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Interrogating progress indicators of the third Millennium Development Goal from the viewpoint of ultra-poor Bangladeshi female heads of household

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ABSTRACT Three indicators are instituted to monitor progress towards the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) directed at the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment: girls' participation in education, women's participation in non-agricultural wage employment, and women's participation in national political decision-making. We examined these indicators through the narratives of 43 ultra-poor Bangladeshi women heads of households. Although the United Nations reports that Bangladesh is making strides towards achieving MDG3, we question the salience of indicators that shelter social institutions such as marriage from scrutiny and perpetuate an instrumentalist orientation to gender equality, where women need to participate in the world-as-it-is.

RESUMÉ Trois indicateurs sont utilisés pour évaluer les progrès accomplis dans la réalisation du troisième objectif du millénaire pour le développement (OMD-3) qui vise à promouvoir l'égalité entre les sexes et l'autonomisation des femmes: il s'agit de la participation des filles à l'éducation, de la présence des femmes salariées dans secteur non agricole et de la participation des femmes à la prise de décision politique nationale. Nous avons examiné ces indicateurs à travers le récit de 43 femmes bangladaises chefs de famille extrêmement pauvres. Même si les Nations Unies rapportent que le Bangladesh fait de grands pas vers l'atteinte des OMD, nous remettons en question l'apropos de ces indicateurs qui préservent d'un examen critique les institutions sociales comme le mariage et qui perpétuent l'instrumentalisation de l'égalité de sexes en invitant les femmes à participer à un monde inchangé.

Keywords: gender; empowerment; Bangladesh; poverty; Millennium Development Goals

Introduction

In 2000, global leaders approved the adoption of the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3): the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The goal is dependent on and influences the achievement of the other MDG goals.¹ Three indicators have been instituted as measures of progress: girls' participation in education, women's participation in non-agricultural wage employment, and women's participation in national political decision-making. The interrelationship of the indicators is understood as: “low education levels and responsibilities for household work prevent women from finding productive employment and participating in public decision-making” (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a, 26, authors' emphasis). The specific MDG3 indicators arise from pertinent rationales. Educational attainment is described as enhancing the status and the capabilities of women

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Thus, the indicator, ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, suggests that educated girls have more choices in all facets of life, and can play more of a role in the country’s progress on political, social, economic and environmental issues (Paris21 2000).

The UNDG (2003) argues that a higher proportion of women in paid employment could yield better personal income, economic security and well-being, although these benefits are not assumed to be automatic. The specific indicator, share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, is thought to highlight an openness of labour markets to women, which reflects broader societal values about gender equality. The third indicator, proportion of seats held by women in national parliament, reflects one aspect of women’s opportunity to engage in public and political life that is linked to women’s empowerment (UNDG 2003).

There has been criticism regarding the appropriateness of these indicators. For example, Kabeer (2005) scrutinised two of the indicators, commenting that ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education is an imperfect measure because it does not reflect the quality of education. She also suggests that, rather than count parliamentary seats, participation in local community decision-making is a better vehicle to support poor women, as it is this level that makes most of the decisions with direct impact on the lives of the poor (Kabeer 2005). Further to this, Panday observed that the quota system for female representation at both the local and national levels has resulted in representation without participation and the author attributes this to a number of constraints, including “structural deficiencies, religion, culture, and patriarchy” (2008, 502). Regarding the employment indicator, working in waged (implying a salaried arrangement on an ongoing basis) industrial or service sectors is viewed as an indicator of gender equality, because in many regions of the world, women are more likely to work in the informal (monetary earnings but not wages per se), subsistence or unpaid sectors (UNDG 2003), in line with Boserup’s (1970) modern employment critique. While the United Nations Millennium Project’s Task Force on Education and Gender Equality notes the limitations of these three measures and has suggested additional indicators (Grown, Gupta and Kes 2005), some of which are now reflected in the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (Branisa, Klasen, and Ziegler 2009), the three specific MDG3 indicators listed above remain the core set used to determine progress towards this goal through annual reporting and thus provide an authentic basis for interrogation of their value to improving the lives of poor women (Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Country Team in Bangladesh 2005; Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh 2007, 2009).

The indicators are intended to be progress measures reflecting the operationalisation of plans for their achievement. It appears that, for the United Nations, gender equality is operationalised within MDG3 as a strategy of inclusion of women in the world-as-it-is. It orients the goal around a sense that exclusion of women from existing social structures is the problem (Squires 1999, cited in Verloo 2005). As Fraser notes (as described by Verloo 2005), in situations of inequality, participation alone is not transformative. Grown, Gupta and Kes (2005) note that parity is important in a world without it, but parity is an insufficient indicator of equality on its own.

From the indicators, the formal definition of empowerment for MDG3 is not readily discernible, nor is it articulated in the MDG Indicators Development Methodology Book (UNDG 2003), and so it is unclear what the desired end of empowerment looks like for achieving MDG3. According to the Social Analysis and Policy Team of the World Bank (World Bank [Social Development Department] 2003), empowerment is a process that: (1) enhances the assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups; and (2) engages, influences and holds accountable the institutions that affect the well-being of individuals and groups. Similarly, empowerment, which involves both self-empowerment and the creation of an enabling environment by other social actors that foster self-empowerment, is central to the United Nations Development Group [UNDG] 2003).
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Program (UNDP)'s human development programs (UNDP 2011). Empowerment, therefore, is oriented to transformation of both the self and the social context, and is expected to result in improved livelihoods and poverty reduction (Mahmud, Shah and Becker 2011).

A situated perspective on MDG3 indicators: methodological considerations

Our study on food provisioning practices and experiences of ultra-poor women heads of household in Bangladesh provided an opportunity to interrogate the unique experiences of women who speak from their standpoint as the targets, but not necessarily the recipients, of MDG3 interventions. Our definition of a female head of household was that she was the sole earner in a family with dependent children. A dependent husband or other relative was permitted. Our definition of ultra-poor is based on daily earnings less than US$1.00 per day (approximately 70 taka). As a population, ultra-poor female heads of household in Bangladesh are known to be highly vulnerable and typically excluded from recent improvements in hunger and poverty rates (Hossain and Matin 2007). Our study provides a deeper understanding of the reasons for this gap.

Our earnings-based definition was augmented by purposive sampling of women from different geo-occupational schemes: garment workers; urban and rural petty traders; indigenous Garo in a variety of informal employment; and Bengali rural labourers. This purposive sampling strategy captures self-employment as well as employment in traditional and export-oriented manufacturing sectors, the latter representing a sector where new opportunities for economic participation are especially concentrated in Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Country Team in Bangladesh 2005, 22; Ahmed 2004). Their marital circumstances were also heterogeneous, including widowhood, abandonment, divorce and flight from abuse (all of which are understood to have gendered consequences in Bangladesh (Asian Development Bank [ADB] 2001). Some women had partners who exhibited characteristics such as old age, disability, addictions or "idleness", which speaks of other hardships in the lives of participants. In addition to their talk of food provisioning, women's narratives captured more broad experiences of extreme poverty on the topics of working, trying to educate children and participating in political decision-making.

Narrative studies can encompass a broad range of methodologies. This study involved individual ethnographic interviews using questions that elicited stories and descriptions of daily activities. Indeed, the first open-ended question was: "Tell me about a typical day from the time you get up until the time you go to bed". Our approach builds on the methodological insight that people are experts at narrating what they routinely do (Campbell 1998). As such, their stories can be used as an entry point to translocal relations and institutional processes that shape their everyday lives (DeVault and McCoy 2002). In this paper, we situate women's narrations of "a typical day" in relation to the MDG3 indicators, and examine what these indicators can and cannot account for in achieving gender equality and empowerment. Their perspectives cannot represent the full spectrum of experiences of ultra-poor women in Bangladesh, but their stories, particularly where there is significant overlap, can tell us about the limits on the everyday applicability and value of the three indicators in contexts where the MDG3 is most needed.

Methods

The 43 women heads of household who took part in the study included: 10 garment workers and seven urban petty traders residing in the Korail Basti slum of Dhaka; five rural petty traders and 11 subsistence agriculturists living in the rural village of Ghorasal Norsingdi; and 10 Garo\(^{4}\) women living in the villages of Askipara and Rangapara near the Indian border. Within these groups, women were purposively selected according to age (<20, 20–29, 30+ years), length of time
living alone with children (<2, 2–5, 5+ years), education (none, up to 4 years, 5+ years), number of children (<2, 2–5, 6+), whether they had other dependents and residency characteristics (migrants or life-long residents of their current resident area in Bangladesh). The sample was intended to saturate thematic concerns around food provisioning experiences among diverse groups of ultrapoor female heads of household. The project was licensed by the Bangladesh Medical Research Council and approved by the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary.

Following an informed consent process, women participated in a private face-to-face interview with one of three members of the research team trained in ethnographic interviewing and a trained translator as required. The women described their typical day, how they provided food for their families, and their thoughts and suggestions on what could be done to help women like them. Asking women about their daily food routine was used as a point of entry into women’s lived experience of poverty because it is a subject about which women are experts and permitted even the shyest woman to speak at length. Digitally recorded interviews (usually 45–60 minutes in length) were translated verbatim by multiple translators and reviewed by research team members both in Bangladesh and in Canada to ensure a well-nuanced translation. Approximately one year following data collection, the overall findings of the study were shared with the women in occupation-themed focus groups, with 39 of 43 participants in attendance. Detailed notes of their remarks and feedback formed additional data for this paper.

In order to generate a situated critique of MDG3, we used an interpretive analytical approach to describe, explain and attempt to understand the lived experiences of this group of ultrapoor women (Charmaz 2004). We used whole transcripts and coded excerpts to explore potential common patterns of the situations and actions of ultrapoor female heads of households in Bangladesh. Analytic processes were both deductive and inductive, using iterative and interpretive strategies such as open, axial and selective coding (Bryman 2004; Strauss and Corbin 1990), constant comparison (Boeiji 2002), immersion/crystallisation (Borkan 1999) and memoing (Bryman 2004) to guide our analysis. Several members of the research team were well versed in popular storytelling genres and tropes in Bangladeshi urban and rural culture; their insights were used to attenuate analytical risks of treating a story as a transparent account of reality. To further manage this challenge and in recognition of our use of translated texts, we focus here on their narrative descriptions that linked to institutional processes.

Findings
The three indicators of MDG3’s aims of gender equality and women’s empowerment serve as the organising framework for the presentation of our findings. Embedded in these results are reports of Bangladesh’s progress to date on each indicator. We highlight further limitations of the indicators by attending to a key social institution — marriage, including the dissolution of marriage, violence and social norms of the marital state — that emerged as important to understanding equality and the empowerment of ultrapoor women. Note that pseudonyms have been used to protect participants’ anonymity.

Indicator 1: ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
Bangladesh adopted policy initiatives in support of female education (UNDG 2003; Hossain 2004; World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a) several decades prior to the announcement of MDG3. In consequence, the World Bank reports that Bangladesh has surpassed expectations regarding the education indicator. The success of female students has been notable, although rich/poor and rural/urban gaps remain, and there is a growing
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Concern about boys being left behind in educational attainment (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a).

In general, the ultrapoor women interviewed agreed that education was a means to "establish" their dependent children or grandchildren and help them have a better life through improved employment prospects:

If I can give her education till she passes the Matriculation Exam (tenth class/Secondary School Certificate Exam), I will make her learn how to work with computer (training on computer); then she will be able to find some good job, in a good company, in marketing job; she will get good salary. (Chumi, garment worker)

However, the ability of women's children to fully participate and thus derive value from the education system was limited because of extraneous fees, the cost of compulsory supplies and, in some cases, corrupt practices.

Despite the assertion that education is free in Bangladesh for all students (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a), multiple financial barriers were described by most of the women interviewed. Tuition was free at some schools but not all and additional fees were often imposed, such as those required to take the matriculation exams. If incidentals (pens, notebooks) were not supplied or if uniforms were required, the mother also had to cover these costs with her limited income. Further, tutoring, often by the child's classroom teacher after hours, was seen as necessary if children were to succeed in school, even in elementary grades: "My daughter studies in class three and my son studies in class two. I have to pay 70 taka for my daughter's private tutor and 60 taka for my son's tutor every month" (Bhavani, agriculturalist). Corruption is recognised as a problem in Bangladesh (Knox 2009), and signs of corruption within the educational system were also described by several women. Examples include requests for a bribe to obtain an admission form or teachers requesting a bribe.

Where schools provided all educational materials or where women could draw upon other social supports, women reported improved access to education for male and female children. In these circumstances, women noted that money was freed up for other family needs. However, school retention policy interventions aimed at eliminating financial and other barriers to education, such as the financial stipend for girls to attend primary and secondary school, were unknown to most of the women who were eligible, and we found no instance where they were accessed by their children.

Shifting to considerations of the impact of education on women's livelihoods, we found that numeracy and literacy varied among the women. Only a few had had formal schooling, and of those, most only to the elementary level. The female heads of households in this sample who were literate as a result of formal education (commonly the Garo women who were educated in Christian schools) found that even with six years of formal education they acquired few employable skills: "I didn't learn anything at that time ... Is [class] six really enough? That's not a lot ... also I have never managed in exams to get other skills" (Lili, Garo).

Lili's observation is mirrored in Bangladesh's MDG progress report, which stated, "Girls not completing the secondary cycle face a severe limitation to their participation in economic and social areas throughout life" (Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Country Team in Bangladesh 2005, 21).

Indicator 2: participation in nonagricultural wage employment

Turning next to waged employment as an MDG3 indicator, the World Bank reports that women's waged employment in Bangladesh has doubled since 1995, with the caveat that the female
The employment rate remains low at 26 per cent (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a). In addition, only 10 per cent of all employed women receive actual monetary wages for their work, compared with 22 per cent of employed men (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a). Similarly, Bangladesh’s own MDG progress report (Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Country Team in Bangladesh 2005) reports that women’s waged, nonagricultural employment rate is 22 per cent. Further investigation reveals that progress in women’s waged employment rates is attributable mainly to the increase in younger women’s employment, especially in garment factories (Ahmed 2004). Whether this is a result of increased education is uncertain, because the employment rates for women of different educational attainment levels plateau until they reach the college level (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a).

Our sampling strategy involved purposive selection of women working in a range of occupational sectors, earning money, but not necessarily wages, or nonmonetary earnings (usually rice) through regular employment, self-employment and casual employment. Among the manual labourers (including some who also raised animals or produce) and the Garo, nonmonetary earnings were common. Thus these women represented both progress because of gainful self-employment and lack of progress because of agricultural earning dependency with respect to this indicator. In contrast, those working in the garment industry would be counted towards achievement of this indicator.

The merits of garment work described by the women included relatively steady employment, labour regulations offering some protection to workers and a degree of respectability or honour. However, garment factory work was rarely characterised as positive because of long hours, lack of job security, absence of benefits and payment irregularities. Indeed, women’s accounts of garment work challenges this occupation as an MDG3 progress indicator. Working in this sector involved a minimum of eight hours per day, six days each week, plus overtime work that extended the workday to 10 or 12 hours. The reliability of pay varied across factories, both in terms of being paid on a consistent date of the month and providing the appropriate overtime pay. Job security was not guaranteed, and women could be fired for absenteeism regardless of the cause. This lack of security and protection limited the extent to which women could stand up for themselves at work. Some dealt with this by moving to a new factory with a better reputation. While factory work was often described in more positive terms than other types of employment, an indication that these women did not find working in the garment sector empowering was that most hoped that their children would not be subjected to such a fate: “Garments work is very hard... I don’t want my child to endure the same hardship I’m enduring now. I don’t want my child to do such hard work” (Chumi, garment worker).

Work in the informal economy was also fraught with challenges, such as low profits and seasonality, extensive travel, long hours, and explicit gender discrimination. Further, it was regarded as less honourable than regularly waged work. Petty trading of items like produce, nuts, broken biscuits and homemade snacks would be considered precarious self-employment, and thus would not be valued highly under MDG3 progress indicators. However, petty trading provided some women with a sense of autonomy and control compared with other forms of work, including garment work:

I decided that I wouldn’t work under anybody’s command; I would stand on my own leg to earn my livelihood. Then I took my own money and asked somebody about a business that I can do... He said that I could do the business of selling raw goods. Then I bought goods to sell. I bought goods worth 800 taka and make profit of 200 taka. Then I bought rice, pulse, etc. spending 100 taka... I took chili and salt with the meal. After that I have made capital worth 900 taka. Then I stocked materials for my business. It was 1000 to 1200 taka... In this way I started this business. Now I take my meal, feed my children, give house-rent. (Bani, urban trader)
Still, petty traders also struggled with gender inequalities. Some petty traders said they felt compelled to sell their goods quickly and therefore for less than their male counterparts because they were dishonoured sitting in public (see McIntyre et al. 2011 for more detail). In other cases, their customers did not offer the same form or amount of compensation they would offer a male trader, and the women were exploited when they tendered credit: “Being a woman I can’t say anything more to the men [who default on their payments for goods]” (Minati, rural trader). With very low marginal profits, success at petty trading was dependent on capital, yet the women were highly averse to microcredit projects (Mcintyre et al. 2011). Ultimately, working in this sector would not be described as an exercise of “real choice” as per the empowerment definitions: “I don’t have any other option except doing this business” (Minati, rural trader).

Both the Garo and manual labourers described multiple methods to make money and feed their children. Agricultural labour, share-cropping agriculture, selling their own or others’ agricultural products (for example, eggs, milk, animals), collecting and selling firewood and working in the homes of others were common activities. This genre of work is deservedly excluded from the MDG3 indicator as it is often dangerous, regarded as dishonourable (especially domestic work), manifests gendered earning discrimination in payment, is unduly physically demanding (for example, digging roads), includes exploitative share-cropping, and was characterised by the women as precarious day employment and seasonal work. The income and activities of these women changed frequently and sometimes involved multiple activities each day. Those doing manual labour commonly reported making half or two-thirds of what men earned for the same work. One woman attributed this to the reduced ability to dig as much soil or carry the same amount of weight as men.

Although nonagricultural wage employment is purported to provide higher income and more economic security than the informal, subsistence or unpaid sectors, we found that, for women with dependents, this may be untrue, particularly as employment might leave children unattended for long periods, as was the case for garment workers who could not pay for childcare and who were usually distanced from extended family support networks. The most empowered group in our study were traders, who showed economic development potential and claimed a degree of independence and autonomy in their work. They also described their work as permitting them to better monitor their children, which was demonstrated by one woman who quit garment work and became a petty trader so as to better care for her children.

On the whole, the MDG3 indicator’s focus on salaried arrangements outside of the agricultural sector has left unaddressed how gendered norms are pervasive, and frequently disempowering to women in their economic work life.

Indicator 3: participation in national political decision-making

In Bangladesh, parliamentary seats are reserved for women through a 10 per cent quota system that is filled by the winning party. Women can also run for direct election. While very few women have won seats directly (Panday 2008), women have served as leaders of major political parties (ADB 2001), and Bangladesh has had two long-serving female Prime Ministers (United Nations Statistics Division 2010). Furthermore, since 1997, each local governmental district (Union Parishad) in Bangladesh reserves at least three seats for women (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007b). This indicator thus appears promising in terms of MDG3 progress despite reservations on how effective women parliamentarians have been outside of the Prime Minister’s office (Panday 2008).

Turning to women’s access to citizenship entitlements from government and their participation in local decision-making (Kabeer 2005), most women struggled to identify how their situation could be improved through resources outside of their immediate control. A minority of
women could articulate some expectations of government, legal and social services, although the accessibility of entitlements such as widow’s allowances was problematic. They did not talk of mechanisms by which they could influence local or national policy decision-making. Instead, many women expressed a perception that (unsurprisingly) they are without “voice” because of their poverty (Appadurai 2004, 70). One woman we interviewed remarked: “We are poor women, what can we say? The government knows that well; sister, is there any value of what we have to say?” (Jayashri, rural trader). Only one woman spoke of her role as a voter:

They asked me to be enlisted in the voter list, they are considering me as a local person as I have been living in this locality for many years. I can cast my vote from now on. (Bani, urban trader)

The World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2007a) recognises that poor women in Bangladesh are largely excluded from community-level decision-making. We had an indication of this in our data. One woman spoke of the constraints at the local governance level: “Say the member or the chairman of our locality, will he come out to help us before helping his own relatives?” (Mala, rural trader).

Unmeasured spheres of gender (in)equality and women’s (dis)empowerment

By contrasting the narratives of ultra-poor women with the indicators of MDG3, it is evident that the indicators used to measure progress fail to account for contextual experiences that further limit the achievement of equality and empowerment on a daily basis for ultra-poor women - a group that continues to fall behind recent gains. The inability to fully access the education system owing to extraneous fees and corrupt practices, and the lack of clarity between wages and other types of monetary and non-monetary earnings are but two examples of the indicators’ limitations. Even using a modified aim for political participation, women neither access their citizenship entitlements nor contribute to local decision-making. Exclusion is apparent. Using the lens of empowerment, we see limited evidence of women’s ability to influence the social institutions that affect their lives, the most pervasive of which is marriage.

The Bangladesh Constitution grants equal rights to men and women in public life. Despite this constitutional guarantee, equal rights are not upheld in legislation; for example, there are discriminatory clauses in labour legislation (ADB 2004). Further compounding this is that inequality in the private sphere (marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance) is reinforced by law, exemplified by the country’s exceptions and reservations on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Where laws do exist, such as the Dowry Prohibition Act or the minimum age of marriage in the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, they remain unenforced (ADB 2001; Lewis 1993). An urban trader who participated in our focus group said: “We know dowry is illegal but we can’t do anything about it. If they don’t ask for money, they ask for material things.”

Marriage, divorce practices and laws figured prominently in the interviews as institutional sites of inequality and disempowerment. Other writers have acknowledged the social institution of marriage as the most important influence on women’s lives in Bangladesh (Arends-Kuenning and Amin 2001; World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a). Marriage has also been cited as the social institution that perpetuates poverty and health inequalities through dowry practices and disempowerment in household relationships (Britt et al. 2010). Indeed, a common assertion in the interviews was that women’s status is determined by their relationship to their “guardian” – that is, husband. Joyeeta (rural trader) explained, “those who don’t have a guardian have really nothing in the world”, words that were followed by tears. Most of the women were without a guardian/husband as a result of illness, death, divorce or
abandonment. Upon the death of a husband/guardian, women were eligible for a widow’s allowance, although only one was ever a recipient and that was on a handful of occasions. Those whose husbands had abandoned them for new wives and those who had agreed to a divorce (sometimes under coercion) could not expect any type of ongoing support, financial or otherwise. Women expressed that challenging their ex-husband meant risking loss of guardianship of their children since the fathers were seen as the legal guardians of children. For example, one who was abandoned, but not divorced, noted that she could not sue her husband for divorce for fear he would petition the courts for child custody: “I can’t do anything according to this law. . . . If he takes my kids away, I would die, as my kids are more valuable than my heart” (Bhavani, agriculturist).

Regardless of why they lacked a guardian, the outcome was the same. Their children were now considered orphans in the eyes of the state. These women could not bring themselves to remarry because it meant abandoning their children, as a new husband would not accept them in the household. As mothers, the women believed this to be unacceptable, and felt they would be severely judged by their children and others: “If I run after my own good, my kids will curse me and call me greedy when they will be adult” (Orpita, garment worker).

Discussion

Bangladesh is often described as a regional exemplar in equality and empowerment initiatives, particularly on the priority of women’s education and economic status. The 1971 Constitution envisioned a society oriented to equality and liberty (Bangladesh Parliament, n.d.). The public policy approaches to addressing the Millennium Development Goals suggest that these issues continue to be taken seriously, yet the ultra-poor are being left behind (Hossain and Matin 2007; Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Country Team in Bangladesh 2005). Understanding why this is the case requires more than quantitative depictions of changes and trends; our findings help explicate the problems with economic development-oriented indicators that stress inclusion in the world-as-it-is (or the world that international agencies and development economists argue it should be), when the concern is gender equality and empowerment. Exclusion is not always the primary issue.

Others before us have argued that the goals of the international agencies and the orientation of the development economics supporting them are instrumental in nature (Arends-Kuenning and Amin 2001, Mayuzumi 2004, Kabeer 2005, Beteta 2006, North 2010). This means that the provision of education to females is seen as an investment with a high payoff, such as lowering fertility, increasing the educational attainment of future generations and improving the health of children, or in the explicit language of the United Nations Development Group, as “an important determinant of economic development” (UNDG 2003, 24). Over-reliance on these indicators to measure gains in women’s equality and empowerment means accepting a certain normative version of what the world-as-it-is should look like: one where equality is reduced to participation parity in certain sectors, and empowerment is divorced from its critical impetus to challenge powerful institutions.

The daily lives of ultra-poor female heads of households in Bangladesh illuminate limitations of the current participation-centric indicators of gender equality and women’s empowerment. These women see education as a method to establish children, but struggle with access issues. While a population point of view correlates increased education with a greater chance of escaping poverty, the women’s experiences reveal that, when little support exists for those who are most vulnerable, the correlation between education and escaping poverty is not realised. The women work, sometimes in wage employment as per the indicator, but their narratives point to the lack of real ability to transform their working lives. Participation in political decision-
making at any level or in any form is nonexistent for the vast majority. Our findings confirm the argument that participation alone is not transformative (Verloo 2005).

In the instrumental orientation, where economic competitiveness takes precedence over other considerations, those norms and practices that are harmful to women are often left unexamined or unaddressed (Arends-Kuenning and Amin 2001; Mayuzumi 2004; Walby 2005). For a country like Bangladesh to achieve its stated commitment to gender equality and empowerment, further attention needs to be paid to parity of participation in a breadth of institutions, including those operating primarily within the social sphere. If we attend to the experiences of ultrapoor female heads of households and focus on the institutional links embedded in the stories of their daily lives, gender norms and marriage customs come to the fore as the unacknowledged barriers to their equality and empowerment. Exclusion or nonparticipation is not the issue here; instead, discriminatory laws and practices (including nonenforcement of equality promoting laws, such as the Dowry Prohibition Act or the legal age of first marriage) block the achievement of gender equality and empowerment. Some argue that norms will change as opportunities change (see World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007a), but this assumption of trickle-down social change is problematic, given that ultrapoor women who are heads of households lack political voice, and workplace participation does not preclude active gender-based discrimination. Yet even if we accept this assumption, at present the indicators render these other norms invisible. This omission belies a lack of commitment to ensuring that further equality gains are realised beyond those of economic development.

Furthermore, it seems that for MDG3 the notion of empowerment is diluted as it becomes operationalised, a finding that has been observed in other sectors such as health (Salmon and Hall 2003). That is, with policy mainstreaming, a once radical concept loses its critical capacity to challenge powerful institutions and risks reproducing a “blame the victim” orientation. Confusing parity with equality and obscuring the socio-environmental limits on options for empowerment place responsibility for change on those who are marginalised, such as these ultrapoor women in Bangladesh. Because the indicators are not well situated in the lived realities of the targeted population, they may in some instances diminish rather than enhance gender equality and empowerment.

Commitment to gender equality and empowerment means remaining cognizant of the inherent problems with quantification and simplification. In her treatise describing how sustainable development processes settle upon simple technical solutions, Li (2007) argues that development planning agencies often start with detailed analyses of complex social, political and economic conditions, but these findings go through a process of simplification in which complexities and potential problems are minimised or eliminated from view. The end result is “optimistic” improvement projects that focus on simplistic technical solutions; these solutions bear little resemblance to the problems that were at one stage seemingly understood in detail (Li 2007).

The limitations of the MDG3 indicators may be illuminated through introducing new methodologies into the discussion. In our case, we used an approach to interviewing that elicited detailed descriptions of the daily activities of ultrapoor women, and focused analytically on institutional links embedded in their accounts to better understand their ongoing marginalisation. Our findings highlight that the current indicators are not wrong, but rather, they are limited. Other more complex quantitative methods and models, such as intersectionality analyses (Hancock 2007), might better describe ultrapoor women’s distribution of gains and marginalisation, albeit in relation to the normative decisions made about what data are collected. Qualitative accounts, like the narrative one utilised here, bring institutions rendered invisible in the current conversation back into view. Such an approach is helpful, but methodological issues are not the only consideration when it comes to the goal: equality and empowerment.
cannot be maximised while the prevailing global understanding is of improved participation in an unequal world.

Conclusion
Although Bangladesh has been reported to be on track to achieving gender equality and empowerment (World Bank/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2007c, Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Country Team in Bangladesh 2005), we, like other scholars (Kabeer 2005, Beteta 2006, North 2010), think it is fair to question this assertion. Can a country like Bangladesh be seen to have met the MDG of gender equality and women’s empowerment if they achieve success on the indicators? The narratives of daily life offered by ultrapoor women in Bangladesh, a group that is left behind as a result of increased disparity, reveal the limitations of both the indicators and the worldview the indicators espouse. Gender equality and empowerment involves more than participation parity. Important social institutions, such as marriage, are sheltered from scrutiny and barriers to inclusion for the group falling further behind remain unexplained by statistics that focus only on participation. Achievement of the MDG3 indicators captures only participation in the world as-it-is (or the world as particular agencies think it should be), perpetuating an instrumentalist orientation to gender equality that may or may not result in empowerment. To be empowered is to be able to transform the social institutions that shape the fabric of everyday life, not just accept the world as it is.

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Notes
1. The MDGs are more fully described at http://www.undp.org/mdg (accessed 5 March 2012).
2. Some had a male in the household; for this reason, our sample does not necessarily reflect different constructions of female heads of household that have been the subject of other scholarship (for example,
Lewis 1993 or Chant 1997). Our version aligns with the economic orientation reflected in development indicators.

3. The other two open-ended questions were “Tell me how you manage to feed your family” and “What do you think could be done to help women like you?”

4. The Garo are an indigenous, matrilineal Christian minority group.

5. Further methodological details and the central findings of the study can be found in McIntyre et al. (2011).

6. This is important because much has been made of the success of microcredit, although the literature demonstrates that it is not a choice of the ultra-poor (Datta 2004; McIntyre et al. 2011) and that it in many ways serves to reduce social service expenditures on the ultra-poor in accordance with neoliberal economic policies (Rankin 2002; Wood 2003; Karim 2011).

7. For a full discussion on the unique gendered concerns of the informal market and vulnerable employment that were identified from the narratives of these ultra-poor female heads of household, see Watters, McIntyre and Rondeau (forthcoming).


References


Patriarchal bargains in protected spaces: a new strategy for agricultural and rural development innovation in the western hills of Nepal

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ABSTRACT This paper integrates the theory of patriarchal bargains and strategic niche management theory to study whether or not creating strategic niches of struggle and negotiation as opposed to indiscriminate gender mainstreaming can help secure rural women's rights. Empirical data for this study were collected on rural women's tasks, resources, and benefits in the Kaski district of western Nepal using mixed methods. Findings suggest that unless women find a protected niche in which they can struggle and negotiate for their rights, patriarchal bargains would not be successful, partly because of women's lower control over land and services associated with land.

RÉSUMÉ Cet article combine les approches de la négociation au sein des structures patriarcales et de la gestion stratégique de niche pour évaluer comment se comparent la création de niches stratégiques de lutte et de négociation et l'approche intégrée de l'égalité des sexes (gender mainstreaming) dans l'avancement et la sécurisation des droits des femmes rurales. A cette fin, l'étude a récolté et analysé des données sur le partage des tâches, des ressources et des bénéfices entre les femmes et les hommes du district de Kaski dans l'ouest du Népal. Les résultats indiquent qu'en partie à cause de leur plus faible niveau de contrôle sur l'accès à la terre et aux services liés au travail de la terre, les femmes ne sont pas bien servies par la négociation au sein des structures patriarcales à moins de trouver une niche protégée dans laquelle elles peuvent lutter et engager des négociations pour leurs droits.

Keywords: rural development; Nepal; gender; patriarchal bargains; strategic niche management

Introduction

Classical patriarchy continues to influence the discourse on gender mainstreaming. Securing women's rights and enhancing gender equality through gender mainstreaming is far from being realised, despite women's issues having been negotiated at high-level forums such as the 1979 United Nations General Assembly, which adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The concept of gender mainstreaming was first proposed at the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, which was further reinforced by the acceptance of gender equality as a human rights issue at the Second World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. The concept of mainstreaming was finally formalised at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Despite several decades of discourse on gender mainstreaming, the literature remains inconclusive about whether women's rights are best protected through mainstreaming, a provision of general norms, policies, programs, and projects applicable to both men and women, or sidestreaming, carefully designed...
interventions specifically targeted to women (see Charlesworth 2005; Cornwall and Nyamumusembi 2004; Tiessen 2007 to follow this debate).

Critics of gender mainstreaming argue that attempts to incorporate women’s issues into mainstream policy, programs and projects, often with the collapse of gender units and focal points that remain underfunded and understaffed, are being used to legitimise a decline in funding focused explicitly on securing women’s rights and achieving gender equality (Ransom and Bain 2011). Further, it has been revealed that gender units or focal points are in constant tension with mainstream actors, particularly when there is a lack of political will and support from those in authority (Sen 2000). Such a tension can be theorised using a multilevel analytical perspective of strategic niche management theory, where gender units and focal points are viewed as protected niches, mainstream actors as the players of the incumbent regime and international conventions and agreements are within the realm of neoliberal reforms as the landscape (Geels 2002). Although independently evolved, optimistic critics of gender mainstreaming bring evidence that mainstreaming is indeed possible through strategic management of women-specific interventions, not only to enhance gender equality and women’s empowerment (Goal 3 of the MDGs), but also to contribute to all other goals (Mehra and Gupta 2006).

Moving beyond the paradox of mainstreaming and sidestreaming, this paper aims to investigate whether or not creating strategic niches of struggle and negotiation can help secure women’s rights and enhance gender equality in rural communities, both within households and in public domains. Women’s tasks, resources and benefits in the rural villages of the Kaski district in the western Hills of Nepal are documented to answer the following research questions: (1) how women’s agency in protected niches interact with mainstream patriarchal social and institutional structures; and (2) whether and how niche-specific gender interventions enhance women’s civil and political rights, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights, on the other. Before we address these questions using the empirical data, the next section evaluates the theory of patriarchal bargains and determines how strategic niche management literature can complement the operational gaps in the former theory that has been developed within the mainstream gender studies literature. Findings suggest that increasing women’s involvement in agriculture, taking over men’s tasks – including interaction with male development agents, although at the cost of women’s increased workload particularly when their spouses are absent – has improved women’s civil and political engagement. However, unless women individually or collectively find a niche in which they can bargain and negotiate for their rights, there is limited positive impact on their economic, social and cultural struggles, partly because of their limited control over and access to land and services associated with land, such as farm credit and farm income.

Review of relevant literature and theory

This section first proceeds with a critical evaluation of the theory of patriarchal bargains as it applies to gender mainstreaming in agricultural and rural development. We then outline how strategic niche management theory informs the conceptualisation of strategic spaces for women’s struggle and negotiations. This section concludes by framing how we plan to use these concepts to guide data collection and analysis.

Patriarchal bargains

While many radical feminists argue that globalisation has increased structural inequality, women in West Bengal, India, have identified it as an opportunity to challenge patriarchal norms using the role models made available through globalised mass media (Ganguly-Scracle 2003). Further, unlike radical feminists who embrace and apply the theory of classical patriarchy to explain
virtually any form of male domination, social feminists have restrictively used it to analyse the relationship between patriarchy and class under capitalism (Bennett 2004). Kandiyoti (1988) introduces the term “patriarchal bargains” to represent variations in gender relations in a society structured/organised according to class, caste, and ethnicity. These patriarchal bargains shape women’s gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts. They also influence women’s active as well as passive resistance to subjugation. The theory of patriarchal bargains evolved historically and culturally, opening up new areas or protected niches of struggle and renegotiation of the rights and relations between the genders.

Under classical patriarchy, a girl is given away through a marriage ritual at a very young age into the household headed by her husband’s father, where she is subordinated not only to men, but also to senior women, especially her mother-in-law (Latreille and Verdon 2007). As Kandiyoti (1988, 279) puts it: “Older women [and men] have a vested interest in the suppression of romantic love between youngsters to keep the conjugal bond secondary and to claim sons’ primary allegiance. Younger women have an interest in circumventing and possibly evading their mother-in-law’s control.” Such a scenario presents a younger man with a dilemma as to whether to enjoy romantic relationships with his wife or to remain loyal to his parents. Very few young men are capable of successfully handling the challenge of liberating their wife from any kind of oppression, and being liberated themselves, all the while still being loyal to their parents. The degree of women’s subordination, however, depends on the degree of endogamy in marriage practices and in household resource endowment (Kandiyoti 1988). In southern India, where marriage within kin networks is deeply rooted, women are relatively more liberated than those in northern India, where endogamy is strictly avoided (Sengupta and Johnson 2006). In rural Tunisia, men in households with a lower resource endowment have relatively less control over their wife and son than wealthier men (Latreille and Verdon 2007). Similarly, in Nepal, women from poorer and marginalised agrarian families are relatively free to leave home for various reasons, including wage employment and joining Maoist cadres in combatant roles (Aguirre and Pietropaoli 2008).

Migration to cities as a rural livelihood strategy may lead to family separation; an extended farming family structure may develop, but still with the patriarchal notion of men as breadwinners. As a consequence, it can lead to a breakdown of classical patriarchy, resulting in the earlier emancipation of younger men from their fathers and the parental households, often leading to an adventurous life in unknown places (Kandiyoti 1988). However, such an early separation could lead to genuine personal tragedy, as Kandiyoti (1988, 282) states:

While this process [earlier separation] implies that women escape the control of mothers-in-law and head their own households at a much younger age, it also means that they themselves can no longer look forward to a future surrounded by subservient daughters-in-law. For the generation of women caught in between, this transformation may represent genuine personal tragedy, since they have paid the heavy price of an earlier patriarchal bargain, but are not able to cash in on its promised benefits.

The above quote justifies why women in a classic patriarchal society deliberately internalise patriarchal ideology and passively resist subordination, while waiting patiently for their turn to rule over younger women as mother-in-laws. The degree to which earlier separation enhances women’s civil and political as well as economic, social, and cultural rights still remains inconclusive in the literature. However, empirical evidence from rural Tunisia where women, in absence of their husband, prefer to establish a nuclear family, confirms that male migration breaks down the notion of “patrilocally extended household” leading to household nuclearisation (Latreille and Verdon 2007).
Although the theory of patriarchal bargains evolved within the generic literature in gender studies, informing various ways of opening new areas or niches of struggle and negotiation of the rights and relations between the genders, it has not been used to inform the paradox of gender mainstreaming and sidestreaming in development projects in general and agricultural and rural development projects in particular. In the next section, we critically review a rights-based approach to development as it relates to gender mainstreaming, and evaluate whether or not strategic niche management theory can provide a solution to the paradox.

**Gender mainstreaming and strategic niche management**

The gender mainstreaming literature evolved throughout the second half of the twentieth century from women in development (WID) to gender and development (GAD) and lately, masculinities and development (MAD). The WID approach, which was predominant in the 1970s and 1980s, was aimed at addressing women's rights, but it proved insufficient when it came to achieving gender equity. This critique subsequently led to the development of the GAD approach as a means of transforming the unjust, oppressive and violent power structures, dynamics and relations which characterise the flaw of gender mainstreaming as a strategy of addressing the problems of classical patriarchy (Charlesworth 2005; Godquin and Quisumbing 2008). During the same period, the “right to development” approach was promoted with the rhetorical incorporation of minority rights within a prevailing development discourse, a critique of which provided the foundation for rights-based approaches to development (Uvin 2007). However, translating broad and universal human rights approaches to local contexts is an ongoing challenge (Waters 1996; Llewellyn-Fowler and Overton 2010). The interplay of gender, caste, and class makes the situation worse (Hirschmann 2008; Padmanabhan 2008). In response to this challenge, the GAD approach focuses on tackling structural inequality as a prerequisite not only to strengthen female civil and political rights, but also their economic, social, and cultural rights as affected by the interplay of gender, caste, and class. Within the GAD framework, the emphasis on issues of power and agency has become more evident, leading to the subsequent development of the MAD approach. This latter approach argues that the real transformation of women’s sociopolitical status will not be possible without a focus on the role of men and the need for change in the domain of men’s individual and collective attitude (Welsh 2010). Despite the conceptual evolution, the challenges to gender mainstreaming in agricultural and rural development programmes and projects are poorly understood, and the relationships between mainstreaming and sidestreaming are often described as paradoxical.

We are, however, optimistic, since an independent evolution of the literature on strategic niche management theory, with its focus on management practice (Kemp, Schot, and Hoogma 1998; Schot, Elzen, and Hoogma 1994) as well as multilevel analytical perspective (Geels 2002), promises to inform some of the paradoxical gender relationships. It is possible that this literature will eventually recognise sidestreams as strategic niches through which radical and social feminists can generate innovations for social justice. On the one hand, the management perspective identifies niches as temporarily protected spaces of struggle and negotiation where women-specific development interventions and feminist movements can occur. These spaces are primarily designed for the shielding and nurturing of specific niches from regime-level pressures, such as classical patriarchy and neoliberal reforms (Smith and Raven 2012). Strategic niche management therefore entails the building of temporarily protected spaces in which new social initiatives can foster and become realised through gradual experimentation and learning among diverse groups of relevant stakeholders, including radical and social feminists and vulnerable women (Schot, Elzen, and Hoogma 1994; Seyfang and Haxeltine 2012). Strategic niche management involves three key challenges. The first challenge is the convergence of the expectations of
multiple actors through deliberation of dialectical divides, including visioning and foresight exercises (Pant and Hambly-Odame 2006). The second challenge is unlearning habits and practices, while learning new ones. Because of their deep entrenchment within their respective "silos", mainstream actors may have difficulty unlearning the rationality of mainstream thinking, while niche actors may have difficulty unlearning social, cultural, ethical and spiritual embeddedness of alternative thinking (Becker 2005; McWilliam 2005). And the final challenge is networking: bonding among niche-internal actors, bridging with niche-external actors and linking with mainstream actors, not necessarily to foster indiscriminate integration and mainstreaming, but, more importantly, to protect core values of a niche intervention (Hawkins and Maurer 2010).

The focus on a multilevel analytical perspective, on the other hand, involves an investigation of the processes of mainstreaming successful niche innovations through dialectical processes of niche–regime interaction within the given context of landscape level macro-economic forces (Geels 2002, 2004; Roep, van Der Ploeg, and Wiskerke 2003; Schot and Geels 2008), such as the social and institutional structures of classical patriarchy and gender-related international conventions. Mainstreaming niche interventions involves either "role reversal", when niches have competitive relationships with the incumbent regime, or "institutional isomorphism", when niches are relatively more compatible with the incumbent regime (Smith 2006; Geels and Schot 2007). The notion of competitive and compatible relationships between niche-specific agency and regime structure is informed by Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory. As it applies to creating protected niches for patriarchal bargains, this theory suggests that, while women are not entirely free to choose their own actions, they are nonetheless agents of social change engaging in patriarchal bargains and reproducing the social structure. The remainder of the paper makes use of the conceptual frameworks of mainstreaming and sidestreaming in order to develop the research approach and methodology and to interpret empirical findings. While the focus will be on a multilevel analytical perspective, we will also bring various elements of strategic niche management to the discussion of empirical findings.

Research methodology

Women’s role in rural livelihoods

Rural livelihood strategies in low-income countries fall into three broad categories: improving subsistence agriculture; livelihood diversification through a mix of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in rural areas; and national and international migration to cities (Scoones 1998). When rural families fail to secure a decent living from farming, they look for alternative sources of income from non-agricultural employment in rural areas, while still working part-time in agriculture, both in terms of wage employment and self-employment. When everything else fails, the last resort would be to leave their family farm in order to secure their livelihoods. Nepal’s 2011 census revealed that 25 per cent of households have seen at least one member migrate outside the country for various reasons, which is more than twice the figure provided by the 2001 census (CBS 2012). When including internal migrations (NDHS 2012), this figure increases to over 50 per cent. Men migrate mostly for work, while women migrate due to marriage. This resulted in an 11 per cent increase in female-headed households from 14.87 per cent in 2001 to 25.7 per cent in 2011 (NLSS 2011). Nearly 80 per cent of migrants come from eastern, central, and western development regions, the highest number coming from western Nepal, where this study was conducted (Table 1).

Rural people account for approximately two-thirds of the world’s poor and strive to secure their livelihoods from agriculture (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010; IFAD 2005; World Bank 2009). This
Table 1. Out-migration from Nepal’s regionsa, 2011, by gender and sending region (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending region</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>17.37</td>
<td>22.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23.48</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>24.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>30.79</td>
<td>25.83</td>
<td>30.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-western</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>11.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far-western</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>17.38</td>
<td>11.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All regions</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: aThe 2011 census counted households with at least one member who had migrated out of the country (CBS 2012). Distribution by gender refers to the gender of the migrant. bNepal is divided into five Development Regions, designated as in the table.

global trend also applies to rural Nepal. Although rural women are key contributors of livelihood systems with their productive and reproductive roles, the available statistical methods fail to estimate women’s poverty, given that poverty data are collected at the household rather than individual level. This makes it necessary to do in-depth research that engages individual women in the process (FAO 2011). Although women’s overall participation in the labour force can be lower in rural areas, agricultural tasks and household chores are done primarily by women. In south Asia, women’s employment in agriculture ranges from 64 per cent in Pakistan to 85 per cent in Nepal. India and Bangladesh are at a par, and fall between these two countries (Das 2006). This not because agricultural tasks are sought out by women, but because non-agricultural employment is rarely available in rural areas and, moreover, women are not expected to leave home. Men, as the breadwinners, migrate elsewhere in search of a decent source of income to support their family’s farming, since simultaneous migration of all household members is not possible (Kelkar 2007). This phenomenon has led to the feminisation of agriculture, as illustrated by the gender segregated employment figures in Nepal. While more men than women were employed in the non-agricultural sector (for example, manufacturing, personal services, transport, and trade), there were more women than men participating in the agricultural sector (Table 2). In the last 15 years, wage earners within the agricultural sector have decreased with a concomitant increase in the number of wage earners within the non-agricultural sector (NLSS 2011). The average nominal daily wage has increased by 323 per cent in the agricultural sector and by 255 per cent in the non-agricultural sector. Nevertheless, the rate of increase is lower for women than men in both sectors.

Table 2. Employment of men and women in Nepal, by sector (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>02.7</td>
<td>09.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>04.6</td>
<td>07.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based activities</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women are not only disadvantaged when it comes to wage employment; they also have the compounded burden of acting as caregivers to growing and aging family members, while acting as stewards of subsistence farms and natural environments (Kelkar 2007). As shown in Table 2, they were also responsible for home-based economic activities and household chores. When we include self-employment, wage employment, home-based economic activities and household chores, rural women in Kenya and Nepal, for example, work as long as 11 hours per day (Figure 1).

**Research approaches**

Using empirical evidence from the Kaski district of western Nepal, this study addresses gender relationships between men and women, between Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities, and between different wealth categories. Particular emphasis has been given to how gender relationships at the community level inform the paradox of mainstreaming and sidestreaming, allowing us to investigate how women in protected niches interact with patriarchal social structures and public agricultural policy. Brahmin and Chhetri ethnic groups were included in the Indo-Aryan community, and the Gurung ethnic group was included in the Tibeto-Burman community. Although Gurung households have a long tradition of migrating to join the Gurkha Armies in India and the UK, with the recent outflow of migrants from rural Nepal, migration was also equally common in Indo-Aryan communities. The overall trend of migration in the western development region reported above also applies to the study of households.

A multistage sampling method was applied as a way of selecting the communities. Eight hamlets of mixed communities of Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities were selected, three from the Lekhnath municipality and five from the Rupakot Village Development Committee. The wealth categories were determined through a participatory wealth-ranking exercise; in Lekhnath, it was done by a local nongovernmental organisation, while in Rupakot, it was done by the researchers and community workers from a local organisation that participated in the wealth-ranking exercise in the former Village Development Committee.

After preliminary field visits, four crops important to the local communities were identified to illustrate gender dynamics in agricultural production and seed management. These crops were rice, corn (major cereals crops), potatoes, and ginger (major home garden crops). In the study area, the main cropping patterns in irrigated paddies were rice–wheat, rice–maize, rice–vegetables,
and in upland rain-fed terraces, it was maize–millet or maize–vegetables. Rice is the most important cereal crop in Nepal, both in terms of land area and production (MoAC 2005). It accounts for 47 per cent of the total cereal area and 57 per cent of the total yield of cereals. As elsewhere in Nepal, corn is the second most important crop in the area of study.

Potatoes and ginger are grown in home gardens. Potato is the second cash crop after oil seeds. It respectively accounts for 31 and 35 per cent of the area and of the production of cash crops in Nepal (MoAC 2005). In the study, 47 per cent of the total households grew potato. Potato is also used as a vegetable in the hills (pahad) and plains (terai), while it is a staple crop in the mountains (himal). Ginger is one of the most important spices in Nepal, with both culinary and medicinal values. Most of the farmers grew at least few clumps of ginger in their home garden. In the study area, 76 per cent of the total households grew ginger for their household consumption and 20 per cent of households sold it for cash income.

Research procedures

Gender analysis is both a conceptual approach and an empirical method, enabling us to analyse the differences that exist between different gender categories with respect to activities, access and control of resources and benefits, and decision-making patterns. As illustrated in Table 3, the participatory gender analysis employed in this study involved task analysis, resource analysis, and benefits analysis within production and seed management of the selected cereal and home garden crops.6

This research employed four research procedures: (1) focus group interview; (2) key informant interview; (3) household survey; and (4) direct observation. Firstly, six focus group interviews were conducted with men and women from the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities in gender mix as well as gender segregated groups. The interview guide includes question about gender roles, men's and women's involvement in agricultural production, access to and control over resources, benefits perceived from staple and home garden crops and decision-making processes in crop production and seed management.

Secondly, in order to understand how women struggle in specific niches, semistructured interviews were conducted with key informants familiar with the issues studied, such as changes in gender roles in crop production over time, the reasons for such changes, and their implications for enhancing women's economic rights. In total, 12 interviews were conducted with men and women, who were 60 years old or older, from both Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities.

Thirdly, a household survey was conducted with the help of a questionnaire that was structured based on the qualitative information available from the focus group interviews and key informant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Explanatory focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task analysis</td>
<td>Who does what, whose labour is affected by planned and emergent changes, what are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the competing demands, and who needs to be taught new methods? (Includes division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of labour in terms of gender, age, caste and social status.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource analysis</td>
<td>Who has access to and control over the resources used in crop production? (Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>means the power to decide whether and how resources are used and how they are to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be allocated; access means the freedom or rights to use the resource, perhaps with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>some decision making once access is obtained.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit analysis</td>
<td>Who has access to and control over the outputs? (Includes analysis of gendered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rights over the use of benefits.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bolt and Bird (2003).
interviews. As outlined earlier, a multistage sampling method was applied to purposively select eight hamlets of mixed communities of Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities, five from Rupakot Village Development Committee and three from Lekhnath municipality. The strata were based on ethnicity and wealth status. In the sampling frame, there were total of 361 households. Out of these households, 167 and 173 households were respectively Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman, wherein 135, 128 and 98 households were respectively rich, medium, and poor. Within each stratum a random sample of 20 per cent of households (N = 78) were selected. Among these households, 40 were Indo-Aryan, 38 were Tibeto-Burman, and 30, 31, and 17 households were respectively from rich, medium, and poor categories.

Finally, direct observation during frequent field visits over the period of six months as was reinforced by researchers’ upbringing in the hills of Nepal provided a strong method of data triangulation for this study. While we try to be as objective as possible, our relationships to each other and our gendered upbringing may have influenced the research findings. The study was initiated at the time of maize harvesting and rice transplanting, providing an opportunity to observe people at work, to see who does what and when, and then cross check the information gathered from other methods.

Data and results
The decade-long armed conflict (1996–2006) in Nepal resulted in the deaths of more than 13,000 people and injuries in the thousands, many of them civilians, and over 200,000 individuals were displaced. Hundreds of women died during the conflict and many more were injured, left home­less, kidnapped, raped, or sexually abused by Maoists and government forces. The abuse of women was much more intense when their male counterparts were absent from their home. Pasipanodya (2008) puts that economic, social and cultural injustice, specifically gender inequality, is both the cause and effect of Nepal’s armed conflict, which was biased towards civil and political rights. For example, while economic, social, and cultural injustices were also on the agenda of the rebels, poor and marginalised families in rural Nepal had to meet the demands of Maoists to provide accommodation and food, while they themselves suffered from starvation. They were also victims of violent actions from government forces that perceived them as either Maoists or supporting Maoists. Therefore, the conflict not only challenged but also reinforced unequal gender relations stemming from traditional sociocultural structures which define rules for women’s participation relating to opportunity, decision-making, access to and control over resources and benefits (UNDP 2009). The following empirical data generated in this study from the rural villages of the Kaski district of Nepal involve specific gender roles in agriculture, access to and control over crop production resources, and benefits generated from it, as a way to understand how rural women interact with patriarchal social structure and public policy. While we focus our analysis on mainstreaming niche innovations, elements of niche management practices will also come into the discussion as necessary.

Gender roles
In the Indo-Aryan community, women’s tasks in rice production consisted of preparing seeds, carrying compost, selecting seeds, uprooting and carrying seedlings, transplanting and second weeding (Table 4). Similarly, men’s tasks included ploughing, puddling and bundling, irrigation, threshing, winnowing, and bullock trampling. There were also joint tasks, such as sowing seeds, first weeding, fertilisation, harvesting, bundling and carrying the bundles, transportation and storage of grain, and transportation of straw. In the Tibeto-Burman community, women’s rice production tasks consisted of selecting seeds, preparing and sowing seeds, carrying compost,
uprooting and carrying seedlings, transplanting, and first weeding. Men were responsible for ploughing, puddling and bundling, irrigation, threshing, winnowing and bullock trampling. There were also joint tasks, such as second weeding, fertilisation, harvesting, bundling and carrying the bundles, and transportation and storage of grain and straw.

Men's and women's involvement in rice production were almost the same in the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities. In the Indo-Aryan community, seed sowing and the first weeding of rice were joint activities, while the second weeding was mostly a women’s task. In the Tibeto-Burman community, however, the second weeding was done jointly, even though sowing the seed and the first weeding were women’s tasks. One Indo-Aryan woman said: “Men are rarely involved in the second weeding of rice as they are scared of bruising of their body from the heavily grown rice leaves. They are reluctant to do the activities that need patience.”

Gender involvement in maize production is also almost the same in both Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities, with women bearing greater responsibility in most of the tasks. In the former community, planting and storing grain were joint tasks, while in the latter community, these tasks were respectively done by both women and men. Moreover, Indo-Aryan women clean the corn cobs, while in the Tibeto-Burman community, men perform this task.

In the Indo-Aryan community, all of the tasks related to potato production except for ploughing and harvesting were done by women. While men plough the field, both men and women harvest potatoes. As in the Indo-Aryan community, Tibeto-Burman women exclusively carry out all of the tasks except for ploughing. There were no major differences in gender involvement between the two communities except for potato harvesting. In the Indo-Aryan community, it is done by both women and men, while in the Tibeto-Burman community it is exclusively done by women. When it came to ginger production, all the tasks except for ploughing were done by women in both the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities.

To understand historical gender dynamics, we examined the cross-sectional data. Elderly key informants noted significant changes in gender roles within agriculture over the last few decades, particularly when it came to the tasks of seedbed preparation, weeding, and produce marketing. There was a greater involvement of women in all of these tasks. One of the key informants, who recalled her time in the 1960s, said that this shift was due to the changes in the seedbed preparation methods. “Earlier, we used to raise dry seedbeds. Now most of the rice growers raise wet seedbed due to the availability of irrigation. Since seed sowing in wet seedbeds is supposed to be easier than in dry seedbeds, women have started to sow seed.” In the past, weeding used to be done by both sexes. Now, since there are more off-farm opportunities for men, women assume the responsibility of crop cultivation, which includes weeding. Moreover, the wage rate for crop cultivation is less for women than it is for men. Similarly, in the past, the men were responsible for marketing the agricultural products, since local market access was poor. This meant that men had to travel far, staying in overnight homes in order to sell their produce. Women were culturally restricted from spending a night away from home without a pressing need. Nowadays, due to the development of infrastructures such as markets and transportation facilities, women are now able to sell their products in the market and return home in the evening.

Changes were also noted in terms of women’s community engagement. During the 1960s and 1970s, very few women held positions in community-based organisations, which can now serve as strategic niches for women’s engagement. Women were barely represented in decision-making bodies. Moreover, women rarely participated in public meetings, where strangers, such as male extension workers, passed information to the community. Therefore, women were disadvantaged when it came to retrieving firsthand information. In an interview, an elderly woman recalls her adolescence: “When I was a young lady, women could not hold positions in public decision-making bodies. I never participated in public meetings. Now, I myself represent Aama Samuha
Table 4. Involvement in production and seed management of four crops in Nepal's Kaski district, by ethnicity and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indo-Aryan community</th>
<th>Tibeto-Burman community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rice</td>
<td>Selection of seeds, preparing seeds, manure transport, uprooting seedlings, carrying seedlings, transplanting, second weeding</td>
<td>Selection of seeds, preparing seeds, manure transport, sowing seeds, uprooting seedlings, transplanting, first weeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Ploughing, puddling, bunding, irrigation, threshing, winnowing, bullock trampling</td>
<td>Ploughing, puddling, bunding, irrigation, threshing, winnowing, bullock trampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Sowing seeds, first weeding, fertilisation, harvesting, bundling, carrying bundles, transportation of grain, storing grain, transportation of straw</td>
<td>Second weeding, fertilisation, harvesting, bundling, carrying bundles, transportation of grain, storing grain, transportation of straw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td>Ploughing, cleaning cobs, storing grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planting, stover cutting, storing grain</td>
<td>Stover cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Maize</td>
<td>Manure transport, first weeding, second weeding, harvesting, cleaning, selection of seeds</td>
<td>Manure transport, planting, first weeding, second weeding, harvesting, selection of seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td>Ploughing, cleaning cobs, storing grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td>Stover cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Planting, stover cutting, storing grain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Potato</td>
<td>Seed preparation, manure transport, planting, weeding, seed tuber selection, seed tuber storage, seed tuber selling</td>
<td>Seed preparation, manure transport, planting, weeding, harvesting, seed tuber selection, seed tuber storage, seed tuber selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Harvesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ginger</td>
<td>Manure transport, planting, mulching, weeding, harvesting, seed selection, seed rhizome storing, seed rhizome selling, rhizome selling</td>
<td>Manure transport, planting, mulching, weeding, harvesting, seed rhizome selection, seed rhizome storing, seed rhizome selling, rhizome selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: "Tasks that are treated differently in the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities are indicated in italic.
Source: Authors' interviews, focus group discussions, and observations.

[Mothers' Club] and my daughter-in-law is a member of a Bachat Samuha [Saving and Credit Group].” This statement indicates a gradual empowerment of women in rural farming communities of the Kaski district and a grounded example of patriarchal bargains in strategic niches.

**Gender access and control over resources for crop production**

Gender access to and control over resources for crop production vary with ethnicity, crops, and wealth categories. In the Indo-Aryan community, although both men and women have access to most of the resources, they are controlled by men (Table 5). For example, land, fertiliser, draft power, and acquired information for rice production were controlled by men. Both men and women controlled seed and labour use, but fertiliser was under the control of men for maize production. It is because the purchase of fertiliser requires cash that it is under the control of men. As in the case of rice, both men and women have access to all the resources (land, seed, manure, draft power, and labour), but men exert control over land and draft power.
Table 5. Variation in resource use (access and control\textsuperscript{a}) for four crops in Nepal’s Kaski district, by ethnicity\textsuperscript{b} and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indo-Aryan Access</th>
<th>Tibeto-Burman Access</th>
<th>Indo-Aryan Control</th>
<th>Tibeto-Burman Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Land, draft power, seed, fertiliser, labour, information</td>
<td>Land, fertiliser, draft power, information</td>
<td>Seed, labour</td>
<td>Draft power, information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Maize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Draft power, land, seed, labour, manure</td>
<td>Land, draft power, manure</td>
<td>Land, draft power</td>
<td>Manure, seed, labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Potato</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Land, draft power, manure, seed tuber, fertiliser, labour, income from sale, information</td>
<td>Land, draft power, manure, seed tuber, fertiliser, information</td>
<td>Labour, manure</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ginger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Land, draft power, seed, manure, mulch, labour, information</td>
<td>Land, draft power, seed, manure, mulch, information</td>
<td>Seed, labour</td>
<td>Seed, labour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \textsuperscript{a}Access is defined as conditionality about using it and how it is used. Control is defined as decision-making about its use. \textsuperscript{b}Tasks that are treated differently in the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities are indicated in italic. Source: Authors’ interviews, focus group discussions, and observations.
For home garden crops, men control most of the resources, such as land, draft power, seed tuber, fertiliser and knowledge (for potato production), draft power and acquired information for ginger production. Compared to maize and ginger, men controlled more production resources for rice and potato because these crops were more important for household food security and also valued in the market.

Tibeto-Burman women control more resources for crop production than their Indo-Aryan counterparts, except for land and draft power; due to endogamy in marriage tradition rather than absence of men from households. Most resources are either independently controlled by women or jointly held by both women and men. A critical difference is that the acquired information is controlled by both of them. In the Indo-Aryan community, this was under exclusive control of men. Therefore, gender differentiation in access to and control over resources used in crop production is less in Tibeto-Burman than in Indo-Aryan community. In both communities, both women and men have access to major agricultural resources including land, but men control more resources than women.

Major resources used in crop production are further investigated for variation according to economic status. Although women’s independent access to and control over resources for crop production were relatively low for all wealth categories, with an exception of farm saved seed, the gender gap in control of resources is less for poor households than for relatively wealthier households (Table 6). Land being a crucial resource for crop production, it is controlled by men of all status under the realm of patriarchal land entitlement policy, although men could hardly alienate women from their usufruct right to use land.

Along with the changes in gender roles, there were also changes in gender access to and control over resources over the last few decades. In the past, crop seeds, labour, and draft power were all under the control of men. Access was also mostly limited to men. Men also used to control the labour of women. This meant that women could only sell, buy, or exchange their labour with the permission of men. Men also used to control the income from women’s labour. Now, these resources are increasingly accessible to both men and women, mainly because men migrate due to the increasing off-farm employment opportunities elsewhere. However, land ownership is largely under the control of men, although women can also have access to land.

Table 6. Women’s independent access to and control over resources for crop production in Nepal’s Kaski district, by economic status of household and type of resource used (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Rich Access</th>
<th>Medium Access</th>
<th>Poor Access</th>
<th>All Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>100 (00/30)</td>
<td>06 (02/31)</td>
<td>18 (03/17)</td>
<td>06 (05/78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm saved seed</td>
<td>63 (19/30)</td>
<td>68 (21/31)</td>
<td>94 (15/16)</td>
<td>71 (55/77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertiliser</td>
<td>30 (06/20)</td>
<td>22 (05/23)</td>
<td>31 (04/13)</td>
<td>27 (15/56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen</td>
<td>18 (05/28)</td>
<td>11 (03/28)</td>
<td>00 (00/12)</td>
<td>12 (08/68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>13 (04/30)</td>
<td>06 (02/31)</td>
<td>06 (01/17)</td>
<td>09 (07/78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm saved seed</td>
<td>57 (17/30)</td>
<td>80 (24/31)</td>
<td>76 (13/17)</td>
<td>69 (54/78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procured seed</td>
<td>23 (07/30)</td>
<td>35 (11/31)</td>
<td>94 (16/17)</td>
<td>31 (24/78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertiliser</td>
<td>35 (07/20)</td>
<td>38 (09/24)</td>
<td>23 (03/13)</td>
<td>25 (19/57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen</td>
<td>18 (05/28)</td>
<td>11 (03/28)</td>
<td>00 (00/12)</td>
<td>12 (08/68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>33 (02/06)</td>
<td>25 (01/04)</td>
<td>100 (01/01)</td>
<td>36 (04/11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *The figures in parentheses are: number of households with women’s access or control over resources/total number of households surveyed.

Source: Authors’ interviews, focus group discussions, and observations.
Table 7. Variation in benefits derived from access to and control of agricultural production\(^a\) in Nepal’s Kaski district, by ethnicity\(^b\) and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indo-Aryan</td>
<td>Indo-Aryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tibeto-Burman</td>
<td>Tibeto-Burman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Income from sale</td>
<td>Grain for consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td>Straw, grain for sale, income from sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Grain for consumption, straw, rice husk,</td>
<td>Rice husk, rice bran, seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rice bran, grain for sale, seed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Maize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cob cover, cob stalk, stover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cob cover, cob stalk, stover, grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Grain, cob cover, cob stalk, stover, seed</td>
<td>Grain for sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Potato</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuber for consumption, tuber for seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Income from sale</td>
<td>Tuber for consumption, tuber for seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Tuber for consumption, tuber for sale,</td>
<td>Tuber for consumption, tuber for sale,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tuber for seed, income from sale</td>
<td>tuber for seed, income from sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ginger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rhizome for consumption, rhizome for seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Income from sale</td>
<td>Rhizome for consumption, rhizome for seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Rhizome for consumption, rhizome for sale,</td>
<td>Rhizome for consumption, rhizome for sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rhizome for seed, income from sale</td>
<td>Rhizome for sale, income from sale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(^a\)Access is defined as conditionality about using it and how it is used. Control is defined as decision-making about its use. \(^b\)Benefits that are treated differently in the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities are indicated in italic.
Source: Authors’ interviews, focus group discussions, and observations.
Access to and control over benefits from crop production

The products created from rice production are: grains for consumption, rice seeds, straw, grains for sale, income from sale, rice bran, and rice husk. In the Indo-Aryan community, both men and women have access to all the benefits except income from sale of rice, which was inaccessible to women (Table 7). However, as in the case of production resources, men control most of the benefits from rice except for the grains for consumption. Rice grains for sale were exclusively controlled by men. Although women had access to and control over most benefits from maize production, grains for sale and the benefits from sales were controlled by men. Potato being a cash crop, men controlled most of the benefits from this crop except tuber for consumption. Regarding ginger, women had control over the rhizome for consumption and seed for replanting, while men control the rhizome for sale and income from sale.

In the Tibeto-Burman community, both men and women have access to and control over all benefits from rice. None of the benefits from crop production were exclusively controlled by men. Therefore, as in the case of resources, Tibeto-Burman women had better control over the benefits from crop production than their Indo-Aryan counterparts, which was mainly due to the endogamous marriage tradition in the former community than male migration.

Gender access to and control over major benefits from crop production were further investigated in terms of the variation in wealth status. As in the case of production resources, the gender gap in control of benefits was less for poor households than for wealthier households (Table 8). Compared to resources for crop production, women of all status had relatively better access to and control over the benefits from crop production.

Over the last several decades, there have been changes in terms of gender access to and control over benefits from agriculture. Key elderly informants revealed that during their adolescence, benefits from crop production, such as grains for consumption, seed for replanting, grains for sale, and the income from the sale of grains were not accessible to women. These benefits were under the exclusive control of men and access to such benefits was also mostly limited to males. Now, these benefits are accessible to both men and women when both of them are present at home and exclusively to women when men migrate to work elsewhere. When women are responsible for handling all the productive and reproductive tasks in men’s absence, men intentionally hand over the control of benefits to the women in both Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities. However, when men are present at home, they still hold control over resources and benefits.

Table 8. Women’s independent access to and control over benefits from crop production in Nepal’s Kaski district, by economic status of household and type of benefit (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Rich</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food grain</td>
<td>40 (12/30)</td>
<td>42 (13/31)</td>
<td>63 (10/16)</td>
<td>45 (35/77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato tuber</td>
<td>60 (09/15)</td>
<td>47 (07/15)</td>
<td>86 (06/07)</td>
<td>59 (22/37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family labour</td>
<td>43 (13/30)</td>
<td>61 (19/31)</td>
<td>64 (09/14)</td>
<td>55 (41/75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw</td>
<td>17 (05/30)</td>
<td>26 (08/31)</td>
<td>25 (04/16)</td>
<td>22 (17/77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food grain</td>
<td>50 (15/30)</td>
<td>58 (18/31)</td>
<td>67 (11/16)</td>
<td>57 (44/77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato tuber</td>
<td>53 (08/15)</td>
<td>67 (10/15)</td>
<td>86 (06/07)</td>
<td>65 (24/37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family labour</td>
<td>47 (14/30)</td>
<td>65 (20/31)</td>
<td>71 (10/14)</td>
<td>59 (44/75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw</td>
<td>33 (10/30)</td>
<td>32 (10/31)</td>
<td>38 (06/16)</td>
<td>34 (26/77)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *The figures in parentheses are: number of households with women’s access or control over resources/total number of households surveyed.
Source: Authors’ interviews, focus group discussions, and observations.
Discussion

Women's continuous struggle and negotiation for agricultural resources and benefits

Intrahousehold negotiation of gender relations are influenced by ethnicity, status, and the subject of negotiation. Firstly, as the case study from the Kaski district of Nepal illustrates, negotiations on gender relations relatively favour women in the Tibeto-Burman community more than women in the Indo-Aryan community. As is common in the southern states of India, women's positions to negotiate within their families depend on the degree of endogamy in marriage practices (Sengupta and Johnson 2006). Tibeto-Burman women in Nepal, who also practiced endogamy, had a better position in terms of their access to and their control over resources and benefits. Another source of female empowerment in the Tibeto-Burman community is that while women do not have legal right to own land and the services associated with land, they have more control over resources and benefits, particularly when their husbands leave home. Examples include joining the Gurkha regiments of the British and Indian armies, a common practice in the area of study. However, endogamy plays more roles in this process than migration alone because migration has recently become more and more common in Indo-Aryan communities as well. Whether it is due to conflict, poverty, in search of better opportunities, or even for adventure, when their male partners migrate to cities, women in rural farming communities, both Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman, not only have to continue their customary duties of production and reproduction, but they also have to take over men's tasks, such as: ploughing, land preparation, traveling to the local market, interacting with extension workers, attending public meetings, and accessing information from formal and informal sources (although conventional service organisations and public policy measures are structured under the patriarchal social structure primarily to serve men). Thus it confirms the literature that women are less likely to be served by conventional extension services (Pandolfelli, Meinzen-Dick, and Dohrn 2008).

Secondly, the negotiations for gender relations are also relatively favourable for women in poor households than in middle-class households, as the gender division of labour is less distinct in poor households than it is in wealthier households. Poor women in the hills of Nepal assume that they are also responsible for earning a living along with their husband and son. Irrespective of wealth, women have far less control over land, services associated with land, and other productive resources, and they also have inadequate access to public services, such as training, extension, and credit (NDHS 2012). Recognising this gender inequality, the Government of Nepal has made a provision waving a part of the land registration fee in the event that land ownership is transferred to women. After the implementation of this policy, an impressive increase in women's land ownership has been seen in urban areas, as high as a 55 per cent increase in the Chitwan district and 40 per cent in the Lalitpur district (Nepali et al. 2011). However, the reason behind this increase in women's land ownership is not simply due to the policy change; the other reasons include the desire to circumvent the increasingly stringent land ceiling policy, to avoid claims on newly acquired land by male siblings, and to purchase housing plots using money remitted by male counterparts who are in foreign employment. However, land entitlement to women is still a rare practice in rural Nepal, where land carries a low monetary value in the real estate market and transactions happen less frequently than in other areas (Kshetry 2011). Specifically in rural areas, not being landowners is part of the reason why women are not perceived as “farmers”, even when they do much of the farm work. As a result, agricultural extension and information on new technologies are almost exclusively directed to men, even though women are largely responsible for the actual farming. This occurs despite the fact that the migration of men has left women as de facto farm managers and stewards, and the management decisions are constrained by their inability to access institutional credit because men hold entitles to land, which is the most preferred collateral to disburse credit through mainstream commercial banks.
Moreover, as discussed earlier, women from poorer and marginalised groups in Nepal were more successful in struggling and negotiating the ability to leave home for various reasons (Aguirre and Pietropaoli 2008).

Finally, men are interested in controlling key resources such as land, the services attached to land, and the transactions which involve cash and credit as a way of maintaining classical patriarchy. For example, women control grain for household consumption and farm saved seed, but men are in charge of grain for sale, income from sale, and procurements of the seeds of new crop varieties. Thus strategic local niches for successful bargaining for women's rights can better serve as an instrument to secure women's rights and enhance gender equality than recommending a checklist for gender mainstreaming developed elsewhere (see FAQ 2010 for a mainstreaming manual).

**Strategic niches of women's struggle and negotiation for agricultural resources and benefits**

This case study from Nepal demystifies the challenge of translating broad and universal approaches to women's rights into local contexts and suggests a differentiation of various rights using a specific example of gender dynamics in agriculture. Due to recent male absence, new social structures have emerged in Nepal, a new pattern of gender roles, and access to and control over resources and benefits. Women are compelled to expand their agency outside the conventional domain of households and engage in accessing inputs, information and resources to manage their farming. These changes have enhanced women's civil and political rights, but these rights could not guarantee their economic, social and cultural rights. Improvement of women's social status and their subsequent engagement in agricultural and rural development provides women with opportunities to engage in activities outside the private sphere of their households, challenging the persistent masculinisation of public spaces. This has clearly enhanced women's civil and political rights, including their engagement in public spheres as risky as Maoist combatant roles and political activism. In spite of these changes, government agencies stick to conventional perspectives on gender in agricultural and rural development, such as the feminisation of expert knowledge systems through the training and recruiting of female researchers, extension agents and development workers, and establishing female quotas in the public service, political bodies and community-based organisations. But these attempts were made under the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming rather than encouraging and facilitating women to form strategic niches of struggle and negotiation as a way to establish a dialectical relationship between mainstreams and sidestreams. Unfortunately, in the past, such attempts under the WID approach have rarely been successful in international agricultural and rural development, where women's and men's rights had to be negotiated not only in civil and political spaces but also in economic, social, and cultural niches. Thus, feminisation, which is often rhetorically called as mainstreaming, is not a panacea for under development and social injustice. For example, in Kenya, women farmers' groups recognise men as their organising secretaries, although men often behave opportunistically; this implies the need for the GAD, if not MAD, approach (Hambly-Odame 2002; Welsh 2010). Similarly, in Nepal niches of women-only forest users' groups face systemic marginalisation, particularly through deliberate allocation of smaller sections of degraded forests and provision of limited opportunity to interact with the social and political networks of relevant stakeholders (Buchy and Rai-Poudyal 2008). Therefore, focus should be on strategic niches, not necessarily sex-segregated, to facilitate the dialectical relationships between niches and the incumbent regime.

Bridging the divide between civil and political, and economic, social, and cultural rights as a means to facilitate the dialectical process of interaction with the patriarchal incumbent regime would come through facilitating gender access to and control over important resources and
benefits, and liberation of those oppressed women so that they can engage in income generating activities. Therefore, positive economic, social, and cultural changes often come through practices that deviate from the norms of silence, the phenomenon of breaking rules that would be possible in protected spaces (Pant and Hambly-Odame 2009).

On the one hand, vulnerable women and social feminists should be able to develop their positive self-image, realising that civil and political rights are not enough to challenge the classical patriarchy. Women should be able to negotiate for their rights through participation in economic, social, and cultural spheres while they keep struggling for their reproductive and sexual integrity and rights, motherhood, and freedom from violence and sexual oppression in the private space (Harcourt and Escobar 2007). This requires that both genders unlearn learned gender relationships that are rooted in oppressive social and cultural norms and values. On the other hand, in the process of economic, social, and cultural independence, women should be able to expand their boundaries beyond their households, including their interaction with male development workers. Redefining women's relationships in various spaces — within their household and with the wider community — would be crucial for a rights-based approach to agricultural and rural development.

Women are as potentially competent in the social domain as they are in the household domain for productive and reproductive tasks. For this purpose, their engagement in patriarchal bargains within and beyond strategic niches — bonding within strategic niches, bridging with gender activists outside the niches, and linking with the incumbent patriarchal regime that often appears resistant to change gender relations — would be more critical than ever, whether their male counterparts live with them or migrate for economic opportunities elsewhere. Public policy reforms, such as the waiver of a part of land registration fee when land entitlement is transferred to women, can create a space for patriarchal bargains, but this would be effective only through stakeholder engagement in dialectical relationships between niche-specific changes and the patriarchal incumbent regime.

Conclusion

The paradox of mainstreaming and sidestreaming have clearly not been helpful when it comes to enhancing women's rights and gender equality; that is, it would not be effective unless sidestreams are recognised as strategic niches where vulnerable women and social feminists can creatively engage and innovate, while interacting with current patriarchal social structures and the regime's public policy measures. Furthermore, women's improved civil and political rights as emphasised by classical right activists do not necessarily guarantee women's economic, social and cultural rights in a patriarchal society like that of the communities studied in this article. However, women's increasing engagement outside their conventional domains of households, either by choice or by imposition in the absence of male counterparts, and subsequent improvement of women's status, all serve as a precondition for their successful liberation.

Developing women's positive self-image would be helpful in enhancing their access to and control over various resources and benefits, including farm lands, information, expert knowledge, and financial resources that were conventionally held by so-called wise men. Thus, the new role of development workers and social feminists would be to differentiate civil and political rights from economic, social, and cultural rights, and provide strategic spaces for patriarchal bargains, such as struggle and negotiation for women's rights under the incumbent patriarchal regime.

Acknowledgements

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Patriarchal bargains in protected spaces

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Notes

1. The United Nations declared 1975 as the International Women's Year and since then we have been annually celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March. The UN also declared 1976–1985 as the Decade for Women.
2. Literature juxtaposes civil and political rights against economic, social, and cultural rights (see, for example, Eide, Krause, and Rosas 2001).
3. Women accounted as many as 40 per cent of the Maoist cadres, with some female-only squads and platoons (Aguirre and Pietropaoli 2008).
4. A critical review on the impact of rural outmigration on women’s livelihoods is beyond the scope of this paper, which has been extensively discussed elsewhere (Gartaula, Visser, and Niehof 2011; Maharjan, Bauer, and Knerr 2012). Sharma (2008) discusses Nepalese migrant workers’ status at the point of destination.
5. The people of the Indo-Aryan community includes Brahimin, Chhetri, Thakuri, Newar, Yadav, Kami, Dami, and Sarki ethnic groups, and the Tibeto-Burman community includes Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, and Tamang ethnic groups.
6. This research adapted various frameworks of gender analysis, such as the Howard Analytical Framework, the People-Oriented Planning Framework (POP), the Moser Framework, and Women's Empowerment Framework. For a critique of these frameworks, please see Bolt and Bird (2003).

References


The community versus community-based natural resource management: the case of Ndumo game reserve, South Africa

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ABSTRACT This article investigates the escalating violence directed by community members towards the Ndumo game reserve in South Africa, which has pitted residents against the reserve they are invested in as owners and managers. We argue that escalating tensions at Ndumo result from three distinct, but interrelated factors: (1) the local community’s historical and present day feelings of loss of land, autonomy and “home” as a result of colonial and neoliberal conservation initiatives; (2) a lack of transformation in the colonial institutions governing community-based natural resource management (CBNRM); and (3) the increasing frustration with the prospects of scaling up CBNRM ventures into a new global conservation paradigm: transfrontier conservation areas (TFCA). We argue that the destruction and violence at Ndumo are best understood as an example of communities trying desperately to engage with state- and private-sector-led conservation in the face of continued exclusion.

RESUME Cet article examine l’intensification des actes de violence commis par des membres de la collectivité locale dans le conflit qui l’oppose à la réserve faunique de Ndumo (Ndumo Game Reserve) en Afrique du Sud, réserve dans laquelle les habitants sont pourtant investis à titre propriétaires et de gestionnaires. Nous avançons que cette intensification des tensions est le résultat de trois facteurs distincts qui sont cependant interrelés : (1) le sentiment de perte, passé et présent, ressenti par la collectivité à l’égard de son territoire, de son autonomie et de son chez-soi, causé par les projets coloniaux et néo-libéraux de conservation ; (2) l’absence de changement au sein des institutions coloniales qui encadrent les politiques de « gestion communautaire des ressources naturelles » ; et (3) l’insatisfaction croissante à l’égard de l’évolution des entreprises de gestion communautaire des ressources naturelles vers un nouveau paradigme de conservation mondiale, avec la création d’aires de conservation transfrontalières. Nous soutenons que le vandalisme et la violence à Ndumo doivent être interprétés comme un cas typique de collectivités cherchant désespérément, face au maintien de leur exclusion, à se faire entendre de l’État et du secteur privé qui gouvernent la conservation.

Keywords: community-based natural resource management; community resistance; Ndumo; South Africa

Introduction

In May 2008, residents of villages adjacent to the Ndumo Game Reserve in the northeast corner of South Africa attacked the neighbouring conservation area. More than 11 kilometres of fencing
along the eastern boundary of the reserve were destroyed within a few days, enabling free access which residents used to harvest resources, cut down trees, graze cattle and hunt wildlife (Carnie 2011). Violence flared again a few months later when a game ranger was abducted and beaten.¹ Tensions remained high in the ensuing years: angry residents routinely confronted tourists and game rangers, culminating with the destruction in 2010 of a suspension bridge that served as a key access point. Soon after, residents allegedly set fire to a game rangers’ camp. The local wildlife authority was completely overwhelmed by the scale of this violence, calling on the police and army to guarantee the safety of the reserve. A government official who visited Ndumo late in 2010 described the situation as “total anarchy” (Liebenberg 2010).

The increasing hostility at Ndumo is particularly noteworthy because the reserve is managed within the paradigm of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM). In the preceding decade, neighbouring communities had been granted ownership over various sections of the reserve and become co-managers of the conservation area. The acts of vandalism committed by community members against a conservation area in which they themselves are invested as owners and beneficiaries highlight some of the deep-seated tensions and contradictions contained within community-based conservation initiatives.

This article investigates tensions between conservation programs and local realities by critically evaluating the ongoing conflict at Ndumo, with a particular focus on the relationships between key stakeholders. Whilst proponents of CBNRM uphold it as a solution to conflicts stemming from exclusions associated with fortress conservation, analyses by critical social scientists suggest that community-based conservation can itself be considered an imposition that precipitates violent resistance (Klooster 2000). Previous scholarship suggests that resistance emerges when communities perceive limited opportunities for meaningful participation (Brosius 2010). Through this lens, actions of everyday resistance such as fire setting, hunting, farming and vandalism are best understood as both strategies of resistance and engagement (Kull 2002; Sullivan 2003; Holmes 2007). In light of these broader arguments, we argue that the violence at Ndumo is a case of communities trying to engage with the conservation debate in the face of continued exclusion and alienation from their land and livelihoods.

We suggest that escalating tensions at Ndumo resulted from three distinct but interrelated factors: (1) local people’s historical and contemporary feelings of loss of land, autonomy and “home” as a result of colonial and neoliberal conservation initiatives; (2) a lack of transformation in the colonial institutions governing CBNRM; and (3) the increasing frustration with the prospects of scaling up CBNRM ventures into the new global conservation paradigm, transfrontier conservation areas (TFCA). Thus, the destruction and violence at Ndumo are best understood as an example of communities trying to desperately engage with state- and private-sector-led conservation when all other possibilities have been exhausted.

**Does the community count in CBNRM?**

Community-based natural resource management – and community-based conservation more broadly – emerged as the darling of the conservation movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s. CBNRM rose to prominence as an approach that sought to redress the human costs associated with coercive conservation by reversing the centuries-old tradition of excluding local communities from the management and associated benefits of biodiversity conservation. Adhering to the principles of sustainable development that sought to achieve environmental, social and economic goals simultaneously, CBNRM promised to bring about more locally relevant and equitable forms of conservation by returning the stewardship of biodiversity to local communities through participation, empowerment and decentralisation (Dressler et al. 2010).
Over the past two decades, there has been increasing criticism that the promise of CBNRM does not hold true in practice. Critics argue that instead of balancing conservation and development goals, CBNRM privileges the former over the latter. Many studies of community-based conservation have found it to be an ineffective and, at times, regressive approach that prioritises the creation and viability of protected areas over the well-being of local people (Adams et al. 2004). The principle that all development within the conservation area must be congruent with the overarching aim of natural preservation requires all parties to have access to both expert knowledge and political influence, which are not evenly distributed among communities and their partners (Turner 2006, 14). These unequal power relationships serve to marginalise the community perspective within CBNRM programs (Büscher and Wolmer 2007; Hoole 2007). In this sense, critics argue that community conservation does not represent a fundamental break from its colonial and exclusionary predecessors, but rather cloaks these same power imbalances in the rhetoric of participation and inclusion, without creating the means and space for community empowerment or self-improvement (Fabricius and De Wet 2002; Garland 2008).

Another major critique levied against CBNRM is that it represents the extension of neoliberalism into the realm of nature. Neoliberalism is the dominant international political economic system of our time, a multifaceted ideology that seeks to subject political, social and ecological affairs to capitalist market dynamics (Büscher et al. 2012). The logic of neoliberalism is deeply embedded within the CBNRM paradigm. CBNRM is based on the principle that biodiversity must pay for itself by generating economic benefits, in this case through eco-tourism, ignoring any other preferred land use by local people or non-monetary value that the land in question may have for them. Second is the pervasive “need” for private sector involvement (Büscher and Whande 2007, 31). As a result, the private sector, having undergone an image makeover as eco-friendly and responsible, has become the supplier of unspoiled natural areas for recreational use, and is consistently favoured over community partnerships throughout the Global South (AFRA 2004, 1). CBNRM thus favours solutions that promote secure property rights and engage the private sector, which is ideally suited to generate financial benefits for communities while simultaneously achieving environmental goals (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Büscher and Dressler 2012).

But some scholars suggest that the reality of CBNRM has not lived up to its rhetoric and that the paradigm has become corrupted (Dressler et al. 2010). Like its predecessors, CBNRM is criticised for being socially insensitive and economically unjust – especially in South Africa where there is an overarching restitution element – and unable to meet the complex challenges of nature conservation. In such instances, community conservation becomes a buzzword: an attractive catch-all slogan that promises a win-win outcome, but that does not address the contradictory nature of the attempts to achieve both conservation and development goals. Ultimately, CBNRM represents a powerful symbiosis between the local elite and international capital, whereby the former grants projects legitimacy and authority, and the latter provides skills, financial resources and technology (Igoe and Croucher 2007, 553). The state is central to this relationship, both in creating conducive neoliberal socioeconomic policies and in brokering individual deals with the private sector (Harvey 2005; Fraser 2006). The poor, too often, remain excluded. For these reasons, the legitimacy of CBNRM programs has come under mounting criticism from the very communities they are intended to benefit.

CBNRM in context: the South African case
South Africa’s early history of conservation followed the same pattern experienced elsewhere on the African continent: by the middle of the twentieth century, game reserves that were established to protect species prized by colonial hunters had morphed into national parks geared towards
attracting urban tourists (Carruthers 1997; Adams 2003; Steinhart 2006). With the genesis of the apartheid regime in 1948, the state refined and intensified the restrictive land policies of its colonial predecessors. Under apartheid, black South Africans were relegated and relocated to designated African homelands. A key component of this racialised land policy was the forced removal of many black South African communities from sites of rich biodiversity in order to cement the illusion of these “wild” natural spaces, which became the exclusive preserve of white tourists. Most of the communities that were evicted from conservation areas were relocated to nearby villages and townships (Fabricius and De Wet 2002).

This process was supposed to be rectified with the arrival of multiracial democracy in 1994, when the Restitution of Land Rights Act established the Land Claims Court (LCC). The LCC was established to address land disputes related to apartheid forced removals via restitution, repair or compensation (Freedman 2003). This proved to be an unwieldy undertaking: by 2007 almost 80,000 claims were still outstanding (South African Associated Press 2007). For those 30 or so claims that centred on land within South Africa’s national parks, the most common resolution involved granting formal titles to the communities whose land had been expropriated, with communities involved as co-managers within the CBNRM paradigm (Kepe 2008). The most significant precedent for this model was the much publicised resolution of the land claim made by the Makuleke people to the Parfuri region of Kruger national park (Steenkamp and Uhr 2000; Robins and Van Der Waal 2008). This preference for CBNRM was solidified with the ANC government’s adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) in 1996, which heralded a shift towards private-sector-driven development that resonated with CBNRM’s neoliberal emphasis (Poultney and Spenceley 2001).

Today, CBNRM programs in contested conservation areas are guided by the Cabinet Memorandum for the Settlement of Restitution Claims on Protected Areas and State Forests (hereafter referred to as the Memorandum; Republic of South Africa 2001), which was initiated in 2001 to facilitate agreements among the various stakeholders implicated by the previous displacement of claimants from demarcated conservation areas. The Memorandum sets out guiding principles for restitution agreements on conserved land: the land should be maintained as a protected area in perpetuity, no residential resettlement should occur and no development or activity should take place except that which is compatible with the use of the land for conservation. In instances where the agreement prohibits physical occupation of the property – for instance, to protect the integrity of the conservation area – compensation is to be made through a planned regime of economic benefits, which accrue to the claimants as the land’s legal owners (AFRA 2004).

The Memorandum does not specify how such an arrangement is to be operationalised or how benefits and responsibilities of CBNRM are to be divided up. Ultimately, this limited form of community property rights provides for land ownership without residency and land management without the right to dispose of the property. These formulations have proven every bit as problematic in practice as they are contradictory in conception, as evidenced by the case of Ndumo.

**Situationing Ndumo: people, place, displacement**

Situated in the predominantly rural region of Maputaland, adjacent to the Mozambican border, the Ndumo Game Reserve covers over 10,000 hectares of biologically rich wetlands. One of South Africa’s oldest nature reserves, it contains two major semi-permanent pans. Water covers between 15 and 40 per cent of the park depending on the time of year, making it an oasis in the otherwise dry and sandy landscape of Maputaland. The reserve is famous for its floral and faunal diversity, especially its unparalleled birdlife (Tinley and van Riet 1981).
Although human occupation has been prohibited within Ndumo Game Reserve for several decades, the history of the land is closely bound up with those of its dispossessed human inhabitants. After its establishment in 1924, the reserve continued to remain accessible to residents: those living within and outside the reserve relied on the land for water, fish, game, medicinal plants, wild fruit and reeds for building homes. Forced removals by the apartheid regime began in the late 1940s. All residents of the reserve were evicted, with severe fines levied to discourage hunting and fire setting. Most evictees settled on land along the periphery of the game reserve where they pledged allegiance to the local Nkosi (chief), built houses, and prepared new fields for cultivation (Impey 2006).

Today, almost all the dispossessed households scattered outside the park's boundary are governed by two Traditional Authorities (TAs). The Mbangweni corridor, consisting of the narrow stretch of land between Ndumo’s eastern fence and neighbouring Tembe Elephant Park’s western fence, is home to just over 100 households, most of whom are the remnants of a Tembe community that used to inhabit the junction of the Usuthu and the Pongola Rivers, in what is now park land. They fall under the tribal jurisdiction of the Tembe Tribal Authority, based at eManguzi (see Figure 1). To the southern and western side of the reserve is the heartland of the Mathenjwa TA, where displaced Mathenjwa families sought refuge within eight neighbouring communities that border the southern edge of the reserve. The Mathenjwa TA is based at nearby Manyiseni. For the sake of simplicity, all eight Mathenjwa communities that neighbour the reserve will be collectively referred to as the Mathenjwa communities, whereas the single Tembe community adjacent to the reserve will be referred to as the Mbangweni community.

Both communities are typical of the region, so the demographic information provided for the entire Umkhanyakude District Municipality (UDM) in which they are located is instructive. The district consists primarily of poor, rural communities who reside on communal land (land is granted to tribe members by their TA according to need). Livelihoods depend primarily on subsistence agriculture, a small informal economy and government grants in the form of pension and childcare payments. More than 70 per cent of the population survives on less than R800/month, approximately USD90 (UDM 2009). The population is predominantly young, with about 70 per cent of residents under 18 years of age. The area is characterised by a shortage of services and infrastructure: 80 per cent of the population is without electricity, 76 per cent without piped water and 92 per cent without municipal waste removal services (Department of Local and Provincial Government 2008).

![Figure 1. Map of Greater Maputaland, showing study area (adapted from Jones 2005, 269).](image-url)
The main entrance to the reserve is situated in Ndumo village, located in the Jozini Local Municipality, under the Mathenjwa TA. The village is the regional hub, housing a small government clinic, eight primary schools, two high schools and a community centre. On the other side of the reserve, under the jurisdiction of the Tembe TA, the Mbangweni community is considerably less endowed. The Mbangweni live in a relatively isolated corridor between Ndumo Game Reserve and Tembe Elephant Park, which has long been used as a thoroughfare for travel between South Africa and Mozambique. Little infrastructure and few services are available.

Findings

Our analysis suggests that the recent violence at Ndumo stems from three key issues: inadequate or absent land restitution; continued colonial institutions; and lack of inclusion in new conservation initiatives.

**Land restitution and neoliberal conservation: contemporary losses to compensate historical ones**

The Mbangweni community was the first to seek restitution for their eviction. In 1995, 114 households made a claim to 1,262 hectares of land within the Ndumo reserve (Hall 2003). Grievances included their forced removal to land south of the reserve, their loss of access to the water inside the reserve, and their subsequent transplantation to the smaller, less fertile slice of land east of the reserve, where they continue to reside today. The claim was officially settled out of court in 2000, when the Regional LCC afforded the community legal title to the portion of land in question, situated in the northeast corner of the reserve (Jones 2005). At the time, Land Claims Commissioner Thabi Shange, offered R10,000 per claimant household as compensation and further suggested that the evictees be permitted to access a 200-hectare portion of the reserve for fishing and cultivation as an interim measure.

This final concession caused uproar among members of the public and conservation NGOs. Buoyed by Ndumo’s 1997 inclusion in the Ramsar convention, conservation advocates both within and outside South Africa argued that granting community access to the reserve would threaten Ndumo’s status as a wetland of global importance (Westwood 2008). Unprepared for the severity of this backlash, the Regional LCC decided to revisit the claim, based on the newly raised contention that the Mbwangweni community never actually resided on the land, and were in fact Mozambican in origin (Tong 2002). Community members objected, maintaining that they and their ancestors did indeed occupy homesteads on the land, using it to supplement their livelihoods on a seasonal basis by hunting and collecting wild fruit and reeds, as well as cultivating in the floodplain and the riverbanks in the dry season. Nevertheless, due to the controversy it created, the idea of ceding a portion of conserved land to the Mbwangweni for agricultural purposes was eventually discarded by the Land Claims Commissioner and removed from the final agreement (Naguran 2002, 8; Venter 2010). The promised monetary compensation was also halved to R5,000. None of these payments have been received by the Mbangweni (Groenewald 2008).²

Dissatisfaction over these fast-changing, inconsistent government positions and the succession of unfulfilled promises of compensation are critical factors fuelling vandalism towards the reserve. As Venter (2010) notes, Mbangweni community members attempted to reengage the government in negotiations following the flip-flop on the restitution arrangement, but to no avail. Ishmael, an official at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development, explains that fence cutting is a direct reaction to the state ignoring their pleas for urgent and swift restitution: “People cut the fence … because they were saying that the process to resolve
the land claim was going very, very slowly.”3 As Brosius observes in the case of Penan opposition to logging in Sarawak, such violence in the face of conservation efforts should be viewed as a community’s desperate attempt to have their voice heard. Acts of violence and vandalism are simultaneously efforts of resistance and engagement: “efforts born of frustration and desperation, to be sure, but efforts at engagement all the same” (Brosius 2006, 315). In the face of severe power inequality and a lack of decision-making and bargaining agency, such dramatic expressions of public discontent are critical tools that communities use to give voice to their swelling dissatisfaction with both local authorities, conservation agencies and government, and to attract attention to their grievances.4

The Mathenjwa claim has been comparatively less problematic. In 1995, 562 households launched a claim with the LCC in Pietermaritzburg, seeking ownership over just under 10,000 hectares of land, approximately 90 per cent of the reserve’s total area. In anticipation of the granting of this claim, a legal trust was established in 1996 to hold shares in both the camp and a private tour-operating company on behalf of the Mathenjwa community. By the time the Mathenjwa land claim was finally settled in 2007 – with most of the claimed land allocated to the community – this trust was the primary mechanism for delivering financial compensation to Ndumo’s new owners (Poultney and Spencely 2001).

Similar to the case with the Mbangweni, there has been significant government inconsistency regarding both the nature and size of the benefits accruing to the community. Although a copy of the actual agreement does not exist on record, community members claim that the then Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism promised R10,000 to each of the 562 claimant households during the handover celebrations for the Mathenjwa claim in 2008. This pledge was later revoked. Instead, compensation became solely dependent on the funds accruing from the joint venture mentioned above, where the Mathenjwa (as the soon-to-be owners of the reserve) partnered with a private company, Wilderness Safaris (with existing operations in Botswana, Congo, Kenya, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Seychelles) to establish the Ndumo Wilderness Camp, a luxury eight-suite tented camp overlooking the Banzi Pan, in the heart of the reserve. This venture epitomises the promise of the CBNRM rhetoric: community owners partner with a private company to create a pro-poor, financially viable model – a win-win for both parties.

The reality of this venture did not live up to its promise. Within a few years of operation it became apparent that this scheme was not financially viable. The company lost approximately R5 million between 1995 and 2004, failing to turn a profit in any single year of operation (Spencely 2008). This poor performance was largely a result of the distance and difficulty in accessing the park from major cities, and because Ndumo’s niche as a bird-watching destination limits its appeal for tourists. In a typical year, Wilderness Safaris reported occupancy highs of around 50 per cent, with lows dipping below 15 per cent (Elliott 1998, 6). They pulled out of the venture in 2004, dismissing all local employees and ending the possibility of reimbursements for Mathenjwa residents. As critics such as Turner (2006) predicted, the vagaries of international eco-tourism markets undermined the venture’s success. While the private partner was able to weather the losses and move on, local people were far less fortunate.

Conversations with community members suggest that many residents would not have supported this joint venture even if it had proved to be financially viable in the long run. Most community members we spoke with were much more concerned with their limited access to the reserve than they were with issues of financial compensation. Most continue to resent being fenced out of their land and prioritise increased access to the land over monetary benefits. Gogo Mampo, an elderly Mathenjwa woman, explains: “To them [non-community members], money is more important. We live in a society where money is not the biggest issue. We just want to live … They are obsessed with making money. This doesn’t benefit us. We would
rather get buck [antelope] to eat than to get money.”5 Another Mathenjwa resident confirms that access to the land is more important than profit: “I don’t believe in money. I think it would benefit us a lot more if people were each given a half acre or a hectare to farm their crops. It is the way of our people.”6

There is an important emotive and spiritual element to these feelings of exclusion. One of the most important reasons cited by residents for their desired return of the land was personal or spiritual connection. Members of both the Mbwangweni and Mathenjwa communities stressed that they wanted to be able to return to visit the graves of their ancestors in the reserve: “there are burial grounds … that we request to visit if things are not going well. Things have changed though. We are not allowed in.” laments one Mathenjwa induna (headman).7 Adam, a senior consultant for Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife (EKZNW), the provincial conservation body, summarises the frustrations of the Mbangweni people when he paraphrases a conversation with an irate community member: “The bones of our ancestors are there, we want to occupy that land which is ours! … Why aren’t we able to go back to it? What’s this business of land claims, we won our claim!”8

All of the 14 Mathenjwa community informants interviewed reported feelings of loss related to their inability to reoccupy their ancestral home. All individuals also expressed dissatisfaction with CBNRM as the mechanism to redress this. For instance, when asked what outcome she hoped to see from the land claim settlement, Gogo Emerald, a 95-year-old grandmother and subsistence farmer said: “They can leave so we can return to our homes. If they opened the reserve tonight I would go here and sleep under a tree.”9 Similarly Gogo Dladla, also a Mathenjwa grandmother, concurred that ownership without access is meaningless: “We want our land back. The government said they’d give it back. This did not happen. They told us that we would own the land, but this is not the case.”10 CBNRM’s failure to fully take into account residents’ emotional and spiritual ties to the land is a major source of community frustration. Yet such cultural and psychospiritual needs are beyond the scope of CBNRM as it is currently conceived, because it values nature solely in material and monetary terms (McCarthy and Prudham 2004). This frustration fuelled community desires to reclaim or reoccupy the land that held such important spiritual value for them.

The crux of the matter is that CBNRM arrangements in Ndumo focus on the question of land ownership – the cornerstone of neoliberal capitalism – rather than the community’s priority of land use or access. As Adams and Hulme (2001) argue, the most critical component of a compromise solution for local communities is secure land access and tenure. The exclusionary nature of the tenure arrangements at Ndumo, alongside uncertain and inconsistent resource use and access regimes, severely restrict the abilities of local residents to manage their livelihoods effectively and to maintain a sense of belonging to their traditional land because they are not allowed to engage in the cultural, social and agricultural practices that give it meaning (Connor 2005). CBNRM in Ndumo is predicated on legal ownership, without corresponding access, use or exchange rights. Such ventures will likely fail to gain the full support of residents until this prioritisation is reversed (Brockington 2002).

Increasing frustration over long delays, inconsistent government positions and land use arrangements that privilege ownership over access have fuelled longstanding feelings of bitterness, frustration and mistrust on the part of the Mbwangweni and Mathenjwa communities. Residents lashed out against the reserve in order to give voice to these concerns and frustrations. As Induna October, a 65-year-old Mathenjwa, explains: “the main reason for their actions was that they did not know what else to do. They wanted government to hear them.”11 The recent violence in Ndumo is thus best understood as the culmination of community frustrations at their lack of access to what they perceive as their land and their rejection of the limited ownership granted to them through CBNRM programmes.
Colonial institutions with neo-colonial mandates

The second underlying factor fuelling increasing violence at Ndumo is the longstanding mistrust directed towards the institutions charged with planning and implementing CBNRM. Institutions and organisations have a profound influence in shaping outcomes within community-based conservation and have much to gain in terms of decision-making and financial control, often at the expense of local people (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). This section examines community attitudes towards the two institutions critical to the implementation of CBNRM at Ndumo, the Traditional Authorities (TAs) and the local conservation agency, Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife.

Traditional Authorities represent an influential and powerful force in the debate over community-based conservation at Ndumo. Under apartheid, Tribal Authorities were established in the Bantustans (African homelands) to serve the interests of the ruling regime, by inexpensively assuming state functions (Cousins 2007). After the fall of apartheid, Tribal Authorities were transformed into Traditional Authorities, and today TAs continue to play a major role in the former Bantustans, particularly with respect to land affairs (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002). However, TAs are struggling to retain their relevance and autonomy within this drastically altered political climate, and land restitution within conservation areas has emerged as a critical area of influence. The government routinely engages with TAs in matters of land reform and restitution, often as the representative body for the claimant community. A key tension is thus the degree to which TAs have evolved from their patriarchal and authoritarian apartheid-era incarnations to be able to foster reconciliation and genuine partnerships with the community members they are supposed to represent.

The two TAs who represent the interests of the Mbangweni and Mathenjwa communities have been fraught with controversy. The Mbangweni are governed by the Tembe TA, which spans the largest communal area in South Africa. Instances of abuses of power and authoritarian decision-making are rampant (Jones 2005). Most of the allegations centre on nearby Tembe Elephant Park, where the Tembe TA has been accused of accepting bribes, usurping local conservation authorities and funnelling funds to secure and expand their own authority. The Mathenjwa TA has also been accused of authoritarianism and corruption. Currently, it is unable to account for the R99,400 paid by Wilderness Safaris to the community trust between 1996 and 2001 (Poultny and Spencely 2001, 22). Community members report that they had not seen any benefits associated with this money.

In order to curb the power of the TAs, local conservation boards (LCBs) have been established to “promote local decision-making regarding [conservation management] as well as to promote the integration of the activities of the protected area into that of the surrounding area” (EKZNW 2011). A joint LCB for the neighbouring Tembe Elephant Park and Ndumo Game Reserve was established in October 2000. The 15-member board is constituted by sectoral representatives (traditional authorities, regional councils, business sector, formal agriculture, regional tourism and special interest groups), who are appointed by the Minister of Environmental Affairs after a local nomination process (Luckett, Mkhize, and Potter 2003). The board is responsible for planning and implementing management plans for the conservation area (in consultation with the conservation authority), as well as the administration and dissemination of all funds accruing to community members.

But the effectiveness of the LCBs in representing community interests remains in doubt. More than half of the Mathenjwa interviewees responded negatively when questioned about the role of the LCB, while only one thought that they had a positive impact on community participation. The most frequent explanations for these negative responses was that the board was unreliable, that it did not convey information to the communities, that it misrepresented the communities’ interests and that it was corrupt or fraudulent.
This adds credence to concerns that CBNRM constitutes a local trap, wherein it is automatically assumed that local distributive mechanisms are inherently just or appropriate, when in practice they are just as susceptible to corruption and inequitable outcomes (Purcell and Brown 2004; Igoe and Croucher 2007; Torquebiau and Taylor 2009). This persistent and longstanding controversy around the representativeness of the TAs and LCBs underscores the propensity for institutional actors to hijack the opportunities associated with community-based conservation at the expense of the community at large (Igoe and Croucher 2007, 553).

The second institution that has come under increasing scrutiny in Ndumo is the conservation authority, EKZNW. EKZNW represents the merger of two apartheid conservation agencies, the Natal Parks Board, the conservation agency for white Natal province and the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation, created to administer conservation areas in the African homeland of KwaZulu. These bodies were reconstituted into Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife in 1994, the single custodian of all conservation areas in KwaZulu-Natal province.

Our research suggests that EKZNW’s effectiveness in Ndumo is limited by an institutional focus that prioritises the goals of ecological conservation over those of social justice and community development. Firsthand discussions with conservation officials and Ndumo park rangers underline how little they know about the communities that border the reserve. The Mbangweni in particular are viewed with suspicion; EKZNW personnel seldom venture into the Mbangweni corridor due to concerns over safety and fear of this hostile community. Relations at Mathenjwa are better, but even their community affairs have been inconsistent and poorly managed. Fred, a senior EKZNW official at Ndumo, asserts that their mandate remains primarily conservation management, and that they are inexperienced and ill-equipped to engage in the kind of comanagement that community-based conservation requires. He suggests that the general view among conservation officials is that community involvement is tedious, time-consuming and “not the responsibility” of the conservation authority.\footnote{12}

EKZNW’s distant relationships with the Mathenjwa and Mbangweni communities have left residents feeling excluded and disempowered. The lack of communication and resistance to community input is a matter of critical concern. Joseph, a Mathenjwa farmer, laments the lack of outreach from EKZNW: “there is this habit the people who run the reserve have about leaving us out of the decision-making … clearly the white man’s interpretation of working together is different to ours.”\footnote{13} Induna Leko concurs: “EKZNW does not keep close relations with the people and when they do something they do not inform us.”\footnote{14}

Local people are further disinclined to cooperate with EKZNW because of its historical links to the apartheid regime. Both Ismael, a Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) official and James, a local researcher, note that this is born out of a culture of resistance that matured in response to the injustices of apartheid.\footnote{15} As the post-apartheid state continues to impose its conservation ideology in the area, it has consistently failed to provide services or alternate development in Maputaland. As a result, the conservation sector is also widely blamed for broader government neglect of the area. The game reserve is the most immediate physical manifestation of this perceived exclusion and neglect, and EKZNW, the most proximate arm of the government that the communities hold responsible.

A significant disconnect exists between the rhetoric around the role and responsibilities of the two major institutions responsible for community engagement around conservation in Ndumo, the local TAs and EKZNW. Neither seems able to achieve its mandate: the TAs have failed as community representatives and administrative agents, and EKZNW has prioritised its role as conservation manager above that of community partner. In order to be successful CBNRM requires stable, transparent and accountable institutions that are committed to balancing both environmental and social justice objectives. Mbangweni and Mathenjwa community members are increasingly frustrated by the inability of these institutions to achieve their stated goals.
**Moving forward: TFCAs and putting the local last (again)**

In recent years, international donors and conservation practitioners have embraced the transfrontier conservation area (TFCA) as a new model of community-based conservation designed to move beyond the limitations of CBNRM. TFCAs involve broadening, merging and bridging existing conservation areas to follow more natural spatial arrangements instead of human and political boundaries. Larger-scale ventures, proponents argue, promote ecological continuity and integrity, while simultaneously offering greater economic opportunities for community members. Further, by invoking the cooperation of numerous nation states in the establishment and comanagement of TFCAs, popularly known as “peace parks”, the model promises to deepen regional allegiances and promote stability (Duffy 2001; Büscher 2010).

In June 2000, the governments of Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa formally established the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation and Resource Area (Patel 2006). This initiative aims formally to connect the Ndumo Game Reserve and Tembe Elephant Park with land in Swaziland and Mozambique to form a single transnational conservation area. In total, more than 4,000 square kilometres of land are proposed to be added onto existing conservation areas, with annual revenues from tourism projected to be upwards of USD18 million annually (Smith et al. 2008).

Progress has been slow, though, due primarily to funding constraints on the Mozambican side and the ongoing conflict at Ndumo, which threatens to destabilise the entire project. One of the key stumbling blocks has been the proposed resettlement of local communities, including the already twice transplanted Mbwangeni, whose current home within the corridor separating the Ndumo and Tembe parks would be swallowed up within the new TFCA. Such a corridor is an essential link in the Lubombo TFCA initiative, but threatens to further destabilise an already aggrieved community by relocating them yet again, even as the fallout from their previous resettlement remains unresolved. A government consultant engaged with current negotiations at Mbangweni reports that community members are extremely mistrustful towards another proposed relocation, and that the issue of land access and use has emerged as the key obstacle. 16 Roger, a member of the Tembe royal family, expresses the scepticism felt by the Mbwangeni towards the new TFCA: “You can work very hard to make sure this thing is joined, but if you want to join this you must have an alternative for the people. Create a sort of employment, create a sort of changing of the lifestyle of the community away from there.”

He goes on to explain that there wouldn’t be a need to resettle Mbangweni residents if they were provided with an attractive alternative, because the land is so poor there that they would be happy to move out gradually, but that their recent experiences with government makes them distrustful of any proposal to move.

Critics are also concerned that TFCAs will entrench neoliberal conservation in the area. It is worth noting that the primary institutional driver of TFCAs in Maputaland (and in Southern Africa more broadly), is the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF). This South Africa-based non-governmental organisation was founded in 1997 with the specific aim of promoting TFCAs in southern Africa. It garners funding from a host of international aid donors, conservation NGOs and Western government sponsors (Jones 2005). 18 The organisation offers human, financial and technical resources to conservation agencies (Büscher and Dietz 2005). But Dressler and Büscher (2008) contend that the regional focus of TFCAs in southern Africa completely bypasses the resource base of poor rural households, such that benefits are unlikely to “trickle down”. By investing directly in the tertiary economy (service sector), PPF does little to support the consumptive land-based livelihoods on which the poor are dependent for cash or subsistence. Hence, although PPF trumpets the “social possibilities” of TFCAs and their potential to accelerate improvements to livelihoods based on economies of scale (Büscher 2010, 650), such ventures are unlikely to be transformative in South Africa, where very few local people are well placed to tap into the private–public synergy of transfrontier conservation.
Even if, as its proponents hope, TFCAs accelerate improvements to livelihoods based on economies of scale, this will likely not alleviate community concerns around institutional mistrust and misrepresentation if it does not address issues of institutional transformation for both the TAs and EKZNW. Most crucially, there is still no consensus in the neighbouring communities about the desirability of the project. The community members we spoke to were split: half of the interviewees thought a TFCA was a bad idea, while the other half saw it as positive if it could provide jobs and infrastructure. The main reasons interviewees offered for their opposition to the TFCA was that partnering with neighbours in Mozambique or Swaziland would lead to increased crime in the area. Another argument levied against the proposed TFCA was that it would prevent residents from accessing neighbouring countries to visit family, as borders that have been relatively permeable for local people may be enclosed within the TFCA and stocked with wildlife. Gogo Mampo’s response encapsulated both of these fears: “The thought of us joining Mozambique and Swaziland is too terrifying. Not only because of the dangerous wildlife, I’m also talking about the crime. It would also prevent us from visiting relatives if the area is now filled with this dangerous wildlife.” Resistance to the TFCA among residents is rooted in concerns over loss of access to reserve land: without institutional transformation there is little confidence that a larger-scale conservation venture won’t leave communities worse off than they already are.

Jones’s (2005) study points to a number of potential negative social and economic impacts from forced mass relocation in order to create the Lubombo TFCA. Among these are decreased access to important livelihood resources such as water and grazing land, further fragmentation of the social linkages between Mbangweni family members and friends still living in Mozambique, and increased intracommunity tensions due to ballooning population density that will result from their likely resettlement to southern Mbwangeni and the neighbouring Bhekabantu area (Jones 2005, 270). She concludes that the creation of a TFCA will only exacerbate community resentment towards the conservation area. Ironically, then, “peace parks” advanced as a means of moving beyond the struggles and conflicts that have plagued CBNRM and, more ambitiously, creating regional peace and security through regional conservation partnerships, have the potential to exacerbate and prolong conflict at Ndumo.

“Sending a fax”: local agency in the face of continued marginalisation
The recent wave of violence at Ndumo game reserve has been widely dismissed as “wildlife crime”; illegal and unwarranted attacks perpetrated by residents that, some conservationists argue, are best handled in the realm of criminal justice (Warchol and Johnson 2009). But our analysis suggests that these acts of violence represent a much more foundational challenge to CBNRM. As Scanlon and Kull (2009) stress, community support and commitment to conservation must be cultivated over time through the distribution of appropriate and equitable benefits, devolving decision-making and control to communities as co-managers, and ensuring that peoples’ identities and aspirations are reflected in these conservation initiatives. None of these principles hold true in the case of Ndumo. Conservation agreements have been slow and inconsistent, favouring land ownership over access and use. Promised financial payouts have yet to materialise, perpetuating community feelings of marginalisation and frustration. The key institutions responsible for operationalising CBNRM in Ndumo have failed to represent residents’ interests and devolve meaningful decision making to the community level. The proposed scaling up of conservation efforts into a TFCA seem likely to exacerbate current tensions.

Local communities have very little space to assert themselves. Once they agree to engage in CBNRM the option of withdrawing from conservation does not really exist because land restitution was premised on ecological preservation (AFRA 2004, 21). Thus, the Mbangweni and Mathenjwa communities have had to find alternative avenues to express their dissatisfaction. The
recent incidents of violence and vandalism at Ndumo are referred to locally as “sending a fax”: actions that are intended to convey a message of dissatisfaction to government. The case study of Ndumo offers an important example of how local communities can use violence as a tool to make their frustrations known. As Brosius (2006) notes, such actions should not be seen simply as antagonism toward the state and private conservation agencies, nor the idea of conservation itself, but rather as a desperate attempt on the part of local communities to attract attention to their cause and be meaningfully included in decision-making about their lands and livelihoods.

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Notes
1. Interview, EKZN (Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife ) official (Fred), 29 June 2009. Officials and local police refuse to comment on this incident.
2. While the settlement process progressed, the claimant households received food parcels for six months as an immediate poverty alleviation measure (Venter 2010).
3. All names used in this article are pseudonyms. Interview, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) official, 22 July 2009.
4. Interview, Gogo Dladla, 3 July 2009.
5. Interview, Gogo Mampo, 5 July 2009.
7. Interview, Mathenjwa farmer (Nate), 5 July 2009.
8. Interview, EKZNW official (Adam), 17 July 2009.
10. Interview, Gogo Dladla, 3 July 2009.
11. Interview, Mathenjwa farmer (October), 4 July 2009.
12. Interview, EKZN official (Fred), 29 June 2009.
13. Interview, Mathenjwa farmer (Joseph), 3 July 2009.
15. Interview, DEAT official (Ismael), 22 July 2009; interview, researcher (James) 20 August 2009.
17. Interview, Tembe royal family (Roger), 13 July 2009.
18. The Peace Parks Foundation’s “Club 21”, who “also serve as an advisory council to the Foundation” are: Absa Bank; HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands† 1 December 2004; Sir Richard Branson and Virgin Unite; Cartier; Chrysler Corporation Fund; Daimler; De Beers; The Edmond de Rothschild Foundations; Deutsche Bank; Dutch Postcode Lottery; Exxaro; Mr Paul Fentener van Vlissingen† 21 August 2006; Donald Gorden Foundation; Fondation Hoffman; Dr H. L. Hoffmann; Philips; Remgro; Richemont; The Rufford Foundation; Rupert Family Foundation; Ms Pierreette Schlettwein; Swedish Postcode Foundation; Swedish Postcode Lottery; Tei Turner Foundation; Total; Vodafone Group Foundation; WWF Netherlands (Peace Parks Foundation 2013).

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References


The community versus community-based natural resource management


Mediated risks: the Roșia Montană displacement and a new perspective on the IRR model

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ABSTRACT The impoverishment risks and reconstruction (IRR) model is widely used in research on involuntary population displacements. This article endorses an expansion of the model to better account for how impoverishment risks are mediated through economic circumstances and through actors outside and within the displacement process. The case of the proposed Roșia Montană mining project in Romania reveals that some impoverishment risks originate beyond displacement itself, and are harder to counter, while others are mitigated through local resistance and the strategic deployment of material and cultural assets. The Roșia Montană displacement also shows that mediation reduces the predictability of IRR risks.

RESUMÉ Le modèle IRR (Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction) est largement utilisé dans la recherche sur les déplacements involontaires de populations. Cet article propose une extension de ce modèle pour mieux tenir compte du rôle que joue la situation économique locale et celui des acteurs qui participent, de l’intérieur comme de l’extérieur, au processus de déplacement. Le projet minier Roșia Montană en Roumanie montre que certains risques d’appauvrissement, plus difficiles à contrer, ne proviennent pas du déplacement lui-même. D’autres risques sont atténués grâce à la résistance locale et au déploiement stratégique, par les collectivités touchées, de leurs ressources matérielles et culturelles. Dans le cas étudié, ces facteurs de médiation limitent la puissance prédictive du modèle IRR.

Keywords: impoverishment risks and reconstruction (IRR); mediated risks; displacement; mining; Romania

Introduction

The forced displacement and resettlement of local populations to make way for development projects, such as large dams or open pit mines, has commanded the attention of anthropologists and sociologists beginning in the 1960s. Two basic theoretical frameworks have been used in the literature on development-forced displacement and resettlement (DFDR) to make sense of the complex social phenomena unleashed by displacement and resettlement (Wilmsen, Webber, and Duan 2011). The first explanatory model was developed by Scudder and Colson in 1982 with the aim of theorising displacement and resettlement as a temporal, stress-ridden process with four distinct phases: learning about relocation; actual relocation; transition; and resettlement (Dwivedi 2002). A more complex model followed 15 years later and is widely known today as the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model (Cernean 1997). This model identifies

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eight categories of risks: (1) landlessness; (2) joblessness; (3) homelessness; (4) marginalisation; (5) food insecurity; (6) increased morbidity and mortality; (7) loss of access to common property resources; and (8) community disarticulation (Cernea 1997). According to M. M. Cernea, if left unmitigated, these risks will lead to the impoverishment of populations displaced by development projects. Several authors credit the model with a wide usability and influence (Muggah 2000, 2011; McDonald-Wilmsen and Webber 2010) in the DFDR literature. One of its chief advantages is its flexibility and comprehensiveness in conceptualising a wide range of socioeconomic, health and cultural risks.

At the same time, however, the model has been criticised for its generality (Horgan 1999) and for failing to contextualise the impoverishment risks (Muggah 2000). Resettlement processes triggered by development projects do not take place in a structureless vacuum, but are inevitably intertwined with processes taking place at the macro level. Likewise, the forced nature of displacement and the involuntary form that resettlement takes should not be assumed beforehand. At the micro level, there is often a significant degree of volition in accepting or resisting displacement or resettlement or the conditions under which these take place. This does not eliminate risks, but it renders them contingent on factors outside the displacement and resettlement process. The argument of this article is that the context in which DFDR occurs mediates the risks identified by the IRR model and that this mediation is reflected in the subjectivity of the actors involved.

The resettlement induced by the proposed Roșia Montană mining project in Romania is used to illustrate the mediated risks perspective advanced here. By referring to mediated risks, rather than to standard risk categories, it will be shown that one is better equipped to assess the unfolding of DFDR risks in a case which, at first, seems to defy the applicability of the IRR model. The next section presents the characteristics of the Roșia Montană resettlement in such a way as to suggest that additional explanations, outside the ambit of the IRR, are needed to understand this case. The following two sections introduce the mediated risks perspective and reconceptualise the IRR model in terms of risk objects, objects at risk and relationships of risk. The methods section is then followed by three sections that unpack the three components of mediation by exploring risks upwards (at a level above the displacement process), downwards (in the resources and strategies of situated actors) and relationally (in the relationships between these two levels and the displacement process itself). The findings are summarised in the conclusion and some practical and methodological implications of this approach are outlined.

Roșia Montană: a case of analytical misfit for the IRR model?

Bearing the name of a mining town in the Western Carpathian Mountains of Romania – famous since antiquity for its gold riches (Slotta and Wollmann 2002) – Roșia Montană has been the focus of media and public attention since the early 2000s. Gabriel Resources, a Canadian-based mining company announced at that time that it had discovered the largest gold and silver deposit in Europe (estimated at 10 million troy ounces of gold). For the large-scale exploitation of the ores, it needed to relocate almost 1,000 households from the commune of Roșia Montană (henceforth RM). In 2002, the mining company began the relocation of the affected population, in theory following a “willing buyer, willing seller” approach, but applying in practice various pressure tactics on those unwilling to sell. For example, the local doctor was apparently bribed by the mining company to leave RM (Popescu 2003), while police officers tried to intimidate foreign journalists and activists (Evenimentul zilei, July 16, 2002). However, neither injuries nor violent deaths were reported during the displacement process. The relocation engendered a variety of reactions from the local population, running the whole gamut from staunch refusal (epitomised by the NGO Albumus Maior) to enthusiastic acceptance (coalescing in the NGOs Pro Roșia Montană and Pro Dreptatea and in the Future of Mining labour union).
Applied in a perfunctory manner, the IRR model sheds little light on DFDR at RM. First, there is hardly any evidence that the displacees have experienced serious economic impoverishment, even if none of the measures advocated by the IRR has been applied, apart from an unusually high level of compensation. The ratio of resource allocation to gross national income (GNI) — a measure used in a World Bank review of 31 projects involving resettlement (World Bank 1996) — is at RM twice or three times the 3.5 cut-off identified by the World Bank for projects without resettlement difficulties. During the period of property acquisitions (2002-2008), around three-quarters of RM residents sold their properties to the company. The remaining quarter refused to sell for various reasons, including disapproval of the planned mine, old age or the expectation of higher compensation levels for properties.

Second, as a mining area, RM began to experience its economic decline (in terms of mining activity and employment) at the end of the 1990s, a few years before the relocation began. Alternative state-supported forms of employment in small industries (in the vicinity of RM) have gradually vanished after 1990, while the development of agriculture or tourism as providers of employment for a significant share of the local population was slow over the last decade and is unlikely to take off in the near future (Waack 2004; Benedek and Dezsi 2001). Joblessness thus emerged as a significant problem before it became one of the displacement risks of the planned mining project. Furthermore, the lack of land-based employment made landlessness so far largely inconsequential for the well-being of those already displaced by the planned mine.2

Third, homes were not simply lost during the displacement process. Quite the contrary, they became a crucial asset for project-affected people in negotiating compensation packages with the mining company. Moreover, by sensing their potential marginalisation in land-based transactions, some residents took an active role in trying to shape this process.

Fourth, morbidity and mortality were largely blamed on the stress induced by the project, but this in turn was not the result of the inevitability of displacement but rather of its partly voluntary nature. Social disarticulation also took a toll on the affected community, but this was again the result of individual choices that tore the social fabric apart. Paradoxically, the very success of individual residents in negotiating compensation packages and moving out of RM put the community as a whole at risk of disarticulation.

Finally, food insecurity was not reported to any significant extent by the relocatees. The loss of access to common property resources similarly did not materialise, as most of the residents chose their own relocation sites, thus avoiding an excessive pressure on the common resources of any one of the host communities.

Finally, while the proposed mining project has displaced about three-quarters of the RM residents, legal challenges mounted by a broad coalition of NGOs, known collectively as the Save Roșia Montana campaign, succeeded in bringing land acquisitions to a standstill beginning in early 2008. Particularly since then, uncertainty has replaced impoverishment as the dominant process, as many residents have come to ponder what will happen if they have to leave or, perhaps equally alarming, whether they will be left behind by the departing mining company.

The contextualisation of the IRR model by means of mediated risks

According to Cemea, the IRR model “captures the core economic and social substance of displacement/relocation, which is impoverishment and reconstruction” (Cemea 1997, 1571). How, then, can one account for the intervention of processes from without or within the displacement/relocation process, processes that have an undeniable bearing on the outcomes of relocation? In agreement with some constructive critiques (Dwivedi 1999, 2002), I argue for an enlargement of the focus of the IRR model to include the mediating contexts of impoverishment
The Roșia Montana displacement and a new perspective on the IRR model

risks. This is done for both theoretical reasons, in order to better understand whether and how impoverishment takes shape, and practical considerations, to better assess whether and how impoverishment risks can be addressed via improved resettlement practices, or rather through more profound changes in the development process itself.

The concept of mediation assumes that objectively identified risks (such as those of the IRR model) do not operate independently of social contexts, but rather that their basic characteristics (for example, probability or extent of damage) become meaningful through the practices of actors involved in making or receiving resettlement decisions. Objectively identified risks, which are general across different contexts and times, need to be understood and deconstructed at the actor level — often at the level of multiple actors — in order to identify their socially specific implications. Building on the constructivist tradition in risk research (Tierney 1999), deconstruction is used to refer to the analysis of risks in terms of three basic elements: an object deemed to be risky (or risk object); an object at risk; and a relationship between the two (Boholm and Corvellec 2011; Hilgartner 1992). The risk object considers the broader political economy of development, of which displacement is one part. The objects at risk are the human values that are seen to be threatened (Short 1984). The relationship between the two objects captures the link drawn by actors between what threatens and what is threatened over the course of displacement. Mediation avoids the more radical implications of constructivism — for example, risks are claims by social actors about perceived threats with no necessary connection to reality — and fosters a cumulative use of the knowledge generated using the IRR (Cernea 1997). However, the mediation perspective involves a higher level of complexity, by taking into account the macro and micro contexts of risks, and it simultaneously tones down the predictive function of the model.

Before applying this conceptual framework to the study of DFDR processes in mining, I will invoke some recent contributions that support the mediated risks perspective advocated here.

Without referring explicitly to mediated risks, Downing (2002) prepares the ground for a similar conception. He identifies eight contextual factors, which make mining-induced displacement more problematic in certain areas than in others:

The likelihood that [mining-induced displacement and resettlement] will be a significant issue increases as eight factors converge — as rich mineral deposits are found in areas with relatively low land acquisition costs (in the global market) that are being exploited with open-cast mining and are located in regions of high population density — especially on fertile and urban lands — with poor definitions of land tenure and politically weak and powerless populations, especially indigenous peoples. (Downing 2002, 3)

These circumstances are likely to play a distinct role in the risk configuration described by the IRR, thus highlighting the importance of political economic factors. The fact that “new strip mines are more likely to be proposed for Montana or Mozambique than for Minneapolis or Milan” (Freudenburg 1992, 307), has to be taken into account in analysing displacement risks.

The agency of actors also shapes the final configuration of risks. For example, the project planned by a Canadian mining company in the fertile area of Tambogrande, a town in the San Lorenzo valley of Peru, met with strong opposition from the local population (Keenan 2004). More in-depth sociological research revealed that the opposition of local people to the project, as well as their resistance to being relocated, emerged from sociocultural values, such as “fairness, trust, attachment to community ties, and self-determination” (Muradian, Martinez-Alier, and Correa 2003, 788). The conversion of this value system into strategic actions resulted in avoiding the involuntary displacement altogether, and even driving off the mining company.

Halfway across the globe, Golub (2006) and others found that in a particular Papua New Guinean context the local population took a proactive role in their relationships with mining...
companies and, as a result, was successful in extracting concessions from foreign developers and from the national government. This process is not always straightforward, and the success of local groups in negotiating whether and how their physical or economic displacement will take place is not assured. The important point, however, is that would-be displacees do have an understanding of, and a saying in, the matrix of risks in which they are involved. But so do their (potential) allies and the project developers reaching out for their lands and resources (Horowitz 2012).

This argument has also been made with direct reference to the IRR model. For example, Muggah (2000) has argued that the IRR model does not take sufficiently into account both the vulnerabilities and capabilities of those displaced. In an insightful analysis of the Sardar Sarovar dam project in India, Dwivedi (1999) distinguished among three categories of mediating factors: intracommunity differences in risk perception; the mediation of activist groups; and the influence of policy or political changes on the configuration of displacement risks.

McDowell (2002) sought to expand the applicability of the IRR model by identifying and building upon areas of common concern between IRR researchers and scholars pursuing the sustainable livelihoods (SL) perspective. The latter focuses on poor households and particularly on “decisions people take about how to achieve successful sustainable livelihoods” (McDowell 2002, 2). This research aims to understand how to promote livelihoods “in light of the risks people confront, the assets they lose and the trade-offs they make in pursuing livelihood strategies” (3). This suggests an active role for the displacees, who perceive, ponder and make choices in dealing with risks.

In reversing the perspective from the receiving to the decision-making end of resettlement policies, Horgan (1999) shows how the agency of the powerful actors, such as development agencies and project developers, can mediate impoverishment risks. While the Itaparica resettlement project in Mexico appeared as an “ideal plan” from the point of view of the IRR model – with each of the IRR risks being ostensibly addressed in the resettlement plan – the outcomes fell short due to faulty implementation. Horgan mentions the behavior of borrowers (who wavered in their financial commitments) and of development agencies (which were unable to coordinate their actions) as the sources of an inadequate implementation, which spawned unexpected risks for the resettlers.

Risk object, object at risk and relationship of risk: new questions for the IRR model

The IRR model suggests that the risk object in DFDR is unambiguous: the absent or poorly devised resettlement plan (Dwivedi 2002). From a constructivist perspective, the risk object is something (for example, a natural phenomenon or macro-economic process) that is identified as hazardous (Boholm and Corvellec 2011). Risk objects are not given in advance; rather, “designating an object as risky is a creative act” (179). At the same time, however, this act “depends on conditions of possibility in the natural and social world” (179), thus having a degree of realism in relation to the social and cultural context in which it takes place. This context includes, of course, the broader economic and cultural circumstances in which displacement and its associated risks take place. The mediated risks perspective allows us to ask broader questions about the sources and outcomes of impoverishment, beyond the context of the development project itself. One such question is: which exogenous factors make the displacement risks of a given displacement situation less potent or more virulent for the actors involved?

Exogenous factors point to outside, mostly political economic influences, which shape the basic datum of the displacement process. In relation to the IRR model, this question aims at broadening, and in this way drawing within the ambit of the model, a host of factors that are relevant for understanding the risks of impoverishment in a given sociohistorical setting. This contextualisation is useful as has been recently shown by Wilmsen, Webber, and Duan in applying the IRR model in the case of the Three Gorges development project in China. The authors show how
exogenous factors — such as the state’s development objectives, the relations between centre and locality, and the form of ownership of land — mediate displacement risks. They conclude that “impoverishment is not simply the result of poor practice, but is informed by states’ goals and the distribution of power within society” (Wilmsen, Webber, and Duan 2011, 358).

In different social and historical contexts, the exogenous factors can have an enduring effect on impoverishment above and beyond the risks of displacement itself. Studies of resource-dependent communities have shown that these can be either on a path of sustained development, of cyclical development, of transition or of long-term decline (Krannich and Zollinger 1997). For such communities, researchers have used the “rollercoaster” metaphor (Slack and Jensen 2004): it makes a significant difference if the displacement strikes when the community is in upward or downward movement. The risk object in such cases is a network of risks centring on the political economy of resource extraction. The displacement generated by the expansion of operations is only one part of this risk network. The antidote to joblessness recommended by the IRR model, namely employment creation (Cernea 1999), can work, in this scenario, only if it occurs within a diversification of the economic base of such communities. There is, however, some evidence that resource-dependent communities such as RM are the least likely to develop spontaneously a diverse economic base (Freundenburg 1992). Turning the “risk matrix” into an “action matrix” (Cernea 1997, 1578) may thus prove to be a more daunting task if planners are faced with impoverishment risks that have deep roots in the political economic context of the development project.

The objects at risk considered by the IRR model are mostly of a material kind — which justifies Cernea’s (1999) call for an economics of resettlement — and include loss of land, of employment, of housing, of food security and of health. However, being a sociologist, Cernea gives due attention to sociological variables in the analysis of DFDR, including social disarticulation, marginalisation and loss of access to common property resources. Overall, however, the range of things people value is fairly limited in social policy analyses of risk (Short 1984). The mediated risks perspective calls for renewed attention to the abrupt changes people experience as a result of displacement or, bearing in mind the networked character of risks, of the circumstances that make displacement possible. The loss of land, a house or a job can all reverberate profoundly in the subjectivity of those experiencing them. In a mining conflict in New Caledonia, for example, Horowitz (2002) discovered that the stakes of losing land were much higher than the mere economic value of the land, because the villagers feared a loss of respect for their customary and legal rights, which were closely tied to their identity and dignity. In the case of the Bergama mining conflict in Turkey, it was the breach of trust concerning the health effects of exploration activities that accompanied the increased morbidity among the residents and helped trigger a strong opposition movement (Arsel 2005). From the examples above, the relevant question for the IRR model is whether, and to what extent, local actors are active in defining and defending the risk objects (or stakes) of displacement and whether this tends to augment or reduce the material losses described by the IRR.

The relationship of risk is the relationship that an observer “establishes between a risk object and an object at risk, the former being held to threaten the value of the latter” (Boholm and Corvellec 2011, 180). Relationships of risk are observer-bound and thus express cultural preferences. The relationship of risk has a great innovative potential for the IRR model in that it puts human actors at the centre of the analysis by taking into account their differentiated experiences of displacement (Dwivedi 2002). According to Boholm and Corvellec (2011), relationships of risk need to satisfy three conditions. First, they are hypothetical descriptions of hazards and dramas that might occur if specific conditions are met. For example, the residents of Intag, Ecuador, formed a strong community group to oppose a mining project on their lands largely in response to the discovery of an environmental impact study that presented a “gloomy forecast of widespread destruction” (Kuecker 2007, 101). Second, they contain causal plots describing how the risk object can modify the object at risk by diminishing its value. Martínez Alier (2003)
shows, for instance, how the La Oroyo smelter in Peru led to the economic displacement of peasants because its pollution led to declining agricultural yields. Third, relationships of risk are catalysts for decisions and actions in dealing with risks and uncertainties. Numerous studies have documented the increasing opposition that mining operations face in different parts of the world (Evans, Goodman, and Lansbury 2002). These actions have been largely fuelled by the perceived risks of the planned operations. In the Pascua Lama project on the Chilean-Argentinian border, for example, the mining operator has agreed to provide financial guarantees to assuage local fears of environmental disaster amounting to $60 million (Gordon and Webber 2008). Despite this guarantee, the project was nevertheless suspended (in April 2013) by a court decision, so the conflict has been going on. The relevant question for the IRR model can be formulated as follows: how can the differently constructed relationship of risk account for the differentiated responses of the residents to the common set of risks postulated by the IRR model?

Methods

The empirical data used to address the three questions above come from 90 semi-structured interviews carried out over a period of two months in 2007–2008 in the RM commune, in the nearby cities of Abrud and Câmpeni, in the neighboring Bucium commune and in two locations where residents of RM had relocated at the time of the interviews (Micești and Cluj Napoca). In RM, residents both within and outside the mining project footprint were interviewed. The answers to the interviews were recorded in writing by the author and three research assistants, digitised in Excel and analysed using the qualitative data processing software Maxqda.

The interview questions assessed the displacement risks indirectly by asking about risks (in general), about current life in RM in comparison to 15 years before (that is, before the arrival of the mining company), about the apprehensions that residents might have about the future and about possible changes in individual and collective lives since the displacement began. In line with qualitative research on risk (for example, Smith et al. 2006), the risk categories of the IRR model were de-centred, in that no question referred explicitly to the IRR risks as such. The broad questions, for example those dealing with the past in comparison to the present, enabled respondents to refer to possible losses – land or jobs – that they incurred (or expected to incur) as a result of displacement. Additional data were drawn from the author’s participation in two public meetings organised by the mining company in RM (in December 2007).

Based on the data collected, the mediated risks perspective will be applied to one specific category of actors – the current and former residents of RM and a small number of residents of Câmpeni, Abrud and Bucium. The risk object, the object at risk and the relationship of risk will be considered from the points of view of these actors while acknowledging, with Dwivedi, that they are “embedded differentially in political economic and environmental conditions” (Dwivedi 1999, 47). Recognising that risks can play themselves out distinctly in different development contexts and among various actors is an important step towards an enriched understanding of the risk categories identified by the IRR model. The empirical data collected at RM show how risks are fluid rather than fixed categories and how intervening agencies (both outside and within the displacement processes) mediate the unfolding of these risks. The emerging picture is more complex – as the risk configuration differs markedly from the “selected empirical evidence” (Cemea 1997, 1572–1573) or the “selected empirical data” (Cemea 1997, 1574–1575) provided for each of the IRR categories – and less certain in its outcomes.

Methodologically, the identification of risk objects, objects at risk and relationships of risk is achieved by exploring what it is that frightens or concerns the affected residents of RM, what they fear they could lose and what relationships they draw between the two. The risk objects will be interpreted in terms of outside challenges, which local actors do not blame strictly on the
The Roșia Montană displacement and a new perspective on the IRR model

The Roșia Montană displacement process but on broader economic processes that put them in jeopardy. In contrast, the objects at risk — referring to all things that are valuable to local actors and which they are willing to defend against displacement — are interpreted as opportunities for avoiding impoverishment. Finally, the relationship of risk captures the enduring uncertainty enveloping the mining project, the displacement process and the varied risk experiences of different groups of residents.

Economic restructuring and enduring joblessness at Roșia Montană

The project developers began the acquisition of properties needed for the new RM mining project in 2002. As a mining town, RM was at that time in a process of economic contraction, reflected in the declining number of workplaces. The loss of jobs in the mining sector began in 1997 and continued until 2006, when the state-owned gold mine was finally closed. Over nine years, 673 jobs were lost, while the unemployment rate doubled from 9 to 18 per cent (Alba Iulia University 2007).

This decline mirrored a much broader process of industrial restructuring that swept across Romania in the second half of the 1990s (Larionescu, Rughiniş, and Rădulescu 1999). In many places, such as the coal mining region known as the Jiului Valley, the downsizing of industrial behemoths was used as a “shock therapy” by the Romanian government, whereas the massive layoffs and the accompanying declines in living standards were experienced as a “shock” by the former miners (Friedman 2007). The decision to close the state mine in RM created similar reactions among its residents. More than three-quarters of the 90 people interviewed in RM believed that the state company should have continued its operation. Amalia, a high school student from the project-affected area, stated in an interview that the local population “has become even poorer because the RM plant has been shut down”. Older residents experienced the closure of the mine as a highly troubling event. Georgeta, an elderly female resident from the affected area, expressed her puzzlement at the closure of the old mine by saying that: “we have had good gold here. Our ancestors said that mining is good. I cannot understand why they stopped it!” The same sense of disorientation is conveyed by Nicoleta, formerly a telephone operator at the state owned mine: “Nobody would have dreamed that the mines would be closed down.”

While only a few workplaces have been lost directly to the displacement caused by the RM mining project, beyond the effect of previous mining redundancies, joblessness seems to be an enduring problem for the community of RM. Neither current nor future mine-related workplaces are likely to alleviate it. At the height of its preparatory works (2007), the mining company had hired in various temporary or permanent positions less than half the number of laid-off workers from the state-owned mine (286 out of 673) (Alba Iulia University 2007).

The RM residents interviewed were also – with some exceptions – not optimistic about the future employment prospects with the Canadian company, for two reasons. On the one hand, it is uncertain if the project will receive the environmental clearance from Romania’s Ministry of the Environment. Octavian, a RM former miner and farmer from outside the project affected area thinks that if the project begins, they will hire young people and “things will be good”. However, he says that without the environmental clearance, the company cannot begin the project and that, in fact, “this is the whole trouble with them”. On the other hand, even if the project were to receive a green light, some residents are reserved about the promised workplaces. For example, Cristian, a former underground miner and unemployed at the time of the interview, explains that the company says it would hire one person from each family. However, they don’t say for how many months they hire you, it is uncertain for how many years, how many months they keep you on the job. They hire you today, [but] tomorrow or the day after someone does not like you anymore. I have enough stress already. (Cristian, project affected area 2007)
In view of these compounded uncertainties (uncertain mining project, in addition to uncertain workplaces at the new mine), it is little surprise that out of 30 respondents of working age interviewed—all of whom could have been hopeful at the employment opportunities offered by a new mine in their town—only three mentioned that they could benefit from the new jobs. The roots of the problem, however, run deeper still.

Alternative sectors, such as agriculture and animal husbandry, offer few prospects for a diversified employment base in RM. First, the agricultural policies of the European Union, of which Romania is a member since 2007, favor agricultural enterprises that are large enough to withstand competition on the European agricultural market (Waack 2004). Liviu, a middle-aged former electrician, who kept farm animals at the time of the interview, explained that: “two or three cows cannot be efficient. There is nowhere you can sell your milk given the European standards. To keep a farm you need a lot of land, to work it with equipment and be efficient.” When asked whether they would like to see the development of agriculture in the future of RM, less than half of the 82 interviewees claimed that they would. The remainder were either hostile to this idea (47%) or uncertain (12%) (Alexandrescu 2011).

Second, among those who have relocated from RM, (subsistence) agriculture does not sit well with the expectation of an urban lifestyle. A significant part of relocatees have moved to nearby cities (Abrud and Câmpeni), to more distant and larger cities (Alba Iulia, Arad or Cluj Napoca) or to villages in close proximity to larger cities (Micești, near Alba Iulia). In contrast, only a small fraction of the willing relocatees (about 25 families) chose as their relocation site the new village of RM, known as Piatra Alba (Green Report 2008), which the mining company still has to build in the vicinity of the old town. Laura, a young insurance broker living in RM, understood the two relocation choices (urban vs. rural) as follows: “Alba Iulia is for those who want to [move on], while Piatra Albă is for those who want to stay as they are.” In this interpretation, only a minority of relocatees seem to be willing to practice agriculture, even at the subsistence level.

Finally, despite its tourist potential, the four guest houses currently existing in RM can hardly provide enough employment for the residents of the community. In sum, agriculture and tourism, although touted as routes to alternative employment, are unlikely to provide sufficient workplaces even for the already shrunken community of RM.

The problem of enduring joblessness illustrates how risks are mediated by the downward employment trend, which the RM community underwent before and in parallel with displacement. Countering joblessness with reemployment, as propounded by the IRR model, can hardly work since the workplaces created by the project are not only short-term but highly uncertain. Alternative forms of employment are unrealistic due to their limited capacity to absorb a sizeable workforce.

All these processes cast a shadow of pessimism on the ability of the IRR to offer a workable action matrix in the case of RM, at least in terms of providing employment opportunities over the long run. By looking more closely at other risk categories of the IRR model, and especially at how these categories are negotiated by local actors, one can nevertheless observe some opportunities for avoiding impoverishment even in the case of an ill-designed displacement process. The second facet of mediated risks, the definition of objects at risk by local actors, brings these opportunities to light.

The corporate Goliath, the unyielding David and the agency of relocatees

The displacement process at RM coincided with the emergence of nationally visible opposition against the mining project among some residents and property owners. The year 2002 saw the first relocatees leaving RM at the same time as it witnessed the arrival of Stephanie Roth, an internationally connected activist militating against the proposed mine. The first local demonstration
The Roșia Montană displacement and a new perspective on the IRR model

Aiming to stop the project was organised in July 2002 (Greenpeace 2006). The local opposition movement, famously portrayed as David against Goliath by a local activist (Kocsis 2004), grew larger over the years and evolved into an international opposition movement known as the Save Roșia Montană campaign. Some of the key moments in the unfolding of this campaign will be briefly enumerated here.

In October 2002, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) terminated negotiations over a $100 million loan for the Roșia Montană mining project. While NGOs celebrated this as victory of the project opposition (Financial Times [London edition], October 29, 2002, 13), some IFC officials said the decision to withdraw was made due to the availability of private financing for the project (Financial Times [London edition], February 7, 2003, 27). In any case, the project developers were thus deprived of the legitimacy offered by its association with a major development institution such as the IFC, according to a Save Roșia Montană activist. Since then, a sizeable number of stakeholders at the regional, national and European levels have stated their opposition to the planned mining project. Despite this, the mining company continued with the permitting procedures and submitted its environmental impact analysis (EIA) to the Ministry of Environment in 2006. One year later, renewed legal challenges by NGOs resulted in the cancellation of a key legal document by a local tribunal, which led to the suspension of the EIA process by the same Ministry (Velicu 2012). After a three-year stalemate, the permitting procedure was relaunched in 2010 but no decision had been made by the beginning of 2013. The Save Roșia Montană campaign has thus been successful in blocking the project for at least 10 years (see Kühnle 2009).

The essential condition that gave the opposition movement an important edge in shaping the terms of displacement was that the mining company could not mobilise the eminent domain prerogative of the state, namely the right to expropriate owners for a project of “public interest” (Alexandrescu 2012). Despite informal pressures on RM residents to accept their “inevitable” relocation, the company followed a “willing buyer, willing seller” approach for acquiring the properties earmarked for development. In one of its press releases, the mining company explained that it was disposed to “negotiate, on an individual by individual basis, resettlement and relocation packages and schedules” (Gabriel Resources 2001).

However, even under these circumstances not everyone in the community was happy. Opinions on the opportunity of the mining project and the acceptability of resettlement were strikingly divided among the locals (Kocsis 2004). The community planning company hired to manage the relocation of the locals discovered at RM an “ unusually suspicious community”:

Many of Rosia Montana’s houses have pit latrines, irregular water supplies and no electricity. Gabriel Resources expected that the villagers would be only too glad to move. But they were not... As it discovered at Rosia Montana, outsiders can sometimes find those concerns difficult to grasp – and even harder to deal with. (Financial Times [London edition], March 9, 2001, 16)

It will be shown here how the things that concern people, their objects at risk, and their agency in defining and defending these objects, mediated the risks of landless and homelessness. This mediation proved beneficial in avoiding their impoverishment, at least over the short term. The objects at risk are the economic future of the resettlers, their social status and the risk of marginalisation.

McDowell (2002) has shown that resettlers identify and mobilise tangible and intangible assets in constructing their livelihood strategies. The evidence collected at RM suggests that some residents have been quite successful in maximising the value of their physical assets, especially homes. While compensation has often been criticised for its limited ability to contribute to the development of resettlers (see Cernea and Mathur 2008), the agency of affected residents
can make a significant difference. At RM, residents wanted to be dealt with individually for the purposes of negotiating compensation packages and, moreover, they were willing to exchange information among themselves to ensure that they would not end up worse off than their neighbours (Financial Times [London edition], March 9, 2001). The net result of these individual negotiations was an unusually high level of compensation (Table 1).

This high compensation level was, in part, attributable to the careful calculations in which some residents factored not only the replacement of their home and land but also their long-term reestablishment. Julia, one elderly woman from RM, explains that, while the mining company made her a compensation offer in the amount of $60,000, she “wanted a house and an additional $80,600 in a bank account. ... My pension is not enough for living somewhere else ... I also want to offer my son a home.” When asked about the status of his negotiations with the mining company, Liviu said that he expects “as good a price as possible” for a house and also “some pocket money, which you can use in case of need”. Several respondents explained that living somewhere else than RM would involve additional expenses. These considerations – which were shared without reticence with the interviewers – were also probably communicated along the informal networks of neighbors and friends residing in RM so that they became somewhat generalised. During a public meeting organised by the mining company in December 2007, one resident openly expressed his disappointment that the compensation he was offered ($72,000) would not enable him to start “from scratch”, apart from being able to buy a studio in Alba Julia. This is a clear expectation for property replacement plus an additional income source. This additional source can also be interpreted as a buffer for the long transition period until the company might be able to offer – if ever – the promised mining workplaces.

Some residents even speculated on the future of the mining project. The expectation among some resettlers that if the mining project would eventually be cancelled they would get their homes and land back, in addition to the compensation they had already received, was not uncommon. Only a small part of the houses acquired have been demolished by the mining company, which seems to justify this expectation. However, the long permitting period for the project has taken its toll on the old houses, some of which are already falling apart.

The residents interviewed appeared to be quite concerned about their economic future and pitched their expectations to a level they deemed sufficient to ensure their long-term financial well-being. Rather than passive victims of impoverishment, some residents acted in full awareness of their complex needs and expectations, in a nice illustration of Sen’s (1999) capabilities idea. The concern of several RM residents with preserving their social status had a similar effect: the memories of their former status as gold miners and the lingering desire to live a materially comfortable life made some residents refuse certain levels of compensation. Although an opponent of the relocation, Stelian, a former miner and carpenter who lived in the centre of RM, probably expressed the feelings of a larger group when he said that the company “should give me enough so that my children can wear ties their whole lives!” By this he meant that the compensation should be sufficient so that his children will not have to work as miners but

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of families accepting compensation</th>
<th>Compensation per family (US$)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>65,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>52,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>161,379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Alexandrescu (2011).
rather as white-collar workers. Another respondent commented on how some people who have sold their houses to the mining company have a “higher social position” (Liviu, RM). Igor explains that those who sold their properties have purchased status-conferring consumer goods such as new cars: “Dacia has no value here anymore; there are Jeeps, Audis, Volkswagen Golfs.” The desire to not be left behind in the race towards a high social position — and thus see their relative status in the community threatened — pushed compensation expectations still higher.

These attitudes suggest that, unlike other cases of local populations confronted with the intrusion of foreign mining companies (for example, Esquel in Argentina), the reactions at RM are not simply the result of incommensurable values (Walter and Martinez Alier 2010). Some interviewees in RM repeatedly conveyed the idea that, given a certain level of compensation, people would accept relocation, thus accepting the commensurability of their values with those of the foreign company. There is, nevertheless, considerable ambivalence in these expectations. Stefan, an elderly opponent of the RM project, said in July 2007 that he would relocate from RM for €1 million, because with this amount he could help out his children. But then he immediately added: “I ask for a lot [to give the company a reason] to refuse. Then I can stay here.” During a casual meeting with Stefan several months later, he nevertheless spontaneously said that he would accept €2 million to leave.

Such “moodiness of action” (Silver 2011) appears to be more characteristic of the agency of people from Roșia Montana, rather than a blanket characterisation of values as incommensurable between an anti-mining and a pro-mining group. Incommensurability is, at best, a variable conditioned by the personal and family histories of residents as well as by the shifting opportunities offered by the uncertain approval process for the mining project. Commensurability can thus be established and suspended in the course of negotiations over displacement.

The third object at risk is marginalisation. In order to cope with this risk, residents resorted to three strategies. All three can be seen as attempts on the part of affected residents to control the displacement process, beyond their sheer economic survival. One strategy involved the construction of wooden structures, in addition to their main houses, for which residents demanded additional compensation. It is unclear whether all these will be compensated by the mining company, but the intention of some residents to capitalise on the displacement process, beyond the compensation levels set by the mining company, is obvious.

The second strategy used to maintain some control over displacement was to sell only part of one’s properties to the company. For example Vasile, a young resident of Roșia Montana, says that he has sold one cottage and a piece of land to the mining company and with the compensation money has bought an apartment in Alba Iulia. His family has not sold their “old house” yet (2007) and his father expects an additional compensation offer from the company. Another respondent, who had already relocated from RM to a comfortable house in Micești (personal observation), wished to keep a bargaining chip in the displacement, and thus in the future of the project, by refraining from selling all his properties to the company. When he was interviewed five years after relocation, he still owned a piece of land in RM.

The third strategy against marginalisation points to an important characteristic that the Roșia Montana conflict shares with similar mining conflicts in Latin America and elsewhere. As alluded to briefly at the beginning of this section, the involvement of regional, national and international actors, in addition to the locals, has transformed this struggle into a typical “glocal” conflict. Escobar (2001) unpacks the glocal as a simultaneous strategy of globalising the local (that is, framing local discourses of resistance in terms of national identity or global environmental and archaeological values) and localising the global (by grounding the struggle against resource extraction in local history and community life).
Skillful local actors have managed to establish viable and long-term links with well-networked international NGOs such as Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth. For example, Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe commissioned an expert opinion from two members of the Institute of European Law at the University of Vienna (Fischer and Lengauer 2002). The opposition to the mining project was thus framed in transnational legal terms, at a critical time when Romania was preparing for EU accession. The authors of the expert opinion pointed out in explicit terms the implications of approving the mine:

This implies that if Romania authorises the Rosia Montana Mining Project despite its serious infringements of EC/EU environmental legislation and environmental standards, it will have to reckon with a considerable number of legal proceedings before the [European Court of Justice], some of which will initiated by concerned individuals, in the case of EU membership. (Fischer and Lengauer 2002, 23)

This approach, which materialised into a long series of successful strategic litigations against various permits and certificates required for the approval of the mine (Kühne 2009), has enabled the members of Alburnus Maior to have a significant say in the approval of the mining project and hence to avoid marginalisation. Short-circuiting the formal channels of participation in decision-making set up by the mining company and the local authorities (through public consultations), Alburnus Maior and its supporter NGOs have appealed directly to regional and national courts and state authorities, which were themselves under close scrutiny from the European Union, to defend their case. The glocal nature of the conflict – with complex arguments against the mine articulated at different scales (very similar to the Pascua Lama conflict analysed by Urkidi [2010]) – has thus greatly minimised the risk of marginalisation.

The optimistic assessment of this section may be seen to counterbalance the pessimism of the previous one. The aim of the mediated risks perspective is not, however, to paint the IRR model in brighter or in darker colours, but to draw attention to intervening factors that shape impoverishment risks not only at one time but repeatedly.

Steeped in uncertainty: stress and the erosion of collective life at Roşia Montană

It has been argued above that the deep woes of Roşia Montană, especially the problem of enduring joblessness, stem largely from outside the displacement process. On the other hand, the active role of local residents in negotiating the terms of their resettlement has meant that the things they value – their economic future, social status and retaining a voice in the project – have played a significant role in avoiding their impoverishment. Turning attention now to the relationship of risk, we can take the final step in developing the mediated risks perspective. Boholm and Corvellec (2011) describe the risk relationships in terms of hypothetical relationships, by asking “what if” questions. What if the RM mining project goes ahead? The local opponents – the NGO Alburnus Maior – answered unambiguously that this would lead to environmental degradation and economic, cultural and social losses due to displacement. When moved to the level of individual residents, the “what if” question becomes more difficult to answer. This is because the causal relationship – the second component in Boholm and Corvellec’s description of relationships of risk – is far from straightforward. Whether the risk object – for example, the impoverishment of RM residents – can be mitigated on an individual basis by raising the stakes of the object at risk (compensation offers of the company for affected properties, for example) is far from certain.

This question awakes uneasy feelings and even anxiety for more than a few residents from RM. Letitia, an elderly resident on sick leave, said: “I am afraid that if I [choose] a house at Piatra Albă, [what if] they don’t keep my children on the job?” Damian expected in 2007 a
substantial compensation offer from the mining company, but still felt “like a shipwrecked sailor, beaten by waves from all sides”. Some even feel that future upkeep and investments in houses was pointless, since they would need to move sooner or later (Szombati 2007). Along the same lines, Georgeta said that “the [company] worries me because they want me to leave and they also want to leave – and I don’t know what to believe”. Rumours that the mining company will withdraw from RM have been legion over the last seven years, attributed by some residents to the desire of the company to entice them to sell their properties while they can still get a good price from the company. On the other hand, so far the company shows no explicit intention to leave RM, presumably unwilling to part with the $15 billion bonanza buried underneath the town.

Uncertainties about the actions of the company or of NGOs, as well as apprehensions about the decisions of the Romanian government or of the Romanian parliament can make causal relationships inscrutable. For example, in the summer of 2013, the government prepared a draft law for Roșia Montană that declares the Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) project as one of “public utility”. This proposed law, which would allow expropriation of properties for mineral exploitation, was scheduled for debate by the Romanian parliament in the fall of 2013. However, the conflict over the mine still has no foreseeable end, as the two parties have displayed comparable strength over time. This has created and still represents a source of constant stress, which respondents have often linked to increased morbidity: “one year passes after the other and [the company] is still here and nothing happens and you are always stressed” (Petra, nurse, RM). Since the sources of stress come not only from displacement but from the political economy of the mining project, it can be termed meta-stress: it is a form of stress that is unlikely to yield to improved resettlement practices alone. Iulian, an active opponent of the Roșia Montană project, claims to have identified tens of displacement-induced deaths among those who have left RM. However, no medical evidence is available to back up these claims.

Relationships of risk are also linked to decisions and actions (Boholm and Corvellec 2011). In spite of uncertainties, all residents have taken action of one kind or another: while some have “risked resettlement”, others have “risked resistance”, as Dwivedi (1999, 47) has aptly put it. Apart from the general economic decline in RM, both groups have managed to avoid displacement-induced impoverishment. However, the aggregate outcome of these individual strategies for defending individual stakes in displacement has been a substantial weakening of collective life. Avoiding individual impoverishment has come at the price of social disarticulation, resulting in a hollowed-out community. This pathological effect of displacement can be interpreted in terms of the disarticulation component of the IRR model and has been analysed elsewhere (Alexandrescu 2013). However, it can also be approached as a mediated risk, from two complementary perspectives.

First, differently situated residents of RM are likely to draw different causal links between risk objects and objects at risk and act differently as a consequence (see Table 2). Some of these links are relatively straightforward, as for those who hold that the future mine is risky or, on the contrary, that the (non-mining) status quo is the real risk object (cells numbered 1 and 2 in Table 2). These clearly defined positions have coalesced into organised and active groups, such as the NGOs opposing the planned mine (Alburnus Maior and the Roșia Montană Cultural Foundation) and groups supporting it (Pro Roșia Montană, Pro Justice, Future of Mining Union).

What fails to be acknowledged in many debates over RM is that a large number of residents draw more than one link between the risk object and the object at risk. When both the risk objects and their subjective stakes are unpacked, we suddenly confront bundles of risk relationships, which cannot be neatly divided between a “mining is risky” and a “status quo is risky” scenario. For example, someone may agree that mining is desirable for RM, but disagree about the rapid pace at which the gold ores would be mined (within 20 years, according to the mining company). Or someone else may disagree about the use of cyanide.
Table 2. The typology of local actors in relation to risk definitions and mine-related benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of the mine</th>
<th>Risk definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High potential benefits of the mine development (properties eligible for compensation within the project footprint)</td>
<td>The future mine is risky (1) Albumus Maior, Roșia Montană Cultural Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low potential benefits of the mine (no compensation for properties)</td>
<td>The status quo is risky (2) Pro Roșia Montană, “Pro Justice”, “Future of Mining Union”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed (and changing) risk definitions (3) Roșia Montană residents with properties in the project footprint area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Roșia Montană residents outside the footprint area and some relocatees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5) Some relocatees from Câmpeni and Micești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6) Other residents of Abrud, Câmpeni and the Bucium commune</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author.

In estimating risk relationships, it is also important to consider the relationships between different residents and the potential benefits of the future mine, in particular the compensations paid for properties and the future jobs. With regard to properties, the eligibility for compensation creates a strong cleavage between those who could, ceteris paribus, sell their properties to the mining company and those who cannot. Living close to the project footprint but still outside the area of eligibility creates a different experience of project risks than living in an area from which one can “escape” in the last instance, by selling one’s property. The IRR model and media debates have been mostly silent on this category of immobilised victims of development-forced displacement. Unlike those living in the project footprint, whose properties are valuable because their acquisition enables the developers to commence the mining project, the residents from the surrounding areas could see the values of their properties plummet – and hence their mobility hampered – if the new mine is actually built. But even this spatial cleavage in risk relationships is socially mediated.

The question asked of respondents on what “cyanide” means to them is a case in point for the double – spatial and social – mediation of risks. One would expect that those who live outside the project footprint will generally be more concerned with the risks posed by the use of cyanide at the future mine than the more mobile residents of the project area. This is actually the case for most of those who reside in the villages and towns in the vicinity of RM (29 out of 35 residents interviewed). Adela, a young mother, says that cyanide “destroys and is dangerous for pregnant women”. She resides in a nearby valley and is ineligible for compensation but she also fears that the company will stay for a few years and then leave. Then “we are left without workplaces and [exposed to] pollution”. One can notice the uneasy mix of hope and fear in this respondent’s understanding of risk. However, like other residents in her circumstances, she demands compensation.

Six residents do not, however, express concern about the use of cyanide, despite living relatively close to the future mine. It is worth asking why. Four of these are in fact relocatees from RM who have voluntarily chosen to move to Câmpeni or Abrud. Their previous experience of working in mining tells them that mercury and even cyanide have been used before at RM, and personally they have witnessed no adverse effects of these admittedly toxic chemicals. The spatial mediation of risks (living close to the future mine) is mediated for these respondents by their occupational identity and experience. Understanding the mediating effects of these factors is crucial for understanding individuals’ relationships to obvious risks, such as those of cyanide. The mediating factors are themselves variable over time.
Six years after the closure of the state-owned mine, Gabriel Resources has become the only significant employer in RM. Accordingly, one would expect that a non-binding public consultation (in December 2012), which asked residents from RM and 34 other communities whether they support the resumption of mining, would find widespread support. However, only 52 per cent of eligible voters from RM voted in favor of the mining project (Gotiu 2012). The remainder were either against the mining project (13%) or abstained (35%). Despite the lack of alternative employment opportunities, residents are cautious about the uncertain fortunes of mineral-based employment. In short, even if the object at risk (their economic well-being) and the risk object (deepening unemployment) are obvious results, the link between the two is not strong enough to mobilise even a large majority to act in support of the planned mine.

The second perspective, on social disarticulation – complementary to that which focuses on the individual fates of Roșia Montană residents – stresses the importance of new collective identities forged in the course of this glocal conflict. Some local actors have come to (at least partly) identify with the mining company and the interests of the mining lobby in Romania and in the EU, whereas others have internalised the values of the environmental justice movement. Local actors have begun to travel, both figuratively and physically, to the centres of political and media influence (Bucharest, London, Brussels, Washington) as exponents and, indeed, living testimonies of local aspirations for or against mining. Strengthening these extralocal collective identities comes at the cost of the aforementioned hollowing out of the community: the historical community becomes a plurality of co-existing Roșia Montanăs, of which the “mining Roșia Montană” and the “agro-tourist Roșia Montană” are the most prominent illustrations.

Conclusion
This article has sought to illustrate briefly the utility of expanding the IRR model to account for cases of DFDR in which risks do not follow the predictable and reversible course implicit in the IRR framework. First, the argument made here is that exogenous factors – often linked to political economic decisions for resource extraction – can render some risks much more enduring and difficult to address than the IRR model allows for. Given that, even at their best, large mines tend to create local enclave economies, the prosperity of which is strictly delimited in space and time (North, Clark, and Patrany 2006), Cernea and Mathur’s (2008) call for project-specific investment and benefit-sharing needs to be broadened still further. In particular, investment decisions in the mineral sector need to be closely attuned to regional development policies with the aim of softening the social effects of boom and bust cycles on employment. The policy-driven diversification of the regional economy is also crucial for avoiding the risk of overreliance on a single, highly volatile economic sector such as mining. As Dwivedi (2002) has suggested, reforming resettlement practices is insufficient if macro-economic vulnerabilities are left unaddressed, at least at the regional level.

Second, individuals and groups affected by development are increasingly aware of what is at stake for them, and ever more capable to shape the conditions that determine their physical or economic displacement (Horowitz 2012). The crucial issue is not only their impoverishment but, in tune with the mediated risks perspective discussed here, the ways in which displacement and resettlement affect the capabilities of the people being displaced (Sen 1999). Reconsidering DFDR research in light of Sen’s capabilities approach – wherein broader questions of risks to desirable ways of life can be asked and problematised – is a promising area of future research.

The mediated risks perspective itself provides useful clues to planners and practitioners concerned with managing resettlement processes. In their relational theory of risks, Boholm and Corvellec (2011) point out that risk communication is not simply a matter of one party informing the other about the true state of affairs with respect to risks. Successful communication with would-be
displaces requires reaching a common understanding of which values are at stake, what threatens
them and what is the relationship between the two. In methodological terms, such an approach
requires more participative forms of research than the survey-based methods still common in
resettlement research. These richer stakeholder inputs could then be included in a better grounded
risk assessment methodology.

The benefits of understanding and managing complex risks for internally differentiated local
populations would materialise in at least two ways. On the one hand, there would be improved
resettlement outcomes for resettlers, who would see their desired ways of life enhanced rather
than threatened. On the other hand, development projects that cannot deliver such positive out-
comes would be subjected to serious scrutiny and perhaps radically redesigned or rejected.

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Notes

1. Mediated is used in this context in the sense of “acting through, involving, or dependent on an inter-
2. Those engaged in agriculture have so far refused to be displaced.
3. All dollar amounts given refer to USD.
4. This occasional paper was made available to the author by the Roșia Montana Gold Corporation
   (RMGC), for which thanks are due.
5. For example, one resident from Roșia Montana, a former miner working as a carpenter at time of the
   interview, complained that the arrival of the Canadian company had ruined the family business.
6. Of the 90 interviewees, five had relocated to Abrud and three to Câmpeni.
7. This is also the site where the Canadian mining company had built a relocation site including 125 indi-
   vidual homes.
8. Of the 90 interviewees, one was approached in Cluj Napoca.
9. Of the 90 interviewees, four were approached in Micești.
10. Name of a socialist-era Romanian automobile.
11. Invoking local history in the struggle against the gold mining project can work as a double-edged
    sword. Alburnus Maior – the first NGO to oppose the gold mine – took its name from the ancient des-
    ignation of the Roman mining site in Roșia Montana and vindicated itself as an association of gold
    miners (Turcanu 2002). On the other hand, the mining company routinely claims that its new mine
    will continue the local mining tradition.
12. This is the value of the gold deposit calculated at a gold price of $1500/troy ounce.
13. There is an emerging literature on what might be called “planned-only projects”, which create uncer-
    tainties, trauma and stress before they actually take place (Kobus 2008, Perera 2010). As the number of
such projects is bound to grow due to increasingly effective opposition worldwide, this dimension of uncertainty should be explicitly theorised in the expanded view of the IRR model.

14. This second NGO opposing the mine emerged a few years later after Alburnus Maior.

15. The turnout across all the 35 communities was below 50% + 1, which means that the quorum was not met at the regional level (Gotiu 2012).

References


The Roșia Montană displacement and a new perspective on the IRR model


Low-intensity democracy and political crisis in Haiti: the North American contribution

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ABSTRACT This article makes the case that Canada and the United States have contributed to blocking Haiti’s path towards democratic development over the last decade by perpetuating neoliberal economic policies and promoting a form of low-intensity democracy based on the political leadership of elite sectors. This approach has placed North American actors at loggerheads with popular civil society in Haiti, contributed to Haiti’s permanent crisis, and exacerbated both the country’s status as a “failed state” and the necessity of ongoing international stabilisation efforts. If Haiti is to escape its permanent political crisis, a paradigm shift is required in the thinking of foreign policymakers.

RESUME Cet article soutient que le Canada et les États-Unis ont contribué à entraver du développement démocratique d’Haiti durant la dernière décennie en perpétuant des politiques économiques néolibérales qui ont un faible niveau d’appui et en promouvant une forme de démocratie très limitée fondée sur le leadership politique d’une élite. Cette approche oppose les acteurs nord-américains à la société civile haïtienne, contribue à l’état de crise permanente qui prévaut dans le pays et exacerbe son statut d’état en déliquescence et le besoin continu d’interventions internationales de stabilisation. Pour qu’Haiti échappe à cet état de crise politique permanente, il est nécessaire que s’accomplisse un changement de paradigme chez les décideurs responsables de la politique étrangère.

Keywords: Haiti; low-intensity democracy; failed state; Canadian aid; US aid

Introduction

On 20 March 2011, Michel Martelly – a popular singer with close ties to the most reactionary sectors of Haiti’s elite – won the second round of a presidential election marred by irregularities. During the first round, which took place on 28 November, at the same time as a general election for the Chamber of Deputies and one-third of the seats for the Senate, Lavalas, Haiti’s most popular and historical political party, was arbitrarily restricted from fielding candidates. Only 22.8 per cent of the electorate showed up at the polls, a record low turnout for presidential elections in the western hemisphere (including Haiti) since 1947 (CEPR 2011). Following the first round, an OAS (Organisation of American States) expert mission controversially declared that Martelly had placed second instead of third, in light of serious irregularities and widespread mobilisations by his supporters. Pressure from the international community led the government of Haiti to accept the election results, causing Martelly to proceed to the second round with a 0.7 per cent lead over his contender. Since Martelly’s victory, the political class has returned to its tradition of infighting:

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the first five months of his term were marked by conflict with Parliament—where the President does not hold a majority—over the appointment of a prime minister. After three candidates were proposed and one finally approved, the President himself pressured Prime Minister Garry Conille into resigning after just four months in office. These developments cast the spotlight back on the nation’s permanent political crisis, and the need for a more careful analysis of the factors behind it. Although the mammoth task of reconstruction imposed by the earthquake of January 2010 temporarily eclipsed the cycle of coups, flawed elections, and campaigns of repression, all of these have prevented the consolidation of democracy three decades after the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship. The question of democratic development must therefore return again to centre stage.

Haiti’s political troubles have not been exclusively homegrown, however: the massive international presence in the country has often added to the state’s weakness and its monopolisation by a small elite. With a shared commitment to an unpopular neoliberal development model, Haiti’s small, fractured elite has relied upon external assistance to maintain its dominant status. Since the early 2000s, both Washington and Ottawa have arguably restricted Haiti’s path towards democracy by perpetuating neoliberal economic policies and by supporting a form of low-intensity democracy—or polyarchy—based on the political leadership of elite sectors. This approach has placed North American actors at odds with popular civil society in Haiti and has been a significant contributing factor to Haiti’s permanent crisis. It has also contributed to the country’s status as a “failed state” and the necessity of ongoing international stabilisation efforts.

This article explores American and Canadian economic development strategy and democracy promotion in Haiti from the outset of Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s second presidency in 2000 to the end of Michel Martelly’s first year in office in 2012. The research draws upon interviews conducted in Canada and Haiti with policymakers, nongovernmental organisations, and representatives of Haiti’s popular movement. We investigate these two seemingly separate issues for empirical and theoretical reasons. In Haiti, with its stark inequalities and massive levels of poverty, democracy, according to Robert Fatton (2002), must “inevitably challenge the structure of power and property rights”. Theoretically, it is difficult to conceive of a process of democratisation in which the most important questions on the organisation of the economy and development strategy are shielded from popular input.

One cannot examine American and Canadian support to democratic development without looking at the larger political economy of democracy building in Haiti. The approach is thus historical, drawing upon a critical political economy perspective to conceptualise the class divisions of Haitian society and Haiti’s relationship to the US, Canada, and the international community. Nevertheless, Haiti’s extreme state of dependency means that the path towards democracy and development requires international support. The US and Canada, which respectively pledged USD2.6 billion and CAD550 million following the earthquake, have provided badly needed aid in sectors such as health and education. But in the area of governance, criticism must yield to prescription in the effort to chart an alternative course for the foreign policies of both countries and the international community at large. We therefore argue that to consolidate a more meaningful and inclusive form of Haitian democracy, donors must engage popular civil society. American and Canadian support to Haiti must be guided by respect for democratic sovereignty: a commitment to elections that reflect the poor majority’s preferences and to enhancing the Haitian state’s ability to develop more robust national development plans. If Haiti is to escape its permanent political crisis, a paradigm shift is required.

The early 2000s: fanning the flames

Haiti has endured a lengthy history of endemic poverty, inequality and subordination in the world economy. The vast majority of Haiti’s population is of African descent, with a small mixed
African-European, or mûlatre, elite comprising only 5 per cent of the population (Central Intelligence Agency 2012). The wealth of the dominant class is linked to assembly manufacturing and agro-exportation. The vast majority, however, work the land with little access to vital inputs, while the slums of the nation’s capital are overfilled with displaced peasants and unemployed workers, and are subjected to some of the most difficult conditions of the Americas. Although recent statistics on inequality and poverty are unavailable, a little more than a decade ago, 65 per cent of all Haitians had lived below the poverty line before the devastating effects of the earthquake; the richest 10 per cent of Haitians held nearly 50 per cent of all income, while the poorest 10 per cent held a paltry 0.7 per cent (UNDP 2007).

American support for the assembly manufacturing-based development model began during the “Baby Doc” Duvalier dictatorship, when Jean-Claude Duvalier promoted exportation to the American market under the guise of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the late 1970s. This plan generated new urban slums in the capital and failed to resolve the unemployment crisis or to produce lasting economic gains (Dupuy 1997). When Haiti’s first democratic elections occurred in 1990, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the head of the popular Lavalas movement (later named Fanmi Lavalas), sought to move beyond the export model and called for agrarian reform, declaring health care, housing, education, food and social security as fundamental human rights. His overwhelming victory was soon upset by a coup d’etat, which reasserted oligarchic control over the economy.

The Clinton administration reinstated Aristide three years later, but on the condition that the latter accept the Emergency Economic Recovery Program (EERP), which secured the neoliberal development framework with its heavy emphasis on export-processing zones. The program, which prescribed export-led manufacturing approaches, privatisation and cash crop production, was formulated by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Inter-American Development Bank (IBD) and USAID, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and several other donors. It stood in direct opposition to the platform for which Aristide had been elected (Dupuy 1997). Further neoliberal reforms were imposed during Aristide’s second presidency, which was marked by escalating confrontations and political opposition to an elite-led civil society movement.

Popular civil society, including les organisations populaires (OPs) and organised labour (la société civile majoritaire) in Haiti, opposed many of the neoliberal reforms, but supported the president until a second coup ended Aristide’s short term in February 2004. Although few studies have been conducted on the scope of this expression of popular civil society, the OPs – the driving force behind the movement of dechoukaj, which “uprooted” the Duvalier dictatorship – overlap with the hundreds of small groups (ti fannis) present throughout Haiti. While they are often unable to mobilise for the long term due to the extreme precariousness of the class status of their leaders, they possess intellectuals who can help sustain a coherent structure at the local, regional and national levels. Their political program – which advocated justice, transparency and participation as the basis of the Lavalas movement – was much more popular than the alternative visions promoted by the opposition from elite civil society (la société civile minoritaire).

Canada and the US began to play a more active role in supporting growing opposition to Aristide among some sectors of the population in the early 2000s. The general election of 2000, which led to a majority for FL (Fanmi Lavalas) in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, initiated a new crisis cycle. The following presidential elections produced a landslide victory for Aristide, but many opposition parties refused to field candidates. Thereafter, opposition forces demanded that Aristide immediately resign; the so-called Option Zéro. The civil society opposition, the Groupe des 184 (G-184), consisted of Haiti’s traditional business elite and middle class NGOs. The G-184 was joined by the Convergence Démocratique (CD), a coalition of traditional political parties to form the Plate-forme Démocratique (PD). The PD remained marginal as Lavalas
continued to enjoy the highest level of popular support in spite of a worsening economy and increasing pressure on Aristide (Dupuy 2005). Although there has never been any evidence to back their most serious allegations, the opposition declared that Aristide was falling into authoritarianism, committing human rights violations and encouraging state corruption.\(^5\)

Canada and the US officially responded to the crisis by supporting a compromise solution, while nonetheless undermining the government. An aid embargo initiated by George W. Bush’s administration, after the disputed elections, with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) following suit, significantly weakened the government and its social policies.\(^6\) Under the Liberal governments of Chrétien and Martin, Canada was one of the few donors who maintained aid to Haiti, providing over CAD18 million from 2000 to 2001. This sum, however, represented half of the amount disbursed during the previous fiscal year and most of it was redirected from the state to NGOs. In 2003, the Secretary of State for Latin America, Africa and the Francophonie, Denis Paradis, organised a secret meeting of states and international organisations at Meech Lake, resulting in the decision that Aristide be removed from power and that Haiti be placed under the UN’s administration under the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine (Engler and Fenton 2005). Canada’s motives were likely driven by a combination of economic interests (with many Canadian multinationals increasingly acting in Haiti), a diplomatic desire to support the US (particularly following the Iraq war), and the prestige associated with playing a major role in a country where it enjoyed much cultural capital (Burron 2012).

In this context, the US and Canada configured their democracy programs to fit within their shared foreign policies objectives. USAID and CIDA allocated amounts to undermine the Lavalas government and to legitimise the following interim government. Three years prior to the coup (fiscal years 2001–2004), CIDA spent CAD11.5 million in democracy assistance compared to CAD81 million over the next three years. The US spent USD13.79 million from 2001 to 2003 and USD66.29 million over the next three years. The cash-starved government of Aristide operated on a USD300 million budget in 2003 (Farmer 2004). The focus also switched to strengthening civil society opposition groups in the events leading up to the coup and to rebuilding state institutions after Aristide was gone.

American efforts to reinforce the elite opposition during the Aristide years were undertaken chiefly by the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) with funds from USAID. From 2002 to 2007, the IRI received USD4.277 million in federal funds to manage its training programs for civic education, civil society organisations and political parties (IRI 2008), which had no members from the most popular party in Haiti. IFES programs in the early 2000s focused on empowering civil society organisations based on the assumption that the executive controlled the judiciary and that the government was implicated in human rights abuses (IFES 2004). The creation of several justice-focused organisations and their “sensitisation” were instrumental in forming the basis of the G-184 and the PD. A University of Miami report (Griffin 2004, 22) notes that interviewed IFES administrators went so far as to claim that they wanted to take full credit for Aristide’s eventual ouster but could not out of respect for the US government.

Canada channelled support to more left-leaning NGOs and some conservative groups linked to the opposition through CIDA and various NGOs. The most active of these organisations, Development and Peace, played a role similar to IFES in mobilising elite civil society opposition groups against Aristide’s government. Despite the assertion that they were supporting the poorest sectors of society in a struggle against authoritarianism,\(^7\) the groups – funded by Development and Peace – mainly had a small membership and were led by French-speaking elites based in the capital (one exception was the peasant movement in the central plateau). Development and Peace also supported many women’s organisations that opposed Aristide, though these were divided along class lines from poor women engaged in the popular struggle.\(^8\)
The paramilitary assault, which delivered the *coup-de-grâce* against Aristide's government in February 2004, indicated the opposition's weakness. A Multinational Interim Force (MIF) composed of troops from Canada, the US and France was deployed to stabilise the situation immediately after Aristide's forced departure (at the hands of US security forces). This was soon replaced by a UN peacekeeping mission led by Brazil and Chile, the *Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haïti* (MINUSTAH). A member of *Réseau d'Organs National Multiplicateur de Fanmi Lavalas* -- a peak organisation of OPs -- put the matter succinctly:

There was a minority civil society composed of the bourgeoisie, the political class and of course some organic intellectuals who always defend this privileged minority. And -- you may laugh, but it is true -- one also has to place within this civil society the United States and its allies. I'm speaking of the government of George Bush, the government of Canada, and the government of Chirac, all of which supported the coup.9

**After the coup: polyarchy at any cost**

During the reign of the Interim Government of Haiti (IGH), led by Florida-based businessman and de facto prime minister, Gérard Latortue, popular civil society faced extreme repression once more. Several human rights reports documented the IGH's brutality, which included eyewitness accounts of attacks by the *Police Nationale d'Haïti* (PNH) and death squad forces against Lavalas partisans in Port-au-Prince's slums. Other acts of violence were demonstrated by the remilitarisation of Haiti's police and the freeing of prisoners, which included paramilitaries during the first coup years who were convicted of extreme crimes.10 Although MINUSTAH helped restore some level of stability and normalcy, it was widely criticised for using repressive measures against the so-called *chimères* and Lavalas partisans of the *bidonvilles*.11 Moreover, MINUSTAH's positive impacts were ultimately limited since its stabilisation efforts were not accompanied by efforts to address the political and economic demands of Haiti's poor majority.

In this context, both Canada and the US initiated a new phase of democracy promotion, while contributing to another neoliberal economic plan: the *Cadre de Cooperation Interimare* (CCI). Canada, in particular, helped articulate a framework of engagement based around the notion of a failed state, which was adopted by UN agencies, the World Bank and other donors, and suggests that failed states are unwilling or unable to enforce security, authority and the rule of law, protect human rights and provide basic services (CIDA 2005).12 There is little question that state building has its merits. However, approaching Haiti's state fragility as a technocratic matter consisting of building institutional machinery and procedural arrangements overlooks the need to differentiate state institutions from oligarchic or patrimonial control (Shamsie 2008) and the "transboundary relations of inequality", which have contributed to Haiti's postcolonial fragility (Shah 2009).

Following the coup, Canada and the US enhanced the state's security capacity while assisting oligarchic sectors realise their development program. They did the latter via the Joint Committee for the Implementation and Monitoring of the CCI, which was developed by the IGH with the support of the World Bank, the IBD, the United Nations and the European Union. Although presented as an initiative on behalf of Haitian civil society, the CCI was hastily conceived and overrepresented the G-184 and international NGOs at the expense of majority civil society (Taft-Morales 2005). The document emphasised privatisation as central to Haiti's development efforts, allowing considerable say for the IMF and the World Bank in Haiti's "economic governance", debt servicing and an export-driven agriculture strategy (Schuller 2008). In advocating for increased foreign direct investment in manufacturing and services and in neglecting agricultural reform, the CCI echoed previous neoliberal development strategies (Shamsie 2009).
US democracy assistance focused on developing elite parties' and civil society organisations' capacities in preparation for elections. USAID directly administered approximately USD1.5 million in democracy assistance, while providing funds to IRI, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and Creative Associates International. They were complemented by a “cross-cutting” Haiti Transition Initiative administered by USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives, oriented towards “quick, visible small projects to promote peace and community cohesion” (USAID-Haiti 2006). The National Endowment for Democracy channelled funds to civil society organisations opposed to Lavalas through two partner organisations, the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) and the American Center for International Solidarity (ACILS).¹³ With more than USD3.575 million in grants from USAID, IRI launched a new political party strengthening program, which channelled funds to a number of marginal parties while accusing Aristide of destabilising Haiti from afar (IRI 2005).

CIDA continued to fund several small civil society organisations directly and through various Canadian NGOs. Among the human rights groups CIDA chose to fund was Haiti’s most high profile human rights organisation, the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR), whose reports were directed against Lavalas partisans and whose most serious allegations were subsequently disproved.¹⁴ Through a CIDA-funded Rights and Democracy project and a second phase of Development and Peace’s country program (CIDA 2006), many of the NGOs and civil society networks opposed to the Lavalas movement continued to receive funding. The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) hosted several conferences in North America on behalf of the Haitian private sector in 2005. With several high-ranking government officials in attendance at one event, including Denis Coderre (Liberal MP and Special Advisor on Haiti to Prime Minister Martin), the conference’s conclusions restated old mantras on the importance of privatisation, enhanced security and the private sector in reducing poverty. Meanwhile, Right and Democracy called on MINUSTAH to increase its security efforts, even though the peacekeeping mission was being criticised for the casualties inflicted by its operations in the slums of Cité Soleil (Rights and Democracy and the Concertation pour Haiti 2006).

Canada also supported the electoral process organised by the IGH. While CIDA’s technical and financial support to the Conseil Electoral Provisoire and the UNDP to organise the elections were not in themselves objectionable, Canada’s silence on the electoral process’s shortcomings was. Despite funding an international observation mission, Canada and its partners were largely silent on the imprisonment of Lavalas leader Father Gérard Jean-Juste, insufficient voter registration centres, and pro-government forces attacking Lavalas rallies (The Jurist, February 17, 2006).

The 2006 presidential results once again exposed Haiti’s political fragmentation. The CD, having always portrayed itself as a coherent alternative to Aristide, dissolved as an electoral coalition after the coup. Haiti’s elite reverted to interpersonal rivalry, with 35 presidential candidates appearing on the ballot. Heading a new coalition, Lespwa – which included members of the former FL government under Aristide – René Préval won the election. The majority of FL members boycotted it. Allegations of fraud surfaced when Préval, poised to win the presidency again according to exit polls and the Provisional Electoral Council’s (CEP) own initial tabulations, finished 1.3 per cent below the 50 per cent mark needed to prevent a second round of elections. Suspicions were confirmed when television stations broadcast thousands of ballots – mostly for Préval – found in a dump not far from the CEP’s tabulation center. Amidst massive protests, a compromise solution apportioned blank ballots among the leading contenders, thereby granting Préval his victory by violating the rules of the game instead of upholding them (The Jurist, February 17, 2006).

Drawing upon its reputation as an honest broker, Canada provided a multilateral face to the intervention. According to one high-ranking Department of Foreign Affairs and International
Trade (DFAIT) official who worked on the Haiti file during the interim government's tenure, Canada helped convince other Latin American states to support the UN presence since Haiti was seen as a challenge for the region and there was a collective responsibility to act. But regional organisations such as the OAS and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the vast majority of Haitians opposed the coup, and Canadian policymakers had in fact acted opportunistically to enhance Canada's diplomatic stature and economic interests.

The (partial) return to democracy and enduring patterns

In light of Haiti's history of dictatorships and coups, and its recent unelected interim government, Préval's presidency can be viewed as successful insofar as it contained a certain degree of democratic legitimacy and established the procedure of handing over executive power through the electoral process. Nonetheless, Préval helped reproduce patterns of development that we believe to be at the root of Haiti's instability. The neoliberal approach reasserted through the interim government's CCI was extended through a new IFI-sponsored Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP) supported by Canada, the US and Haiti's other major donors (Republic of Haiti 2007). Similar to the CCI, the GPRSP advertised itself as a participatory-based project and emphasised prudent fiscal and monetary policies, exploiting competitive advantages in agriculture, tourism and textiles.

Under Préval, both CIDA and USAID continued to fund elite civil society. Rights and Democracy launched a CAD5.5 million CIDA-funded program in 2008, which continued to fund its main civil society partners and the Convention des Partis Politiques Haitiens, a coalition of 12 political parties formed in 2005 with the co-opted faction of FL. Both the US and Canada also began emphasising supporting political institutions. Among other things, a CAD5 million CIDA-funded parliamentary capacity-building program was implemented. USAID also hired the development consultant Tetra Tech ARD to implement a decentralisation effort to strengthen local government units. In the absence of redistributive policies and autonomous development planning, however, such state-capacity building exercises amounted to little more than stabilising neoliberalism by creating a more efficient polyarchy.

Indeed, in 2009, the old emphasis on Haiti's low-wage manufacturing sector received renewed impetus with the release of the "Collier report", a development strategy authored by economist Paul Collier, Special Adviser on Haiti for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The report, also supported by Bill Clinton, now UN Special Envoy for Haiti, noted that Haiti was in a unique position to capitalise on new US legislation providing duty and quota-free access to the American market (Collier 2009). Released shortly before Haiti's parliament began debating a bill to triple the minimum wage to USD5 per day (62 cents/hour), the report was seized upon by opponents to keep wages low. Leaked documents indicate that contractors for Fruit of the Loom, Hanes and Levis worked with the US Embassy in Haiti to oppose the increase while the Senate debated the bill, which had already unanimously passed in the Chamber of Deputies. Préval eventually negotiated a two-tier system to pay textile workers a minimum of USD3 per day and all other industrial and commercial sectors USD5 ("WikiLeaks Haiti: let them live on $3 a day", The Nation, June 1, 2011).

Without an organised popular base to sustain his government, Préval supported the international economic program and provided unconditional support to MINUSTAH, which increased stability in some of the poorest sectors of Port-au-Prince through repression. A recently leaked US diplomatic cable indicated that the mission also assumed a more direct political role when its chief from June 2006 to August 2007, Edmund Mulet, recommended that criminal charges be filed against Aristide to prevent him from regaining influence (Mulet was renamed head of mission after the earthquake; "WikiLeaks Haiti: the Post-Quake ‘Gold Rush’ for Reconstruction
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Contracts”, The Nation, June 15, 2011). That Haiti’s elite required a foreign-occupation force to stabilise the country in the absence of civil conflict points to the elite’s failure to broker a new social compromise.

Senate elections in April 2009 again illustrated the elite’s antipathy towards the popular classes’ involvement in Haiti’s democracy. The culprit this time was the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), which prevented FL from participating in the election based on arbitrary and unconstitutional restrictions, thereby choosing to reject the party’s candidate list when a party faction submitted its own list after the registration date had passed. When the factions then jointly submitted one list, the CEP further required an original signature (nonfacsimiled) from the party leader, former President Aristide, in exile in South Africa. FL challenged the CEP, which does not have the authority to exclude legally recognised political parties, in court. But the CEP ignored FL’s legal challenge (and protests from parts of the international community), and held the elections as planned. Although the CEP announced an 11 per cent turnout, as many Haitians boycotted the election, virtually every independent observer estimated turnout of less than 5 per cent.

The earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January 2010 left up to 200,000 dead (which included approximately 20% of federal government employees), 300,000 injured, and 1.5 million displaced (Bolton 2011). Initial optimism that the earthquake represented an opportunity to place the Haitian state at the center of development efforts was soon challenged by the actions of international actors. After the initial shock of the destruction, a donor conference and reconstruction plan held in Montreal instigated the creation of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC). Co-chaired by Haitian PM Jean-Max Bellerive, the IHRC included representatives from the different branches of government, business, civil society and bilateral and international donors. An emergency law granted complete authority to the commission to determine the country’s future over the next 18 months, effectively rendering Haiti an international trusteeship (Fatton 2010). The commission spearheaded the Haiti Action Plan, which in many ways constituted a post-earthquake reiteration of the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, affirming the sanctity of the Haitian state while identifying NGOs as the main agents for implementing the plan and granting the IHRC authority to approve project proposals (Republic of Haiti 2010). The IHRC represented a complex and shifting locus of authority which, despite having Haitian government and local representation, remained inaccessible to Haitian citizens and beyond popular accountability (Bolton 2011). UN Deputy Special Envoy, Dr Paul Farmer - a longtime friend of Haiti’s poor - warned that post-earthquake aid to Haiti largely bypassed the state, and that the poor had very little input in the country’s reconstruction plans. In the days following the earthquake, Canadian officials even feared that the lack of political stability would increase the risk of a popular uprising and expressed fears that Aristide would return from exile in South Africa.

The Action Plan can be seen as an effort to return the focus on export-processing zones and limiting the Haitian state to establishing infrastructure and promoting manufacturing and tourism. While one can reasonably argue that in post-earthquake Haiti, any jobs – including those in the export-processing zones – are welcomed, Haiti’s inability to adopt a “high-road” approach to assembly manufacturing that might contribute to the country’s development, based on higher wages, unionisation and generous social policies, is troubling. Among the 23 assembly plants currently in operation in Haiti, only one has negotiated a collective agreement with its workforce (Shamsie 2009).

In addition to the continuities in development strategy, Canada and the US both funded and sanctioned flawed elections. Before the earthquake, the CEP had followed up its controversial decision to exclude FL from the senate election by excluding 14 political parties – including FL – from the upcoming general election. Although FL followed all registration requirements, the council cited its original failure to submit a party authorisation for the April 2009 elections as
grounds for its exclusion (UDH 2010). Strong donor pressure ensured that the elections were held according to the original decision on 28 November 2010. Only 22.8 per cent of registered voters cast a ballot, indicating, once more, that most Haitians refuse to participate in elections excluding the country's most popular political party. Official results after the first round of the presidential election put Mirlande Manigat (Rassemblement des Démocrates Nationaux Progressistes) comfortably in first place, with Jude Celestin from Préval’s INITE coalition in second and Martelly (Repons Peyizan) in third. After widespread protests in favour of Martelly, an OAS expert mission (six of the seven members of which were from the US, Canada and France) recommended overturning the results based on a review of a sample of ballots. 23 Surrounded by US advisors and figures from Washington's democracy promotion industry, Martelly was the US's favoured candidate. 24 Under pressure from the international community, the CEP nudged Celestin out of second place with the highly questionable OAS results, which put Martelly ahead of Celestin by 0.7 per cent. In this context, Martelly emerged victorious in the second round of voting, which occurred on 20 March 2011.

Slipping back into authoritarianism?

In his campaign, Martelly invoked “the people” and portrayed himself as someone who could mediate power (Sylvain 2012). In May 2012, he received parliamentary support for his Five-E development strategy – employment, état de droit (rule of law), education, environment and energy – which political leaders implicitly agree are national priorities (ICG 2013, 21). Martelly's flagship reconstruction project consists of a new industrial park in the north-east, the North Park Project, the construction of which was facilitated by the government evicting 366 farmers from a large, fertile tract of land (which coincided with the first anniversary of the January 2010 earthquake). The project has received financial support from a number of international backers, including USAID, and will be managed by the South Korean company Sae-A. In December 2010, the American Federation of Labour – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) issued a memo carefully documenting Sae-A's “labor and criminal law violations” in Guatemala before the company moved many of its operations to Nicaragua to avoid making concessions to Guatemalan workers (Sontag 2012). Although low-quality jobs are better than no jobs at all, the strategy is likely to continue reproducing the same patterns of enclave-style development amid massive pools of unemployment.

Martelly’s populism, which is uncharacteristic of a dominant class that has usually attacked redistribution of any sort, obscures his lack of significant action on social matters. 25 Regarding the promised universal education program, the government did establish the National Fund for Education in May 2011, with the goal of collecting USD8.5 million per month by taxing all international phone calls in and out of Haiti, and all international money transfers; a move which ostensibly allowed the waiving of all registration fees for Haiti's primary schools. But the management of the fund has been linked to a corruption scandal, and it appears that the fees for most of the country’s primary students were already being covered by international donors. On the positive side, the government piloted a cash-transfer program in May 2012, through which credits of up to 20 dollars a month are given to mothers who keep their children in school from various small-scale health initiatives in the capital (Taft-Morales 2012).

Martelly's government has also sought to place Haiti at the forefront of its own unified development process, and in November 2012 established the Coordination Framework for Foreign Development Aid (Cadre de Coordination de l'Aide Extérieure au Développement d'Haiti, CAED). Even before the announcement of the plan, many US and Canadian development efforts seemed increasingly geared towards strengthening the basic institutions of government. In addition to a Parliamentary Strengthening Program designed, in part, to build public support...
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for democratic institutions (see USAID 2012), a USD132 million project funded by USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives is supporting a range of government initiatives and communications campaigns, including a campaign to highlight the benefits of the North Park Project (USAID 2011). CIDA’s governance efforts have been more modest, and have included supporting the development of a civil registry and constructing temporary offices for key Haitian government departments (CIDA 2013).

While Canadian and American efforts have undeniably contributed to building the Haitian state, they, along with other international forces, are rallying behind a Haitian executive who has little interest in preserving fragile democratic gains and which may be slipping back into an authoritarian presidentialism. Martelly’s longstanding ties with Duvalierists are well documented and many key advisors and Cabinet members also have Duvalierist pasts (see Grandin 2011; Daniel 2011). Martelly has also taken on Haiti’s left-leaning political elite in an effort to restore both neoliberal and more right-wing reactionary elements to political power. He has also repeatedly clashed with the legislative branch of government over his prime ministerial nominations and has prompted the National Association of the Press to declare him a threat to freedom of expression (Valdès 2011). More recently, the President has also been criticised for sponsoring constitutional amendments in violation of legal procedures (Ives and Leduc 2012).

Moreover, Martelly’s plans to restore the military may further reinforce the president’s power base, while soliciting unemployed young men who could destabilise Haitian society (a key practice of the Duvalier dictatorship), particularly after the withdrawal of MINUSTAH. Although the president has indicated that the military would be used strictly for policing, humanitarian, and civil purposes, the likelihood that it would serve repressive function given the current polarisation and ideological disposition of the former officer corps (to which Martelly is closely tied) is high. This has been paralleled by a process which Ives refers to as the “Macoutification” of Martelly’s power as “coup-making soldiers and police chiefs” are integrated into key security positions (Haiti Liberte, February 15, 2012).

Do these developments foreshadow a lapse back into the authoritarian past masked by the rituals of hollow elections? Although they speak to the inability of the elite to govern through a more inclusive arrangement, the US, Canada, and international donors share some responsibility in nurturing the elite and in shaping the conditions that allowed Martelly to come to power. The president himself has remained an important regional ally for both the Harper government and the Obama administration, even though he is no mere puppet: his rapprochement with key left governments in the region speaks to a strong nationalist streak that does not always correspond to the North American vision of neoliberal regional order (see Burron 2012). But his vision of development has largely corresponded with the preferences of Haiti’s international donors, and both sides seem to agree that the interests of the elite should come before democracy. Whether this will entail a further reassertion of Haiti’s authoritarian traditions will depend upon the evolving political struggles in both Haiti and in key donor states.

Conclusions: respecting Haiti’s democratic sovereignty

If the US has long supported Haiti’s elite against popular civil society, Canada’s efforts in this regard have been more recent. Through democracy assistance programs and official diplomacy, both countries have supported Haiti’s elite as they sought to destabilise President Aristide’s democratically-elected government, while presiding over a campaign of repression against the Lavalas movement. Although both countries began to strengthen government institutions after the democracy established by the Préval government, they also continued to support elite sectors of civil society, while popular groups and Haiti’s traditional political party remained excluded from political life. Moreover, the US and Canada have supported successive iterations of neoliberal
development plans that have been long rejected by the popular movement. By acting on behalf of an elite that was unable to garner broad support, the US and Canada have contributed to political crises, which have undermined the consolidation of a genuine democracy, exacerbated Haiti's status as a "failed state" and driven questionable international stabilisation efforts.

Opportunities for more progressive voices to influence Canadian and American foreign policy are essential. Donors have an interest in taking on a new approach as decades of development interventions have failed to either stabilise the situation or to foster development. The recent announcement by the Canadian Minister of International Cooperation, Julian Fantino, that Canada would put new funding for Haiti "on ice" after visiting the country, represents, in some ways, a legitimate example of donor fatigue (The Canadian Press, September 27, 2012). If Fantino's comments reflect a right-wing populist critique of international assistance that ignores Canada's role in sustaining a corrupt state in Haiti, the sentiment may well resonate with citizens who are legitimately concerned about how their tax dollars are spent abroad. The larger changes in Canadian development policy currently underway provide critical scholars and development practitioners with the opportunity to articulate an alternative approach in broader public discussions.

We therefore submit three general principles for a genuine democracy to take root. First, Canada, the US, and the international community must collectively move beyond the rhetoric of state building capacity and engage in its actual practice. While assisting Haiti in charting a long-term development strategy, the international community must emphasise strengthening government ministries and the civil service. Building state capacity means allowing the state to implement a comprehensive public-led development plan that enshrines workers' rights and privileges public works, infrastructure development, food autonomy, and production for the domestic market (Dupuy 2010). This anticipates the second point: the need to move beyond the export-led neoliberal development strategy, which has failed to produce sustainable development results and has reinforced the traditional patterns of exclusion, polarisation and inequality. Assembly manufacturing may play a role in Haiti's path towards development, but this can only be realised through a high-road approach to development.

This reorientation is unlikely to occur until the Haitian state itself undergoes a fundamental transformation, what the Lavalas movement once referred to as chanje leta. This speaks to the third point: a focus on democratising the state. While this includes strengthening political institutions, it also means supporting transparent and open elections, which reflect the preferences of the poor majority (though whether this means Lavalas in its current incarnation is unclear). Those who are truly interested in supporting democratic development in Haiti must help democratising the state by enhancing the link with popular, not elite, civil society. While the coup, campaigns of repression, exclusion, and the devastation of the earthquake have undoubtedly exerted their toll on the weak organisational basis of the popular sectors, development initiatives could support the rejuvenation of popular groups through programs that seek to "echo" and "amplify" their voices in influencing public life. A paradigm shift along these lines would signify that the international community was finally prepared to respect the democratic sovereignty of the Haitian people.

Biographical notes
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Notes

1. For the classic critique of how the United States supports polyarchy, a form of democracy largely limited to liberal democratic institutions and elections in the Third World, see Robinson (1996).

2. Haiti’s “failed state” status is often attributed to internal factors. See, for example, the Fund for Peace’s (2011) failed state index, which ranks Haiti number five in the world according to 12 key indicators, while not considering whether any of such factors have been exacerbated by external actors.

3. Then Canadian Minister of International Cooperation, Bev Oda, announced a CAD220 million Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund, which included – confusedly – parts of the CAD150.15 million and CAD400 million commitments (CIDA 2010a, 2010b, 2011). The Relief Fund was intended to match the CAD220 million committed by Canadians for Haiti relief efforts. The US government committed USD1.1 billion in humanitarian relief assistance and USD406 million in recovery assistance to Haiti following the earthquake. This was accompanied by an additional USD1.15 billion for reconstruction efforts (USAID 2011).

4. The senatorial elections were called into question when the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) applied a vote-apportioning methodology to grant first-round victories to eight senatorial seats won by FL candidates who had won considerable majorities but had not obtained 50 per cent of the vote. See Dupuy (2007) for a critique of the CEP and its control at the time by Lavalas.

5. Peter Hallward (2007) has refuted these claims, demonstrating how much of the violence that occurred was attributable to the Police Nationale d’Haiti (PNH), whose political affiliation was often antigovernment, or to pro-FL groups rather than the government itself. This position is contested by Deibert (2005), who documents the link between the Lavalas government and armed gangs. Although Hallward (2008) convincingly refutes Deibert’s main criticisms, he ignores Aristide’s reliance upon armed gangs to break up opposition rallies. Dupuy (2005) considers the role of the dominant class and international forces in undermining democracy in Haiti while criticising Aristide’s acceptance of structural adjustment and his failure to mobilise popular forces behind a progressive alternative. The recourse to the gangs, in effect, symbolised the inability of the government to arouse the people to its defence. While we do not dispute Dupuy’s interpretation, the limitations of Lavalas did not justify the international onslaught against it (nor does Dupuy suggest as much).

6. The Aristide government continued to pay arrears on its debt to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (most of it odious), despite the fact that the IDB caved to pressure from Washington and froze four loans approved in 2000. In July 2003, Haiti sent more than 90 per cent of its foreign reserves to the IDB to pay off these arrears (Farmer 2004).


8. In the months prior to Aristide’s forced departure, many Québécois NGOs created an informal network to coordinate their actions, the Concertation pour Haiti, which brought together a dozen or so labour organisations and NGOs. The position of Canadian NGOs likely reflected a general alignment with the unofficial policy of the Canadian government — their primary funder — and the seemingly progressive base of elements of the opposition (see Burron 2012).

9. Interview, Port-au-Prince, 16 March 2009.

10. See Hallward (2007), which summarises the human rights reports.


12. CIDA also developed An Internal Guide for Effective Development Cooperation in Fragile States in 2008 and declared Haiti the only fragile state in the Americas.

13. The former implemented a project with the ultra-conservative Centre pour la Libre Entrprise et la Démocratie (CLED) to develop a National Business Agenda, while the latter provided a USD100,000 grant to the marginal labour organisation, Batay Ouvriye, which had been alienated from the larger pro-Lavalas labour movement (NED 2005).

14. For example, allegations that Aristide’s PM, Yvon Neptune, had orchestrated genocide when supporters of the G-184 clashed with the pro-Lavalas group, Balé Wouzé, in the town of St. Marc in February 2004 were subsequently disproven. In its ruling on Neptune v. the State of Haiti, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights criticised the former and current government’s violations of Neptune’s basic human rights, exonerating him of all charges and ordering the government to pay him USD95,000 in damages and costs.

15. Rights and Democracy was shut down by the Conservative government in the summer of 2012 as part of its ongoing efforts to reorganise Canada’s democracy assistance community of practice. See Burron (2012).
16. Although Préval was prepared to align his administration closely with Washington, the impoverished country’s efforts to acquire oil at discount prices through Venezuela’s Caribbean oil alliance, PetroCaribe, were sabotaged by the US Embassy under Ambassador Janet Sanderson (see “WikiLeaks Haiti: the PetroCaribe Files”, The Nation, June 1, 2011).

17. The CEP has been criticised for being politically aligned with Préval (see IJDH 2010).

18. The decisions by international actors following the earthquake promoted mixed reactions. The decision by IFIs to cancel Haiti’s (mostly odious) debt represented progress, though postquake IMF loans could lead to a new debt cycle (Jubilee USA Network 2010).

19. See also Vorbe (2010).

20. By September 2010, less than 15 per cent of all reconstruction pledges from the international community had arrived (USD1.8 billion), of which only 0.3 per cent went to the public sector (Farmer 2011, 182). The USD1.15 billion pledged by the United States also stalled because of Congressional partisan politics.


22. This included a presidential election and elections for all 99 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 10 of 30 seats in the Senate.

23. Among other things, the OAS sample did not take into account the results for tally sheets for some 1,326 voting booths that were either never received by the CEP or were quarantined for irregularities. This corresponded to about 12.7 per cent of the vote. The sample also controlled for irregular tally sheets by excluding them rather than using statistical techniques to estimate voting patterns based on the large amount of electoral data available (see Johnston and Weisbrot 2011).

24. Including his campaign manager, Damian Merlo, whose previous experience included working for George W. Bush’s Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Otto Reich, who led the effort to destabilise Aristide’s government in the early 2000s. Merlo also worked with the IRI program in Brazil before joining John McCain’s failed 2008 presidential bid (Grandin 2011).

25. In late 2011, the Martelly government launched a plan to rehabilitate 16 earthquake-affected neighborhoods and close six camps in 100 days, targeting 30,000 of the 500,000 people then living in camps. Yet, a household survey found that 40 per cent of families who left the camps under the plan reported living in worse conditions than before the earthquake and the number of rehabilitated houses, new housing construction, and dispersed rental vouchers issued by the Martelly administration could not possibly accommodate the nearly 1.1 million people who have vanished from camps throughout the country (Remy 2012).

26. Although Lavalas has been repeatedly barred from electoral participation, many of the political parties that are represented in Parliament are left-of-centre. Lavalas also still holds a small number of seats in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

27. The president has used figures of speech such as taisez-vous (shut up!) to stifle critical questions (Valdès 2011).

28. Martelly has called for the creation of a 3,500-member army to be built over three and a half years, at a cost of approximately USD95 million, including USD15 million to compensate former soldiers who were discharged. It is unclear whether the plan will come to fruition, since it would require the approval of Parliament and the majority INITE coalition has opposed it (Taft-Morales 2012).

29. Two organisations that have adopted this approach include the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and Partners in Health (PIH), which have collaborated with the OPs from an approach that emphasises solidarity and accompaniment.

References


Low-intensity democracy and political crisis in Haiti


Promotion and partnership: bilateral donor approaches to the private sector

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ABSTRACT Despite a renewed focus by bilateral donors on economic growth and the private sector as driving forces behind development, there has been relatively little comparative analysis of donor policies for achieving this. This article fills that gap. Using a framework analysis approach, we find that donors take an apolitical and technocratic approach to growth and the private sector that largely ignores ongoing debates about the role of the state in development. They also promote their own private sector as playing a key role in these efforts, but to varying degrees. Donors see the solutions to development lying in markets – to promote solutions to growth (through private-sector development) – and solutions to development (by partnering with the private sector). Donors see increasing partnerships with the private sector as a win-win-win-win situation for recipient governments, donors, the private sector, and civil society. Yet this positive framing is unlikely to survive the realpolitik at the country level, where the interests of different actors often diverge.

RESUME Malgré le renouveau de l’accent mis par les donateurs bilatéraux sur la croissance économique et le secteur privé comme véhicules du développement, il existe peu d’analyses comparatives des politiques adoptées par les donateurs pour traduire ces orientations en pratiques. Nous avons cherché à remplir ce vide en utilisant l’analyse du cadre (framework analysis) pour étudier l’information rendue publique par les donateurs réunis au sein de l’OCDE-DCD-CAD. Les résultats montrent que les donateurs adoptent une approche apolitique et technocratique à la croissance et au secteur privé, ignorant les débats courants sur le rôle de l’État dans le développement. Ils estiment que les solutions au développement reposent sur les marchés, c’est-à-dire que la croissance passe par la promotion du développement du secteur privé et le développement par le partenariat avec le secteur privé pour le développement. Ils tendent également à promouvoir leur propre secteur privé pour son rôle clé dans les efforts faits en ce sens. Pour eux, les partenariats avec le secteur privé offrent une avenue qui sert tous les acteurs impliqués : les gouvernements bénéficiaires, les donateurs, le secteur privé et la société civile. Pourtant, il est peu probable que cette approche affirmée subsiste face à la realpolitik des pays, où les intérêts des différents acteurs divergent fréquemment.

Keywords: aid donors; private sector development; partnering with the private sector; growth; OECD

Introduction

The private sector has become the new donor darling. Over the past few years, members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) – the forum through which donor countries coordinate their aid efforts – have

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renewed their focus on economic growth and the private sector as driving forces behind development (Estrup 2009; Nelson 2011). At the international level, donors have put their weight behind statements supporting the private sector at the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in 2010 (DCED 2010) and more recently at the 2011 Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) held in Busan, South Korea (HLF4 2011).

This shift has come in the context where aid – as a proportion of total finance available to developing countries – has decreased significantly compared to non-aid flows like trade, foreign direct investment and remittances, all of which have grown exponentially over the past decades. Though aid also increased over this period, donors are now implementing fiscal austerity programs that are decreasing or freezing the resources allocated to aid budgets. With it, donors are emphasising “cost effectiveness” and “value for money”, seeking to leverage shrinking aid budgets through innovative financing mechanisms, harnessing non-aid flows, private-sector-inspired solutions and direct partnerships with private sector actors. Equally important, developing countries are recognised as key markets or investment sites for donor countries’ firms and investors, and aid agencies are increasingly working with firms in donor countries to promote development-friendly investments. The extent to which donors are promoting their own private sector in these efforts varies.

This article provides a critical assessment of these trends by mapping and assessing bilateral donor strategies relating to the private sector. It is based on an examination of publicly available OECD-DAC donor policies reviewed between January and June of 2012, including websites, strategy papers and policy documents related to economic growth, trade and private sector programming and donor commitments at HLF4 and in other multilateral fora. Taking a framework analysis approach, the objective of the research is to identify emerging themes in donor policies around the private sector by comparing and contrasting different elements of donors’ strategies. It unpacks the different approaches donors are taking to the private sector and distinguishes between their efforts to promote private sector development and to partner with the private sector for development. It critically assesses the visions and assumptions of donor strategies, including how donors see the role of the state and private sector actors in achieving development outcomes, and their assumptions regarding partnerships with the private sector for development.

This article draws from a much longer report published by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation and The North-South Institute (Kindornay and Reilly-King 2013). In addition to the issues outlined above, the original report also addressed donor assumptions about economic growth and implementation considerations relating to how donors incorporate good development practices on gender, sustainability, human rights and aid effectiveness into their work on, and with, the private sector. This article focuses largely on the composition of, and assumptions behind, donor strategies as they relate to the private sector.

Methodology
The research is based on a framework analysis approach. Framework analysis is often used in policy research and when the sample is pre-designed or issues have been identified a priori (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). Clear from the beginning, the objectives of this research were to:

- survey the key components of bilateral donor strategies on the private sector;
- examine the extent to which commonalities and differences exist across various strategies;
- assess how donors incorporate good development practices, such as gender, sustainability and aid effectiveness considerations, into their strategies; and
- identify examples of good practice based on the findings.
The research process included the following steps: familiarisation with content; identification of a thematic framework; indexing (where information is identified as corresponding to a particular theme); charting (whereby information is arranged based on charts of themes); and interpretation.2

**Sources of data**

A literature review was conducted between January and July of 2012. The review was confined to the policies of OECD-DAC donors. The analysis is based on an examination of publicly available information, including websites, strategy papers, policy documents and donor commitments at HLF4 and in other multilateral fora. The research was originally based on the assumption that only private sector and economic growth strategies would be included. However, the initial scoping exercise revealed that donors have taken several different approaches, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, to working with the private sector and on economic growth more broadly. This required giving some consideration to, for example, trade and development strategies. On an operational level, donors have also articulated their private sector approaches into different policy and programming tools. Some have policy implementation guidelines, toolboxes and monitoring frameworks, while others have developed broad strategies that provide general direction for project and program orientation. Despite these differences, some degree of comparison between donors could still be made.

**Generating the thematic framework**

A key component of the framework analysis approach is the creation of the thematic framework, which is outlined in Table 1. The framework was informed by a historically grounded perspective that takes seriously the global, national and local determinants of poverty and recognises the importance of structural constraints. The often unexamined assumption of the link between growth, trade and poverty reduction was given special attention. As such, the framework includes the logic and composition of donor strategies and, importantly, seeks to identify underlying assumptions, including what role donors envisage for the state and the private sector in contributing to economic growth and development.

The framework is also influenced by important lessons learned about the role of growth, the private sector and the state in development. In 2008, the independent Commission on Growth and Development released *The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development* (2008). Chaired by Nobel-laureate economist Michael Spence, the Commission was launched in 2006 and brought together 22 leading economists to examine the policies and strategies of countries that had achieved rapid and sustained economic growth and poverty reduction over the past 25 years. It found that a number of key factors are at the heart of success: political leadership; industrial policies; managed exchange rates and capital controls; effective institutions and governance structures; a talented public service; strong domestic savings and public investment in infrastructure, education and health; job creation; and social protection. Each country context is different, of course, but in all cases the state was the primary engine of growth, an analogy that sees the private sector as fuel. The private sector's investment and entrepreneurship cause growth, but active, effective and stable governments have crucial roles to play. The Commission's findings informed the analysis and assessment of donor policies and strategies. As a result, the framework includes how donors view the role of the state and the private sector, including with regard to engagement with the interests of the public, in the development process generally, and in implementing strategies.
Table 1. Themes and sub-themes in the strategies of OECD-DAC donors for economic growth and private-sector development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| Structure of the growth and/or private sector strategy | • Type of strategy  
• Budget for the strategy  
• Market vision and assumptions behind the strategy  
• Rationale of the strategy  
• Pillars of the strategy |
| Accordance with other agreements            | • Relevance to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation  
• Signatory to the Busan joint statement on Expanding and Enhancing Public and Private Cooperation for Broad-Based, Inclusive and Sustainable Growth and/or member of the Private Sector Building Block |
| Actors and targets                          | • Role of the state  
• Role of other development actors (in particular social partners)  
• Domestic or internationalised private sector  
• Areas of focus and key targets  
• Financial and development additionality |
| Implementation considerations              | • International standards and principles  
• Explicit strategies for leveraging aid resources  
• Transparency and accountability  
• Corporate social responsibility (CSR)  
• Monitoring and evaluation |
| Cross-cutting issues                        | • Sustainability  
• Gender  
• Human rights |

In addition to the issues identified above, a range of additional cross-donor themes and sub-themes were established and defined as a basis for comparison. The framework includes basic components of donor strategies such as budget size, rationale, objectives and key pillars or areas of focus. As a complement to these components, international declarations and statements on growth and the private sector that might further shape donor policies or give an indication of donor intent were taken into consideration. In addition, a range of additional cross-donor themes and sub-themes were established and defined as a basis for comparison, such as how gender, sustainability and human rights issues were addressed in strategies. In some cases, donors did not have policies on these issues but did have separate policies on human rights or gender equality. This was taken into account in the analysis, although it is difficult to discern the extent to which such separate polices guide economic growth and private sector programming. Not all the elements covered in the framework are addressed here.

Since donors’ strategies are aimed at working with the private sector, the framework also looks at whether donors reference international and domestic laws that relate to the private sector, as well as regulations and voluntary initiatives such as the International Labour Organisation’s conventions on decent work, the UN Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

The framework was tested against a sample of three donors’ policies (Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States) to establish whether it resonated with their policies. Based on the initial scoping, areas where information was limited were identified (and their inclusion in the final framework assessed) and the framework was further refined. Although information
Bilateral donor approaches to the private sector

was limited in some areas, such as budget size, some themes were retained, since the mixed availability of information across all donors was in itself germane to the analysis. "Type of strategy" was added to the matrix because it became clear over the course of the research that donors articulate their engagement with the private sector at different policy levels, such as in their overall development strategies, through specific private sector strategies or thematic policy frameworks on, for instance, trade. Based on this scoping exercise, it is essentially too early to call the themes discussed in this article "trends". Rather, the discussion below is framed in terms of thematic issues on which donors take various approaches. Table 1 shows all of the themes and subthemes analysed. Only a portion of these are addressed here.

Methodological limitations

There are a number of notable limitations to this initial scoping study. First, the analysis is based on policies, not actual practice. It is difficult to assess the extent to which policies translate into actual positive or negative development impacts on the ground. Nevertheless, the scope and depth of some donors' policies and the existence of a suite of policies indicate that some donors have more developed thinking around their engagement with the private sector than others.

Second, the assessment is confined to bilateral donors and the European Union. Multilateral development banks play an important role in terms of leveraging the private sector in development. They also represent an important component of many bilateral donors' private sector strategies in terms of the resources that bilateral donors allocate to them for private sector and economic growth programming. Nevertheless, they were not included in this study because much has already been written on multilateral development banks, particularly on their private sector lending windows (for example, Kwakkenbos 2012; Bracking and Gahno 2011; Perry 2011; ActionAid International et al. 2010; Ellmers, Molina, and Tuominen 2010). No comparative study has been done on OECD-DAC donors' approaches to the private sector.

Third, at the aggregate level, there are indications that a modest shift exists among bilateral donors towards increased funding for private sector-oriented programs. Tomlinson (2012, 131) notes that the amount of bilateral sector-allocated aid to the social sector remains significant, but is on the decline – from 57.6 per cent in 2005 to 49.6 per cent in 2010. Similarly, support to government and civil society is also on the decline, dropping from 18.0 to 15.8 per cent over the same period. By comparison, support to economic services and production (geared potentially more towards the private sector) has shown a modest increase, from 32.2 to 34.2 per cent. Official Development Assistance (ODA) loans (versus grants) are also a growing phenomenon, as are non-ODA instruments like loans and equity investments to national and domestic private sector enterprises delivered through Development Finance Institutions (Kwakkenbos 2012). Beyond looking at broad allocations by donors to growth and to the private sector, an extensive and disaggregated statistical analysis was not conducted on donor allocations for the private sector or growth by country, economic sector, size, and type and nationality of firm targeted. As a result, an analysis on how allocations relate to an individual donor’s normative frameworks could not be done. A statistical analysis would have added another dimension to the implementation considerations assessed in this article, but initial mapping suggested that information detailed enough to make comparison useful would have been difficult to obtain for all donors.

Finally, providers of South–South Development Cooperation (SSDC), which also support private sector development and economic growth, were not included in this analysis. This omission was recognised from the outset. Over the past five years, international assistance from middle-income countries such as Brazil, China, India and South Africa has grown substantially (Tomlinson 2012). Brazil, India and South Africa have established development cooperation
agencies. Engaging their own private sectors to penetrate markets and build infrastructure in the South has always been an element of these emerging economies' approaches to SSDC through their large development and export-import banks, like the Brazilian National Bank for Economic and Social Development and the Export-Import Bank of China. However, information on the grant-based components of SSDC initiatives is just emerging and many of the details on such cooperation are still not public. Given this reality, the research focused on establishing a provisional baseline for traditional donors' engagement around growth and the private sector, aimed at filling a research gap that had not been addressed. Clearly, though, future work needs to include SSDC actors to provide a broader and more nuanced picture of how development actors are engaging with the private sector overall.6

Aid, growth and the private sector

Emphasis on economic growth and the private sector will sound familiar to those acquainted with the cyclical nature of the “latest” development theories and trends that have characterised and shaped international aid efforts over the past five decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberal structural adjustment programs sought to promote economic growth through deregulation, privatisation of national services, trade liberalisation, and financial opening. Following the failures of most of these approaches (Duffield 2002; Rojas 2004), a broader approach to development was enshrined in the Millennium Declaration in 2000, which led to the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be pursued alongside neoliberal approaches to growth. Despite the focus on social service provision, and a concern among aid donors about “good governance” in the 2000s, these approaches have tended to favour the market, since trade and financial liberalisation are seen as pathways to development. They relegate the state to the role of sound macroeconomic manager, rather than encouraging it to play a more proactive or interventionist role in promoting economic growth (Soederberg 2004; Taylor 2004; Chhotray and Stoker 2008).

Since the eruption of the global financial crisis in 2008, donors have put in place fiscal austerity programs that are decreasing or freezing the resources allocated to ODA budgets. This has meant that donors are placing increased emphasis on approaches that can demonstrate to taxpayers the “cost effectiveness” and “value for money” of their limited resources, seeing engagement with the private sector as one means to catalyse aid resources. Donors are also focusing on economic growth and the private sector in their programming, motivated by a critique that the MDGs, with their strong emphasis on social outcomes, failed to give sufficient attention to the economic foundations for achieving progress. Consequently, a renewed focus on economics will drive stronger growth and job creation, with the assumption that greater emphasis on the benefits of growth and tax revenues generated will help reduce poverty (see, for example, DCED [2010] and HLF4 [2011] for donors’ international commitments to a greater focus on growth and the private sector). In the context of a renewed focus on growth and the private sector, the researchers examined how bilateral donors were translating this focus into policy and practice.

Overview and analysis of donor approaches and assumptions

An important “take away” from this initial scoping exercise is that, while donors may more or less agree that economic growth is integral to development and that the private sector has a key role to play in growth, the similarities end there. Donors emphasise, for example, different types of private sectors (national [donor], foreign [multinational] and domestic [recipient country]) and various roles for the private sector in achieving growth, development and poverty reduction. This understanding in turn has implications for how donors see their own role. Jørgen Estrup’s study on aid, the private sector and the aid effectiveness agenda similarly found that donors
take different approaches, which has implications for how they design, implement and coordinate their work in this area (Estrup 2009). But beyond this, the lack of coherence among donors, in particular regarding something about which all donors clearly agree (such as the insight that the private sector is key to development), was one of the most striking findings of this study.

The subsection that follows provides an overview of the different policy frameworks donors have for addressing growth and the private sector; the logic and assumptions around various donor strategies in terms of their approach to growth and the private sector; how these assumptions translate into the two broad donor approaches for working with the private sector (promoting private sector development and partnering with the private sector for development); and finally an assessment of where the state fits into all of this, in particular in the context of aid exit.

**Donor approaches: policy frameworks for working with and through the private sector**

Donors take different approaches to the private sector. Their strategies and policy frameworks have been developed at different levels. Some have broad strategies that serve more as guidelines and provide direction for projects and programs, while others have detailed programming, monitoring and evaluation guidelines. The extent to which donors have established, detailed and publicly articulated their work with the private sector at various policy levels is one interesting finding of this research.

Where donors have an explicit private sector strategy, they tend to take one of three approaches, varying in terms of the extent to which they promote partnership with the private sector to address development challenges and private sector development.

Some donors follow what might be seen as the more traditional form, basically targeting the establishment of, and support for, the private sector in developing countries. An example is Canada’s 2003 Framework for Private Sector Development (CIDA 2003), which, though still listed on the government website, was subsumed by Canada’s strategy on sustainable economic growth in 2010. Japan currently takes a similar approach (JICA 2012).

Donors such as Denmark, Finland and Netherlands have specific strategies that define modalities for how donors plan to engage with the private sector in key areas, as well as more broadly across thematic priorities. For example, Finland and Denmark articulate how they will engage in public–private partnerships. The Netherlands has made working with the private sector a priority across all of its development programming; in other words, greater engagement with the private sector serves as an overall approach to the country’s development work.

A third approach combines these two. Sweden and the United Kingdom have specific policy documents that outline how they will work with the private sector to deliver development cooperation across different thematic areas and how they will support private sector development in developing countries.

Some donors do not have a private sector strategy. Instead, they weave their private sector programming and engagement into their economic growth or trade and development strategies. Australia, Canada and New Zealand are examples – their thematic focus on sustainable economic growth interweaves private sector elements. Other donors include engagement with the private sector as part of their broader development strategy, often coupled by a webpage on the private sector (rather than an actual strategy per se). France (Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships 2011) and Portugal (IPAD 2006) take this approach. Finally, these approaches are not mutually exclusive: Belgium, for example, includes elements of private sector engagement in thematic priorities on a dedicated webpage and refers to the role of the private sector in their overall development strategy (see BTC n.d.a).

There are several important lessons from these findings. First, many bilateral donors have not articulated a clear strategy for specifically engaging the private sector. This makes it difficult
to assess how these donors are engaging with the private sector and supporting private sector development, and on what terms. Second, the extent to which donors have developed their strategies varies greatly – from including private sector engagement at the level of their overall development framework, to establishing provisions for engaging the private sector under other strategies, to creating a full-fledged private sector strategy. Third, the extent to which strategies and policies can be operationalised varies. Some policies focus more on the overall direction for programming, rather than spelling out exactly how private sector engagement and development will occur. Other donors have produced a suite of policies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their work in the area. This means that across donors there were varying degrees of specificity across strategies. Finally, few donors give much attention to the individual domestic context – admittedly difficult to ascertain from a broad policy or strategy on the private sector – and the fact that the scope for working with the private sector will vary across countries. Private sector engagement will depend on multiple factors, including: the policy and legislative enabling environment for business; the sophistication of the domestic private sector – varying needs across different sectors (agriculture, health, education, energy and transportation, for example) and segments of the private sector (large industries, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises [SMEs]); and the relative size or potentially very different needs of the informal sector in the host country.

Donor assumptions: sustainable growth, the private sector and development

Donors recognise that patterns of growth matter, which has implications for their engagement with the private sector. However, their emphasis on patterns of growth and how to achieve sustainable and equitable growth varies. This finding is also consistent with Estrup’s study of donor engagement with the private sector. He found that while donors agree that poverty reduction and pro-poor growth matter, there is little consensus on what pro-poor growth actually means and how it can be achieved (Estrup 2009).

In terms of making more explicit links between growth and benefits for the poor, many governments identify the challenge of the negative impact that growth has on inequality; however, they do not necessarily carry through this logic to discern what is needed for addressing inequality (USAID 2011; European Commission 2011; Government of Ireland 2006; Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships 2011; BTC n.d.b). Some simply acknowledge the issue. Others go deeper and recognise that both patterns of growth and the distributional impacts of growth matter – that is, how the revenue and other benefits such as new jobs from a thriving private sector will be shared with, or explicitly target, those living in poverty. The European Commission is concerned with who benefits from growth, recognising issues of equitable redistribution of the benefits, inclusiveness, income generation, productive and decent employment, gender equality, social protection, quality education and training, responsive higher education and building strong healthcare systems (European Commission 2011). Switzerland is more focused on country priorities and pro-poor policies, and specifically on pro-poor growth defined, relatively, as the income of the poorest growing faster than the income of the richest, and absolutely as the income of the poorest increasing. It notably takes redistributive policies aimed at employment and income generation as its starting point (SDC 2004). Denmark also prioritises income distribution and human rights in its budget support:

As an element in the contract on budget support, [Denmark] will pursue constructive and critical dialogue concerning both public revenue and expenditure, including the mobilisation of tax revenue and the priority given to social sectors. Issues such as income distribution policy and fulfilment of human rights will be central in this dialogue. (DANIDA 2012a, 37)
Other governments focus on sustainable dimensions of growth. South Korea focuses on pro-poor growth and green growth (KOICA 2012). Finland's development policy promotes an inclusive green economy that seeks to foster economies that strengthen human wellbeing and social equality, grounded in the “sustainable use of natural resources [that] takes into account the carrying capacity of nature, as well as secures the provision of ecosystem services” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2012, 32–33). Germany’s and Japan’s work in this area is based on economic, social and ecological market economy principles and pro-poor growth (BMZ 2006, 2007). For instance, in Germany “[s]ustainable development demands that ecological, socio-cultural and political aspects receive the same attention as economic ones” (BMZ 2007, 2). For its part, Japan has a strong focus on environmental conservation relative to other donors (Australia and Canada), which focus more on resource management, not coincidentally areas where their resource companies are strongly engaged. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) highlights that the quality of economic growth matters as much as how it is generated. In order for it to be sustainable, growth must be shared, inclusive of all groups, compatible with reducing climate change impacts, and responsible in the use of natural resources (USAID 2011).

Taking a solidarity approach to growth, France and Belgium are outliers in comparison to their OECD-DAC counterparts. For France, the solidarity approach recognises that “globalisation means rethinking new pathways to growth” that are cognisant of mutual global interdependence and a shared common destiny, and that seek to find pragmatic solutions to problems that transcend borders, like inequality and global public goods (France 2011, 10). It contrasts this perspective with the current unsustainable technology and energy growth of the industrialised world (France 2011). France argues that countries need to pay attention to “the quality of growth, its ability to create employment, its impact on welfare and the environment and its contribution to strengthening States”, and to “[m]echanisms that reduce inequalities and protect the most vulnerable ... (pro-poor policies, risk reduction, redistributive fiscal policies)” (Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships 2011, 14).

Belgium’s “social and solidarity economy” approach is based on recognition that “an economy that is not concerned with social issues is a vehicle for inequalities and growing injustices” (BTC n.d.b). It points out that “the current context requires us to question a development model that is based on unchecked market-driven growth and blind competition” (BTC n.d.b). This means that while the Belgian Development Agency sees the importance of the private sector in generating economic growth, it does not overstate the role of the private sector – it is an important, but not the only, pillar in the quest for sustainable development and the fight against poverty. In practice, Belgium sees an ethical component in private sector activities that is undergirded by principles of service delivery to communities or their members. These activities combine economic viability and social utility, actively involve local communities or social networks in the production of goods and services, form consultative and cooperative networks of associations and communities and contribute to the creation of new economic and social arrangements.

While many donors recognise that patterns of growth and redistribution matter, few seem to translate this recognition into a focus on promoting policies that strengthen government capacity to create decent work, effectively collect taxes and deliver social services and redistribute the benefits of growth to those who are most marginalised by the economic activities that create growth. At best, donors tend to focus on making very narrowly defined markets equitable within and among countries, rather than supporting policies to directly target growing inequalities. The latter suggests a more proactive role for the state (and other development actors) in addressing inequality, whereas the former emphasises making markets work for the poor.
Donor assumptions: two different approaches to engaging the private sector

While donors agree that the private sector is key to development, there is a lack of coherence in the approaches that donors take on this issue in their programming. Nevertheless, some areas of agreement exist. All donors see the private sector as the key driver or engine of growth and development (analogies vary, but the main point is that the private sector is seen as playing the central role). The private sector fulfills this role by nurturing new investments, contributing to self-regulating markets, producing market efficiencies, creating new and better jobs (leading to rising incomes for individuals) and generating new sources of domestic tax revenue (from which governments can dedicate more resources to social programs and subsequently reduce poverty). Beyond this, donors’ strategies for connecting the dots between the private sector, development and poverty reduction fall within a very broad spectrum.

The end goal of donors’ strategies tends to vary depending on the extent to which their strategies are aimed at promoting private sector development versus partnering with the private sector for development.

In the former case, donors see promoting private sector development as the end goal. In this case, the link between growth and poverty in developing countries is a direct one: a thriving private sector contributes to growth, which in turn contributes to poverty reduction. Supporting the private sector is valuable in its own right because it unleashes growth or helps integrate domestic private sector actors into the global economy, which in turn benefits the poor. For example, Austria claims that “the private sector and development are two sides of the same coin” (ADA 2012). Denmark and Norway’s approach focuses predominantly on promoting business and private sector development as the means to advancing growth and broader development. Some donors use the idea of making markets more competitive or work better for the poor (both as producers and consumers) as an entry point.

In the latter case, some donors tend to see the end goal as partnering with the private sector for development. Partnership with the private sector will help make effective use of declining aid resources, leverage alternative sources of development financing and identify innovative market or private sector-managed solutions to development challenges, including the provision of goods and services to poorer populations (bottom of the pyramid approaches, for example). Alternatively, some donors explicitly see engagement with the private sector as a means to promote their own commercial interests.

A number of donors, including Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, combine the logic of partnership with the private sector with the logic of the promotion of private sector development. In this context, donors seek to create business relationships between national and domestic private sector actors through initiatives such as challenge and innovation funds. Here, donors are essentially partnering with the private sector to promote private sector development. Some donors highlight the need to ensure that national businesses are making linkages with partners in developing countries as ways to simultaneously increase the internationalisation of the firms in the aid-recipient country and facilitate the expansion of their own national companies. Other donors see harnessing the expertise of their own businesses as having the potential to make positive development impacts and, thus, effective or even ideal partners to increase the agency’s effectiveness.

Finally, Australia, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and the European Commission place their work with the private sector in the broader context of improving policy coherence for development. The private sector is a piece of a bigger puzzle.

Despite the different nuances, most donors see promoting the private sector as a means to increase incomes (through job creation) and public revenues (to deliver social services). This is evident in the overall rationale for some donor strategies and the pillars of and activities in
their strategies. Donors make connections between enhancing employment opportunities and livelihoods, which in turn generate higher incomes for individuals and households and help governments to increase their revenues, which can be used to provide more or better social services. However, the extent to which donors explicitly target the areas that they need to in order to achieve those outcomes, such as quality of jobs created, sectors that can most readily create jobs, industrial policy and enabling governments to effectively collect taxes and deliver on social services, is mixed.

**Donor assumptions: aid exit and the self-reliant state**

An important goal of some donor strategies is aid exit and enabling developing countries, as the Netherlands notes, “to solve their own problems and become less dependent on aid” (Government of the Netherlands 2011, 4). For the European Commission, greater emphasis is placed on the role that growth and domestic resource mobilisation (and thus the state) have to play in poverty reduction, as opposed to “incremental increases in ODA” (European Commission 2010, 11). For USAID, “[e]conomic growth ... is the surest way for countries to generate the resources they need to address ... development challenges on their own and thus to emerge from dependence on foreign aid” (USAID 2008, i). USAID’s policy framework for development cooperation claims that the “ultimate goal of development cooperation must be to enable developing countries to devise their own solutions to key development challenges and to develop resilience against [economic] shocks and other setbacks” (USAID 2011, 12). The goal is to shift from aid dependence to self-sufficiency through growth. Germany sees vibrant economies as key to enabling developing countries to “take responsibility for building a better future for themselves on the basis of self-reliance” (BMZ 2011, 3). The Netherlands is pursuing the same goal, but envisages the path to self-sufficiency through improving the capacity of developing countries to “shoulder their own responsibility” (Government of the Netherlands 2010, 2–3) by targeting obstacles to sustainable growth and promoting self-sufficiency “with a move from aid to investment” (Government of the Netherlands 2010, 1). Japan goes one step further, viewing its private sector work as a way to “empower developing countries ... to create a society that can reap the rewards of economic development through their own efforts” (JICA 2012).

This interest in self-reliance suggests greater policy space for developing countries to shape their own economic and social policies. However, the opportunity for becoming fully self-reliant is undermined by donors’ current views on the role of the state in achieving this outcome.

Donors are taking a more nuanced approach to macroeconomic reforms in developing countries, rather than pushing one-size-fits-all neoliberal policies as they did during the 1980s and 1990s. Yet neoliberal approaches still prevail. In general, donors take an apolitical approach to growth, the private sector and development. This reflects technocratic understandings of the state and largely ignores ongoing debates about the role the state plays in development and the political economy in which policies are made.

In terms of economic policy, for some donors the focus is on the state’s technical role in promoting an enabling environment for business through the right policy and regulatory mix. This means that donors rarely promote a proactive interventionist role for the state in development. Such a role would give greater priority in their strategies to heterodox approaches to promote and direct economic development, industrial policy, job creation policies and productive capabilities (for instance, upgrading skills and industry). This is surprising given the prominence of state intervention in the development of Brazil, China, India, South Africa and other relatively self-reliant developing countries in the South. Instead of strengthening domestic and regional markets relevant to maximising growth outcomes for poor and marginalised populations,
donors focus on technical aspects of market chain or cluster development, as well as the integration of businesses into global markets.

These donor approaches, alongside the impact of decades of neoliberal policies, continue to diminish the policy space for developing countries to establish socio-economic models specific to their national (and regional) contexts that take into account the views of citizens. A 2011 consultative study by Penny Davies on the private sector and aid effectiveness, which is based on approximately 50 interviews with donors, developing country governments, civil society partners and business leaders, found that the majority of respondents stressed the importance of supporting country ownership in relation to private sector development at country level (Davies 2011). Some respondents also stressed the importance of policy space for governments to develop their own strategies (Davies 2011). Yet, donors pay little, if any, attention to countries’ abilities to balance the “right” policies (which for donors tend to be whatever ideas are hegemonic at the time) with the political space and necessary capacities for developing countries, including their civil society organisations (CSOs), to determine their own policy mix. Only Germany’s strategy explicitly recognises the ideological debate on the role of the state in economic development (BMZ 2007, 2).

Beyond the broader macro debates, most donors at least recognise the role of the state in ensuring access to social services; however, they differ in terms of the extent to which they see the private sector playing a role. The Making Markets Work for the Poor21 initiative supported by Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom does not explicitly recognise the ideological debate, but does say that it is not the role of donors to tell developing countries what the appropriate role of the state is or should be. Nevertheless, Sweden, for instance, points out that it will not support a strategy or project that will make people reliant on the private sector for what are rights (for example, basic education) that the state has an obligation to secure (SIDA 2011). Conversely, while recognising that the state has a role to play in delivering social services, the United Kingdom explicitly states that it will support the improvement of the private provision of social services.

Given the emphasis many donors place on promoting self-reliance, it is remarkable that while some donors talk about the importance of domestic resource mobilisation and taxation – critically important ways to build self-sufficiency and maximise the impacts of growth – only three (Denmark, Norway and the European Commission) actually include strengthening tax systems within their areas of focus or policies.22 For Denmark, strengthening tax systems so countries can finance their own development is one of five pillars within its business strategy (DANIDA 2012b, 2). Denmark also addresses illicit capital flight.23 Norway’s Taxation for Development program includes capacity building for tax authorities (NORAD 2011). The European Commission focuses on building stronger tax systems and fighting tax evasion (European Commission 2010).

In drawing some conclusions, it is important to note that regardless of how differently various donors approach the issue of growth, the private sector and development, the entry points for programming and partnership are not very different. In short, while theoretical approaches distinguish various donors, how much they matter should not be overstated since, in practice, donor responses are not that distinct. For example, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States all have as their entry point making markets more competitive or work better for the poor (both as producers and consumers), even though they place very different emphasis on issues such as employment and decent work, ecological and social considerations and human rights.

**Modalities of engaging the private sector**

As implementing partners, donors are seeking to increase the value for money of each aid dollar spent by harnessing the skills, expertise, innovation and finances of the private sector through,
Bilateral donor approaches to the private sector

inter alia, traditional private–public partnerships, the provision of goods and services to poorer populations (bottom of the pyramid approaches, for example), research, innovation or challenge funds, advanced market commitments, concessional financing windows, innovative financing tools and support for corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities.

In their study of donor strategies on the private sector and rights-based approaches, Heather Gibb, John Foster and Ann Weston found that donors intervene at the macro, meso- and micro­levels when promoting private sector development (Gibb, Foster, and Weston 2008). Kiyoto Kur­okawa, Fletcher Tembo and Dirk Willem te Velde (2008) identified similar levels of engagement in their examination of donor support for the private sector in sub-Saharan Africa.

Macro-level donor policies focus on creating a business-enabling environment—building economic, legal and regulatory foundations (property rights, financial regulations, governance and sound public financial management) to ensure that the right conditions exist for the private sector to thrive. Meso-level interventions are those that make markets work in ways that address market failures and imperfections, enhance competitiveness and better integrate all actors into markets. These interventions include aid for trade, building value chains, provision of finance and transfer of technological innovations. Finally, micro-level interventions that invest in businesses and people entail building support services to enhance longer-term private sector development and growth. Examples include investments in businesses (technical and financial support to the private sector) and people (infrastructure development; health; education: vocational skills training, in particular for women, focused on fostering a thriving workforce; and environmental sustainability).

Within the context of promoting private sector development, donors have developed a number of modalities for partnerships with the private sector to meet their goals. Table 2 below summarises donor mechanisms for engaging the private sector in their promotion of private sector development. The table includes interventions that specifically focus on private sector actors, although other forms of intervention by donors exist for private sector development. For example, it does not include traditional donors’ interventions aimed at developing country governments regarding regulatory reform that would fall under business-enabling environment activities.

In terms of private sector development activities, traditional donors focus on engaging the private sector in developing countries in development planning at country level, support for CSR and establishing the right incentives for foreign private sector actors to engage in development-friendly investments, including establishing new trade relationships and ventures with companies in developing countries. They also engage local private sector actors in developing countries, particularly farmers, SMEs and individuals through the provision of financial and technical assistance, as well as capacity building to improve individual skills and business operations.

Outside of their work on private sector development, donors have sought to develop innovative partnerships with the private sector to address development challenges. They are supporting initiatives such as:

- competition or challenge funds and programs to develop products and services, or address other development challenges that will benefit people living in poverty (advocated by Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom);
- advance market commitments (advocated by Canada, France, Italy, United Kingdom);
- support for feasibility studies for development-friendly investments and research on scientific and technological innovations (advocated by Austria, Germany, Sweden); and
- support for or development of knowledge platforms and learning tools related to the role of the private sector in development (advocated by Australia, Sweden and the UK).

A number of challenge and innovation funds and programs have been established by traditional donors aimed at harnessing private sector expertise, innovation and finance. They are generally
| Macro-level interventions: business-enabling environment | • Engagement with the private sector, including through business associations, to assess their needs in the national development planning of aid-recipient countries. Can also include CSOs and trade unions (for example, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom)  
• Support for promoting and implementing national and international CSR standards like the UN Global Compact or the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (for example, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Sweden) |
| Meso-level interventions: making markets work | • Matching initiatives4 that couple firms, generally in traditional donor countries, with businesses (and sometime CSOs) in developing countries, often with a focus on development impacts (for example, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States)  
• Support for micro enterprises and SMEs, including farmers, with the goal of integrating them into global value chains (for example, Austria, Canada, Italy, New Zealand)  
• Financing for donor countries' firms to encourage their investment in developing countries (for example, Denmark, Finland, Germany) |
| Micro-level interventions: investing in business and people | • Technical assistance to private-sector enterprises in developing countries (for example, Denmark, New Zealand, United Kingdom)  
• Economic empowerment initiatives that provide access to finance and opportunities to gain entrepreneurial skills, often directed at women (for example, Australia, Austria, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States)  
• Skills training for youth and women (for example, Canada, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom) |

Note: "Donors seek to match their domestic firms with firms in developing countries. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) Business Partnerships are one example.
Source: Modified from Kindornay and Reilly-King (2013).

Based on a competitive call for proposals and provide co-financing for successful projects on a grant basis. Sweden’s Innovations Against Poverty (IAP) program is one example.25 The program supports businesses based or operating in poor countries to develop services, products and processes that benefit people living in poverty. IAP has no sectoral restrictions and is open to small and large businesses. The program will match a maximum of 50 per cent of project costs for successful applicants.

Donors are also making use of advanced market commitments to address global health challenges, particularly in the area of vaccine development. Advanced market commitments are stimulations of demand by donors for a specific product for which there is a need (for example, cheap vaccines) but where the private sector may not see a profitable market. Funding may be pledged, but is only actually committed if the product is created. The GAVI Alliance – a private–public partnerships that aims to increase access to immunisation in poor countries – makes use of this model.26 Finally, donors are supporting research and knowledge-sharing aimed at supporting development friendly investments and progress on technological innovations.

### Partnering with the private sector: the new win for development?

What is new about how donors are engaging the private sector is not how they are supporting private sector development – which donors have been doing for decades – but how they are partnering with the private sector for development. Donor strategies on growth and the private sector...
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are based on the assumption that partnerships among development actors represent wins for everyone – recipient governments, the private sector, donors and civil society – they are win–win–win–win situations. Each actor has a role to play under this assumption. All partners are to engage with and inform national development strategies. Private–public partnerships allow actors to benefit from private sector finance and expertise, while the private sector benefits from financing and the awarding of contracts. Some CSOs (mainly international non-governmental organisations) benefit from additional finance.

Yet this positive framing of the quadruple win situation is unlikely to survive the realpolitik at country level. This is, at least in part, because donor strategies do not address real issues relating to power in decision-making and the motivations of different partners. Donors’ assumptions about broad-based ownership and inclusion are seemingly based on the notion that the interests of all parties are not so different as to hinder agreement. But when policy-making involves a large number of actors – ones with potentially disparate goals, agendas, interests, constituencies, capacities to engage and power to influence outcomes, as is the case with donors, developing country governments, the national, foreign and domestic private sectors and civil society – disagreements will occur. Moreover, considering that some donors have made promoting their own commercial interests a priority in private sector partnerships, potential exists for conflict when these interests are not aligned with developing country priorities. This does not mean that consensus is impossible; however, it does place increasing emphasis on the importance of the process for securing country ownership, reaching consensus and the politics of that process.

In general, donors do not address the political dimensions to growth, the private sector and development. This reflects technocratic understandings of the state and largely ignores ongoing debates about the role the state plays in development and the political economy in which policies are made. Donor approaches, alongside the impact of decades of neoliberal policies, continue to diminish the policy space for developing countries to establish socioeconomic models specific to their national (and regional) contexts that take into account the views of citizens.

Conclusions

This article has looked at bilateral donors’ strategies for promoting private sector development and partnering with the private sector for development. The analysis is based on a framework that was developed to assess systematically the structure and components of donor strategies in terms of their budget size, assumptions, rationale, objectives and key pillars or areas of focus. The article highlights a number of key findings. Donors agree that growth is integral to development and that the private sector has a key role to play in this regard. However, donors emphasise different patterns of growth and see various roles for the state and the private sector in achieving growth, development and poverty reduction. Although they recognise that benefits from growth must be shared, most growth and private sector strategies do not engage comprehensively on issues relating to the distributional or pro-poor impacts of growth, or the role of the state in ensuring pro-poor development outcomes.

The extent to which donors have established, detailed and publicly articulated their policies on and work with the private sector varies. Donors have articulated their strategies for working with the private sector at different levels, with some having broad strategies that serve more as guidelines and provide direction for projects and programs and others having detailed programming, monitoring and evaluation guidelines.

A goal of donor strategies is improving self-reliance in developing countries through the promotion of economic growth. However, the extent to which donors target domestic resource mobilisation and taxation – important areas that, if improved, would decrease developing countries’ reliance on aid – is limited.
Despite a lack of comparability, donors engage with the private sector in two key ways: by promoting private sector development; and by partnering with the private sector. These approaches are not mutually exclusive. A number of donors are partnering with private sector actors to promote private sector development. To varying degrees, donors see their own private sector as having a key role to play in these efforts. In their promotion of private sector development, donors do not address the political dimensions to growth, the private sector and development. Donor strategies are based on the assumption that partnerships among development actors represent a quadruple win for everyone – recipient governments, the private sector, donors and CSOs. Yet this positive framing is unlikely to survive the realpolitik at the country level.

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Notes
1. These include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.
2. See Srivastava and Thomson (2009) for a full review of this research approach.
3. The UN Global Compact is a voluntary corporate responsibility initiative that was launched in 2000. It brings together over 8,700 corporate participants who agree to follow 10 principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. See http://www.unglobalcompact.org.
4. The guidelines are recommendations for responsible business that have been endorsed by 43 governments, which represent all regions in the world and account for 85 per cent of foreign direct investment. These governments, which include all OECD members, have agreed to encourage their firms to observe the guidelines wherever they operate.
5. Some comparisons looking at specific components of donors’ engagement with the private sector exist, but they cover a limited number of donors. Kwakkenbos (2012) and Spratt and Collins (2012) look at development finance institutions. Nelson (2011) examines the increasing links between different types of donors (multilateral, bilateral, development finance institutions) and the private sector. An Overseas Development Institute study looking at Japan’s engagement with the private sector includes a brief examination of seven donor approaches to working with the private sector (Kurokawa, Tembo, and te Velde 2008). In 2009, the Business Civic Leadership Center, an affiliate of the US Chamber of Commerce, commissioned a report looking at 10 bilateral donors’ engagement with the private sector (BCLC and Corporate Citizenship 2009). The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development also provides an overview of its members’ (including 14 DAC donors) engagement with the private sector (Heinrich 2012). The Busan Building Block on Public–Private Cooperation is currently conducting a comparative survey among donors of public-private initiatives, which had not yet been completed at the time of writing. More recently, the DCED (Heinrich 2013) released a report looking the lessons learned by donors from partnering with the private sector for development that builds on this work, further expands the thinking around development additionality and begins a discussion on how to better measure the results of these types of partnerships.
6. See Kindornay, Heidrich and Blundell (2013) for a recent review and comparison of Latin American SSDC provider and OECD-DAC donor approaches to aid and the private sector.
7. This article henceforth distinguishes between the three different types of private sector using the terms national, foreign and domestic.
8. The guiding principles include: supporting rule of law; striving for broad-based growth; strengthening the private sector; improving conditions for the market economy; supporting economic transformation; creating social partnership; shaping the economy based on ecological concerns; and ensuring equal opportunities (BMZ 2007).

9. Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

10. Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

11. Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

12. Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

13. This approach is particularly present in the private sector engagement policies of donors such as Finland, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

14. Canada, Finland (Finnfund, a Finnish development finance company), Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom.

15. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Norway and the European Commission.

16. Policy coherence for development refers to improving the coherence of donors’ aid and non-aid policies to improve development outcomes. For example, a donor might offer trade-related technical support through its development agency and, through its trade ministry, lower tariff barriers to imports from developing countries.

17. Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, the United States and the European Commission.

18. This includes Canada, Denmark, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

19. Austria, Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

20. Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Japan, France, Sweden and the United States.

21. Making Markets Work for the Poor is an approach to reducing poverty guided by four principles: (1) systemic action; (2) sustainable change; (3) large-scale impact; and (4) a facilitative role for donors (based on determining how to stimulate market development rather than displace markets or market players). See M4P (2012).

22. Although it is important to note that while some donors do not make taxation a focus of their work, countries such as Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden are supporting the African Tax Administration Forum, the mission of which is to improve tax administration capacity in African countries. See ATAF (2012) for more information. The International Tax Compact, launched by Germany, has also revealed that a number of other donors are working in the area of taxation; however, it also found that this was mostly through specific initiatives at the country level and that it is difficult to assess donors’ contributions in this area via a desk study (Kohnen et al. 2010). In 2013, the G8 committed to improve the exchange of tax information and develop a better system to find and punish tax evaders (see G8 Information Centre 2013).

23. Finland’s most recent overall development policy includes addressing these tax issues as well, although it does not explicitly support strengthening tax systems in developing countries.


26. See GAVI Alliance (2013) for more information.

Biographical notes

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Reconsidering the economic vulnerability index of the United Nations
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ABSTRACT This paper reviews the design of the economic vulnerability index and examines the relationship between the economic vulnerability index and economic volatility, which is measured by the coefficient of variation of detrended real GDP per capita. The result of a regression analysis indicates that revision of the economic vulnerability index designed by the United Nations is recommended. In addition to the weights used to aggregate the index, the variables included in the index should be moderately modified as necessary.

RESUME Cet article évalue la structure de l'indice de vulnérabilité économique utilisé par les Nations-Unis et il examine la relation entre cet indice et la volatilité économique mesurée par le coefficient de variation du PIB réel par habitant dépouillé de sa composante tendancielle. Les résultats d’une analyse de régression montrent que l’indice couramment utilisé devrait être révisé. En plus du poids qui leur est accordé dans l’agrégation de l’indice, les variables qui le composent devraient être modérément modifiées au besoin.

Keywords: economic vulnerability index; economic development; small economies; United Nations

Introduction
In the Doha Development Agenda of the WTO (World Trade Organization), special and differential treatments for small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) have become an important issue. SVEs form their own group within the latest round of the WTO negotiations1 and claim that economic vulnerability jeopardises their development. Economic vulnerability can be understood as the negative impacts of exogenous shocks on an economy. Economic vulnerability can be caused by small size, remoteness and insularity, disaster proneness, environmental fragility and other factors (Briguglio 1995). For example, limited by a small economic scale, SVEs can produce few products, such as fish and tropical fruits, and must import most necessities from the rest of the world. Consequently, SVEs are easily affected by outside shocks and therefore become vulnerable. Similar difficulties may also occur for other developing economies. The positioning of developing economies should reflect both their development level and their economic vulnerability (Liou and Ding 2004).

Indeed, Cordina (2004) shows that people in more vulnerable economies enjoy lower per capita consumption because they tend to accumulate more capital stock to address unexpected shocks. In examining the issue of economic vulnerability, Cordina (2004) constructs a model in which the fluctuations in capital and consumption are both assumed to be two-sided. However, the negative impacts of downside fluctuations, especially those caused by natural disasters, are a greater focus in the design of some economic vulnerability indices (EVIs). Furthermore, some studies of economic vulnerability at the household level, such as Ligon and Schechter

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(2003) and Jha, Dang and Tashrifov (2010), relate vulnerability to poverty. These authors also address downside fluctuations and risks in discussing economic vulnerability.

As we will see later, an EVI often includes a shock subindex constructed from two-sided fluctuations in economic indicators, which is usually referred to as economic volatility. In this paper, both economic vulnerability and economic volatility are frequently mentioned. To avoid unnecessary confusion, the downside fluctuations or risk that developing economies face owing to exogenous shocks are referred to as economic vulnerability and the two-sided fluctuations generated by exogenous shocks are referred to as economic volatility. Therefore, the discussion in Cordina (2004) is more related to economic volatility. According to Cordina (2004), both economic vulnerability and economic volatility are bad for developing economies.

Ramey and Ramey (1995) provide empirical evidence from the data of 92 countries and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. It is reasonable to infer that the least developed countries (LDCs) suffer from economic vulnerability like SVEs do because of less advanced production technology and limited natural resources. Since 1999, the criteria for LDCs set by the United Nations (UN) have included an EVI (hereafter, the UN EVI). In addition, because a well-designed EVI can indicate the weakness of developing countries, an EVI can also serve as a tool to allocate aid from donors (Guillaumont 2009).

Although the formula of the UN EVI has been revised several times, the basic idea of the UN EVI is the same. The UN EVI measures not only the exogenous shocks to the economies, but also the characteristics of economies that may alleviate or aggravate the negative impacts of the shocks. The policy capacity to reduce the negative impacts from exogenous shocks is referred to as economic resilience, which is currently not part of the UN EVI. In short, the UN EVI tends to reflect not the ex-post volatility or fluctuations of developing economies, but rather the ex-ante shocks to which developing economies are exposed. A typical EVI consists of structural factors, which may be related to economic vulnerability.

In addition to the UN, many scholars, such as Atkins, Mazzi and Easter (2000) and Crowards (1999), have worked on designing an EVI for other international developing organisations. I will briefly describe the previous design of the EVI in this paper. Most indices are constructed using a conceptual design, but their validity is not tested empirically. This paper will fill the gap in the literature.

One important reason to construct an EVI using conceptual discussion is that economic vulnerability cannot be directly observed, while economic volatility can. Economic volatility is jointly determined by exogenous shocks, economic vulnerability and economic resilience. Economic vulnerability to the exogenous shocks leads to increased volatility, and economic resilience works in the opposite way. Hence, an appropriate index for measuring economic vulnerability, the exposure to ex-ante shocks, is assumed to be strongly related to economic volatility, the ex-post fluctuations in the economy, when one controls for economic resilience, a set of macro-economic policies that can ease the negative impacts of exogenous shocks.

Therefore, I first estimate the ex-post volatility faced by developing economies, and then examine the relationship between the EVI and the ex-post volatility. The strength of the correlation between an EVI and the ex-post volatility of an economy can help to indicate the appropriateness of the EVI and provide researchers with ideas to improve the EVI. However, because the relationship between the EVI and ex-post volatility is not entirely straightforward, this relationship should not be the only criterion that is used to determine the appropriateness of the index. Also, because the UN EVI is the only one currently officially in use, the related discussion will solely focus on the UN EVI.
The design of the economic vulnerability index

In this section, I will review three designs of the EVI. The first two designs are Atkins's work for the Commonwealth Secretariat and Crowards's work for Caribbean Bank. Finally, I will introduce the design of the UN EVI.

Commonwealth Vulnerability Index

Atkins, Mazzi and Easter (2000) believe that economic vulnerability is the result of high exogenous impacts/shocks and low macro-economic resilience, and these authors develop a complicated way of constructing an EVI. First, they estimate the exogenous impacts by a regression model. After testing several variables, they regress income volatility on the export diversification index, the data on trade dependence in the *Statistics Handbook of International Trade Development* and the *Statistics of Natural Disasters* from the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at Catholic University of Louvain, Brussels. The predicted value of income volatility is the volatility caused by the structural characteristics of developing economies. They then measure macroeconomic resilience based on the size of the gross domestic product (GDP). Finally, they apply the principal-component method to find a latent variable that is related to high uncontrollable impacts and low macroeconomic resilience. This latent variable is the measurement of economic vulnerability. The authors confirm that small economies clearly tend to be vulnerable.

Study of Caribbean banks

Following Briguglio (1995), Crowards (1999) constructs an EVI by averaging a series of normalised economic variables, which may be related to economic vulnerability. The normalisation method is as follows:  

\[ x_i = \frac{X_i - \min X}{\max X - \min X} \]

where \( X_i \) represents the original data of Economy \( i \); \( x_i \) is the normalised data; and \( \min X \) and \( \max X \) are the minimum and the maximum of all economies' data, respectively. The variables chosen by Crowards (1999) include peripherality/accessibility, export concentration, convergence of export destination, dependence upon imported energy and reliance on external finance/capital. However, the formal version of the EVI used in the report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is slightly modified. The openness index is added, and the convergence of export destination and reliance upon external finance/capital is cancelled (ECLAC 2001).

The UN EVI

The first version of the UN EVI was introduced in 1999. The methodology used to construct it follows the work of Briguglio (1995) and Crowards (1999). The variables included in the UN EVI can be divided into two subgroups. One subgroup is used to measure the size of the exogenous shocks, and the other is used to measure exposure to the exogenous shocks. The differences between different versions of the UN EVI are simply the variables included and the weights used to aggregate, which are also the differences between the UN EVI and the EVI advanced by Crowards (1999). Briguglio (1995) is very influential in the related literature.
### Table 1. Comparison of the UN EVI in 1999 and in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Shocks</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Shocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export concentration</td>
<td>Instability of agricultural production</td>
<td>Populations (1/8)</td>
<td>Remoteness (1/8)</td>
<td>Victims of natural disasters (1/8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of population in low-elevation costal zones</td>
<td>Instability of exports of goods and services</td>
<td>Merchandise export concentration (1/16)</td>
<td>Instability of agricultural production (1/8)</td>
<td>Instability of exports of goods and services (1/4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The boundaries used in the normalisation procedure may not be the maximum or the minimum of the raw data.

Note: *The values of population and victims of natural disasters are logged values. The numbers in parentheses are the weights to aggregate the variables.*

The variables included in the UN EVI and the weights currently used can be found in Table 1. The table simply compares the original version with the current (2011) version and leaves out the 2005 revision. Two significant differences can be highlighted:

1. The economic vulnerability caused by natural disasters draws more attention. In each subgroup of variables, one variable related to natural disasters is added. Although the concept of ecological vulnerability is not the same as that of economic vulnerability, it is well known that environmental factors can induce economic vulnerability and vice versa. For example, Adrianto and Matsuda (2004) also include environmental factors in the EVI when discussing the economic vulnerability of Japanese islands.

2. The exposure index was revised more substantially than the shock index was. The shock index was not revised significantly when the UN EVI was being revised. The volatility of the agricultural sector and the volatility of the exports sector remain the primary concerns of the exogenous shocks. Instead, although population and export concentrations are not replaced in the design of the exposure index, the natural characteristics of an economy and its influence are addressed in much greater depth in the latter version. As we can see in Table 1, two variables, remoteness and share of population in low-elevation coastal zones, have been added, and the share of manufacturing and modern services in GDP has been replaced by the share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

### Comments

The methodology proposed by Briguglio (1995) is the most prominent one in the literature on EVI design. The main advantages of this approach are ease of understanding and ease of calculation. Compared with the method of Briguglio (1995), the methodology described by Atkins, Mazzi and Easter (2000) is much more difficult to understand for policy-makers. Furthermore, the regression...
Reconsidering the UN economic vulnerability index

model used to identify the source of shocks is not reliable enough. Some other important variables related to economic vulnerability may be missing.

According to the methodology of Briguglio (1995), the choices of the variables and weights to construct the EVI are arbitrary in some way. This characteristic may be one reason why the UN EVI must be revised frequently. One way to justify the design of the EVI is to examine the relationship between the EVI and the ex-post or actual economic volatility. The ex-post economic volatility is represented by the fluctuations that developing economies actually face, and the ex-ante economic vulnerability can be said to be potential downside fluctuations that developing economies are exposed to. Clearly there must exist a gap between the ex-post economic volatility and the EVI. However, a well-designed EVI should be able to explain a greater part of the ex-post economic volatility.

Part of the gap between economic volatility and the EVI may be the economic resilience, or a country's policy capacity to return to its normal pattern, and part of this gap could be caused by the misspecification of the EVI. By examining the relationship, the empirical results may provide suggestions for improving the EVI and hints for designing the economic resilience index. Indeed, some literature, such as Briguglio, Farrugia Cordina and Vella (2009), started to propose the design of the economic resilience index.

Measuring ex-post economic volatility

In this section, a measure of economic volatility will be proposed, and the estimation results will be shown later. Economic volatility is often measured by the standard deviation of the economic growth rate, as reported by Atkins, Mazzi and Easter (2000) and Klompa and de Haan (2009). However, the sample periods are often long. Furthermore, the economic growth rate tends to become lower while economies mature, or become higher while developing economies enter the take-off stage. Therefore, in some cases, a high standard deviation of the economic growth rate may simply reflect the maturity or the structural change occurring within developing economies.

In this paper, I propose another measure of economic volatility. In the modern dynamic general equilibrium model, business cycle fluctuations are modelled as the impacts caused by exogenous shocks. The source of exogenous shocks in models may differ across types of theories. However, the source of exogenous shocks will not alter the conclusion. Because economic volatility may be defined as the impacts caused by the exogenous shocks, economic volatility can be measured as business cycle fluctuations.

In the literature, business cycles are studied using the detrended macroeconomic time series data, and the real GDP is often used to evaluate the overall performance of an economy. Therefore, economic volatility can be measured by estimating the fluctuations of detrended real GDP. Furthermore, the path of economic growth and the structural change of the economies can be reflected in the trend of the real GDP. Because using the data of the detrended real GDP can exclude the bias of traditional measures of economic volatility brought by economic development and structural change, the measures of economic volatility proposed in this paper may be better than the traditional one.

There exist various ways of detrending macroeconomic time series in the literature, and different means of detrending can extract different types of information from the data (Canova 1998). However, the filter proposed by Hodrick and Prescott (1980, 1997; hereafter, the HP filter) is currently the standard means of detrending macroeconomic data in the study of business cycles. The HP filter is applied in this paper.

In addition, the relative size of the fluctuations is a better measure of economic volatility than the absolute size. Otherwise, large-sized economies tend to have higher economic volatility
simply owing to their large size. The measure of economic volatility proposed in this paper is based on the standard deviation of the real GDP, which is scale-variant. A normalised and scale-invariant measure is more appropriate. The average logged real GDP during the sample periods is used in this paper as the benchmark for normalisation. That is, the coefficients of variation are the measure of economic volatility in this paper. Finally, for the sake of data availability and the convenience of international comparison, the real GDP in US dollars published in World Development Indicators will be the data source, and the sampling periods are between 1990 and 2010.

In summary, the estimation of economic volatility is obtained in this paper using the following steps:

- **Step 1** - detrend the logged real GDP in US dollars using the HP filter. The choice of parameters is based on the suggestions in Hodrick and Prescott (1980, 1997).
- **Step 2** - calculate the standard deviation of the cycle term (detrended real GDP).
- **Step 3** - divide the standard deviation obtained in Step 2 by the average of the logged real GDP during the sample periods to measure economic volatility.

The formula is as follows:

\[
\text{Economic volatility} = \frac{\text{standard deviation of detrended logged real GDP in US dollars}}{\text{average of logged real GDP in US dollars}}.
\]

**Estimation of economic volatility**

The estimation of economic volatility of 179 economies can be found in Appendix 1. Based on the design of the measure, it is clear that a higher value of the measure represents a higher economic volatility. According to my estimation, among the 10 most volatile economies, six are landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and none is a small island developing state (SIDS).\(^{12}\) It appears that LLDCs are more prone to exogenous shocks than SIDSs. Indeed, whether SIDSs seriously suffer from impacts of exogenous shocks is controversial. As mentioned above, the exposure of SIDSs to exogenous shocks is high, but SIDSs are also more flexible in adjusting their economic structure.\(^ {13}\) Compared with SIDSs, LLDCs appear to be generally ignored in the discussion of economic vulnerability. Based on the data of the UN EVI in 2012, only one LLDC, Burundi, is listed among the 10 least vulnerable developing economies.

Based on a rough comparison of my estimation results and the UN EVI, it appears that a significant portion of the 10 most vulnerable economies (according to the UN EVI) also suffer from high ex-post economic volatility.\(^ {14}\) Only Tonga and Gambia are exceptions. There appears to be some linkage between economic vulnerability and economic volatility as suggested. It is worth examining the relationship between these two variables more closely.

**Reconsidering the economic vulnerability index of the United Nations**

In this section, the appropriateness of the UN EVI will be examined. The UN EVI not only is officially used as a criterion of the LDCs but also has a strong policy influence. Therefore, the UN EVI is the only EVI examined in this section. I mainly examine the relationship between the EVI and the ex-post economic volatility. The data from the UN EVI in 2012 can be found on the UN website.\(^ {15}\)
Reconsidering the UN economic vulnerability index

Appropriateness of the UN EVI

According to my estimation, the correlation coefficient between the ex-post economic volatility and the UN EVI is 0.3903, indicating moderate correlation. Although the current design of the UN EVI can reflect the figures of economic vulnerability in some respects, it remains fair to say that the UN EVI can be improved. First, whether the weights used in the UN EVI are appropriate will be discussed. I will then briefly explore whether to include more variables or to exclude some currently used variables based on the current design of the UN EVI.

The UN EVI is a composite index created by aggregating several variables with arbitrary weights. The inappropriateness of the UN EVI may result from inappropriate arbitrary weights or from poor variable choices. To access whether the design is reasonable, first, I separately regress economic volatility by the UN EVI and its components. Then, I add other macroeconomic variables to the regressions to strengthen the explanatory power. The results of the economic volatility regressions are provided in Table 2.

The six regressions can be divided into two groups. The regressors in the first group (regressions 1–3) are the UN EVI and its components. The regressors in the second group (regressions 4–6) include other macroeconomic variables. Regressions 1–3 use composite indices such as the EVI, the exposure index and the shock index as regressors; the low $R^2$ indicates that the explanatory power of the regressors is weak. In contrast, the $R^2$ of the regression can be significantly improved by using the components of the UN EVI directly as regressors. Although a significant portion of the variance of economic volatility across developing economies can be explained by the variables included in the UN EVI, the weights set in the UN EVI should be reconsidered.

In general, the variables included in the UN EVI do not perform well at first glance. The $R^2$ of the regression is low, and most coefficients of the regressors are not significantly different from zero. Furthermore, some signs of coefficients do not agree with theoretical predictions. For example, it is expected that a developing economy with a lower population, a higher export concentration, a higher share of the population in low-elevation coastal zones or more victims of natural disasters should be more volatile. However, the regression analysis yields the opposite results. The undesired results may be caused by inappropriate variables being included in the UN EVI, or by the estimation bias of omitted variables.

Ideas to improve the UN EVI

As suggested, the low explanatory power of the UN EVI for the actual economic volatility may be caused by omitted variables in the regression. In Table 2, regressions 4–6, three types of macroeconomic variables related to economic vulnerability or economic volatility are included in the regressions: trade exposure, economic freedom and income levels.

Trade exposure

Since the development of the first version of the UN EVI, trade exposure has been considered in the design of the EVI. In the literature, it is agreed that trade is a major channel through which
Table 2. Regressions of economic volatility (all sample economies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1°</th>
<th>2°</th>
<th>3°</th>
<th>4°</th>
<th>5°</th>
<th>6°</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNEV1I</td>
<td>$6.72 \times 10^{-5}$ (2.95)***</td>
<td>$9.40 \times 10^{-6}$ (1.12)</td>
<td>$4.24 \times 10^{-5}$ (2.03)***</td>
<td>$-1.41 \times 10^{-5}$ (-0.86)</td>
<td>$5.57 \times 10^{-5}$ (3.08)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure index</td>
<td>$7.48 \times 10^{-6}$ (1.35)</td>
<td>$1.08 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.68)*</td>
<td>$-7.98 \times 10^{-5}$ (-0.97)</td>
<td>$5.42 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.16)</td>
<td>$2.91 \times 10^{-5}$ (2.41)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock index</td>
<td>$-7.54 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.30)</td>
<td>$-1.12 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.23)</td>
<td>$-1.17 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.14)</td>
<td>$-3.49 \times 10^{-5}$ (2.70)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>$1.77 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.16)</td>
<td>$-7.54 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.30)</td>
<td>$-1.12 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.23)</td>
<td>$1.17 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.14)</td>
<td>$3.49 \times 10^{-5}$ (2.70)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness</td>
<td>$1.77 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.16)</td>
<td>$7.48 \times 10^{-6}$ (1.35)</td>
<td>$1.08 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.68)*</td>
<td>$-7.98 \times 10^{-6}$ (-0.97)</td>
<td>$5.42 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export concentration</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of population in low-elevation costal zones</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of natural disasters</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Instability of agricultural production</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instability of exports of goods and services</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import-to-GDP ratio</td>
<td>$5.38 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.53)</td>
<td>$5.71 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.72)*</td>
<td>$7.24 \times 10^{-5}$ (7.61)***</td>
<td>$5.38 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.53)</td>
<td>$5.71 \times 10^{-5}$ (1.72)*</td>
<td>$7.24 \times 10^{-5}$ (7.61)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports-to-GDP ratio</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.73 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.44)</td>
<td>$-5.46 \times 10^{-5}$ (-5.46)***</td>
<td>$-3.45 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-3.73 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.44)</td>
<td>$-5.46 \times 10^{-5}$ (-5.46)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property rights subindex</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
<td>$-8.51 \times 10^{-5}$ (-1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP per capita</td>
<td>$2.81 \times 10^{-4}$ (1.47)</td>
<td>$4.75 \times 10^{-4}$ (2.35)***</td>
<td>$4.75 \times 10^{-4}$ (2.35)***</td>
<td>$2.81 \times 10^{-4}$ (1.47)</td>
<td>$4.75 \times 10^{-4}$ (2.35)***</td>
<td>$4.75 \times 10^{-4}$ (2.35)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$-3.32 \times 10^{-4}$ (-0.47)</td>
<td>$-1.92 \times 10^{-4}$ (-0.30)</td>
<td>$5.24 \times 10^{-4}$ (0.94)</td>
<td>$2.24 \times 10^{-3}$ (1.66)*</td>
<td>$4.61 \times 10^{-4}$ (0.29)</td>
<td>$-3.81 \times 10^{-3}$ (-1.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.1523</td>
<td>0.1816</td>
<td>0.2950</td>
<td>0.4014</td>
<td>0.4469</td>
<td>0.6616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *The values in parentheses are t-statistics based on the ordinary standard errors (regression 6) or the robust standard errors (regressions 1–5). b Asterisks represent the *10, **5 and ***1 per cent significance levels. c White’s heteroscedasticity test reveals that regressions 1–5 may suffer from heteroscedasticity (at the 10 per cent significance level). Source: Calculated by author.
exogenous shocks can affect developing economies and that terms of trade have a substantial influence. Guillaumont (2009, 2010) only consider using the ratio of exports to the GDP to construct an indicator of exposure to external shocks, and only the concentration and the instability of exports are currently included in the UN EVI.

Guillaumont argues that the trade-to-GDP ratio is mainly determined by population and trade openness. Because population is already included in the EVI and trade policy is not an inherent property of an economy, Guillaumont suggests not including the trade-to-GDP ratio in the EVI. However, the real data reveal that trade exposure is in fact related to some inherent properties of an economy. For example, three of the 10 economies with the least merchandise trading (percentage of GDP) in 2011 are landlocked. Furthermore, the correlation between trade exposure and population may be weaker than one would expect. Of the above 10 economies, three have populations of fewer than 1.2 million and China, the economy with the largest population, is ranked number 44 with regard to merchandise trading.

I suggest that the indicators of trade exposure should be included in the UN EVI, but that exports and imports should be separated. In developing economies, imports are essential owing to these economies' limited production capacity, and this reliance on imports may also transmit the exogenous shocks to developing economies. The reliance on imported food or energy is also high in some developing economies. Fosu (2001) found that import instability may be more critical to the growth process in Sub-Saharan Africa than export instability. Hence, it is expected that a higher import-to-GDP ratio will be associated with a greater degree of exposure to exogenous shocks.

Exports can help domestic firms to extend the depth and breadth of the market, especially when the scale of the domestic market is small. Down (2007) shows that domestic demand volatility is greater than global demand volatility even in the OECD members. If an economy's trade partners become more diverse as its export share expands, developing economies with a larger export-to-GDP ratio may experience less economic volatility and reduce the exposure to exogenous risk.

**Economic freedom**

As mentioned above, economic resilience may fill the gap between economic volatility and economic vulnerability. In agreement with to Briguglio (2004) and Briguglio, Farrugia Cordina and Vella (2009), economic resilience may be defined as the policy capacity to alleviate the impacts of the exogenous shocks, and good governance is one important feature of economic resilience. After testing several variables related to good governance, the property rights subindex of the Index of Economic Freedom published by the Heritage Foundation is found to be highly relevant to economic volatility and is added to the regression. The substance and enforcement of the law, the independence of the judiciary system and the corruption within the judiciary system are major concerns.

**Income levels**

People living in poverty often lack the ability or tools to counteract the negative impacts from exogenous shocks or to enhance the positive impacts. What is more, the negative exogenous shocks may cause poverty (Holzmann and Jørgensen 2001). Although poverty and economic vulnerability should be highly correlated empirically, the causality between poverty and economic vulnerability requires deliberate work to clarify. A conceptual discussion of this causality is beyond the scope of this paper, but an income-level variable has been added to the regression to avoid the problem of omitted variables. Income levels are measured by the average of the

The new regression results for economic volatility are also shown in Table 2. The results of regressions 1–3 remain similar to the new results of regressions 4–6 even after other macroeconomic variables are added to the latter as regressors. It is worth noting that most coefficients of the components of the UN EVI become significant and that the signs of most of the coefficients correspond to predictions; the two new variables measuring negative impacts of natural disasters in the UN EVI are exceptions to this trend. This paper confirms the higher exposure to exogenous shocks of economies that are located more remotely, have a smaller population, have a higher exports concentration and have a higher share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Furthermore, high instabilities in agricultural production and in export of goods and services yield more severe shocks. It is fair to say that most choices of components are related to economic volatility and may reflect a large portion of economic vulnerability that developing economies suffer, although the weight of each component in the UN EVI may be reconsidered.

The two newly added components in the UN EVI in 2011 do not perform as predicted. It is predicted that a higher population share in low-elevation coastal zones indicates a higher population exposed to the danger of natural disasters and that more victims of natural disasters indicate more severe shocks to an economy. However, the regressions reveal the opposite relationship with economic volatility. Except for small islands with the problem of rising of sea levels, the economies in which people remain willing to live in low-elevation coastal zones, such as Bahrain, may provide enough protection. Such economies will not be highly economically vulnerable. Furthermore, landlocked developing economies in which no people live in low-elevation coastal zones remain highly economically vulnerable. The ratio of the victims of natural disasters to population may be more highly related to the location of developing economies. The economies in East Asia or in the Caribbean region suffer from tropical storms and tend to have higher ratios of victims to population. Furthermore, the number of victims of natural disasters may not be proportional to economic loss suffered. However, economic vulnerability may be more highly related to economic loss.

Generally speaking, the coefficients of the four variables added in this paper to explain economic volatility are significantly different from zero. That is, the four variables may help to explain the economic volatility faced by developing economies. As predicted, my estimation results consistently show that a developing economy that can effectively protect property rights has lower economic volatility. Briguglio, Farrugia Cordina and Vella (2009) argue that an index of property rights could be used to measure good governance or market efficiency, and they also include an index of property rights in their resilience index. With respect to trade exposure, it is interesting that the influence of import exposure on economic volatility is opposite that of export exposure. Controlling for the concentration and instability of exports, high export exposure alleviates economic volatility, but high import exposure increases economic volatility. It should not be surprising that exports and imports play different roles in the path of development. Many developing economies pursue development through export expansion and import substitution. Indeed, fluctuations in international commodity prices, especially those of energy and food, can affect an economy through imports. The dependence on strategic imports should be included in the EVI (Briguglio, Farrugia Cordina and Vella 2009). It is well known that export expansion is highly positively related to economic growth (Tyler 1981; Kavoussi 1984) although the causality of this relationship is not clear (Jung and Marshall 1985). The negative correlation between economic volatility and the ratio of exports to GDP may simply reflect the positive correlation between the size of the economy and the export ratio.

Surprising is the result that an economy with a higher real GDP per capita tends to have larger economic volatility. Indeed, Béne (2009) reports similar results from micro-level data of
### Table 3. Regressions of economic volatility, low- and low-middle income economies\(^{a,b}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1^e)</th>
<th>(2^e)</th>
<th>(3^e)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNEVI</strong></td>
<td>(8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((2.56)^{**})</td>
<td>(9.07 \times 10^{-6}) ((0.69))</td>
<td>(3.06 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.28))</td>
<td>(2.17 \times 10^{-5}) ((0.94))</td>
<td>(4.04 \times 10^{-5}) ((2.26)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure index</td>
<td>(2.31 \times 10^{-6}) ((0.26))</td>
<td>(-4.32 \times 10^{-6}) ((-0.54))</td>
<td>(-2.38 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.56))</td>
<td>(-2.54 \times 10^{-6}) ((-1.53))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock index</td>
<td>(1.76 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.58))</td>
<td>(-2.05 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-3.95 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.15)^{**})</td>
<td>(-4.82 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.25)^{**})</td>
<td>(-5.43 \times 10^{-5}) ((-3.43)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>(2.66 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.41))</td>
<td>(5.82 \times 10^{-7}) ((0.06))</td>
<td>(2.62 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.31))</td>
<td>(1.54 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.20))</td>
<td>(2.03 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.29))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness</td>
<td>(-4.32 \times 10^{-6}) ((-0.54))</td>
<td>(-2.38 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.56))</td>
<td>(-2.54 \times 10^{-6}) ((-1.53))</td>
<td>(-1.56 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.53))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export concentration</td>
<td>(3.95 \times 10^{-5}) ((2.15)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.08 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.99)^{*})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instability of agricultural production</td>
<td>(2.62 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.31))</td>
<td>(-3.95 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.15)^{**})</td>
<td>(-4.82 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.25)^{**})</td>
<td>(-5.43 \times 10^{-5}) ((-3.43)^{**})</td>
<td>(-5.43 \times 10^{-5}) ((-3.43)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instability of exports of goods and services</td>
<td>(2.62 \times 10^{-5}) ((1.31))</td>
<td>(-3.95 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.15)^{**})</td>
<td>(-4.82 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.25)^{**})</td>
<td>(-5.43 \times 10^{-5}) ((-3.43)^{**})</td>
<td>(-5.43 \times 10^{-5}) ((-3.43)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries</td>
<td>(-4.32 \times 10^{-6}) ((-0.54))</td>
<td>(-2.38 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.56))</td>
<td>(-2.54 \times 10^{-6}) ((-1.53))</td>
<td>(-1.56 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.53))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of population in low-elevation coastal zones</td>
<td>(-2.05 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(3.95 \times 10^{-5}) ((2.15)^{**})</td>
<td>(-2.38 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-8.08 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.99)^{*})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of natural disasters</td>
<td>(-4.32 \times 10^{-6}) ((-0.54))</td>
<td>(-2.38 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.56))</td>
<td>(-2.54 \times 10^{-6}) ((-1.53))</td>
<td>(-1.56 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.53))</td>
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<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instability of exports of goods and services</td>
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<td>(3.95 \times 10^{-5}) ((2.15)^{**})</td>
<td>(-2.38 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.50))</td>
<td>(-8.08 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.99)^{*})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import-to-GDP ratio</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Export-to-GDP ratio</td>
<td>(-8.08 \times 10^{-5}) ((-1.99)^{*})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td>(-8.33 \times 10^{-5}) ((-2.65)^{**})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property rights subindex</td>
<td>(-5.96 \times 10^{-4}) ((-1.55))</td>
<td>(-2.52 \times 10^{-4}) ((-0.60))</td>
<td>(-5.96 \times 10^{-4}) ((-1.55))</td>
<td>(-2.52 \times 10^{-4}) ((-0.60))</td>
<td>(-5.96 \times 10^{-4}) ((-1.55))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP per capita</td>
<td>(-1.02 \times 10^{-5}) ((-0.93))</td>
<td>(-7.99 \times 10^{-6}) ((-0.80))</td>
<td>(-3.15 \times 10^{-6}) ((-0.45))</td>
<td>(6.91 \times 10^{-3}) ((2.55)^{**})</td>
<td>(-5.34 \times 10^{-3}) ((-1.56))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-6}) ((-3.50)***)</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-6}) ((-3.50)***)</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-6}) ((-3.50)***)</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-6}) ((-3.50)***)</td>
<td>(-3.87 \times 10^{-6}) ((-3.50)***)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td>0.1685</td>
<td>0.2053</td>
<td>0.3754</td>
<td>0.5937</td>
<td>0.6184</td>
<td>0.7973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: "The values in parentheses are t-statistics based on the ordinary standard errors (regressions 4–6) or the robust standard errors (regressions 1–3). Asterisks represent the *10, **5 and ***1 per cent significance levels. White's heteroscedasticity test reveals that regressions 1–3 may suffer from heteroscedasticity (at the 10 per cent significance level). Source: Calculated by author."
fishermen in the Congo. After controlling the negative impacts of economic volatility, people continue to face the tradeoff between return and risk, and an economy whose economic structure is at more risk may tend to have a higher average output.

The performance of the shock index remains much better than that of the exposure index. These results are also robust across different samples. However, the $R^2$ is significantly improved because the newly added regressors provide significant explanatory power, especially when only developing economies with low or low-middle income are analysed.

**Robustness to sample selection and suggestions for the UN EVI**

Table 2 analyses all of the developing economies in the database used in the LDC review process. However, the needs of poor economies in particular should also be addressed in the discussion of the EVI. Thus, in Table 3, only developing economies with low- or low-middle-level incomes are included in the sample.\(^{21,22}\) The regression results are found to be robust across different samples. Furthermore, when only developing economies with lower incomes are analysed, the $R^2$ value improves significantly after the four macroeconomic variables have been introduced.

In sum, according to the findings in this paper, the UN EVI could be improved in the following ways. First, the components of the UN EVI can be changed. The two variables used to measure the threat from natural disasters can be left out. Instead, the index of import exposure should be included in the exposure index. This substitution is expected to improve the performance of the exposure index, which is shown as being unrelated to economic volatility in the regression analysis.

Second, the weights used to aggregate the UN EVI should be reset. Regardless of whether the UN EVI serves as a criterion for LDCs or as a tool to allocate aid, the UN EVI should be designed to meet the demand of developing economies with low or low-middle income. The regression using developing economies with low or low-middle income as the sample can provide more accurate information about the weights. For instance, the weights of the two variables reflecting the agricultural sector should be increased, and the weight of remoteness should be decreased.

Third, the Property Rights Index and other governance indices can be incorporated into the Economic Resilience Index. In theory, economic resilience is different from economic vulnerability, but both are related to economic volatility. The findings in this paper echo Briguglio, Farrugia Cordina and Vella (2009): an index of good governance should be included in the economic resilience index, and the property rights index is a good choice for this task.

**Conclusions**

A conceptual discussion cannot provide the sole basis for the design of an EVI. Indeed, the approach to measure the risk that developing economies face is not perfect. The downside risk should be better addressed. However, it is still better to provide support from the real-world data.

The typical method for constructing an EVI is to calculate the weighted average of the variables or indices related to economic vulnerability. However, the choices of weights to aggregate and variables to include in the EVI are arbitrary to some degree, even though conceptual discussion can provide some support.

To examine whether the design of the UN EVI is appropriate, this paper proposes to measure economic volatility using the coefficient of variation of the detrended real GDP. According to my estimation, LLDCs also experience serious economic volatility, but SIDSs attract much more attention. Economic volatility is the combined result of exogenous shocks, economic vulnerability and economic resilience. It would be interesting to separate these three components. However, it is not easy to do so. Some of the major indicators that are included in all versions
of the EVI are the mixed results of economic vulnerability and economic resilience themselves. For example, trade share, export concentration and the share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in GDP all reflect some inherent properties of developing economies, but also may change in the long term if adequate economic policies are instituted. Simultaneously designing the EVI and the economic resilience index may help. Nevertheless, a well-designed EVI should still be highly correlated with economic volatility after other relevant variables are controlled for, although it is acknowledged that the method proposed in this paper is not the only means of adjusting or validating the EVI.

It is found that the shock index of the UN EVI performs better than the exposure index. Indeed, the exposure index has been revised several times. In general, most components in the UN EVI can reflect the economic vulnerability developing economies suffer. However, the 2011 revision appears not to have improved the UN EVI as hoped. Finally, it is suggested that some components in the UN EVI should be replaced and the weights that are used should be reconsidered.

Acknowledgements
The author appreciates the helpful comments of two anonymous reviewers. The author assumes responsibility for all errors.

Notes
1. The group includes Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Honduras, Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tonga.
2. In addition to the UN EVI, the gross domestic product per capita and the augmented physical quality of life together represent the criteria for LDCs. The UN EVI was used to replace the economic diversification index. Clearly, the concept of economic vulnerability is broader than that of economic diversification.
3. Many related studies in the literature apply this method. Indeed, Crowards (1999) is not the first to do so.
4. In practice, minX and maxX can be the boundary values arbitrarily chosen by the index designer.
5. Every version of the UN EVI follows the same methodology.
6. The UN EVI was revised in 2005 and 2011.
8. According to Briguglio (1995), the ease of international comparison is another criterion used to construct the index.
9. The $R^2$ of the regression model is simply 0.35.
10. The definition of economic resilience in this paper is slightly different from that of Briguglio (2004). Briguglio (2004) and the authors of some related studies simply address the negative impacts. In fact, the overheating of an economy will induce ineffective production and consumption and is also a problem to any economy.
11. Economic resilience is not a major concern in this paper and will not be addressed in depth.
12. The list of LLDCs and SIDSs can be found on the UN websites http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrrls/ldc/list.htm and http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrrls/sid/list.htm
13. Poon (1990) argues that information technology applications and other factors are also essential for the flexible specification of small economies.
15. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_data.shtml A total of 130 developing economies are included in the database. The database is updated every three years to review LDCs.
16. While the variables included in the UN EVI are being normalised, the arbitrary boundaries also induce additional bias. If the un-normalised data are used, the $R^2$ of the regressions using each component in the UN EVI as regressors may be even higher than 0.5.
17. The export ratio to GDP is used to calculate a weighted instability.
18. According to the world development indicators, the 10 economies with the least merchandise trade comprise Brazil, Macao, Central African Republic, the United States, Sudan, Japan, Timor-Leste, Greece, Comoros and Rwanda.
19. A generalised Hausman test reports no significant difference between the coefficients of the same regressors.
21. The classification of income follows the criteria of the World Bank. There are missing GDP data for some developing economies. The actual number of developing economies included in the first group is 121, and the number in the second group is 72. The list of developing economies in the regression analysis can be found in Appendix 2.
22. This paper does not address the design of the economic resilience index.

Biographical note
Chun-chieh Wang is an associate professor at National Sun Yat-Sen University. He received his PhD degree from the Pennsylvania State University. His research interests include industrial organisations, economic development and development issues in the WTO. His recent works have been published in several journals including Journal of International Trade and Economic Development and Economic Bulletin.

References
Reconsidering the UN economic vulnerability index


Appendix 1. Estimation results of economic volatility (unit: $10^{-2}$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Volatility</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Volatility</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Volatility</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Volatility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>0.4236</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>0.2624</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>0.7214</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>0.1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>0.1222</td>
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Source: Calculated by the author.

### Appendix 2. List of economies in the regression analysis


Notes: *The income level of the economy is neither low nor low-middle. †The economy is excluded from Table 3 owing to limited data availability.
RESEARCH NOTE
How Canadian practitioners see their engagement in fragile states. A research note
Gaëlle Bourgoin, Tim Brown and Christoph Zürcher*
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

ABSTRACT Northern donors, Canada among them, have increasingly engaged with fragile states — but with limited effectiveness. While some scholars attribute this to a fundamental lack of capacity in recipient countries, others suspect that aid effectiveness is also hampered by strategic interaction between donors and reform-averse local actors, who often gain the upper hand. We analyse 44 semi-structured interviews of Canadian practitioners and find that they indeed perceive their interaction with local actors as a strategic game. Asymmetrical information, short time horizons and lack of trust and coordination can impede donor agendas. There were marked differences between and among government ministries and NGOs.

Keywords: statebuilding; peacebuilding; good governance; aid effectiveness; Canadian foreign policy

Introduction
In the last two decades, Northern donors have increased their engagement in fragile states. In most cases, however, they have not managed to “fix” them. Accordingly, many fragile states “have been stagnating over the long term or have even regressed”, year upon year bottoming out global survey lists measuring wealth and development (Baranyi and Desrosiers 2012, 445). Likewise, little progress has been made with regard to good governance and democratisation. A fragile state emerging from violence hardly ever turns into a democracy, even with generous foreign assistance. Among recent peacebuilding interventions, just two out of 19 cases emerged as “free” societies, according to Freedom House (2005, 2008). The fragile states in which Canada has recently invested aid — Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti and Afghanistan — can hardly be described as stable democratic states. In these cases, instability cannot be blamed on lack of aid: the
international community increased its official development assistance (ODA) to fragile states from US$5.8 billion in 2000 to US$46.7 billion in 2009 (Baranyi and Desrosiers 2012).

At the same time, there has been a steady stream of innovative high-level thinking, spearheaded by the OECD DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee) and affiliated networks such as the INCAF (International Network on Conflict and Fragility). Already in 2002, the OECD DAC urged its members to remain engaged in difficult situations and to improve their context analysis of fragile states (OECD DAC 2002). In 2007, the OECD DAC endorsed a set of Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States as a new norm to guide donor policies (OECD 2007). Prominent among these principles was a focus on context, alignment with local priorities in different ways and in different contexts, coordination among donors and recognition of statebuilding as the central objective. These precepts helped to establish the importance of local context and priorities. In 2011, the INCAF concluded that “statebuilding is first and foremost an endogenous process” (OECD DAC 2011, 15). Yet, despite these efforts, the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of Northern engagement in fragile states remains a concern for Northern donors (see Baranyi and Desrosiers [2012] for an overview).

In parallel with the emphasis on “context”, “local priorities” and “endogenous processes” by policy think tanks, a growing body of scholars have developed an interest in the micropolitics of statebuilding. This strand of research does not deny the importance of structural factors such as a country’s level of development, economic structure or broader institutional framework, but suggests that these factors alone do not sufficiently explain the apparent inadequacy of donor engagement in fragile states. What also matters is local agency. The preferences of local actors, as well as their constraints and attitudes toward external actors, bear heavily on the success of an intervention.

Taking local agency seriously, scholars reinvestigated the interaction between local and external actors. Instead of assuming closely aligned interests, scholars began to problematise this relation. For example, Donais (2009) sees a tension between what peacebuilders impose and what local actors want. Liberal peacebuilders wrongly assume that local ownership emerges when local actors finally commit to an externally conceived roadmap to peace. He juxtaposes liberal peacebuilding with a communitarian vision of peacebuilding, in which peacebuilding processes must be designed, managed and implemented by local actors rather than foreigners. According to this view, the incongruity between a process that is locally owned and one that is externally imposed can only be reconciled when peacebuilding is understood as cultural exchange.

Such a view of peacebuilding processes is shared by Richmond and Mitchell (2012). Peace interventions, they argue, will lead to the emergence of an interface where everyday activities, needs, interests and experiences of local groups and the goals, norms and practices of international policymakers/implenters overlap. Within this space, a unique range of practices, responses and agencies — including plural forms of acceptance and appropriation, resistance and the exertion of autonomy — emerges and “hybridize” the “blueprints” for peace advanced by international actors. (Richmond and Mitchell 2012, 2)

Similarly, studies of “peacebuilding from below” have identified how local actors attempt to game the peacebuilding project to advance their own interests (Boyce 2002; Pouligny 2006). Studies of specific peacebuilding operations show how the interaction between goal-oriented and strategically motivated actors serves to undermine the mission (Autesserre 2010; Campbell, Chandler, and Sabaratnam 2011; Fortna 2008a, 2008b; Fortna and Howard 2008; Hyden 2008; Manning 2008; Pouligny 2006; Richmond and Mitchell 2011; Zürcher 2011).
Moving the discussion about the importance of the local political economy one step further, Barnett, Fang, and Zürcher (Barnett and Ziircher 2008; Barnett, Fang, and Zürcher 2008; also Zürcher et al. 2013) describe the interaction of local actors and international donors as a strategic game in which local elites may embrace some aspects of the policies prescribed by donors but refute others. Because local interests and externally imposed blueprints are often misaligned, these scholars conceptualise peacebuilding as a process of negotiation. According to Barnett et al., local actors may reject policy prescriptions for many different reasons. For example, donor insistence on democratic rules and good governance can, when implemented, create security threats. In some fragile countries, democratisation is associated with mass mobilisation and ultimately civil war. Local actors may be reluctant to embrace new norms because “good governance” can restrict a leader’s ability to reign arbitrarily and to extort and expropriate state resources (Berdal 2009; Elwert 2001, 2003; Jean and Rufin 1994). Furthermore, democratic procedures and good governance can threaten the very foundation for the authority of many regimes in fragile states – patron-client networks – thus threatening these regimes’ very survival. Clientelistic networks are an endemic feature of weak states; arguably they are the most basic form of governance practised in places where infrastructural power is weak (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Ilkhamov 2007; Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Reno, 1999, 2000, 2011; Bratton and van de Walle 1994).

For all of these reasons, argue Barnett and Zürcher (2008), embracing all of the policy prescriptions may entail considerable adoption costs for local elites in fragile states. As a result, they may implement some donor prescriptions and actively resist others.

In sum, this literature emphasises that local preferences are important, and will be reflected in negotiations with international donors. It assumes that stagnant political reform may not just be due to incapacity, but also to the strategic calculations of local actors who will try to maximise the benefits of cooperation with donors, while at the same time protecting vested interests. Donors will be less effective when local actors are in a position to resist or subvert their policies; they will be more effective when they recognise that they are locked in a game of strategic bargaining and, of course, when they have been dealt a good hand.¹

Our article builds upon the work of the above mentioned scholars. We also depict peacebuilding as an interactive process between players who share some interests but not all. Whereas proponents of the “hybrid peace” are predominantly interested in a theoretical argument that helps to explain the outcome of peacebuilding interventions, we present here an empirical analysis that highlights the process that leads to such an outcome.

This article contributes to the existing body of literature by investigating three related questions. First, we ask whether practitioners view their interaction with local counterparts as essentially cooperative, or as a strategic game in which their own interests conflict at times with those of a rival. Second, where practitioners perceive the interaction as predominately strategic in nature, we identify constraints peacebuilders feel in negotiating their agenda. Finally, we examine whether practitioners share perspectives across different organisations, or if perspectives tend to vary according to organisational belonging.

We find that practitioners, by and large, do conceive of their interaction with local actors as a strategic bargaining process. This finding supports the assumption that donor goals in fragile states may not only be impeded by local incapacity, but also by the diverging interests of local actors and donors. However, there were marked conceptual differences between members of different organisations. While the NGO community in general perceived their relationship with local actors to be cooperative, respondents from the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) tended to see the interaction in strategic terms. When asked to identify factors which weaken their bargaining position with local counterparts, practitioners identified information asymmetry, short time horizons and a lack of mutual trust. Respondents also felt their position was weakened by a lack of coherence within the peacebuilding community.
Several lessons may be learned from these insights. Most importantly, practitioner perceptions appear to be siloed according to organisational belonging. This makes it difficult to achieve strategic and policy coherence across organisations. Other impediments stem from ignorance about the local political economy and short time horizons in comparison to local counterparts. In sum, ineffective donor engagement in fragile states appears to be due to handicaps in the strategic game played with local counterparts.

The rest of this article is structured as follows: first we briefly describe Canada’s engagement in fragile states; next we describe our data gathering strategy; we then address three themes that emerged as respondents described their engagement with local actors in fragile environments: differing time horizons; asymmetrical information; and the role of trust between practitioners and local counterparts; finally, we discuss how practitioners conceptualise their relations with local counterparts in general.

Canada’s engagement in fragile states

This study focuses on Canadian practitioners. Our Ottawa-based research team had access to a wide spectrum of Canadian peace- and statebuilders. The questions we raise touch upon Canadian interests. Canada’s history of engagement in fragile states dates back to the Suez Crisis in 1956, when Canadian diplomat Lester B. Pearson initiated the modern world’s first peacekeeping force. Canada went on to contribute to every peacekeeping mission until 1989. In the mid-1990s, peacebuilding figured prominently in the “Human Security” doctrine elaborated by Lloyd Axworthy (Thomsen and Hynek 2006). Since the end of the Cold War, Canada has contributed to 14 out of the 19 major peacebuilding operations launched by the international community. In 2005, the Canadian government created the Stabilisation and Reconstruction Task Force (START), charged with addressing problems in fragile states and conflict-affected societies by a whole-of-government approach. In 2010 and 2011 the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) spent $976 million in development aid for post-war countries (CIDA 2012) and the DFAIT spent roughly $178 million on peacebuilding initiatives (DFAIT 2011). Between 2001 and 2011, it is estimated that the Canadian mission in Afghanistan cost $11.3 billion (Government of Canada 2011). Most recently, Canada has been engaged in fragile and conflict-affected states such as Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti and Afghanistan. Clearly, engagement in fragile states has for many years figured prominently in Canadian foreign and development policy. Yet the results have been mixed. Based on a comparative analysis of Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan, Baranyi and Paducel (2012, 136) conclude that “while advances have been made in each context, the most striking pattern is the modest nature of development results despite the scale of investments made by Canada”. Other Canadian scholars attribute these somewhat disappointing results partly to the fact that in conflict-affected states development aid practices often became securitised, creating an environment in which it is difficult to respect development principles such as consultation and community participation, as well as adequate monitoring and evaluation (Banerjee 2009; see also Baranyi and Paducel 2012).

Data

We conducted 44 semi-structured interviews between 17 and 29 May 2011 (see Appendix for list of respondents). We spoke to respondents in DND, DFAIT and CIDA. We also interviewed respondents from various NGOs, among them the Canadian Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, Doctors without Borders) and the Agha Khan Foundation. Other respondents were scholars (affiliated with Harvard, Stanford, Carleton and Ottawa universities, as well as Canada’s International Development Research Centre). In total, 59 per cent of respondents worked for
How Canadian practitioners see their engagement in fragile states

government agencies and 41 per cent were affiliated with NGO and academic institutions. Where possible, interviews were conducted in person (68%); the remaining interviews were conducted via Skype. Interviews lasted 63 minutes on average.

Afghanistan is overrepresented, particularly among respondents from DND, which is to be expected given Canada’s heavy footprint in this country. Overall, 34 per cent of respondents spoke primarily from experience in Afghanistan, 14 per cent in Sudan and 14 per cent in Palestine. Each of these countries figures among CIDA’s 20 “countries of focus”. We concede that our data has a bias on these focus countries. But this bias is tolerable since we are interested in identifying and describing causal mechanisms and in describing Canadian attitudes toward fragile states rather than in making broad statistical arguments.

Of the respondents, 70 per cent were male. A PhD had been completed by 13 per cent of respondents, 69 per cent held a master’s degree and 15 per cent held a bachelor’s degree. The average interviewee had 14 years of experience in international affairs (a mode of 12 years), and 67 per cent had completed at least six months of field experience. Just 5 per cent served at the junior level, 32 per cent were mid-level employees, 45 per cent served at the senior level and 18 per cent served at the executive level.

The semi-structured interviews were flexible enough to allow for new and follow-up questions. Our guiding questions were as follows. We first asked respondents to describe their personal experience surrounding the interaction between practitioners and local actors. We then asked about the nature and the consequences of this interaction. We were especially interested in whether and how this interaction had an impact on the implementation and outcome of in-country programming. In order to gauge whether a respondent perceived his/her interaction as a cooperative or strategic game, we asked about instances when the interaction between practitioners and local counterparts was marked by disagreement and conflict, and if they could describe the causes of this conflict. We also inquired if some issues caused conflict more often than others. We asked about how the respondent and his/her local counterpart reacted to such conflict, how parties tried to solve conflict and which camp typically prevailed. Toward the end of the interview, we turned to four more structured questions. We asked respondents to rate in general terms how often interaction with local counterparts led practitioners to substantially adjust their programs; how often the implementation of the program reflected the original intentions of practitioners despite adjustments made along the way; how often interacting with local counterparts led practitioners to abandon programs; and how often respondents thought that practitioners interacted with their local counterparts from a position of strength or weakness. These rating questions, together with the narrative from the semi-structured interviews, helped us better to understand respondent perceptions.

The role of information

According to respondents, the greatest challenge of working in fragile countries in or after conflict is that the inner workings of these societies are often unintelligible to international actors. As a result, Canadian practitioners find it difficult to identify trustworthy partners and to assess their interests. Respondents also mentioned that working with representatives of the state administration was difficult when war and state fragility left only the facade of a state administration in place. Because the state is so weak, state representatives are often not the only, or even the most important, power brokers. Societal actors such as elders, tribal leaders, local big men and warlords often exercise more influence than state officials. Some of these actors operate in the open, but others tend to stay in the shadows. According to many respondents, such constellations are not easily understood by outsiders and pose fundamental risks to international donors. Respondents were aware of the fact that, because they often lack vital local knowledge and
information, they may partner with a state administration which is too weak to deliver the dividends of peace, or discover their local partner in the state administration is merely a front for a local power broker. If, on the other hand, donors decide to work with nonstate actors—the supposed “grassroots” —they may end up choosing a partner who actually does not share the vision of practitioners, but instead is primarily interested in peacebuilder resources.

This lack of vital information can affect peacebuilding in other ways. Respondents often mentioned cases where local actors would release biased or incomplete information in order to influence practitioner decision-making in a way that favoured local interests. One respondent mentioned a situation in which a local political actor, in order to gain political leverage through favour with a major international NGO,

informed the Red Cross of violent clashes before they would happen, so clinics could be set up and the local people would be reassured that they’d be taken care of during the times of conflict. This way, he would gain political credibility. 5 (R1.6)

Many respondents said that it was vital to avoid relying too much on a single group as a partner or source of information (R1.9). A trap that practitioners often fall into is, according to another respondent, to rely exclusively on government officials (R3.6). Another respondent cautioned:

People in agreement with you are not necessarily the best local counterparts .... There is need for good intelligence and the need to cross-reference information. You must have local interlocutors to make sure you understand what is going on from a variety of different angles, not just what you want to hear. (R1.9)

Respondents felt that their lack of local contextual knowledge put them at a disadvantage. Local counterparts, they felt, could exploit this weakness for personal advantage (R2.3, R2.4). As one respondent from the military summarised: “We have resources but we don’t have any knowledge about what’s going on over there; they have no resources but they have all the knowledge about what’s going on” (R4.7).

Other military respondents pointed out that information gaps led not only to poor aid allocation, but could actually hamper security for international actors:

The same guys who launch rockets into the base later sell you your protective barriers against the rockets, so if business is slow they will just launch some extra rockets and the army in turn will feel the need to buy more concrete barriers. (R2.1)

Many respondents talked about the need for information sharing between peacebuilders. For instance, a civilian member of Canada’s mission in Kandahar said:

There was a different approach between military and civilians as we had very different philosophies; you have to try to bridge these different visions. You cannot only rely on personal relationships; you also need institutions to do that. (R3.5)

The importance of information sharing was understandably greatest in complex and integrated missions, where military actors and various development actors work side-by-side. Military actors and civilian actors have different informational needs, and also different ways of gathering information. Respondents said this compartmentalisation led to an incomplete picture of the local political economy. Consequently, Canadian practitioners expended much energy on the ground to establish a common information base (R3.5, 3.6).
Respondents said that an important benefit of information sharing is that it mitigates "donor shopping". They mentioned several instances where a local elite sought to play one donor against another (R3.5, R3.6), choosing to partner with whoever offered the most resources and least accountability. Said one respondent:

When a donor would present their plan to a local official; he would often respond with the plans and concessions other donors offered him. If CIDA was not willing to budge on the issues of accountability and results-based management, especially in a context like Palestine or Afghanistan, he would refuse to participate. (R4.3)

Another respondent said "local actors know that if one donor does not give it to us, another will" (R2.2).

To conclude, local actors tend to benefit from asymmetric information. Donors struggle to identify reliable partners, often misread the local political economy, are sometimes misled and too rarely share information among themselves. This invites donor shopping and renders conditionality ineffective.

**Different time horizons**

Another constraint that practitioners frequently mentioned is the problem of short time horizons. Practitioners parachute into post-conflict environments, while the local population and elite are permanent fixtures. There is thus an inbuilt time advantage for local actors, whose longer time horizons afford them a stronger position at the bargaining table. Interviewees indicated two circumstances that exacerbate this imbalance, both tied to the bureaucratic and organisational logic of the peace- and statebuilding machinery. Practitioners operate in frequent rotations. First, there is a high turnover among practitioners; international staff typically work abroad for one or two years before returning to headquarters or an otherwise less strenuous posting. CIDA and DFAIT staff reported stays of one or two years, whereas military rotations were said to last six months typically (R3.5, R1.5).

Short budget cycles also offer an advantage to local actors. Practitioners are under constant pressure to spend money within a fixed time span. Failure to spend can result in a reduced budget in the next period and is typically interpreted as a failure to implement a set objective. Time pressure can make proper implementation and monitoring of a project impossible, reducing its overall efficiency (R4.6). Complaints about this incentive structure are commonplace in the literature, and were reiterated by our interviewees.

In addition to inefficient aid, respondents were concerned that quick rotation schedules make it difficult for practitioners to acquire local knowledge. Respondents were unanimous in emphasising the importance of understanding the local political economy (as discussed above), but most found it impossible to acquire that knowledge in such a limited time span. As one respondent put it, "in six months we won't become part of the social fabric when these people have been together for generations" (R2.4). A second consequence is that building trust becomes difficult. Many respondents agreed that high levels of personalised trust between practitioners and local counterparts is essential, especially in societies like Afghanistan, where impersonalised trust is rare and good working relations therefore depend on face-to-face interaction (R4.6).

Most importantly, Canadian practitioners feel that local actors use mismatched time horizons to their advantage. Canadian practitioners are under pressure to implement programs in a relatively short amount of time, and depend on local actors in various ways, from obtaining visas and logistical support to protection. Practitioners are consequently vulnerable to delay tactics. As one respondent who worked in Haiti remarked, "governments are always open to talk..."
about everything, but they always delay, delay, delay" (R4.4). Another respondent who worked in Afghanistan said:

Afghans are there forever, so they can easily outwait military and civilian officers. For example, the military are there for a nine-month shift. After five months, they are just beginning to know what is going on and starting to say no. However, the locals knew they could just wait for four months until the new officer came. Timeline always influenced the local counterpart’s strategies. By our behaviour they knew when we were in a rush to finish. Then, if they knew a deadline was coming for us, they leveraged this in bargaining. (R3.5)

It is worth noting that Canadian peacebuilders rarely, if ever, withdraw from a project, lending further strength to the bargaining position of local actors. No respondent could recall an instance when practitioners cancelled a project, even when dissatisfied by the performance of their counterparts. Aid conditionality is almost never applied. As one respondent put it:

We have far more resources than locals do. We also have the ability to get around them and we have leverage. The international community has significant control of resources. The question is whether we are willing to use it and whether it is acceptable to use it. Often the international community is not willing to use this leverage. It prefers to avoid confrontation and to favour cooperation. (R3.6)

Pulling out, it seems, is not a tool in the peacebuilder’s shed.

To summarise, respondents said that local actors can extract resources without implementing required reforms since practitioners operate under time constraints, often lack local knowledge, frequently rotate and seldom apply conditionality.

Trust

As we have seen, practitioners perceive that asymmetrical information and short time horizons put them in a disadvantage in relations to profit-maximising local actors. Strategic interaction is clearly perceived to dictate the relationship between local actors and donors. However strategic bargaining is not viewed as the exclusive determinant of peacebuilding projects. Almost all respondents said trust was also essential to sound development practice, as it allows individuals to better cooperate with one another (see also World Bank 2011). Therefore, peacebuilders invest significant time and energy to win local trust and confidence (R1.3, R2.1, R5.2). This task may require long-term, uninterrupted interaction:

If practitioners are to be successful in gaining the trust of local counterparts, the time they spend on the ground building trust must be consistent. Allowing for large gaps between one’s presence and departure can undermine previously built relations, forcing practitioners to have to start over in their attempt to develop positive relationships with local counterparts. (R2.3, also R4.6.)

Respondents also stressed the importance of being “transparent and open” (R1.3), of keeping promises (R3.5, R1.3) and of demonstrating flexibility and willingness to compromise (R1.3, R2.1, R3.3). This, of course, represents an inherent dilemma: to be effective, practitioners must win local trust, and one way of doing so is to be flexible and accommodating. But local actors are certainly able to exploit such concessions, and since engaging fragile states is also a strategic bargaining process between actors with different preferences, compromise may actually jeopardise the ultimate goal of better governance. Navigating this dilemma is not easy for practitioners. Since most prefer to avoid confrontation, practitioners often sacrifice leverage.
How Canadian practitioners see their engagement in fragile states

Differences in perception between organisations

Our interviews highlight the importance of asymmetrical information, different time horizons and trust. But do respondents share these perceptions uniformly, or does membership in a particular organisational shape or predict perceptions? More specifically, do organisational tenets or values impact whether practitioners perceive their interaction with local actors predominately as strategic or as cooperative interaction?

To gain traction on this question, we coded each interview to determine whether respondents perceived their interaction with local actors to be a strategic bargaining process. We assigned the values “predominantly”, “sometimes”, and “rarely/never”. This was a qualitative assessment based on respondents’ answers throughout the interview. Recall that the interviews were semi-structured and answers are therefore descriptive narratives. From these narratives we extracted relevant data. We defined strategic bargaining as a situation in which local actors attempt to bring the project or program into closer alignment with their own interests, and further from the original intent of practitioners. Bargaining for more resources was not coded as strategic bargaining, but bargaining over control of resources was. We analysed all interviews and coded them with this definition in mind. Overall, the narratives of 15 respondents suggest that they viewed the interaction as predominantly about strategic bargaining. For 15 respondents, this was sometimes the case, and 14 communicated that this was rarely if ever the case. The results are reported in Table 1.

As expected, we find important distinctions between different organisations. Military personnel and foreign service officers with significant field experience were much more likely than members of the NGO community to perceive their interaction with local counterparts to be a strategic bargaining process. This is partly due to the different social role of these organisations. Most NGOs define their mission as a partnership with local counterparts and, in line with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, strive to align themselves with local interests and establish a high degree of local ownership and trust. This requires close ties with local partners, and as a result NGOs rarely promote projects which run contrary to the interests of local partners. Given these varying incentive structures, different perspectives across organisations are to be expected. For respondents from CIDA and scholars, we found no clear tendency. CIDA representatives were evenly split in their perceptions (4 predominantly, 1 sometimes, 3 rarely/never). For scholars, the most frequent coding was “sometimes”.

Different organisations were also affected by different constraints. Importantly, short time horizons were mentioned by all organisations. However, this constraint seems particularly troublesome for CIDA, DND and DFAIT. DND staff tend to highlight the negative impact on trust building, while DFAIT staff tend to be concerned with the “delay tactics” employed by local actors. NGOs tended to be less troubled: out of nine interviewees, just three viewed timelines as a constraint.

Table 1. How frequently do respondents perceive their engagement to be strategic bargaining?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession/organisational affiliation of respondent</th>
<th>Predominantly</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely/never</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DND (Department of National Defence)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAIT (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nongovernmental organisations</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars, experts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the subject of information, DFAIT representatives seemed to be more alert to the possibility of bias and instrumentalisation than DND and CIDA. Only one respondent from the NGO community mentioned the importance of having accurate information. Again, this difference may be due to the fact that NGOs typically employ a more collaborative approach.

Each organisation mentioned that in order to reach their objectives, trust building was essential. However, it seems that while DFAIT, CIDA and NGOs viewed trust as critical to achieving their goals, DND viewed it as a way to obtain information from locals. It seems clear that each organisation is affected differently by the constraints of limited time and incomplete information. They also perceive these constraints differently. Similarly, if all organisations seem to believe that trust is important, it is for different reasons.

Finally, another concern is the lack of coordination; CIDA, DND and DFAIT all flagged this issue. Each government department also expressed concern over the ability of local actors to exploit this constraint in the form of “donor shopping”. NGO interviewees appeared to be less preoccupied by this constraint. A possible explanation is that NGOs tend to focus programs on the grassroots or micro level, while government organisations work at the macro level. Consequently, NGOs are less affected by the consequences of poor coordination.

Discussion and conclusion

Our findings suggest that many Canadian practitioners view engagement with local actors as a strategic interaction resulting from the pursuit of diverging interests. As one respondent put it: “For some local actors, their main concerns are whether those projects help building their reputation. This, in particular, is a reason why some projects failed” (R5.1). Another said:

We learned that working with locals has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, they have intimate knowledge of what’s happening on the ground, and at the same time can put up obstacles if it conflicts with their own interests, business, political, or otherwise. (R5.10)

However, the notion of a dominant strategic interaction is not uniformly shared. While respondents at DND and DFAIT usually stress the strategic dimension, respondents from CIDA and academia hold mixed opinions. NGOs rather oppose this idea and see their engagement as a collaborative process.

Canadian practitioners pointed out several factors which may have an impact on this strategic interaction and therefore the effectiveness of their mission. These include a lack of time, local knowledge, trust and coordination between practitioners. However, different organisations appear to be affected differently and to various degrees. Our research shows that practitioners in DND, DFAIT and – to some extent – CIDA feel that short time horizons, the information problem and a lack of coordination all serve to weaken their bargaining position. They perceive that these factors allow local actors to use delay tactics and to shop for donors. Overall, NGO representatives register less concern with these issues. The only problem on which respondents from all organisations agreed was that of short time horizons and their impact on relationship building.

Our data also highlight important divergences in values between organisations. DND was clearly more opportunistic: the military had clear objectives, and were more likely to compromise with local counterparts to achieve them. DFAIT and CIDA were less likely to relax accountability standards in order to move the project forward. As one respondent put it:

CIDA and DFAIT generally refused to compromise. It was too difficult to do with the layers of accountability. However, the military was more willing to compromise. There were more chances for locals to influence the project if it was a military project. (R3.6)
Perhaps this can be explained by the military's aim to win "heart and minds", and therefore to "please" locals. It also appears that NGOs are willing to compromise with local actors. This is not surprising given that NGOs tend to perceive their interaction as collaboration. CIDA and DFAIT, in contrast, are devoted to building durable institutions and may therefore be more concerned about the long-term impact of compromises that can negatively impact accountability and transparency.

These divergences impede Canadian engagement in fragile states. They lend support to studies that show how differing values between CIDA and DND have prevented the whole-of-government strategy to function properly (Schmitz and Phillips 2008). Gerald Schmitz and Kann Phillips show how, on one side, CIDA was committed to long-term development and wanted projects to be owned and implemented by Afghans. On the other hand, DND focused on short-term projects with the aim of explicitly linking these projects to Canada to win "hearts and minds". Because the military employs development projects as a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself, many NGOs distrust civil–military cooperation. NGOs were also reluctant to sacrifice their perceived neutrality by coordinating or sharing information with DND or DFAIT. While there have been genuine efforts to improve cooperation and to bridge these differing values and perceptions, there is room for improvement.6

If the engagement of donors in fragile states is, to some extent, a strategic bargain between donors and local actors, how can practitioners strengthen their position? Our interviews suggest some straightforward answers: increase capacity for knowledge gathering, information sharing and coordination, and expand time horizons. This is easier said than done, given organisational and bureaucratic constraints, but it is a strong reminder that effectiveness, or the lack thereof, is often as much influenced by bureaucratic routines and constraints within donor organisations as by structural difficulties in recipient countries.

Beyond these obvious suggestions, Canadian practitioners also need to think more strategically about their position within the local political economy of fragile states. If engagement is correctly perceived to be a strategic interaction, then practitioners should shape their approach accordingly. For example, while representatives of DFAIT and CIDA recognised the strategic bargaining process in their interaction with locals, they tend to employ a collaborative approach that undermines their position. The interviews show that they are usually unwilling to use what leverage they do possess (primarily in the form of resources) at the bargaining table, preferring instead to employ diplomacy and compromise. The point here is not that practitioners should avoid cooperating with local actors, but it may be in their interest to pull out of projects when local actors fail to meet certain conditions.

Canadian engagement might also be improved through better understanding the divergence between donor and local elite interests. So long as practitioners are ignorant of the incentives which guide counterparts in the field, they are hardly in a position to design effective programs. As many scholars have mentioned, local actors sometimes fear that donor prescriptions which emphasise good governance may hamper their security and political power (see, for example, Zürcher et al. 2013). The implication is that programs focused on good governance will only succeed where the security situation is reasonably stable – a condition which is unlikely in fragile states.

There are, of course, myriad cleavages that cause interests to diverge at the micro level. Among them, respondents report frequent conflicts over contracting (R1.6, R2.2, R2.3, R3.5, R3.6). Local firms may compete for a contract and seek to pressure donors, or local actors may attempt to control the contracting procedure, not just for economic reasons, but because an ability to secure contracts for an ally is often an important source of political power. Other cited sources of conflict surrounded the location of certain projects, for example, where a road would be built, or where a police station would be installed (R2.4). Issues of land ownership
can also create tensions, especially when donors push for land privatisation or redistribution (R1.1, R4.4). Likewise, conflicts can arise when donors push for merit-based appointments to various administrative positions; such actions infringe on local elite control of the appointment process (R1.4). Finally, projects that are perceived to contradict local cultural norms and values can also lead to conflict. For example, in Afghanistan a micro-finance project might stir resistance because interest payments were seen as “haram”, that is, incompatible with Islamic law. Similarly, donors faced resistance when they insisted that women be included in village councils or be trained as teachers (R1.1, R3.3).

Clearly, we need to develop a better understanding of why local actors resist some aspects of the donor package. In doing so, however, we must avoid making impulsive normative statements. We should not equate the resistance of local actors with a principled stand against democratic values per se, even if resisting and reshaping donor activities at the micro level may contribute to outcomes which, in the aggregate, tend to hinder good governance.

It is entirely possible that local actors oppose certain aspects of donor projects not because they are fundamentally opposed to good governance, but because these projects create conflicts with other legitimate interests. Consider the example of a mayor of a Bosnian community, as reported by Peirce and Stubbs (2000). The mayor opposed a project dealing with minority groups returning to the central Bosnian town of Travnik. On the national level, the project aimed to strike an ethnic balance so that refugees of all ethnic groups who returned to an area where they were a minority benefited equally. However, from the mayor’s perspective, it would have been “electoral suicide ... to agree to reconstruction programs targeted solely at minorities, whilst the majority population remains displaced and in poverty”. His position was interpreted as nationalist, undemocratic and “anti-Dayton” by some international observers. But the mayor’s primary concern was his immediate electorate. And his electorate was concerned only with reforms that impacted their immediate welfare - not that of returning minority groups. This example, as well as many shared by our interviewees, underlines how important it is to understand the incentive structures under which local actors operate. In order to develop a more efficient approach, Canadian practitioners and scholars alike must strengthen their purchase on the political economy of societies in which they intervene, especially at the micro level.

In order to do so, practitioners might consider choosing their partners more carefully. Most practitioners are inclined to deal with the highest echelons of state bureaucracy. This is especially the case for members of the diplomatic corps and the military, both of which are organisations that strongly believe in official bureaucratic hierarchies. When asked how they typically addressed a problem, most respondents said that they would try to contact the next echelon of government in order to increase leverage over the local counterpart. This might be effective in states with a functioning, transparent and professional administration, but will prove problematic in many post-war and fragile states, where state bureaucracies are often a thin façade for personalised patronage networks. In such situations, patrons have some leverage over clients, and they may use it occasionally to support practitioners, but only to the extent that this support does not endanger their own patron-client network. Afghanistan is a case in point. Respondents who worked in Kandahar told us that they would sometimes turn to President Karzai for help when encountering resistance from local power brokers. On occasion, the president would support practitioners. However, respondents also said that the most powerful broker in the region was Ahmed Wali Karzai, the president’s brother, who was allegedly involved in many illicit activities. While President Karzai may have supported practitioners in specific cases, he was careful not to jeopardise his brother’s position. As one respondent said, while practitioners often seek an alliance with government actors against informal power structures, government actors have long ago forged a clandestine compact with these structures (R4.6).
An alliance with state actors may be considered a tactical gain for practitioners, but do little to improve governance. Long-term Canadian interests would be better served with a compact between Canadian practitioners and society. In the long run, only the population will be able to reign in its power brokers. This is not a simple task, as civil society is weak to non-existent in many post-war countries, and cannot be “grown” overnight by even the most generous donors. Nevertheless, engaging fragile states may become more effective when practitioners become more aware of their position in the local political economy and align themselves with local civil society. This may ultimately be the most effective way to increase their leverage vis-à-vis local power brokers.

Acknowledgements
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Notes
1. In this article we discuss the perception of Canadian practitioners. This research would be well complemented by a study of local elite perspectives.
2. Canada contributed to operations in Afghanistan (launched in 2002), Bosnia (1995), Cambodia (1992), Central African Republic (1998), Croatia (1996), DR Congo (1999), East Timor (1999) Haiti (1994), Kosovo (1999), Macedonia (2001), Mozambique (1992), Namibia (1989), Rwanda (1994) and Sierra Leone (1999). Canada did not participate in or contribute to peace operations in Angola (1995), Burundi (2004), Côte d’Ivoire (2003), Liberia (2003) and Tajikistan (1997). We define a major mission as a mission mandated by the UN or by another international organisation which is aimed at keeping the peace in a post-conflict situation and at inducing social change, with the ultimate goal of creating a stable and democratic country. A mission must be deployed for at least six months and have at least 500 military personnel in the field to be coded as a major mission. We code a mission start only when these thresholds are met, even if the mission was established and deployed earlier but was different in character and scope.
3. This estimation is based on the data provided in the Statistical Report on International Assistance 2010–2011 (CIDA 2012). It includes the bilateral and the multilateral international assistance (Sections D2 and D3).
4. As part of its Aid Effectiveness Agenda, the Government of Canada announced in 2009 that it would focus 80 per cent of bilateral resources on 20 countries. See http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/NAT-223132931-PPH.
5. This respondent, and all others interviewed, was assigned an identifying number. The list of respondents and their affiliation is in the Appendix.
6. After research for this article was completed, the Government of Canada announced plans in its 2013 budget to merge CIDA and DFAIT into the Department of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Development. It is possible that this move will improve communication and coordination between Canadian officials devoted to diplomacy and aid, but it is too soon to predict if and how the amalgamation will affect Canadian engagement in fragile states.

References


## Appendix

Table A1. List of interview respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>R = Respondent number</th>
<th>Perception of interaction as strategic action: 1 = predominately 2 = sometimes 3 = rarely or never</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<td>NGO</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Alternatives International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>WUSC\textsuperscript{a}/Agha Khan Foundation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>USAID\textsuperscript{b}/Carr Center, Harvard University</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.6</td>
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Notes: Emboldened organisation names signify the primary affiliations for the purpose of the interview.\textsuperscript{a}World University Service of Canada; \textsuperscript{b}United States Agency for International Development; \textsuperscript{c}Canadian International Development Agency; \textsuperscript{d}Department of National Defence (Canada); \textsuperscript{e}Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (Canada); \textsuperscript{f}International Development Research Centre (Canada).
BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS DE LIVRES


"Why am I here?" (87): this question, voiced by Alisha Nicole Apale, deep on the Thai–Burmese border, might be familiar to all the contributors in Generation NGO. Indeed, the questions posed by the authors may be more numerous, and more important, than answers in this small volume, but those questions are vital, especially for the young volunteer or intern heading abroad in the cause of development. Some of the answers may not be much clearer to those who have done time in the development world, as this pre-generation NGO reviewer would readily admit.

These 10 essays, edited by Alisha Nicole Apale and Valerie Stam, are written by young people who reflect with fresh eyes on the challenges and complications of their development assignments. They mainly focus on Africa (Namibia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Ghana and Senegal) with contributions on Ecuador, Thailand and Barbados. The essays are very readable, even eloquent, as stories and anecdotes capture well the ethical borderlands of development work. While the authors represent diverse ethnic backgrounds, they may resonate with the older reader as being typical of the altruistic and idealistic Canadian development student. Simon Yale Strauss admits to such an outlook:

We are curious, we are idealistic. And often, we think we can make a difference somehow. We are also lucky enough to have the luxury to do such things and effect such changes, to journey to our own personal otro lado. (131)

For those contemplating an internship abroad, the questions posed here will be invaluable. Some of the dilemmas presented will resonate with those who are experiencing or have completed an overseas assignment. However, this book is not just for students or development tyros. The development practitioner will recognize familiar ethical dilemmas, but will appreciate seeing these through new eyes – young eyes. The professor may welcome case studies, or rather case stories, to stimulate discussion around complex issues. For instance, Laura Madeleine Sie’s “A Night out in Malindi” (Chapter 3) does not end up, like a good short story, as anticipated, but can open the door for lively discussion regarding the morals and ethics embedded in the development experience. Development classes back home may not have prepared her and her colleagues for an encounter with an inebriated beggar in this Kenyan coastal town. Those involved in study abroad programmes may recognize the struggle between independence and security, and squirm just a little as they consider the youthful need for independence and adventure, perhaps oblivious to parental concern, not to mention supervisory worry over the risks from a litigious society and university administrators back home.

The main theme, if there is one, is the challenge caused by power and privilege to the intern mzungu, gringo or vazaha. Although the authors are predominantly white, female and privileged, the book helpfully acknowledges other Canadian perspectives too – for instance, diasporic perspectives become central to the story in Chapter 3. The position of privilege can elicit a typical Canadian response, guilt, but it also stimulates insight and provokes debate. Issues of poverty
and wealth, identities and stereotypes, independence and security, prejudice and injustice, relationships and friendships, and coming and going all permeate the essays. The authors recognize that some loss of naivete, or innocence, accompanies field experience, bringing to the surface underlying tensions and leading to more nuanced conclusions than originally anticipated.

While power differentials are at the heart of the collection, some issues of “moral incertitude” could be further explored. For instance, the question of sexual relationships is not mentioned. Another “taboo” subject crops up quite often in this collection, as it also does in field experience: the question of religion — very humorously dealt with in the piece by Simon Yale Strauss (Chapter 7). There are also some important insights into the dimensions of human happiness, a growing theme in broader development focus. The usual development problems are all here and some comments were particularly moving, none more so than Julia Paulson’s reflections in Chapter 8 on history: “It does not freeze the people who live through it. It shapes their normal and adds bullet holes to their facades, but they, too, live past it, as people in Esteli [Nicaragua] do, by colouring their walls with paint” (163).

A brief introduction helpfully provides an overview of historical trends in development in advance of the 10 essays, but perhaps a conclusion would also have helped. The writers acknowledge that they may be the real beneficiaries of their internship experiences rather than those they are sent to help, although perhaps the authors could have provided a few more reflections on development itself. However, perhaps that is the reader’s job, this slim volume being only intended as “a starting point for others” (14). But what a starting point this engrossing little book offers us!

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Anthropological studies of development projects, actors, and effects on communities, no matter how in depth, often end up only capturing a moment in time — a year or two of fieldwork at most — and typically only focus on single development trends, such as NGOs, capacity building, or Gender and Development (GAD). Rarely does a study track the progression of various development approaches implemented in a single community over a long period of time, with the intent of understanding the historical imprints and patterns of development projects and their effects on the present. Due to the clipped pace of change, most researchers rush to print their studies, thus sacrificing a critical and longer-term analysis. Susan Vincent’s ethnography, Dimensions of Development, is a work that defies this trend with profitable results. The book chronicles Vincent’s long-term relationship (from 1984 to present, and spans 12 instances of fieldwork) with the Allpachico community, a legally recognised comunidad campesina (peasant community) in highland Peru. In one sense, the project harkens back to classic village studies of mid-twentieth-century anthropology. Yet, Vincent makes no apologies for not following what has now become the standard procedure of multi-sited fieldwork, by which one traces a development project from the architect’s drawing table at large multilateral agencies (e.g., World Bank, Food and Agriculture...
Organization) to the in-country offices of development’s foot soldiers, and, eventually, to the community itself. Rather, the strength of *Dimensions of Development* emerges from its long-term focus on a single place, tracking people, projects and outcomes in order to reveal the ways development is more often than not “uneven, fragmented, and disrupted” (14).

The precise location of Vincent’s work merits some explication, given its uniqueness in the Andean region. Allpachico is located in Peru’s Mantaro Canyon in the central highland department of Junín. Along with the entire Mantaro Valley, this expansive Andean region has been the site of steady, yet arguably understated, anthropological research since the 1950s, much of it concerned with development issues. Allpachico and its neighbouring communities are distinct from many Andean villages because of their near lack of agriculture and pasturing. The area’s rocky topography has meant that historically, residents have had to look elsewhere to earn their livelihoods, mainly in mining and commercial activities. Significantly, Allpachico is located near the famous American-owned Cerro de Pasco mines, which opened in 1922 and quickly became a major source of employment (and minor enrichment) for the community. The mines also produced toxic emissions that blanketed the region and further diminished agricultural possibilities. When Vincent began her work, Allpachiqueños were maintaining a living through a mix of small-scale business ventures, railway work, and from mining pensions.

Against this backdrop, Vincent explores development initiatives in Allpachico as a series of “social forms of production”, each informing the historicity of social action in the community. The key examples include an Integrated Rural Development project, the proliferation of NGOs, projects dedicated to streamlining gender and, most recently, municipal participatory budgeting. Her exploration unfolds in seven chapters, not including the introduction and conclusion. The first three chapters provide important contextual background to the Peruvian case. They include a critical discussion of the anthropology of development (with a comparison with the infamous Cornell Peru Project at Vicos from the 1950s and 1960s), a historical chapter detailing the region’s integration under the Inca, Spanish and Peruvian states, and a chapter on community development. This latter chapter skillfully deconstructs ideas of “community” that are often uncritically bandied about by development practitioners and politicians, as well as anthropologists. By teasing out both state and developmentalist discourses, Vincent articulates a key contradiction in evocations of “community”, whereby communities are frequently cast as “autonomously capable” while simultaneously framed as dependent and in need of outside experts and resources. In Peru, this contradiction mirrors the baggage that accompanied the development of the comunidades campesinas and which lead to uneven interactions with the state.

The ensuing chapters take the reader into the heart of development projects that took place during Vincent’s various fieldwork experiences. Chapter 5 addresses an Integrated Rural Development project in the mid-1980s, Latin America’s “lost decade” and, in Peru, the years coinciding with the rise of the extremely violent Maoist group, Sendero Luminoso. The project, aimed at improving agricultural production and raising incomes, is largely a failure. Still, as Vincent points out, this early development encounter deeply shaped how Allpachiqueños viewed, received and participated in future projects.

Chapters 6 and 7, arguably the most impressive chapters of the book, address development efforts concentrated around gender and the work of NGOs. With the introduction of Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) initiatives in the community, Vincent tells a familiar story of how, rather than simply empowering women, the projects reoriented gender, often with divisive results. In the cases of specific women she highlights, it is often individual social capital and life changes that are responsible for their empowerment. Many women, she argues, “learned the script, but not the practice” (107), meaning that the language of empowerment does not actually lead to real gendered change. Chapter 7 details the meteoric rise in NGOs in Peru since the 1960s. In 2007, over 1,000 NGOs were working
in Peru; in 2004, Vincent documented over 50 registered in the Mantaro Valley alone. Vincent’s analysis of their efforts is even-handed, noting how Allpachiqueños have clearly benefited from specific projects (such as potable water), which they actively pursued, yet at the cost of pulling the community deeper into a field of commodified relationships and class distinctions. Projects intended to unify communities and level disparities inadvertently created new ones with the introduction of market rationalities into the development process.

By the end of Dimensions of Development, Vincent’s central claim that development should be seen as a “process intended to join past and future” (4) is realised. Allpachiqueños welcome each new development project through the social moulding that previous projects shaped. In the end, the conclusions Vincent arrives at are not all that surprising: the fingerprints of neoliberalism, state intrusion and the commodification of social relations are everywhere. However, what makes this work distinctive is its ability to give a taste of what it is like to live in a place where one project leads to the next and where one set of experts is replaced with another. The book especially gives pause to the almost fetish-like distinctions scholars draw between state and non-state development actors. As researchers stay perched on the lookout for the next development fashion, and to see how it will be received, Vincent’s work suggests our critiques may be over-determined. At least in Allpachico, villagers care very little who is carrying out a project (NGOs, the state, or any other agency). Instead, this book drives home an often forgotten point that “development practice, alternative or not, is inseparable from the dominant historical, political and economic processes in which they take place” (21).

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This book encapsulates at least four broad themes. The first is the relevance of Karl Polanyi’s critique of capitalism to the contemporary global financial crisis. In his seminal work, The Great Transformation ([1944] 2001), Polanyi argued that the severity of the economic crisis of the inter-war years was due to a mistaken attempt to restore the liberal international economic order of the nineteenth century: a set of policies based on the fallacious construct of the self-regulating market. He believed that without social control, the market would end up “annihilating both man and nature” and extinguishing democracy. In Part 1 of her book, Kari Polanyi Levitt explains her father’s ideas and their relationship to those of his contemporaries, Friedrich von Hayek and John Maynard Keynes. Her account is enriched by insights derived from personal and family experience. Karl Polanyi was a socialist, but not a Marxist; his socialism was deeply humanistic and democratic, and emphasised solidarity, mutual trust and cooperation (39–53). Hayek, like his mentor, Ludwig von Mises, was “virulently individualistic and antisocialist” (27); Keynes was “a product of the best traditions of English liberalism”, who believed that “capitalism should be wisely managed” (73). Keynes became the intellectual author of the policies that underpinned the economic expansion which lasted for a quarter of a century after World War II; Hayek was the intellectual progenitor of the neoliberal counter-revolution of the 1980s and 1990s. Polanyi Levitt provides a compelling account of the road that originated with Mises’s Privatseminar in
Vienna in the 1920s and led ultimately to Pinochet, Thatcher, Reagan and the Washington Consensus (Essay 2). By comparing the succession of financial crises that culminated in the global meltdown of 2008 with the crisis of the 1930s, she shows they had a common theoretical root in the thesis of self-regulating markets and that both were driven by the primacy accorded to the interests of finance capital and the subjection of debtor countries to brutal adjustment policies. The consequences in the 1930s were catastrophic; the outlook in the 2010s is highly uncertain. Yet, the lessons have yet to be learned by policy makers.

A second theme – the main subject of Part 2 – is the origins, causes and possible futures of contemporary underdevelopment and development. Polanyi Levitt's work on this subject is replete with insights drawn from a lifetime of research on Canada, the Caribbean and the Global South. The structural continuities in the relationship between the North and South from mercantilism to globalisation are analysed with reference to certain "rules of the game", which condition the outcomes in favour of the North. In a 1975 paper (Essay 9) Polanyi Levitt held that only through "collective disengagement" from the North could the South achieve development. In a later essay (Essay 10) she revised this view. Latecomer industrialisation in East Asia is explained by the fact that colonisation did not destroy indigenous civilisations, as happened in Latin America; nor did it fracture the polities and depopulate the societies, as it did in Africa. Furthermore, she argues, East Asian latecomers made use of the developmental state and never adopted the Anglo-American brand of laissez faire capitalism.

But does this mean that the "rules of the game" applied by the North were different in Asia than in Latin America and Africa? Or if they were the same, how did the Asian latecomers circumvent – or utilise – them to their own advantage? Although the answers to these questions can be inferred from the text, a more direct comparison would have been useful. Does Polanyi Levitt expect that the rest of the Global South will now follow the East Asian example? While not answering this question directly; she takes a long historical view in believing that the continued relative decline of the West is inevitable. Indeed, she considers this is desirable from the viewpoint of multipolarity and achieving a more democratic global order (Essay 15). Here, she seems to differ from Samir Amin, who, in the Afterword, denies the possibility of "catch-up" by the Global South within the current framework of generalised monopoly capitalism (266) and argues that only some Asian countries satisfy the criteria of true "emergence" in the world economy (268–269).

In Essays 7 and 12, Polanyi Levitt delivers a trenchant critique of contemporary economics and a coherent case for the revalidation of development economics. The link between these is the objection to the methodological individualism that constitutes the foundation of the neoclassical schema. For Polanyi Levitt, the abstraction of "economic man" is a grotesque misrepresentation of the many-sided nature of human motivations and human needs. Additionally, it serves as a spurious justification for the assertion of a single, universal, science of economics. Her views show an organic connection with the Polanyian theses that reciprocity and redistribution are as historically important as exchange as organising principles of economic life; that land, labour and money have been transformed into "fictitious" commodities under capitalist exchange relationships; and that the consequent "disembedding" of the economy from society is a destructive aberration. Polanyi Levitt's concise statement on culture and economy (Essay 7) which includes the "three fallacies of economics" (109–111) should be required reading for students in the social sciences. Her arguments for reclaiming development economics rightly emphasize the importance of history – including the history of economic thought – and of multidisciplinary study, a point reinforced by Amin (258). The key issues in development economics are identified as market and state, trade and development, and growth and equity, but there is no universally applicable formula. The epistemological dimension, then, amounts to a third theme of the essays.

A fourth theme is the author's transformative vision. The essays are rich with ideas on such subjects as culture and development, socialism, democracy, diversity and regionalism, sustainable
development, international aid and reshaping the international order. The treatment often amounts to a refreshing departure from the mainstream approaches of both the Right and the Left. This is especially so where Polanyi Levitt makes the case for validating the role of culture, creativity and diversity in development (Essay 7; also 210); and for the (re)claiming of intellectual autonomy and policy autonomy in the Global South (Essays 13 and 14). The problem, as is well known, is that policy autonomy is often negated by WTO and IFI rules. Hence, her ideas for an international order that allows space for nationally determined policies of sustainable development, while logical, leave open the question of how to change existing asymmetrical power structures.

There are some other unresolved issues in Polanyi Levitt’s transformative vision. Her endorsement of the East Asian development model leaves open the question of whether these countries, in emulating the West, are not on a path of disembedding the economy from society, and are not seeking to adopt a lifestyle that is environmentally unsustainable. “It is inconceivable that the values of Anglo-American capitalism,” she insists, “will continue to dominate the world” (255). But is this enough to ensure that markets are tamed by society; and consumerism tempered by a long-term perspective? Also worthy of further discussion is how Polanyi’s ideas on socialism, and Polanyi Levitt’s views on culture and development, relate to the current debates over “twenty-first century socialism” and “solidarity economy”.

Distinct themes notwithstanding, there is a virtually seamless transition from Polanyi Levitt’s interpretative essays on her father’s work on The Great Transformation to her own perspectives on development and The Great Financialization. This is significant, for Karl was a lawyer by training and an economic historian by vocation, while Kari was trained as an economist and made her professional career as a statistician and development economist. She discloses that her father once said to her “I don’t know what development is” (11). But over the course of her own intellectual development, she developed a heightened respect and appreciation of his work, eventually blending his insights with her own deepening understanding of the causes of underdevelopment and of the sources of true development. The Kari Polanyi Levitt of the 2010s is noticeably more Polanyian than the Kari Levitt of the 1960s. That process of synthesising is an implicit subtext of these essays. To this reviewer, the juxtaposition underlying Parts 1 and 2 of these essays works remarkably well; and the continuities of scholarly approach and of substance shine through with a light that illuminates past, present and potential future.

Polanyi Levitt writes in an engaging style that is adorned with pithy, eminently quotable, observations. If there are any criticisms to be made, it is that careful editing might have reduced some repetition of subject matter (for example, references to the neoliberal counter-revolution varying in length but similar in substance appear in Essays 1, 2, 10, 12 and 13). But these are selected essays, not book chapters, and some overlap is inevitable. The shortcoming is minor when set against the range and depth of the insights one encounters from page to page, which will amply reward the reader.

Reference

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