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Development's current focus - poverty reduction and good governance - signals a turn away from the older neoliberal preoccupation with structural adjustment, privatization and downsizing the state. For some, the new emphases on empowering and securing the poor through basic service delivery, local partnership, decentralization and institution building constitute a decisive break with the past and a whole set of new development possibilities beyond neoliberalism.

Taking a wider historical perspective, this book charts the emergence of poverty reduction and governance at the centre of development. It shows that the Poverty Reduction paradigm does indeed mark a shift in the wider liberal project that has underpinned development: precisely what is new, and what this means for how the poor are governed, are described here in-detail.

This book provides a compelling history of development doctrine and practice, and in particular offers the first comprehensive account of the last twenty years, and development's shift towards a new political economy of institution building, decentralized governance and local partnerships. The story is illustrated with extensive case studies from first hand experience in Vietnam, Uganda, Pakistan and New Zealand.