Feeding the World: Agriculture, Development and Ecology
COMING TO TERMS WITH NATURE

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Philip McMichael
Abstract

How and why does 'development' privilege a global agricultural system that is socially limited and ecologically unstable? This essay examines the ways in which 'development' has been represented and applied to the task of feeding the world, and its ecological consequences. 'Development', a term with universal appeal, has been appropriated as an ideological expression of capitalist development. It actually represents the political relations of global capitalism, though not of course without being contested. This essay frames capitalist development in terms of three successive historical 'projects': the colonial, development, and globalization projects. The contradictions of each successive project condition the one that follows, just as the crisis-ridden globalization project is today shaping an emerging, unstable, 'imperial project', focused on securing resources to sustain US military power and the global consumption relations of a minority class.
The environmental impact of agriculture is the effect that different farming practices have on the ecosystems around them, and how those effects can be traced back to those practices. The environmental impact of agriculture varies based on the wide variety of agricultural practices employed around the world. Ultimately, the environmental impact depends on the production practices of the system used by farmers. The connection between emissions into the environment and the farming system is indirect, as Agricultural Development Economics Division Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations www.fao.org/economic/esa. i. PROOF COPY, World agriculture towards 2030/2050: the 2012 revision. Nikos Alexandratos and Jelle Bruinsma Global Perspective Studies Team. FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division. Abstract. Based on our assessment of world agricultural resources, it seems that at the global level there should be no major constraints to increasing agricultural produce by the amounts required to satisfy the additional demand generated by population and income growth to 2050. Agricultural output as a whole would increase to about 60 percent over the levels of 2005/07 Development of sustainable agricultural production systems will be necessary to safeguard the world’s already damaged ecosystem and sound principles of science and technology can be applied to minimize environmental degradation. 1. Introduction. Ecology and economy are twin elements of global stability. About twenty-five years ago, it was a popular belief that the goals of economic development and environmental protection were mutually exclusive. Today, this view has largely given way to a belief that we need a better understanding between economic development and the global environment. The f