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978-0-521-19903-2 - Decolonising International Law: Development, Economic Growth and the Politics of Universality

Sundhya Pahuja

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Decolonising International Law

The universal promise of contemporary international law has long inspired countries of the Global South to use it as an important field of contestation over global inequality. Taking three central examples, Sundhya Pahuja argues that this promise has been subsumed within a universal claim for a particular way of life by the idea of 'development'. As the horizon of the promised transformation and concomitant equality has receded ever further, international law has legitimised an ever-increasing sphere of intervention in the Third World. The post-war wave of decolonisation ended in the creation of the developmental nation state; the claim to Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources in the 1950s and 1960s was transformed into the protection of foreign investors; and the promotion of the rule of international law in the early 1990s has brought about the rise of the rule of law as a development strategy in the present day.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521199032

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First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Pahuja, Sundhya.

Decolonising international law : development, economic growth, and the politics of universality / Sundhya Pahuja.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in international and comparative law ; 86)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-19903-2 (hardback)

1. International law. 2. Postcolonialism. 3. Law and economic development.

I. Title. II. Series.

KZ1250.P34 2011

341–dc23

2011026078

ISBN 978-0-521-19903-2 Hardback

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Acknowledgements

It is good to rely upon others. For no one can bear this life alone.

Hölderlin

Despite the fantasy of individual achievement, in my experience a book cannot be undertaken without considerable support from many quarters. First in this regard is Peter Fitzpatrick, a model of what a scholar, mentor and teacher can be. Fiona Macmillan has also offered me much encouragement and intellectual provocation throughout the long gestation of this book. Over the same period it has been my great pleasure and privilege to be part of three extraordinary intellectual communities: at Birkbeck and the London School of Economics and Political Science in the UK, and the Melbourne Law School in Australia.

I owe a profound debt of gratitude to many people in each of those places (and beyond), especially for reading all or part(s) of this work and offering detailed comments, critique and encouragement, including Patricia Tuitt, Beverley Brown, Susan Marks, Antony Anghie, Ruth Buchanan, Ben Golder, Richard Joyce and Luis Eslava. Shaun McVeigh deserves special thanks for his generosity, patient interest and collaborative spirit. Others who generously read and commented on various parts of the book include Sebastien Jodoin, Mark Antaki and Amir Kordvani. I thank James Parker for his assistance in the final leg.

Fellow travellers Barry Collins, Richard Joyce, Ben Golder, Stewart Motha, Victoria Riddler and Emily Mierisch all offered harbours of warmth when London got too cold, and very special thanks are due to Sara Ramshaw and Vidya Kumar, who each gave me the gift of intelligent friendship, especially during the early years of this project. Others whose kindness and engagement buoyed me include Gerry Simpson, Deborah Cass, Bronwen Morgan, Simon Halliday, Costas Douzinas,

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Michelle Everson, Adam Gearey, Anton Schutz, Johan Van der Walt, Upendra Baxi, Fleur Johns and Christine Chinkin. Victoria Hunt, Valerie Hoare and Sue Baines were unfailingly helpful to the last. My years in London would not have been the same without the kindness of Angela Ward and the hospitality and enduring friendship of Alice Palmer and Tom Hardy. At various stages, conviviality and companionship were also offered by Carolina Lassen-Diaz, Maria Hyland, Lawrence Norfolk and Vineeta Rayan, the Tanniou-Pfertzelt family, Bryan Stubbs and the Grainger family.

Melbourne University and its environs provides an extraordinary and ecumenical home for interesting (international) lawyers of all stripes, and I am grateful for the generosity, enthusiasm and conviviality of my many friends and colleagues there, especially Jenny Beard, Francesca Martin, Jenny Morgan, Maureen Tehan, Ian Malkin, Helen Rhoades, Sarah Biddulph, Camille Cameron, Anne Genovese, Judy Grbich, Ian Duncanson, Belinda Fehlberg, Anne Orford, John Howe, Peter Rush and Wendy Larcombe.

Those who funded me in various ways were obviously crucial, including Birkbeck College and the Law School, the University of London, the UK Government and the University of Melbourne. Michael Crommelin, Dean of Melbourne Law School for most of this project, has been unfailingly supportive throughout.

Om, Asha and Monica Pahuja have, as usual, supported this endeavour with the utmost generosity and kindness, although their interest has been eclipsed by a different gestation and arrival over the same period; Ananya Ruby Baskin has been the most delightful of interruptions, and I hope will continue to be so for many years. Finally, I thank Jeremy Baskin for being my home wherever we are. I dedicate this book to him.

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