

ABSTRACTS FOR WORKSHOP NO. 1:

VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

(in random order)

Environmental Literacy and NGOs: Experience from the Microcredit Based Social Forestry Program of *Proshika* in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study assesses the impact of participation in the social forestry program of *Proshika* on the environmental literacy of participating households in Bangladesh. *Proshika*--a non-governmental organization--has initiated a social forestry program with the twin objectives of improving environmental quality while alleviating poverty. *Proshika* uses microcredit to motivate poor households to participate in its social forestry program. Moreover, participating households receive training on planting trees along with information on other environmental issues. In order to gauge the impact of the program on the environmental literacy of participating households, we calculated an environmental literacy score on the basis of the responses of households to 10 environmental issues. The analysis relies on a household-level survey of 450 households. We use the instrumental variable technique (IV technique) for the analysis of data. The results indicate that participation in the social forestry program of *Proshika* significantly enhances the environmental literacy of participating households. The findings of the study emphasize the importance of initiating more such programs by the government as well as NGOs to enhance people's knowledge on the environment.

“Indigenous people and forced migration – history and consequences”

Vibeke Andersson,

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The history of indigenous people in Latin America is intertwined with the story of forced migration.

Indigenous people have been subject to forced migration for many reasons: need for labour in colonial mines, power holders including indigenous territories in private property, disruption of social organisation with displacement as a consequence and poverty induced displacement in recent times. The paper will discuss the reasons behind these displacements and the consequences forced migration and displacement through history has for contemporary Bolivia. Many of the conflicts between indigenous people and governments and elites have their roots in the history of forced migration. The paper will be based on cases of forced migration through time and space in Bolivia.

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Transitions and re-creations. Using insights from institutional change in transition economies for promoting adaptive capacity under multiple stressors

Andrei Marin

Insights from development studies converge to support a similar view, advocating for a model of development based on local 'culture' (multiple life-worlds, rationalities, goals), a theoretical perspective on development that incorporates the 'social imaginary of Third World peoples without first reconstructing them in our terms before meeting them' (Tucker, 1999).

The proposition that people's vulnerability can be significantly reduced by implementing technological adaptations derived from experience elsewhere and based on economic models of efficiency and rationalities, is reminiscent of the heyday of a modernization view of development, based on technology transfer and structural adjustments. This view of development as modernisation seems indeed to increasingly gather new momentum as advocates of 'low-carbon growth' propose alternative technologies as new sources of economic growth and (implicitly!) reduced vulnerability. The evidence provided herein contradicts such excitement for what I perceive as an emerging discourse of 'remodernisation' spurred by the urgency of climate change adaptation.

An alternative model of development, in which economic welfare does not come at the expense of local people's valued lifestyles, rationalities and goals, breaks with the orthodoxy envisioning adaptation to climate change as only a matter of implementing new structures (e.g. government agencies, national adaptation plans of action- NAPAs) and technologies (e.g. new crops, water storage facilities). The present paper proposes that adaptation strategies should build on local values and existing institutional arrangements, in order to provide more viable solutions for tackling future and highly unpredictable changes.

In changing circumstances, such as post-socialist transition economies, multiple institutions may be competing, and resource access achieved via ambiguous authority and power regimes that transcends simple formal institutions (Verdery, 1999, Sturgeon and Sikor, 2004, Verdery, 2003).

Insights from transition economies illustrate that socio-economic changes occur in the context of power struggles not only between actors but also between economic models and institutional frameworks. The encompassing institutional transformation in such cases suggests in fact a process of institutional bricolage of old and new rules, norms and obligations. The evidence proposes that people deal with new circumstances by borrowing from and employing existing institutions, styles of thinking and social relationships, re-creating old arrangements to fit new circumstances. This strategy may provide not only the flexibility necessary in the highly unpredictable situations brought about by climate change, but also the familiarity of a known context that allows for innovation. It is this institutional bricolage that I propose may hold valuable answers to how sustainable transitions can be promoted.

”From Subsistence to Monetary Economy – lack of holistic analysis in development strategies”

Melissa J. Lesamana

In Africa, in particular indigenous people still rely on subsistence economy. Through financial globalization, aid and governmental implementation of various strategies for poverty reduction, financial growth and development – unpredicted counter effects have occurred.

The declining position of reciprocity caused by increased transition to monetary economy in the Samburu indigenous pastoralists in Kenya, leads to an increase of numerous negative consequences. While profit making, saving and accumulation of money is the basis of the mainstream development strategies within healthcare, education, employment and environmental preservation, the Samburus adapt it both through approval and force. However, it has resulted in further economic marginalization which eventually probably will cause the local- and national economy more than if these initiatives were not introduced, or implemented in a less rapid speed.

Social-, environmental-, financial-, and infrastructural increasing costs are many and serious. Alcoholism, crime, prostitution, financial marginalization, environmental degradation, corruption, anomaly and violence are direct consequences of this transition.

Since reciprocity is such a vital part of the holistic world view of the Samburu people, their identity, traditions and cultural practice are challenged by the monetary economy. For instance business entrepreneurship, one of the leading development strategies for poverty reduction cannot align with reciprocity as their core factor are defective. This distracts the traditional power balance and function of the gerontocracy. Once this is out of function, quandary and disorder occurs.

Due to this, the social and economic cost of such a transition might cause more harm than good if the holistic worldview of indigenous people are not taken in consideration and deployed while designing development strategies for poverty alleviation in such communities.

The indigenous logics, religious- and social expressions of life seems to be harder to comprehend while dealing in indigenous communities, and therefore more severe counter effects occurs through various development initiatives initiated in these areas.

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Gender-based Conflict in Accessing Natural Resources in Nigeria: Need for Socio-cultural Transformation

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ABSTRACT

“A society’s ability to define and, within a broad system of the rule of law, establish institutions that can enforce property rights to land as well as other assets is a critical precondition for social and economic development” (Deininger, 2003:8). African woman is faced with different forms of traumatic experience and discrimination that results to conflicts not only in her low perceived status but also in the denial of her rights of property based on cultural norms, which poses development challenges to the continent. Many researchers have ended up only describing those cultural practices and gender-based conflicts but never prescribed solutions, which can only come out of participatory research, “creating a framework within which conflicting parties can generate ideas for creative conflict resolutions”. Beijing Declaration (1995) that “protection from violence is not just something that would be nice for women to have” but as “their right and an obligation for the state”, becomes imperative. Hence, “resource-based conflicts should be seen and analyzed within a policy and governance context” (Leory, 2009: 51).

This research aims to investigate the present situation of gender discrimination with respect to land property rights in Nigeria and to discover how to resolve and transform the resulting conflicts constructively by the state and communities themselves, using Johan Galtung’s Transcend approach. Conflict transformation should provide those who experience conflict or violence with appropriate and innovative methods and approaches, and assistance to address its causes without recourse to violence. Triangulating field research method involving respondent-led approach in individual interviews, four group discussions and two problem-solving (Transcend) workshops have been conducted for this paper.

Do natural resources reduce social trust?

Do natural resources reduce social trust? This paper reviews the literature on natural resources and on trust. The existing theoretical and empirical literature suggests that natural resources can reduce trust through several indirect mechanisms. Notably, studies show that natural resources lead to institutional degradation, corruption, inequality, and civil war, all of which have been associated with reduced trust. In addition, increased stake size in trust game experiments tend to reduce trust which suggests that there may be direct effect of natural resources on trust. This paper tests empirically whether there is a direct effect of natural resources on trust (The Pearl Hypothesis), using cross-country data. The results indicate that no such direct effect exists, suggesting that any effect of resources on trust runs through intermediate variables such as institutions, corruption, inequality, and civil war.

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How controlling the arms trade can help vulnerable communities build peace and sustainable development

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Armed violence currently kills an estimated 740,000 people each year. Millions more are injured, psychologically scarred or impoverished. Irresponsible arms transfers and excessive military spending undermines development both by fuelling conflict and crime, and by diverting funds from social spending such as education and health care. Resources are wasted by military spending that goes beyond legitimate security needs. Such spending can also contribute to unsustainable debt service payments, which reduce resources for social spending - and it can fuel corruption. What are the dynamics between the demand for and supply of arms? How can communities and states meet challenges posed by uncontrolled flow of arms, and build resilience?