

## Preface

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This volume contains papers from scholars who gave lectures at an intensive researcher-training course in August 2000 organised by the Graduate School of International Development Studies, Roskilde University.

The papers deal with changing global and regional conditions and how they have impacted upon development in Third World countries. Most of the papers further raise questions concerning the likely implications for policy-making and socio-economic development in the future.

As a whole, the present volume covers a broad spectrum of topics reflecting the wide-ranging discussions at the training course. Some of the issues dealt with concern the interpretation of the basic nature of recent changes in the international economic and political systems. Are we witnessing 'globalisation' in the sense that national economies are being subsumed and re-articulated into a global system with the further implication that the role and capacity of nation states as sovereign economic regulators are being eroded? Or would it be more appropriate to describe what is actually happening as 'internationalisation' where national economies remain the principal entities and where nation states continue to play important roles? Is it at all meaningful to deal with the changes at this high level of aggregation or should we rather look for regional patterns shaped primarily by the leading economies of the world, especially the US, the EU and Japan? This also raises questions about the driving forces and whether they should be conceptualised in terms of processes, structures and flow patterns or in terms of actors such as states, firms and international organisations. Are changes in the world economy and the conditions for

Third World development brought about primarily due to basic structural changes in the leading economies, such as corporate financialisation in the US, new forms of capitalist competition or altered forms of industrial organisation? Or should we rather look for the driving forces among prominent actors such as the US government, the IMF, the World Bank or the WTO? Do less powerful actors such as organised labour, environmental pressure groups and other civil society organisations play important roles in shaping the international economic and political structures and institutions?

None of the papers actually raise these issues as 'either-or' questions but rather as 'more-or less' and 'how' questions. In a brief introduction, however, it may be useful to simplify and point to the competing extreme positions and interpretations.

In relation to the analyses presented in the various papers of the implications for developing countries a similar approach may be adopted but here we may also raise more open-ended questions to give a flavour of the topics dealt with: Has opening up and increasing the international integration of the economies of developing countries promoted growth in general or only under certain conditions? Can openness be managed to ensure more benefits to developing countries or have the states in these countries been weakened to the point where they are essentially powerless when it comes to regulating their economies and cross-border transactions? What are the requirements in terms of policies, national institutions and capacities for achieving national control and balancing the external pressures? Is it helpful in this context for developing country states and other national actors to engage in coalition building at a regional or global level? Can they benefit from strengthened global and regional governance institutions or is it more likely that increased international political integration will further undermine state autonomy?

These and related issues are discussed in general terms in the papers of this volume, but they are also addressed more specifically in relation to particular countries, mainly in Asia.

With this collection of papers we hope to stimulate more debate on and more analyses of changing global and regional conditions; how they have impacted and are likely to impact upon developing countries; and how individual countries have coped with the new challenges. Comments and criticism of the papers will be highly appreciated. They may be communicated through the editors or directly to the respective authors.

## PREFACE

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