Development, as traditionally conceived, has either failed the majority of global citizens or been transfigured into a tool of wealthy and powerful elites, opening great scars of global inequality and social injustice. At the same time, the world order seems to be changing and we do not know how it might further transform development concepts and ideas moving forward. Yet this is also a time when ordinary actors are able to affect and influence how we measure and support people’s wellbeing in the future. Hence, there is perhaps no better time to more deeply and thoughtfully explore the question of development than now.

As an import of Western colonialism, “development” is enmeshed with political, economic and cultural histories that have, since its import and melding with movements of national independence, been firmly rooted in the modern South Asian experience and undergirds numerous efforts of “becoming modern” and nationalist identities as the articles demonstrate.

This special issue of Bhumi takes aim at the complex web of development theory and practice—that is by now a hegemonic and global specter. By exploring fissures and gaps in the results of current development practice, the editors and contributors of this volume desire to open up the necessary space by which room is made available to imagine new alternatives.

The contributors represent diverse personal backgrounds and academic focuses and bring them to bear on the question of development. While most contributions are focused on South Asia there is one that brings the issue back to the West during the heyday of American industrialism and exceptionalism. While all contributions are unique in their own right, they are all linked by an ambition to critique development in either its theory or practice and explore things from an approach empathic to ordinary people.

_Nihal Perera and Jeffrey M. Lauer_  
Guest Editors for Special Issue on Development
Bios of Authors

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**Pradeep Sangapala** is a PhD student in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Alberta, Canada. He received his Masters (2014) in urban and regional planning from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. His research interest includes urban planning, planning history, post colonialism, development studies, right to the city, and human rights. Sagapala’s Masters thesis is on Empowering Communities or Creating Dependencies: People's experience of a development project in Sri Lanka? (2014) His current research, entitled ‘Nationalism, Planning, and Postcolonial Politics’, investigates the impact of colonial and nationalist thought on postcolonial spatial thinking in Sri Lanka.