, Eurocentric rationality are examples of this.

In this *longue durée* movement of expansion, the discursive matrix's assumptions, institutional, political and cultural needs were far from being universally desired and peacefully accepted. As I mentioned before, compliance and consensus building have often met with resistance and were accomplished also by means of historical processes enacted by a myriad of agents and agencies. Many of the latter exerted outright physical and symbolic violence against peasants and indigenous peoples in different parts of the globe. Armies of soldiers, priests and colonisers, backed by powerful institutions (centralised state agencies, the Catholic Church or colonising companies, for instance) invaded territories preaching the new credos for outcompeted natives who were placed in the position of primitive, savage or inferior, subaltern people. Notwithstanding the formidable power behind the matrix, its dissemination was never completely efficacious as the resilience of resistances proves. Yet, people(s) who have resisted or who resist, entirely or partially, the metanarrative and goals of the discursive matrix are discriminated against in different ways and are perceived by powerful development agents and agencies as retrograde or subversive, as hindrances to their goals.

The scope and depth of the categories that make up the matrix's civilising drive tend to naturalise the belief in it. In consequence, the strongest and more evident forms of resistance suppose a de facto constructed exteriority that becomes possible thanks to a subject position that articulates culture, critical social consciousness and politics. Therefore, those agents and discourses that, for historical, cultural and political reasons, are relatively out of the matrix's totalising efficacy, represent the clearest threat to the matrix's cohesiveness and power. Some indigenous movements and discourses in Ecuador, Bolivia and New Zealand, as well as, in different ways, Muslim precepts about the role of religion in politics, illustrate this relative exteriority. There are other modes of resistance that are ideologically constructed. Some are created in the pragmatic conflicts of the developmental encounters, for instance when social agents of the same sociocultural background are transformed into objects of prescient development planning elites and are forcibly involved in political struggles to protect their economic and social interests that are being negatively impacted by a given developmentalist intervention (the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects provide the most illustrative example). This kind of situation does not mean the existence of a complete disagreement on the suppositions of the matrix. In reality, the conflicts involved often are due to a clash of interests or of interpretation on what development should be. Another form of resistance derives from the intellectual construction of a different subject position which is achieved by the exposition to a critical political pedagogy or by the study of critical theories in the social sciences and history, for instance. This position often gets combined with, and is expressed by, discourses that foster the notion that 'another world is possible'. What often is at stake here, though, is not a wholesale critique of the matrix but a wish to domesticate its most

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deleterious effects such as the contempt for the environment, cultural diversity, human rights and social justice.

Two Modes of Dissemination of the Discursive Matrix

The dissemination of the discursive matrix operates in complex historical and sociological scenarios in two basic and interrelated distinct modes that can be analytically apprehended. I call them the diffuse mode of dissemination and the concentrated mode of dissemination. A few introductory considerations are in order.

The diffuse and concentrated modes of dissemination have different capacities of transferring discourses and, in consequence, of framing reality. On the one hand, the diffuse mode has an ontological capacity; it is more difficult to perceive given its depth and naturalising power. As such, it can be seen as a most effective way of transferring the matrix's contents. It operates in more implicit than explicit ways. It is more amenable to historical and sociological analysis. On the other hand, the concentrated mode has an explicit and openly perceivable framing capacity. It is thus prone to ethnographic research.

Discourses are the stuff of the diffuse mode while models are the stuff of the concentrated one. Let me start by defining models as broadly as possible: they are any symbolic or physical device that is used to anticipate behaviours and interventions in reality in order to control randomness and to achieve predefined, desired and foreseeable goals. They imply beliefs in relations of cause and effect notwithstanding whether these relations are demonstrable or not. A model is also a logic device, a schema, that instructs social agents about how to copy behaviours, processes and actions. In this sense, human life would be impossible without the ability of making and reproducing models. Besides the fact that discourses and models are related to different levels of abstraction and generalisation (for example, the difference between the diffusion of the Western notion of good life, and the diffusion of blueprints of industrial plants), the main difference between them is the following: discourses explain and naturalise, they create the wider environment for the introduction and acceptance of models, while models, in turn, explicitly anticipate and inform concrete processes of decision-making and intervention in reality. Models are more concrete and rigid know-how formulas. I will return to the discussion on models later.

Diffuse Mode of Dissemination

I call it diffuse mode because (a) it has an extraordinary capillarity and power of silent dissemination and (b) it is the product of manifold actions of an enormous quantity of subjects and processes that often are difficult to identify but are responsible for the creation, consolidation and reproduction of the main discourses informing the matrix. The diffuse mode operates by means of largely unconscious macro sociological processes and very long duration historical processes that, in turn, may congeal in institutions and in subtle or not so subtle processes of transmission and socialisation. I

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am referring to processes such as the already mentioned disenchantment of the world, the formation of the world capitalist system, the emergence of the bourgeois subject, and the expansion of the Western Christian world. The diffuse mode is thus made up of multiple macro temporal processes and multiple macro agencies. It articulates different spaces and times on a large scale. In consequence, the diffuse mode is multi-temporal, multilocal and multiscalar. These assertions are perfectly illustrated in the long history of colonialism and its more or less disguised resurfacings in contemporary development worldviews and actions or in the practices of international cooperation agents, for instance.

Historical and sociological analyses are the most effective approaches to understand the diffuse mode. Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Origins of the Modern World System* (1974), Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* (1982) and Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) are seminal and paradigmatic examples of this kind of literature. In the same direction, Dussel (1993) shows how the West invented itself by fabricating a history that excludes non-Western contributions, such as the important Muslim heritage in science and philosophy. Works like these reveal the constructed nature of the contemporary structures of inequalities and of the truth claims of powerful discourses based on categories such as the Western progressive and cumulative notion of time or its self-image as a lineal extension of Greece, the 'cradle of civilisation', philosophy and democracy. By means of these historical processes of discourse production the West is endowed with a 'natural' superiority vis-à-vis the rest.

It is not the historical or sociological truth that matters here. For the sake of our discussion, what matters is that 'progress' and 'Western civilised values' are categories of the matrix that inform and frame social agents' worldviews and livelihoods. As we saw, it is in the nature of the matrix to resort to a mix of discourses about history and destiny, making up a field of contentions in which different parties strive to establish their interpretation as the correct one. The discursive matrix lends itself to ideological and utopian struggles that are replicated in the contents reproduced and disseminated via the diffuse mode.

Physical and symbolic violence (coercive adhesion) are part of the diffuse mode. The history of subjugation of natives by militarily powerful outsiders and the works of the Christian civilising missions illustrate this assertion. But this mode is more effective when seduction and acceptance prevail (voluntary adhesion). Imitation, compliance and consonance are central to the mode's efficacy because they are directly related to the possibility of transforming the 'natives', bringing into light new subjects. In this connection, the mode reveals itself as a powerful tool of consensus and hegemony building. Sharing intersubjectively constructed beliefs is a way of creating objective social life and representations that, in turn, become constraints seldom or never questioned by social agents (something akin to the Durkheimian notion of social facts as things). Imitation is a particularly vital form of diffuse dissemination because it means the conscious or unconscious acceptance and repetition of some norm, behavior or technology. Imitation is also a major way of learning and becoming a member of

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a culture and society. Innovations and foreign models of any kind are much better absorbed if they are easy to imitate.[2]

The diffusion of innovative visions and devices has long been thought to be a major cause of social change. Everett Rogers (2003 [1962]), for instance, wrote a most influential book on how the diffusion of innovations explains social change. In fact, in the wake of many authors before him, Rogers is interested in why novelties are rejected or adopted. Social networks and intersubjective communication play major roles in his explanation as well as the respect for local knowledge and for local sociocultural particularities. However, Rogers' interpretations are illustrative of theoretical approaches that do not consider the desirability of 'innovations' nor their insertion in complex power relations among state, corporate and civil society agents with different interests and worldviews. Although Rogers understands diffusion as dependent on social life, the latter is seen as a cohesive whole in which dissemination occurs independently of different subject positions. This kind of approach is especially problematic when we think of disseminations within the world system, a system clearly structured by different technological innovation capabilities and power to transmit them.

Technologies that embody the matrix's values are one of the most powerful ways of diffuse dissemination. Technological apparatuses and innovations are particularly effective because they are also engines of industrial capitalist growth and differentiation and thus highly related to differentiated accumulation of power. New technologies, especially when first introduced, have clear demonstrative effects as well as capacities of self-explanatory seduction. The efficacy of a new technology makes it more desirable and facilitates social agents' interest in borrowing it. In our analysis, we need to distinguish the imposition of a model as one process from its acceptance based on its own qualities and demonstrative effects.

Concentrated Mode of Dissemination

In contrast with the diffuse mode, the concentrated mode of dissemination of development models is more concrete and structured by historical processes of medium and short duration. It is prone to be embodied in mid-sized and micro agencies that are involved in the production of discourses, models and actions that are identifiable and tangible. Some of the most important of these agencies were created after World War II when development became a label internationally accepted and used. It is the case, for instance, of the World Bank, created in 1944; the United Nations (1945) and its bodies such as the United Nations Development Program (1965); the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1961); the World Trade Organization (1995); several regional development banks, such as the Asian Development Bank (1966); and many other institutions that make up the international cooperation field. Capitalist firms (steel industries, civil engineering contractors, oil corporations, car makers, for instance), universities and non-governmental organisations and many others are also main actors within the development power field

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(Ribeiro 2002a). These agencies and their personnel are responsible for the mechanisms of dissemination typical of the concentrated mode.

The concentrated mode of diffusion is actually incarnated in agencies and social agents that establish conditionalities that, in turn, shape local realities. In consequence, ethnographic research and field research are effective methods for studying it. There are several research studies carried out by social scientists on the mid-sized agencies that produce and disseminate development models as well as on the developmental encounters that put together social agents with different ethnic, cultural, social and political backgrounds. I have shown how the World Bank's complex labor market ethnic segmentation is unified and homogenised by the bureaucratic structure, with its hierarchy and reproduction necessities, by the need to use English as the common language and by the production and reproduction of development models (Ribeiro 2002b). Flávia Lessa de Barros (2005) studied how the relationships between the World Bank and major international non-governmental organisations framed sustainable development models and contributed to strengthen the Bank's role in global governance as well as in processes of creating a global civil society. For Barros, these are the most powerful actors competing to define and disseminate sustainable development models on a global scale. The strategic role of the World Bank within the development field led American environmentalist Bruce Rich (1994) to call it the Mecca of development. Indeed, its political sensitivity to changing development models and discourses (consider, for instance, the impact of sustainable development on the Bank's structure and policies) and its international power and prestige make the Bank a particularly important transnational physical center (Hannerz 1996) of the concentrated mode of dissemination of development models. In spite of important ongoing efforts, such as the research led by French anthropologist Marc Abélès on the headquarters of the World Trade Organization, there remains much to be studied on the internal logics and dynamics of mid-sized agencies that are central to global governance and to the dynamics of the concentrated mode of model dissemination.

Anthropologists have also done research on micro agencies and scenarios typical of the concentrated mode of diffusion. Such field research often is carried out in settings where real developmental dramas unfold. I have done research on the construction of a large-scale infrastructure project, the Yacyretá Hydroelectric High Dam, on the Parana River, on the border of Argentina and Paraguay (Ribeiro 1994). This research showed how civil engineering corporations are responsible for the modeling of local social, economic and political realities in the name of development. Furthermore, my studies on the historical transmission of models of large-scale projects showed the central role engineers have played in the dissemination of different kinds of blueprints at least since the industrial revolution in the late 18th century (see, for instance, Ribeiro 1987). On the other hand, Pareschi (2002) did research on small sustainable development projects and the different agencies/agents involved. She analyzed the articulation of a large German cooperation agency, with Brazilian state agencies, major Brazilian socio-environmental NGOs and small Indian associations. She identified problems

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in this realm that are similar to other more traditional developmental encounters: top-down relationships, the upper echelons of the networks keep the power over and intelligence about the projects to themselves, little understanding of local people's issues and capacities. In order to interpret the imposition of models to local populations in the name of sustainable development, Pareschi coined the notion of 'projectism', meaning that all agents involved in development interventions must obey the projects' requirements that often originated in models of different scales (see below). Projects are elaborated by outsiders and reflect much more the bureaucratic, economic and political needs and interests of development proponents than those of the local populations.

International cooperation has also been the focus of social science research. Silva (2004) studied the building of a new nation-state, East Timor, by focusing on the relationships among United Nations' agencies, non-governmental organisations of different national origins (especially Portuguese ones) and local elites. She revealed, among other things, how the cultural and political frameworks of social agents of the international cooperation often reflected their national origins and informed their programmatic actions and disputes with other actors of the development field in the attempt to establish a prevailing position. These outsiders, their projects and models also were enmeshed in the disputes concerning the different projects and models of nation-building defended by local agents.

The works mentioned above are representative of a growing literature on international cooperation (see, for instance Hoffman 2009; Valente 2010). Analogies comparing international aid to colonialism and imperialism are not uncommon in such critical volumes as those of Tandon (2008), Abbas and Niyiragira (2009) and Easterly (2006). Such analogies are another indication of the lasting influence of the matrix's civilisational categories in concrete examples of the concentrated mode of diffusion.

How the Diffuse and Concentrated Modes of Dissemination are Implemented

The diffuse and concentrated modes share two common forms of implementation. The first one I call 'demonstrative processes' to indicate that it is a non-authoritarian form that rests on convincing abilities, persuasion, seduction, consensus building and voluntary acceptance. I call the second one 'intervention processes' to highlight it is a form of coercive adhesion that depends on unequal power capabilities, on forced implementations and/or on the presence of articulated, conscious planning efforts. They may trigger resistance to the transmission of development models. I will explore the characteristics of both forms as they occur internally to each mode of dissemination.

Implementation of the Diffuse Mode

Demonstrative processes are the most typical form of dissemination of the diffuse mode. This is mainly due to the fact that this mode relies on processes of long duration

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that have become naturalised in social agents' lives and are part of the exercise of hegemony. In fact, who would remember, or know, for instance, that individualism, the notions of personhood, private property, copyrights, capitalism and nation-state, so important for the spread of development models, are historical artifacts? Only social scientists, historians and economists, as well as a few other intellectuals and politicised activists would. For the vast majority of social agents these are unquestionable issues or categories. Indeed, they are the end result of 'civilising' and 'modernising' processes. However, such processes, we know, were not peaceful; they often involved major conflicts, wars of conquest and the subordination of peoples who did not want to comply with the colonisers' worldviews. The implementation of the diffuse mode by means of demonstrative processes that entail imitation and voluntary adhesion generate hegemonies that, in turn, (re)institute the need for certain discourses and models.

Many demonstrative processes are akin to what Foucault called biopolitics (see, for instance, *The History of Sexuality*, 1978), that is, the invention of massive technologies of social and political planning and intervention that were accepted by the majority of the 'population' in the name of their own security and well-being. Biopolitics is so deeply embedded in history and social life that the subjectivity of social agents is framed by the system's need for control and governmentality. The works of biopolitics makes development, for those involved as subjects in the spread of its models, an unquestionable naturalised discourse, a veritable religion (Maybury-Lewis 1990) of our times. Biopolitics has made technological progress, innovation, rational management, instrumental reason, advancement (in contrast to backwardness and decline), modernisation and civilisation (in contrast to savagery and barbarism) central guiding concepts and propositions of agencies and agents involved in the diffuse mode of dissemination of development models. The diffusion of what Appadurai (1990) called ideascapes, for example, notions such as freedom, welfare, democracy, representation, rights, sovereignty, together with the universalisation of the nation-state, paved the way to further discursive and institutional colonisation.

The demonstrative effects of technological innovations are especially effective in diffuse dissemination, as already noticed. Technologies convincingly enhance control over natural, social, economic, political, and cultural processes. Those social agents who do not control or have access to the devices responsible for their loss of power over their environment immediately wish to make up for the existing differences. Military technological disparities are the most obvious examples of how innovation and technique matter in concrete conflicts. In short, technological diffusion is directly related to power differences and social agents acknowledge that relation. Technological innovation is thus easily associated with modernisation and with the worldviews of those who control it. Those who do not control it, follow suit. Electronic and computer innovations provide the latest examples of what I just indicated. In general, the longing for novelties may result in imitation, copying or in the purchasing of panaceas that supposedly will solve the problems of those 'lagging behind'. Comprador bourgeoisies, buyers of closed modernisation packages, are good examples of the

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acceptance of abstruse models for the sake of catching up with the 'advanced countries'.

Other important diffuse means of dissemination are the media and educational systems. This is most evident in current times. On the one hand, the ubiquity of radio and television is greatly functional for spreading all kinds of discourses, cultural, social, political, economic and linguistic fads. The internet has potentialised global diffusion and interaction by means of emails, the world wide web, search engines such as Google, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Search engines are putatively neutral but ultimately guide visions and choices through their use of culturally-informed algorithms and boost the power of electronic-computer capitalism. On the other hand, the global expansion of universities as the solution for higher education everywhere has certainly changed the hierarchies of knowledge prestige and model production in local and national settings in favor of Western modern conceptions. Even biological and body representations are impacted by the implementation of the diffuse mode of dissemination as scientific, medical, health and hygiene models flow to all corners of the world.

Finally, I will point out three other major forces underneath the implementation of the diffuse mode. First, long distance trade and diasporas are responsible for a great variety of disseminations. When trade and diasporas are directly associated to colonisation they become a major force in the conquest of local populations. Intervention processes are common in these scenarios. Would the West have so effectively disseminated its life forms if it were not for the widespread colonisation of vast areas of the world by Europeans and if it were not for the establishment of several entrepôts in different places of the globe? The degrees of hybridity of the resulting situations heavily depend on previous factors such as the political and military strength of the local population as well as their capacity of resistance to intrusions promoted by the intervention processes. Second, the spread of capitalist infrastructure, especially of those works related to the logistics of capitalist expansion, to its production, consumption and circulation needs, is also relevant. These planned initiatives represent the material support of flow mechanisms and have strong demonstrative effect on locals. I am referring to the construction of railroads, highways, mining enclaves and large-scale infrastructure projects, such as hydroelectric dams, built in isolated areas. Such projects are also clear examples of intervention processes. Last, but not least, I want to highlight macro processes of capitalist change, such as those involved in the change from Fordist capitalist relations of production to post-Fordist ones. They are typical of capitalist transformation and competition and force agents to change their lifestyles and accept new production, management, and market models if they want to survive as economic actors.

Implementation of the Concentrated Mode

It is in the nature of the concentrated mode to be made up of tangible agencies that usually implement planned actions. In consequence, their intervention processes are

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rather visible and can be ethnographically described. These processes of dissemination are animated by communities of communication active on different levels of integration (from the local, to the regional, national, international and transnational levels of integration). Networking is crucial to create and amalgamate the communication channels and alliances responsible for the existence, reproduction and transference of models. These communities of communication meet in diverse real scenarios where they perform communicative encounters in which models are exposed and transferred to differentiated social agents, presumably by means of demonstration processes. Such communities of communication are constructed by rituals that may have variegated local or transnational impacts since they are actually part of a chain-like series of encounters. Communicative encounters and rituals are the ethnographic nodes of the rhizome of flows and they differ according to their participants and locales. For instance, a meeting of development elites of World Bank officials and Ghanaian state officials in Washington, uses very different communicative modes and rituals than a public hearing in the Brazilian Amazon jungle with local leaders of social movements and government officials.

I subdivide these communication communities into three different kinds: epistemic communities, political communities, and communities of economic interests. The arbitrariness of this distinction is self-evident: I only make it for the sake of analysis and to emphasise some characteristics more evident and recurrent in certain groups. In the end, every community is epistemological and political and has economic interests.

Epistemic communities are formally dedicated to the production, rationalisation and normalisation of knowledge about/for development. Their role and importance in the dissemination of global models have been discussed by scholars of international relations. Haas (1992, 3) defines an epistemic community as

> … a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area. Although an epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, they have (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members; (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and (4) a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence.

Epistemic communities involved in the making and circulation of development models are made up of professionals and scientists such as economists, engineers, sociologists, anthropologists, lawyers, biologists, geologists, business administrators,

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diplomats and several others. They may be found in multilateral development agencies and banks, organisations of international cooperation, universities, in different kinds of industrial and financial corporations, non-governmental organisations and think tanks. The models these 'experts' make usually appeal to rational demonstrative processes that become, in turn, the basis for intervention processes. They are the main producers of high level of abstraction models (such as the invention of 'sustainable development') or of models of lower levels of abstraction (such as structural adjustments or regional infrastructure planning). Their authority rests on the fetishisation of scientific and professional knowledge and on their ability to demonstrate the efficacy of previous models or the effectiveness of their previsions. Models and modeling are central to the reproduction of epistemic communities that often play wittingly or unwittingly political roles in legitimating decision-makers' positions.

In contrast to epistemic communities, political communities rely on their ability to galvanise political capital and power to interfere in the making, transmission and reception of models. They often use scientific and professional knowledge as means of legitimating their claims in conflictive scenarios. In fact, it is common to find different epistemic communities advising diverse political communities that are involved in struggles for the establishment of the 'truth' about a conflictive issue. The effects of climate change on the future of the planet are an archetypical example. Political communities may be made up of the same professionals and scientists commonly present in epistemic communities. Government agencies (of the executive, legislative and judiciary branches), multilateral agencies, organisations of international cooperation, also play important roles in this milieu. Political and economic elites may build more or less formal political communities that are highly influential in model making and circulation such as the G-7 was in the creation and implementation of the PPG7, the Pilot Program for the Protection of Tropical Forests (a rather ambitious plan based on sustainable development premises) in Brazil, in the early 1990s. Powerful agencies and agents may gather around proposals that are elaborated in major rituals of global governance and integration of transnational political elites such as the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, that produced the Agenda 21, a document used as a worldwide guide highly effective as a tool of concentrated model dissemination. Another good example is the debate that crystallised into a political discourse that became known, in the 1990s, as the Washington Consensus and was responsible for the propagation of neoliberal economic models.

Since the actions of these communities are guided by politics as a means of establishing consensus or of solving conflicts, they are, by definition, more inclusive and prone to using demonstrative processes as the main form of model dissemination. Political communities cannot be entirely insensitive to oppositional and contradictory viewpoints. Indeed, an important segment of these communities is made up of non-governmental organisations, social movements, unions and churches as well as more or less organised networks of citizens. Brokerage and networking abound in this milieu. An international NGO, for instance, may derive its power vis-à-vis a

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multilateral agency from its position of fund supplier to local NGOs or social movements. In this connection, international NGOs, like any other source of funding such as foundations, become primary global agencies of model production and dissemination. Local knowledge and local networks also play a major role within such political communities since they often provide the legitimate grounds for movements to oppose developmentalist initiatives. 'Traditional' knowledge and models, culture and ethnicity become highly politicised entities in such scenarios.

Communities of economic interests are made up of different kinds of entrepreneurs, capitalist corporations, government organisations and other agencies and agents involved in the production and circulation of industrial or agricultural commodities. Financial agencies such as multilateral development banks, export/import banks and private banks as well as global governance agencies such as the World Trade Organization or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development are important players in communities of economic interests. Participants in these communities act by means of intervention processes that usually disregard local models. Depending on the compositions of their networks and on their economic interests, participants do lobbying, engage in bidding processes or in processes of acquisition and mergers, or create consortia to better articulate their political and economic interests and to enhance their technical competences. Regulations of global finances and trade, of productive processes, of labor relations, of social and environmental impacts as well as the fostering of technological and managerial innovations are examples of concentrated dissemination carried out by communities of economic interests. Their work with developmentalist inclined elites is facilitated by the empirical results provided by the application of certain development models. Among the latter, large capitalist infrastructure projects, especially those associated with (1) interconnecting important economic regions, (2) triggering large scale industrial growth, and (3) extracting crucial natural resources, are outstanding examples of the demonstrative effect of the initiatives of many communities of economic interests. Capitalist growth and differentiation in many industrial sectors also illustrate demonstrative effects that prompt economic agents to adopt new models. Generalised competition in an economic branch has the same effect, pressuring competitors to adopt solutions that yield the most cost effective results. Processes of acquisitions and mergers spur the use of new technological, productive and managerial models if a company is to remain competitive in nationally or internationally integrated markets.

Further Understanding the Roles of Models within the Concentrated Mode: Macro, Meso and Micro Scale Models

The concentrated mode consists of a set of agencies with different positions, power and capabilities of intervention. Planning and projectism are key practices of this field and usually are framed by means of macro, meso and micro scale models that constitute the structure of the discourses being transmitted. Given the prominence of models in the dissemination of development discourses I will further explore their differences

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and roles. The differentiation of models according to their scale is thus a necessary exercise.

Macro models are programmatic grand narratives composed of readings of the past and future of humankind, general guidelines for agencies and agents. They are usually high level abstractions formulated in a pompous manner as the solution for different kinds of problems. They provide an umbrella-like coverage for the construction of less abstract formulations and tend to become slogans and sometimes popular buzzwords. When this happens, their contents may become irrelevant and turn into empty signifiers which are used by agents of different political persuasions as indexes of modernity or of fashionable cutting edge speech. Sustainable development, human development, cultural diversity, neoliberal and modernising discourses are common contemporary macro models. They are the result of long-standing articulations and negotiations of networks of agencies/agents that include members of various epistemic, political and economic communities of communication.

Macro models entail different political and practical strategies of discourse production and dissemination. Their implementation usually demands the elaboration of meso and micro models. Narratives may be produced within or on the interfaces of academic, political and economic institutions as responses to changing historical and sociological conditions. Universities and formal or informal political subjects and structures are powerful propagators of macro models. Other efficient modes of macro model dissemination are 'institution building' and 'capacity building', common initiatives in international cooperation and in the development field. The creation of new institutions, a ministry for the environment, for instance, is a way of turning macro models into real entities, of securing guarantees that the model will be implemented, reproduced and further disseminated by real social, political and economic agents. New institutions demand new agents to implement their goals and to assure their corporate reproduction. Capacity building is the response to this created necessity. Other powerful propagation engines are the already mentioned mega transnational rituals of integration of political elites such as the Rio 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development that turned sustainable development into a global paradigm. These are mega communication machines that invade the local media with macro models. In these mega rituals there are multiple formal and informal communicative encounters in which members of different epistemic, political and economic communities present their understandings of macro models and how they intend to transform them into meso and micro models.

Meso models are not as abstract as macro ones nor are they as precise and detailed as micro models. They are informed by macro models' general doctrinaire contents but have an immediate commitment to implementation and transformation. Meso models are geared more towards a how-to-do approach than towards the construction of ideologies or utopias or towards convincing social agents of an intervention's rightfulness. They take for granted that the macro models they convey are desirable and legitimate. For instance, neoliberalism is a macro model translated into meso models that

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were widely applied to national economies. These were economic policy prescriptions known as structural adjustment programs. They are 'conditionalities', intervention processes that frame how development funding is negotiated as well as the rules of engagement with real issues such as the role of the state and civil society in development initiatives.

Meso models are also produced by epistemic, political and economic communities of communication and may be a product of their collaborative or conflictive interactions. They are disseminated by international rituals such as meetings of global governance institutions (International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, for instance). Political structures, such as parties and state organisations are also instrumental in the diffusion and implementation of these models. In contrast with macro models, meso models do not depend on the creation of new institutions. However, they rely on changes in institutional goals and practices and sometimes entail vast managerial and economic reforms of public and private corporations. Consider, for instance, the impacts of privatisation after it became a highly effective meso model of economic policy in the 1990s. They included changes in firms' capital composition, the breaking of the organic links with state apparatuses, changes in labor relations, and unemployment, to mention but a few. Public policies and legislation play a crucial role in this environment. Programs and projects are the preferred mode of transmitting and carrying out meso models' desiderata.

Micro models are directed towards action and real transformations on the ground. Macro and meso models have already generated a symbolic and political environment that feeds micro models with legitimating contents. They are the real plans and projects, outlines, blueprints, layouts, mock-ups, prototypes; they are preestablished spatial, social, economic and cultural interventions. They are models in the concrete sense of the word, preformatted cognitive maps to (re)produce materialities, lifestyles, production and circulation schemes, environments, and social, economic, political and cultural processes. They prefigure reality and impose a predefined order on it. As the last links of the dissemination chain, they have a hands-on approach. Micro models have authoritative and authoritarian qualities and they fully depend on projectism. Once micro models are defined and start to be implemented, all processes have to be adapted and performed according to their mandates. Incapacity to act accordingly and results that differ from what was anticipated are considered to be evidence of failures and incompetence. Those responsible for the disparities must explain themselves and may be found guilty and dismissed for not following the rules. Resistances to the implementation of these models, sometimes called development projects (struggles against dam construction, for instance) are met with strong responses by the developmentalist agents, including physical violence.

Micro models are usually disseminated and implemented by technicians and professionals such as engineers, architects, geologists, economists, lawyers, business administrators, sociologists, anthropologists, biologists and others. The dissemination of these models may require the creation of new institutions or the transformation and adaptation of old ones. Capacity building is particularly important since micro models

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involve the transmission of specific, often technical, knowledge to local peoples who may not be familiar with the projects' lexicon and rationale. Their transmissions often entail a series of communicative encounters, some highly formalised such as training courses or public audiences. Training courses taught by development experts or consultants are particularly interesting because their pedagogy often makes use of micro models of model transmission. One of such models, the ZOPP method (Zielorientierte Projektplanung or Goal Oriented Project Planning) was developed by the GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, the German technical cooperation agency) and has been applied in all German-funded projects since the 1980s, in many different circumstances, as a technique to enable the participation of interest groups in the preparation of project plans and to help consensus building. Other international cooperation organisations and multilateral agencies use ZOPP. Participants often are taken to isolated venues to have 'full immersion' experiences with the method and with the project goals that are supposed to be absorbed by 'target audiences'. The pedagogy of development requires dedication, formality and seduction if models are to be internalised by new agents. International, national, regional and local agents of the development field participate in other rituals of content transfer. Some of these are planning and political meetings that put together people from different international developmental agencies, governmental and non-governmental organisations and, sometimes, local citizens. According to Silva (2008, 144) the so-called donor conferences are a characteristic event in the AID field. They are

> … ritual phenomena in the international aid universe and, for this reason, are condensed and expressive manifestations of this universe's symbolic repertoire and modes of functioning. As a ritual, the meeting is a solemn occasion in which values and institutions which operate in the aid donor field are renewed.

In such 'glocal negotiation spaces', as Silva (2008) shows, identities, relations of alliance, honour and precedence are also constructed further reinforcing the processes of model dissemination.

Final Considerations

Flows and implementation of development models do not happen in a vacuum. Models are produced, circulated, accepted or contested within power fields made up of different subject positions. Social agents put models into effect using different technologies and communication methods. This article aimed at understanding how powerful discourses and models in 'development' are transferred on a global scale and naturalised in ways that make resistance to it seem absurd. I offered different notions, different tools for the interpretation of a rather complex universe. These are discursive matrix; diffuse and concentrated modes of dissemination; demonstrative and intervention processes; epistemic, political and economic communities; macro, meso and micro models. My intention was to formulate a framework of analysis of global flows of development models.

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It is common that a theoretical effort leads to new questions. After these reflections, I came to the conclusion that more research is needed on the logistics that allow flows to exist. There are people, places, devices, machines, buildings and roads that make up the infrastructure on which flows thrive. The communication and social basis of information transmission explored in this paper is central to any sociological and anthropological analysis of flows. However, in order to understand more how 'flows' operate we have to do research on such fundamental nodes of the 'web of flows' as harbours, airports, broadcasting stations, and antennae, as well as on the real connections established among them that are the results of the cooperation of people and machines. The more time-space compression (Harvey 1989) caused by the enhancement of communication and transportation systems deepens its structuring impacts on social, economic, political and cultural life, the more important it will be to understand its apparatuses and operators.

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Notes

[1] This paper was originally written as part of the final report of the MEDEA Project (Models and their Effects on Development Paths: an ethnographic and comparative approach to knowledge transmission and livelihood strategies), under the European Commission's small- and medium-scale focused collaborative project, FP7 SSH-2007-4.1.2. – Development paths in an historical and comparative perspective and their impact on Europe. In Brazil, the research was carried out by the Laboratory for the Study of Globalization and Development (Department of Anthropology, University of Brasilia) during the years of 2010 and 2011. Five other teams located in England (Goldsmiths College), Spain (University of Barcelona), Italy (University of Bologna), Slovakia (Comenius University) and Argentina (IDES) also participated in this international research effort. My thanks to Gonzalo Diaz Crovetto, Fernando Firmo, Nelson Soto and Raoni Giraldin who, in Brasilia, gave me different kinds of support for the writing of this text. I also want to thank two anonymous reviewers of *Anthropological Forum* who helped me to improve my arguments with their critiques.

[2] French sociologist Gabriel Tarde dedicated an entire book, *The Laws of Imitation* (1890), to understand the primordial role imitation plays in social life and reproduction. See the English version in Tarde (1903).

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