Introduction

Tracking the changing discourse on development in the *International Labour Review*

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Abstract. *The introduction to this Centenary Issue presents the discourse of development as reflected in a number of articles published in the* International Labour Review *(ILR) between 1971 and 2020. The 13 articles selected for inclusion in this issue provide various perspectives on development at different points in time, focusing on income, structural transformation, improvement of the lives of people through social development, and the interactions of economic growth with employment and labour markets. By highlighting aspects of the relationship between economic development and labour, these analytical and empirical contributions are still relevant today to help us to understand development processes and policy discussions.*

Keywords: *economic and social development, industrialization, globalization, employment, basic needs approach, human development, technological change.*

1. The central issues of development economics

Development has long been a central concern of students of the economy. For a time, development was seen as synonymous with a high rate of growth in gross domestic product (GDP), on the grounds that the benefits of a rapid expansion of national income would spread across the population and "trickle down" to the poor. This view had to be revised, however, as the experience of several developing countries suggested that economic growth is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for development more broadly defined. It became increasingly clear that it was the nature of changes in the structure of the economy and the associated productive employment opportunities, along with

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redistributive policies, that determined whether the benefits of growth would reach a larger proportion of the population.

The origins of what is now generally thought of as "development economics" can be traced back to the post-war period of the 1950s. This is when the notion that developing countries differed from industrial economies in their economic logic gained currency through W. Arthur Lewis's (1954) concept of economic dualism and through Paul Rosenstein-Rodan's (1943) theory of the coordination failures inherent in less developed economies. Others like Michal Kalecki (1976) identified differences in the nature of unemployment as the most critical macroeconomic distinction between developed and developing economies. In developed capitalist economies, unemployment was linked to the inadequacy of effective demand; in developing economies, unemployment (or underemployment) was seen as structural, resulting from "the basic and endemic shortage of capital equipment as well as bottlenecks in the supply of necessities" (Ghosh 2005, 114). These varying perspectives were also associated with sometimes conflicting approaches to growth strategy: balanced growth strategies dependent upon central coordination through development planning (Mahalanobis 1951) versus unbalanced "big push" strategies for industrialization conceived by Rosenstein-Rodan (1943) and advocated, for example, by Albert Hirschman (1958).

Of course, these differing assessments all required a common understanding of the objectives of development. Yet, here again, international perceptions have gone through a number of different phases. Early analysts treated development purely as a process of generating greater material prosperity, leading to what is now recognized as a simplistic focus on expansion of per capita income. Subsequently, experts recognized that development implies the structural transformation of the economy, shifting workers from lower-value-added to higher-value-added activities. This made development synonymous with industrialization and the building of industrial or "post-industrial" societies that characterized affluent countries.

However, it became increasingly clear that the growth of the industrial sector alone would not solve the employment problem in underdeveloped economies. Eminent development economists such as Benjamin H. Higgins and K.N. Raj argued that special efforts were required to address this issue in order to make successful economic development possible (ILO 1961). The ILO's launch of the World Employment Programme (WEP) in 1969 had a major influence on the development debate, since it put productive employment[1] and basic needs at the heart of the development strategy (ILO 2009). It also broadened the scope of the ILO's work by combining economic growth with social progress as part of the overall development strategy. This broader agenda on growth and distribution of income had an impact on development debates in the 1970s and 1980s.

[1] "Productive employment" refers to employment yielding sufficient returns to labour to permit workers and their dependents a level of consumption above the poverty line (ILO 2017, 1)

About three decades ago, economists studying development issues introduced the concept of "human development" (Haq 1995; Sen 1999), recognizing that monetary income, even in per capita terms, could be at best a poor, and at worst a misleading, indicator of economic and social progress. For simplicity's sake, the human development index developed by Mahbub ul Haq as the Project Director of the 1990 *Human Development Report* (UNDP 1990) included health and education indicators as part of per capita income. But the fundamental aim of this approach was to recognize that development implies the expansion of human capabilities in the achievement of universal access to basic needs (such as nutrition, housing and essential amenities, and health and education services), and guaranteeing the human security and dignity of the entire population. More broadly, it considers development "as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen 1999, 3). Over time, the crude reliance on national averages for any of these indicators was also brought into question as it became increasingly evident that distributional changes (or the lack thereof) played a critical role in determining the extent to which such development actually led to the transformation of living conditions and opportunities for most of the people in society.

All of this highlights what should be obvious: development is not and cannot be a simple technocratic or apolitical process. Rather, it both relies on and results in changes in income and asset distribution. It depends, therefore, to a critical extent on national and international configurations of the political economy. In global terms, the international division of labour that was established around the middle of the nineteenth century persisted in its broad contours for more than a century and a half. It was a reflection of the fact that most countries were unable to undergo the same process of industrialization and achieve the same per capita GDP growth that established the developed countries as "rich". This did not just occur by happenstance: it reflected economic processes operating at global, national and local levels that affected and constrained possibilities of growth and development in different regions. Economic development in any one region or country therefore cannot really be understood without considering the evolution of imbalances in global power. This is inextricably linked with access to, and control of, global resources, including natural resources. The long history of excessive use of global resources by today's developed countries has contemporary resonance in the debates over the relative responsibility for, and need to restrict, carbon emissions to reduce global warming.

Within countries, too, questions of distribution permeated development or the lack thereof. Both the costs and the benefits of any development process tend to be unequally dispersed to varying degrees, which reflect the processes of the political economy underlying the changes brought about by development activities. The embeddedness of both markets and governments as inherently social institutions (Polanyi [1944] 2001) means that meaningful economics necessarily inhabits the field of political economy, which recognizes the interplay of political and social forces with economic and legal institutions or processes. This approach gives history and politics much more significant roles in the processes of growth and development at local, national, regional and international levels. The importance of uneven development as a characteristic and intrinsic feature of capitalist expansion also becomes evident. Development strategy and specific policies both generate distributional consequences, which, in turn, act upon economic, social and political processes. They also determine the contours of subsequent policies. This means that it is not enough to recognize that there can be different "winners" and "losers" in a development process. Rather, history matters in a more thorough and complex way by making the process of development an evolutionary one in which there is a continuous interplay of various forces that determine actual outcomes.

The relationship of development to the world of work is, therefore, also necessarily complex and multilayered. For obvious reasons, development analysts have been concerned with understanding changes in labour processes, in employment and labour markets and in the incomes and living conditions of workers. The articles in this Centenary Issue of the *International Labour Review* (ILR) trace how these perceptions of development have evolved over time. They also pursue some of the central questions of how structural transformation and poverty reduction interact with employment and labour markets. We have chosen these articles for their importance in the theoretical, empirical and policy discussions of their times and for their contemporary relevance. They bring out different aspects of the relationship between economic development and labour in ways that were analytically fruitful at the time they were written and that still provide insights into development processes today.

2. Development as structural transformation

The article by Ignacy Sachs (2004), a Polish-born French economist, provides a rich and insightful exposition of how the idea of development has evolved over time. He describes how early expectations of gradual but consistent progress towards "modern" economies had to be revised in the face of the more complicated reality of structural heterogeneity, both economic and social. Sachs argues that "developing economies can still be described as archipelagos of modern enterprises with high labour productivity, immersed in an ocean of low or very low productivity activities, which constitute the interstitial tissue of the economic system. Most of the GDP comes from the archipelago. The majority of people swim in the ocean, trying to survive" (Sachs, 164–165). This discrepancy helps us to understand the persistence of other forms of inequality and of low productivity in aggregate social terms. Active state intervention is required to alter both employment opportunities and relative prices through fiscal and monetary policies, as well as sectoral strategies, to make the process of economic growth more "inclusive". Sachs makes the case for employment-led growth, a process that appeared idealistically implausible during the heyday of neoliberalism in the late 1990s but which seems to have gained much more traction and potential these days.

The very notion of development as structural transformation is inextricably bound up with patterns of employment.[2] Following Kuznets (1973), modern economic growth has generally been associated with structural transformation in the economy, involving employment shifts from agriculture to other sectors and then from industry to services, along with a shift from self-employment to wage employment in companies. Kaldor (1967) treated structural change as not only a result of growth, but also a cause of it, with manufacturing growth leading to more rapid increases in GDP and labour productivity. In demand terms, manufacturing and services have higher elasticity of demand for their products than does agriculture. In addition, Verdoorn's law stipulates that productivity in manufacturing industries rises with the growth of manufacturing output (but with a coefficient less than unity, to ensure continued employment growth in manufacturing). Therefore, productivity growth is higher in manufacturing than in services or primary activities and so has a greater impact on aggregate output and productivity. This leads to manufacturing growing faster than total output. Further, the mechanism outlined by Lewis (1954), of "surplus" labour in primary activities moving to more productive manufacturing, implies that employment growth in industry also results in increasing productivity in other sectors.

Either way, growth and structural change (in terms of the composition of both output and employment) are closely intertwined. Some have seen this as the essential process of development, expecting that industrialization will result in higher per capita incomes and lower inequality. However, structural change has not always operated in this stylized manner. Although the share of agriculture in output has generally tended to decline, this has not always been accompanied by equivalent decline in agricultural employment. Over the past century, different economies have displayed strikingly different patterns of structural change and economic transformation. It is true that some countries have successfully made the transition to manufacturing (such as the East Asian developmental States), but there are also examples of initially rapid expansion and stalled levels of manufacturing that have produced dualist labour market regimes, as in some countries of Latin America and in South Asia. In a few recent cases, services have become the drivers of growth, while agrarian low-income economies and mineral-rich economies have exhibited different trajectories.

S.A. Kuzmin (1982), an ILO official who was a researcher in the WEP, disaggregates the causes of structural transformation into four categories: (1) those resulting from the dynamics of national economies, such as differing rates of sectoral growth and the extent to which these create new employment; (2) changes in social needs and aspirations, which he saw as strongly influenced by urbanization; (3) trends in the processing of primary products and the extent to which these are encouraged and controlled within the national economy; and (4) forces emanating from the global economy, including the shift towards knowledge-intensive industries, the increasing share of capital-goods-producing industries and the changing balance of factor costs that

[2] Parts of this and the following paragraph draw on Jayati Ghosh (2016).

generate tendencies for industrial production to relocate from developed to some developing countries. These may appear obvious today, but they were quite prescient at the time when Kuzmin wrote his article, and his considerations remain largely valid in the present context.

3. Rural development and agriculture

The movement of workers across sectors and between rural and urban areas has been intrinsic to the development process. Over time, there has been a growing concern about poverty and employment, the most acute development problems in less developed countries. These issues continue to persist and remain unresolved to this day. The challenges of employment and rural development attracted great attention from development economists, who argued for major transformations in rural areas to solve these problems. Addressing the agrarian question (in particular, highly unequal land concentration and exploitative labour conditions) became ever more pertinent. In a number of countries, governments introduced agrarian reforms, and a large body of empirical literature has looked into the impact of these reforms in improving rural livelihoods in less developed countries.

Marvin J. Sternberg (1971), an economist from the United States of America, dealt with this question. His article explores how agrarian reforms led to an increase in agricultural employment and improved workers' welfare in a number of low-income countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. He considers three aspects of employment: the level of remuneration of agricultural workers; the amount of underemployment; and the creation of new jobs in the agricultural sector. On the basis of several country studies, he argues that, although agrarian reform is very much a political issue, its ability to meet the goal of creating employment opportunities also depends on a number of other factors. These include the expansion of the resource base, investments in large-scale irrigation projects, the improvement of rural infrastructure, and the introduction of technological advances such as high-yielding crop varieties. He recognizes the importance of the "green revolution" – that is, the combination of new inputs like high-yielding seed varieties and irrigation with chemical fertilizers to achieve greater production – in addressing the output–employment problem and the issues of hunger and poverty. However, he is also concerned about the green revolution's effect on the cultivation of traditional varieties of crops, its impact on employment possibilities and its potential to exacerbate inequalities. He argues that "the seed-fertiliser revolution, despite its potential, is no substitute for agrarian reform … and other measures required to provide adequate income and opportunities" (Sternberg, 475) to those engaged in agriculture.

Amit Bhaduri (1989), a leading Indian economist then based at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, notes that, although redistribution of land and other productive assets would increase incomes and strengthen the strategies of the peasantry, "the political barriers to such redistribution can be formidable" in certain political regimes (Bhaduri, 698). He suggests an alternative policy agenda as a more feasible option, including the granting of rural credit and the implementation of marketing reforms to strengthen the survival strategies of poorer agricultural households. In many less developed economies, the lack of formal institutions providing credit, agricultural inputs, and markets for produce resulted in the extraction of agricultural surplus by the rentier class through the interlinking of the markets for land, labour, credit, water and products, which was counterproductive to economic development. Bhaduri further points to the limits of the dual economy model. He argues that most economies did not transition from agriculture to industry and instead shifted to traditional service activities. The reason for this was the coexistence of production on large farms based on wage labour and the self-employed subsistence workers, which reflected the inequality of land ownership and other resources. Such instability in rural livelihoods forces massive outmigration of members of agricultural households to urban areas in order to devise survival strategies in industry and traditional services. This, in turn, affects the process of industrialization, which, to be sustainable, requires rural livelihoods to be reasonably stable and to be able to generate the required agricultural surplus, thus avoiding undue pressure on employment creation in industry and services.

The debt crisis and the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s ushered in by neoliberalism had profound consequences for the rural economy in many parts of the world. The governments of many countries were obliged to implement structural adjustment and stabilization measures under the aegis of the Bretton Woods institutions. It was argued that, as agriculture accounts for a sizable share of export earnings, the specified measures would help bring about the development of the agrarian economy, address rural and urban poverty and result in income redistribution. The contribution of Ajit Singh and Hamid Tabatabai (1992) – respectively, an eminent economist from Cambridge University and an ILO official – questions the long-term implications of structural adjustment programmes and the role of agriculture in that context. A fundamental question they raise is "whether this is the right kind of structural change from the point of view of *long-term development* in the developing countries" (Singh and Tabatabai, 416). They note that rural areas produce only a small proportion of agricultural products for exports, and a substantial part of the food production is subsistence agriculture, which is non-traded. In addition, from an employment point of view, the export sector is quite small compared with the size of the agricultural economy. The authors show that devaluation increases income inequality not only in rural areas but also in the overall economy. They further argue that cuts in food subsidies and increases in producer prices lead to food inflation, which can have serious consequences for both the rural and urban poor.

The liberalization policies of the 1980s and 1990s in the land, labour and capital markets, as well as the opening up of economies to world markets, led to a boom in commodity exports. It also provided new markets for capitalist agriculture and allowed the entry of corporate capital, which was invested in export commodities and resulted in production shifting from traditional crops – such as rice, wheat and maize – to non-traditional agro exports like sugar cane, soya and fruits. Singh and Tabatabai show that, during the 1980s, commodity prices were low or weak and were subject to greater fluctuations, a situation that did not lead to more favourable terms of trade for developing countries. The repercussions of these policies fuelled a new process of land concentration, which, in some instances, led to "land-grabbing" and has now become an increasing problem for small landholders and communities in rural areas.

Despite these developments, there was an impetus to reassess the role of agriculture in economic development in an effort to address the employment question in rural areas in most economies. Singh and Tabatabai lay down an agenda for policy research, which is still relevant today, wherein they promote Sukhamoy Chakravarty's (1987) "agriculture-first development programme", which is based on the expansion of internal rather than external demand. This, they argue, could be achieved through large-scale government investment in irrigation and other agriculture-related infrastructure. A second important policy issue they raise is the extent to which domestic agriculture should be protected from international price fluctuations.

4. Technology choice and employment

The choice of techniques was central to development strategies, and such choices were intertwined with decisions on the type of goods to be produced, the capital–labour ratios and the scale of operations. The vast choice of technology and the breadth of technological knowledge made available by industrialized economies meant that less developed and developing economies had to adopt a conscious technology policy as part of their industrialization strategy. Ajit Bhalla (1976), an ILO official, illustrates the dilemma that preoccupied development strategists when adopting the appropriate technologies for their economies, focusing on employment generation and poverty alleviation as the fundamental objectives. Central to this debate was a social cost–benefit analysis involved in determining whether the adopted technology was socially desirable – an issue that is even more relevant in today's era of automation, robotization and digitalization. Bhalla's analysis is based on a number of country studies conducted as part of the WEP. He shows that countries adopted sector-specific strategies that varied from capital-intensive techniques such as the use of second-hand machinery, labour-intensive methods or reverse engineering, among others. Appropriate technology, Bhalla finds, is most essential in the small-scale sector, which has the capacity to absorb, as well as the potential to create, employment opportunities. This entails allocating a larger proportion of research and development expenditure to small-scale, rather than large-scale, sectors. It also requires the development of a machine-tool industry that would be the basis for industrial expansion and reduce dependence on advanced economies. In addition, Bhalla argues, technology transfer by multinational companies could facilitate the appropriate adaptation of existing technology and create more employment with limited investment resources.

In his article, Amartya Sen (1996), renowned economist and Nobel Prize laureate, considers the use of technological choice as an instrument of employment policy in developing countries, and the associated challenges. Clarity about the concept and measurement of employment is necessary in order to explore the effectiveness of labour utilization, which (along with modes of production and distribution) is at the core of employment policy. With regard to the measurement of employment, Sen notes that women who stay at home and take care of domestic responsibilities (performing "unpaid labour") are not recognized as being employed, despite their contribution to national income and the employed workforce – a debate that continues to date and that affects other aspects of the development process. At the same time, according to Sen, approaches to technological choice depend on the sector and country contexts. This is evident when one examines specific case studies of employment policies, such as public works programmes, which may not always be the most effective way of distributing income because of discrimination, corruption and bribery. An important challenge that Sen discusses relates to dualism and resource allocation, which can be applied in different contexts: formal versus informal, large scale versus small scale, modern versus traditional. He argues that institutions, along with capital and labour costs, play an important role in the choice of the appropriate technology or mechanization in any particular sector.

The conditions under which such decisions are made, and the ways in which work functions not only as a source of income but also as a source of well-being and as a means of generating and maintaining growth, are another important area of analysis. The article by US economists Henry Bruton and David Fairris (1999) delves into this aspect by considering the adequacy of working conditions in different development contexts in terms of "efficiency" and justice and by examining the role of the workplace, and labour's role in production, in generating productivity growth. The authors also consider how work fits in with and serves other social activities, thereby contributing to well-being beyond the purely financial rewards. These observations raise important philosophical questions, for example on the meaningfulness of work, that are often overlooked by both analysts and policymakers.

5. Development and global economic integration

Much of the early literature on development strategy explicitly or implicitly took a "closed economy" approach, which became increasingly untenable from the 1960s onwards. The integration of developing economies through trade is an obvious issue, because it can have an enormous impact on patterns of economic diversification. The role of foreign investment also became a major focus of interest, because of the promise of such investment not only in bridging the savings gap but also in aiding technology transfer and access to markets. Sanjaya Lall (1995), a development economist based in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, provides a largely optimistic but also very nuanced approach to how foreign direct investment (FDI) can usefully contribute to diversification and employment creation in developing countries. He notes that the employment effects of FDI can be complex, and therefore proactive government policies are necessary to stimulate the desired outcomes. These policies may include trade and industrial policies and supplyside measures like the development of infrastructure, the improvement of education and the establishment of a local/national science and technology system. However, Lall points out, the international environment was "increasingly hostile to many policies that have enabled NIEs [newly industrialized economies] to create a dynamic economic structure and raise the quality of employment" (Lall, 539) – a position that has unfortunately since then become even more pronounced.

Some of the concerns that Lall highlights, as well as the possible downsides to attempts at global integration in development strategies – at least from the workers' perspective – became even more obvious over the subsequent decades. Processes of global integration were increasingly apparent, and developing countries liberalized the rules for cross-border trade and investment flows, as well as the policies of their financial markets, in the hope that globalization would become the means that would make domestic economic development possible. The contribution by Eddy Lee and Marco Vivarelli (2005) – respectively, an ILO official and an Italian economist – focuses on the impact that these policies and processes had on employment, poverty alleviation and income redistribution within developing countries. It presents the results of an extended programme of research by the ILO on the social impact of globalization in developing countries. The conclusions are cautious, but nevertheless important and still highly relevant. The authors find that "neither employment creation nor the reduction of within-country inequality automatically follows from increasing trade and FDI" (Lee and Vivarelli, 178). Rather, they point to very diverse employment effects in different areas of the world, which can generate a concentration of economic activities and the marginalization of some activities and workers. Empirical results suggest that the employment impact of both more open trade and FDI inflows depends on the initial labour intensity, the output effect and the productivity effects in the traded-goods and non-traded-goods sectors. Conversely, the authors also find that neither do increased trade and FDI emerge as the main culprits of rising income inequality in developing countries – other than through the possible effects of FDI and capital goods imports in causing skill-biased technological change. They conclude that increased trade has alleviating effects on absolute poverty (despite some counter-examples in sub-Saharan Africa) because of its impact on economic growth. FDI is neutral in this regard, but financial liberalization appears to have adverse effects on relative poverty. The impact of globalization on employment and poverty reduction also seems to be significantly mediated by technology, much as Lall argues, and by the extent to which it promotes labour-saving and skill-biased technologies in developing countries with large surplus labour. In addition, Lee and Vivarelli note that labour market flexibility and the extensive use of informal labour may increase employment in quantitative terms but, at the same time, give rise to increasing income inequality and "social dumping" through a race to the bottom that may ultimately reduce socio-economic capabilities in a developing country.

Marilyn Carr and Martha Chen (2004), from the University of Sussex and Harvard University, respectively, take this analysis a step further through careful disaggregation of both processes and outcomes. The relationship of development processes to labour in this analysis is no longer treated in terms of undifferentiated workers moving to different activities, and is much more sophisticated. It addresses not only changes in the aggregate levels and composition of employment as a result of greater involvement in global production systems but also the nature of the employment opportunities, the terms of inclusion of paid workers in export-oriented employment and the barriers to inclusion of self-employed workers (including those attributable to the non-recognition of unpaid work). The authors also discuss the forms of exclusion resulting from changed domestic production because of increased imports and new types of domestic and foreign investment. Significantly, the article also recognizes the role of "ascribed identities" such as ethnicity and gender in generating segmented labour markets, which are utilized by employers and therefore create quite different impacts of globalization on different types of workers. This has often been described in terms of the winners and losers of globalization, but the authors point out that it is not a straightforward dichotomy. There are many parallel processes of exclusion and inclusion, which often operate simultaneously and also depend on the broader context of macroeconomic and growth policies and on the extent of social protection. Moreover, it is not only the workings of the State that affect the outcomes for different types of workers: other parts of society – such as the private sector, civil society, family and community – also matter in determining both the way that these economic processes play out and their results. This, in turn, suggests that the development project should take a more nuanced and diverse approach to economic and social policies, which need to recognize this complex reality.

6. Contemporary concerns

Several concerns that were evident in the first phase of globalization starting in the early 1990s became even more obvious during and after the global financial crisis of 2008–09, which exposed several of the broader weaknesses of the earlier global development trajectory. These are discussed by Jayati Ghosh (2010), an Indian economist, who considers three basic imbalances that caused the global financial crisis and are still not resolved: the imbalance between finance and the real economy; the macroeconomic imbalances between major players in the international economy; and the ecological imbalance that has become a constraint on future growth because of climate change and other environmental problems. What is perhaps even more striking is the fact that, except for those in a few (admittedly large) pockets like East Asia, most people in the developing world did not gain from globalization because of the net transfer of resources from the South to the North. The governments of most developing countries opened up their markets to trade and finance, gave up policy space for industrial and monetary policy and pursued "fiscally correct" deflationary policies that attempted to reduce public spending. Significantly, however, there was no net transfer of jobs from North to South, since aggregate industrial employment in the South as a whole barely increased despite some relocation of production, particularly to East Asia. Old jobs in the South were lost or became precarious, while the majority of new jobs remained insecure and low paying. Widening inequality meant that growth in emerging markets passed most people by as profits soared but the wage shares of national income declined sharply. Almost all developing countries adopted an export-led growth model, containing wage costs and domestic consumption and enabling destructive exploitation of the environment for the sake of international competitiveness and greater shares of world markets.

Moreover, the technological advances of the past two decades are also rapidly changing the world of work. Although they have created some opportunities, they have also introduced some serious challenges related to rising inequalities, job polarization, unemployment and environmental degradation. Uma Rani and Damian Grimshaw (2019), both ILO officials at the time of writing, address some of these long-standing issues in the growth and development debate in their article. They argue that new digital technologies, such as digital labour platforms, are creating sweatshops of digital labour and worsening labour conditions, but are nevertheless increasingly embraced by governments in developing countries, since they address the immediate unemployment problem. The new technologies also raise questions about the distribution gains from productivity growth and wealth generation. In particular, a number of indicators and international evidence suggest that the current model of economic development has not led to a convergence of incomes and opportunities, given that different forms and patterns of inequality persist. The authors stress the need to shift to a human-centred "equality-inducing growth" model, emphasizing that institutions and solidarities with trade unions and other organizations should play a fundamental role in this process to ensure social justice and sustainability.

More recent analyses (for example, ILO 2021) suggest that, apart from the quality of work in terms of income and social protection, there are also concerns with regard to the content of work. Skills mismatch, for instance, may result in highly skilled and educated workers performing mind-numbing, low-end and repetitive tasks. The current development trajectory of the digital economy could push such workers into pursuing work under precarious working conditions. From a development point of view, some important questions relate to developing an integrated approach to employment policy, along with industrial and technology policy, in order to effectively utilize the highly educated and skilled workforce in a productive way that contributes to economic and societal development.

7. Final point

The articles included in this Centenary Issue were written at different points in time, but they invariably come to a similar conclusion: an alternative development trajectory is urgent and essential. This alternative approach would move away from an obsession with export to concentrate on reviving domestic demand through good-quality employment, public spending on crucial physical and social infrastructure, and providing social protection, thus emphasizing more sustainable "green" investments. It would also focus on reducing inequalities by recognizing the need for the regulation of different markets (including finance and labour) and for redistribution through fiscal and monetary policies. It is interesting to note that these are precisely the strategies that many advanced economies are now adopting in reaction to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, although they still remain unavailable to most developing countries.

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